

OPEN NINTH:

CONVERSATIONS BEYOND THE COURTROOM

EVERY DAY IS VETERAN'S DAY

EPISODE 10

NOVEMBER 8, 2016

HOSTED BY: FREDERICK J. LAUTEN

>>Welcome to Episode 10 of “Open Ninth: Conversations Beyond the Courtroom” in the Ninth Judicial Circuit Court of Florida.

And now here’s your host, Chief Judge Frederick J. Lauten.

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** Good afternoon. I’m here today with Orange County Court Judge Jerry Brewer. If there’s a definition of public servant, it would be Jerry Brewer. We’re going to learn this afternoon that he has served the citizens of Central Florida, the State of Florida and the United States as a veteran, as a fire fighter, and since 1995, as a hard working Orange County Judge. So he’s really had an entire lifetime dedicated to serving other people. Jerry, welcome. It’s a thrill to have you here, thank you.

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** A pleasure to be here, Chief.

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** So let’s start – let’s start with talking about your experience as a veteran. As I understand – did you grow up here?

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** No, I grew up in Oklahoma.

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** Oklahoma. And what age were you when you went into the military?

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** Actually, I was a month and a half past my 17<sup>th</sup> birthday.

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** Holy smokes. And what branch did you enlist in?

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** Marine Corp.

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** Did you enlist?

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** Yes, I did.

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** When was that in the history of our country?

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** Right in the middle of all that hay day, 1967.

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** So when Viet Nam was hot and heavy.

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** Hot and heavy, yeah.

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** All right. Where did you do your basic training?

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** San Diego.

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** Okay, and then tell us what happened after that? Where did you head?

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** Well, in the Marine Corp you do your basic boot camp. And then you're off to infantry training. And the way they have it in California is, it's literally right down the road from the Marine Corp recruit depo. We did infantry, basic infantry training up there and then they gave us all leave and off to whatever school you were going to attend in order to learn what your job was going to be.

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** What job was that for you?

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** Well, for me it was working on the ejection seats and safety and survival systems in F-4B Phantoms.

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** How much training did that require?

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** You know, there were three different schools that we had to go to. It was a basic school, it was two weeks of learning how not to walk into propellers.

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** Okay.

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** And that's what they told you right up front is we're going to learn how not to do this. And then a basic mechanics school where you just learn basic mechanics, you know, this is a wrench, this is a screwdriver, that kind of thing. And then you went into your actual school where you learned the trade that you were going to have out in the fleet. And so all total probably – probably twenty weeks, twenty-four weeks, something like that.

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** And then what happened after that twenty weeks?

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** Well, then you got assigned to your duty station. For me it was Buford, South Carolina.

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** All right. All right, Buford, South Carolina. How long were you there?

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** A little over two years actually.

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** Great.

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** We were there – let's see, I got there in late '68, probably September '68 and left there in January of '71 when they transferred me up to Cherry Point, North Carolina.

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** All right. How long did you stay there?

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** For the balance of that year. And I finished my four year tour in December of that year.

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** Okay. So did you ever go overseas?

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** Not unless you call Puerto Rico overseas.

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** All right. So no – you didn't see time as they say in country, in Viet Nam?

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** No, no I had a – my older brother was there when I enlisted. My stepbrother rotated in right after him. And I always assumed the first couple of years that they wouldn't send me because they were there, and they – there's sort of a policy that they wouldn't send people that were that closely related into a war zone. And that's all I wanted was for the first two years to get out of South Carolina and I was willing to go to Viet Nam to do it. And it didn't happen, couldn't get orders, couldn't buy orders, couldn't beg orders to get out of there.

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** Sounds a little rare. That's interesting.

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** Well, there were a lot of people that felt that way because there was the chance that if you could get out of there, go to Viet Nam, that when you came back you'd be stationed in California, and everybody wanted to be in California.

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** Okay.

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** If you spent any time in the 60s in southern California, that's where you wanted to be.

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** So did you learn – we might come back to that in a minute. Did you learn – what lessons did you learn from the Marine Corp? I just heard that, you know, it's a life altering experience. Was it that way for you?

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** When you consider that I had dropped out of high school my sophomore year. I don't think I did three months of my sophomore year before I quit. And you know, probably knew at the time that it was really a dumb move. But it just – it was that time and everybody was heading west, to the west coast. I think I probably had it in the back of my mind that, you know, I needed to be in California more than I needed to be in Oklahoma. But you know, my mom was a single mom and she raised four kids on her own waitressing. And so there was always that part of you that was working no matter what else you were doing and kind of helping mom out. And I sort of realized, you know, she spent most of her adult life taking care of kids. And I was sort of the last one at home at that time and I said that combined with the sort of not so smart move dropping out of high school, I figured something had to change, and that seemed like the logical thing to do, plus it was the location. It was Oklahoma. There were a couple things you could do in Oklahoma basically back then. You could join the military; you could just go to prison, or you could get a job somewhere out in the oil fields or something like that. And it wasn't what you would call a career that you wanted to see yourself in forty years from now.

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** Right. So what was the first step then after discharge from the military?

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** Well, you know, I had gotten married the last year I was in the Marine Corp and we had our first child thirteen days before I separated, and so I really didn't have any choice. I had to find a job and at that point in my life I had basically done three things. I had delivered papers. I had worked in a coke a cola bottling plant and I had worked on ejection seats. And they had this program back then where if you were ex-military, you signed up at the state unemployment office and they would match you with a job that was similar to what you did in the military. So I'm going like, okay, ejection seats, no. What they told me I was qualified for was to drive a gasoline tanker.

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** I'm not sure how we got from ejection seats to gas –

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** I think it was the exploding part that kind of coincided. But they offered me a job doing that and I said, I don't think so, I mean, I'm just looking at that big truck that's full of gas and I want to drive around in this bomb in Florida where it's a 138 degrees. No, no. So I took a job in construction actually and hung sheet rock.

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** Okay, in Florida?

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** Yeah. Up in Deland, Volusia County area.

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** That's work that will make you sweat.

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** Well, it will but, you know, when you're young, when you're 21, you got to remember I was 21 at that point. I was sort of in the prime of my youth and I had started – I had figured out that maybe going to college was a good idea. So I was construction during the day, college at night, and then spent the weekend on the beach up in Daytona with the other long-haired hippies and that's what we did.

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** So how long did you live that lifestyle?

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** Probably for about a year and a half, two years.

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** Then what?

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** Well, then my father in law, and they lived up here. They had retired in Lake Helen, was a retired fire fighter for Miami. And he and my mother in law, more her than him, kind of figured that in order to be an appropriate son in law that I needed some legitimate job. And this construction thing and long hair and beach and college, that wasn't it, so they convinced me to come to this town and put in an application as a fire fighter. And I actually did it one day just to get them off my back. Cindy and I and the kid were on our way to Disney World and down here in Orlando, the old City Hall down there that they blew up for the movie, was a guy name Earl Pratt in there that ran civil service. And I just stopped in one day, no appointment and they said, you know, he's over there. And I went over there and said to him I want to be a fire fighter, and he goes, you want to be a cop. I says, no; he says, we got openings for cops. I said, you got openings for fire fighters. He goes, yeah, but we got a lot of openings for cops. That was that Disney thing, right after Disney and I said you know, I did four years in the Marine Corp. I've had all the weapons I need so, no, I think fire fighter probably. Plus, you

know, I had hair down the middle of my back, and I'm standing there in front of him in a pair of cutoff jeans and flip flops and a tank top, and I'm thinking, they're going to look at me and go, no way and they're going to run the other way screaming. He said, okay, and he slid a little test across the table to me and said, take that test. I took the test, and he looked at it, hand graded it and said you passed. Oh, and my wife and kid are waiting down in the car to go to Disney so he said, go out the front of this building, past that round building right there and you'll see a fire station. He said, I want you to go over there; he gave me the name of somebody to talk to, a chief. He said, you go in and find him; you talk to him. And I went in on a Friday and talked to this chief, this guy name Charlie Parker who eventually became the chief. And he said, can you be back Monday morning at 8:00 and I said, well, yeah, why. And he goes, going on shift. Really? He said, yeah.

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** That was fast.

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** Oh, it was, and I was back that next Monday morning and they took me into a supply closet and fitted me with three uniforms and bunker gear. And they said if the – if that thing goes off, that noise maker up there, you get on the back of that truck right there, on the tailboard, and then they took me out and showed me how to stand on the tailboard and not fall off.

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** That was your training?

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** That was it. And you know, there were some riots here in Orlando that year, 1973. If you look up race riots out in – off of Orange Center Boulevard and Tampa, out in that area.

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** Okay.

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** Well, guess what my first night on the fire department was?

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** That night?

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** Oh, yeah, I'm sitting down at Station 1 and we're hearing all these trucks go out and they're talking about this building is on fire and shots fired over here, and blah, blah, blah. And they kept telling me, look, if we go, you're going to ride in the cab. Okay. Well, we went, and guess who was on the tailboard? I was like a flag flapping in the breeze back

there and my helmet strap wasn't tight enough. So my helmet is doing this, going up and down. I'm back there holding onto the thing. I know we're heading for riots and my thoughts were, I didn't sign up for this. This is not what I want to do.

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** I don't know why, but I'm fixated on this image of hair down to your waist, so did you have to get a haircut before your first day at the –

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** You know when I was leaving his office that day, he hadn't said a word about it.

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** Right.

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** There was a beard too. And I stopped at the door and I turned around and I said, so, do I have to get a haircut? And he just kind of laughed and he goes, yeah. Quasi-military, so yeah, all the hair went, the beard went; everything had to go. And I had to look like everybody else.

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** So your first week on the job for the Orlando Fire Department, right?

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** Right.

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** Not Orange County, Orlando. Pretty exciting week –

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** Yeah.

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** Pretty scary week maybe.

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** I mean, I'm out there in the middle of a riot standing on the tailboard of a truck and everybody else is inside the protective cover of the truck itself. And but for the fact that a very large fellow stepped up on the tailboard with me, I didn't know him from Adam, and he looked over at me and he had a bunker coat on and he opened his coat like that and he had a big old .44 stuck in the waistband of his pants. And he said don't worry, rookie, and I went, I love you. I don't know who you are but I love it.

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** When did they train you to fight fires?

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** About four months after that.

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** Okay.

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** I mean, there was training as we went because whatever they went to, I went to. There used to be – there was an adult theater right here on Orange Avenue years ago. Do you remember that?

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** A little bit, yeah.

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** Well, we had a fire there. It was one of the first interior fires that we ever had, and it was behind it actually, in a drycleaners, and had to lay lines in the street and do all the stuff that fire fighters normally do. And that was the first time I was ever actually in a burning building because you stepped into the building and you stepped down about a foot. It was dark, you can't see anything, and I stepped in there and the floor is full of water and I go down a foot. And I'm looking around for fire. All I see is smoke. I mean, you can't see anything and somebody taps me and does that. And I look up and it's all up there –

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** On the ceiling.

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** I said, okay, I didn't sign up for that either.

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** Holy smokes.

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** Yeah, it was –

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** Well, how long – how long did you work for the fire department?

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** Four years.

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** Fought fires. Did you get any other training?

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** Oh, yeah, I drove the rescue truck.

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** Drove the rescue truck.

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** Station 7 out in Washington Shores.

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** So you had emergency – training in emergency services?

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** Yeah, everybody got that.

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** Everybody gets that.

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** I mean, that was back in the day before there was such a thing as a paramedic. Basically, an EMT was the most you could be and so you could do that. And then I wound up driving various pieces of equipment, the rescue truck, the pumpers as a relief driver. And then we had an old ladder truck here. I don't think it exists anymore. Used to be up at Station 3, the kind with the tiller guy on the back.

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** Right.

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** Well, I was up there for a while and they taught me how to do that, and then every time they had to put that thing into service on my shift, wherever they put it, I had to go there because I drove the back of it.

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** That's crazy.

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** What a trip that was. You can't imagine going down OBT in the middle of the day with all kinds of traffic, guy in front wants to move over, look over your shoulder and you move the back over, clears everything and over he comes. It was – it was like not growing up.

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** So what about life lessons in your fire fighting experience? Anything that registered?

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** Yeah, the mortal –

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** That you're mortal?

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** Well, if I was immortal before that, which I think most young fire fighters look at themselves as being immortal, but I had enough brushes with death while I was doing that just in that four-year period that I realized, you know, I could not come home from this. And a lot of them bunched up the last six months I was a fire fighter. So that when I had to make the decision, because by then I had two kids, to leave that job, and that security, and go off to Alabama to go to law school, and drag my family up there without a job or a decent

place to live, it was like, okay, probably won't be asked to, you know, go into any buildings that are falling down while I'm doing that, so I can go do that.

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** All right, so that phase. So then you go to the law school phase after fire fighting. You and your two children and Cindy.

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** Yes.

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** And Cumberland Law School.

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** Right.

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** Tell the listeners where that's located.

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** Birmingham. It's actually in Homewood, Alabama which is just south of Birmingham.

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** And then after that, did you come back to – right back to Central Florida?

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** I did.

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** And I know you practiced law. You had a partner, Gary Fox.

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** Yes.

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** Is that where you started? Did you start with Gary?

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** No, no, I – I actually had a meeting with the family. The kids were little. They were pretty easy to persuade – you could persuade them with virtually anything, but we sat down and talked about – you know, we had been as poor as church mice for the last three years and so we have a choice. We can go to work for somebody or we can just go to work for ourselves. And we made the decision to just hang a shingle out over on Bumby and start getting to know the people in this community that, you know, might be in need of services. And did that for probably a year and a half. And actually I had the practice up and running. Somebody had told me early on that if I could break even within five years, that that was successful. And I kept thinking, no, that's like not eating or something. And in a year and a

half's time my wife had quit her job and come to work for me and we were doing good. And then I met Gary and we hooked up.

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** So what type of practice did you have?

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** It was a threshold practice, you know, if it came across the threshold, I did it.

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** Right.

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** I became an expert on the spot.

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** Great. And so how long – how long before you became a judge? How long did you practice law?

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** Twelve years.

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** And then did you run or get appointed?

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** I ran.

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** An opponent?

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** Um-hum, and incumbent.

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** An incumbent judge who you defeated.

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** Yes.

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** And you became a county judge in 1995.

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** Right.

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** So I know, of course, about your career as a judge. But what I want to do is move to the startup of veteran's court. And if you would, tell the listeners about you and former Chief Judge Perry in establishing the first veteran's court in our circuit.

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** Well, you know, it had been discussed here for years. Bob Wesley, the Public Defender, I remember him talking about it ten years before we got around to it. And I knew they were happening elsewhere, and somewhere early in the process, I don't know if I told the Chief Judge at that time, probably had at some point that if he decided to do it,

that I'd be more than happy to help any way I could. And so, of course, it wasn't happening. And literally, what, the week before we decided to have a veteran's court, he made the public statement that we couldn't have one because the legislature hadn't fund it. And then I was at our conference and, you know, John Woodard.

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** Right.

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** Well, John was there and he and I are down there scarfing up on the breakfast, and he looks at me and he goes, I understand you're going to be the new veteran's court judge in Orange County. And I said, news to me. He goes, no, no, no. He said, I just heard it. He said, you all are going to have one and you're going to be the judge. How does a judge from Seminole County know what I don't know.

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** For our listeners, John Woodard is a county court judge in Seminole County.

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** He certainly is. Been around for a long time too, but he – and I got the call from Belvin shortly thereafter to –

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** Okay. What year was that, if you remember?

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** Let's see, well, we're in what, 2016. That was probably 2013.

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** All right. So what kind of – what types of issues or what range of issues, in your experience, were veterans struggling with when they appeared in front of you in veteran's court?

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** PTSD and substance abuse.

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** All right. Those were the two predominately --

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** Those were the two big ones. If you ran a vine through all those veterans, you would touch virtually every one of them with one or both of those issues.

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** Right. And what could the courts do to address those problems? What was the purpose behind veteran's court?

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** Well, it gave them an opportunity to be in the room with other veterans who kind of spoke their language, including me and Tina Caraballo after me. But the

other veterans who were in the room, it was always my experience with the military, was that, you know, we could fight all we want in our own house and we did regularly. But when somebody from outside our house came in that house and started giving somebody trouble, well, then guess what, we just became a band of brothers and sisters. And so by getting them all in the group together, having one veteran stand there with a room full of veterans who are there for pretty much the same purpose, and having to confront reality, made a difference. And you'd see them change as they did that. But we not only did that. We had this team around us in veteran's court. Every organization that you could possibly imagine in Central Florida, including the VA, county service officers who work with veterans, who were there and so when there was an issue or problem with a veteran, we had somebody who could pick up their phone, make a phone call and address the issue on the spot. And so when we had veterans that needed desperately to go into treatment or to get into the domiciliary or that sort of thing, they literally could make it happen that day, and even arrange for transportation. So we were able to touch a lot of their lives real quick and get them off the street. You know, we had that big thing going right here in the city – I think you've been involved in it, the homeless project.

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** Yes.

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** And I heard them say the other day that Orlando's veteran community is functionally no longer – or no longer has homeless veterans.

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** Right, veterans' homelessness in Orlando is now at functional zero. That doesn't mean – that means that a veteran might be on the streets for a little bit of time, but once they're identified, that their homelessness is brief, it's rare, it's one time before they're housed.

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** Yeah, I continue to work with them out at the jail.

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** That's great.

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** We just identified a fellow out there that we saw coming through as a regular. Never major stuff, always minor stuff, trespass, ordinance violations. And he – he's the one that came in, what, six, eight months ago and wanted me to sentence him to the max. And I'm saying for, what is this, an open container or trespass. I said, I don't normally do that and he says, look, I'm old. I'm tired of being in the street; I'm sick, I need help and the only

way I'm going to get help is if you lock me up here. We were – we had a volunteer come out of the woodwork, a lady who works with veterans, Laura Tweedy is her name, and she offered to work with him. We managed to get him out of jail and into an assisted living facility where he's still living today and happy as a clam. And it even goes further. His – he had been estranged from his family for over twenty years. They all live up in Massachusetts. And so we were able to get a hold of his daughter in Massachusetts who is supposed to visit him this month to see if there is a possibility of reconciliation so they can bring him back to Massachusetts and have him live there.

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** That is fabulous. That's a great story.

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** You see them coming through every day.

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** Any sense of recidivism rates for defendants who have been through veteran's court?

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** Okay, I can only speak up to the time that I left. And up to the time that I left, we had the veterans that completed the program. We had zero veterans that came back through. Now, that's not going to go on forever.

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** Yeah, but that's great. That's great. Is that the most rewarding aspect of your judicial career in your opinion?

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** Yeah, I'd put it up there in the top two or three.

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** So you're slated to retire at the end of this year after a long judicial career. What advice would you give to young lawyers who are thinking about becoming judges?

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** If they take the step and decide to become a judge, they need to be who they really are on day one and not try to effect somebody else's method of doing this. I've seen that a few times over the years where, you know, a judge looks at another judge and says, gee, that works great for her or him and then they try to mimic it and it doesn't work. You got to be who you are going to be on day one and continue to be that person.

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** What -- Jerry, are there some things you've learned while on the bench that you would have never imagined as a young attorney?

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** You know, particularly in the last five years while I've been out at 33<sup>rd</sup> Street –

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** And for the listeners, so you're at what we call the Booking and Release Center, so in essence there's a courtroom in the jail so that people who are arrested, you see them the next day and you process cases through that facility. It's cuts down on transportation and other things --

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** Right. And we resolve a lot of cases there but the stuff that people do to each other, particularly the children. You know, we all sort of know it goes on out there, but I never imagined it goes on to the extent that it does. And I expect that because I'm seeing as much of that as I see, there is so much more of it that we're not seeing at all. I mean, I got a taste for it when I was in the domestic violence court in county court, but that was adults mostly. And now I see the stuff that people do to kids out there, their own kids, and I'm just shocked. So that made a bigger impression on me out there than anything else.

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** Well, Jerry, a career that included service to our country in the military, service to the local citizens as a fire fighter, service to the region as a judge, and retirement at the end of the year, are you kicking your feet up and that's it or do you have any plans for what the next phase is?

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** I've got a couple of ideas about things I'd like to do. I'm going to get another motorcycle for sure, a one seater so there's no temptation, you know.

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** Right.

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** And my wife has some ideas of things she would like to do. Most of which she could do without me. She wants to go to Scotland, and she wants to go to Australia.

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** Tell me she's going to drag you along.

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** Well, that will be her idea to drag me along. Somebody has to stay home and take care of the animals.

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** Any chance you'll sit as a senior judge occasionally?

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** Well, you know, I've got the application in.

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** Great.

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** And of course, you don't know what reaction you're going to get at the other end because as you and I know, you know, we've all got a jacket up there somewhere and we really don't know what's in it. You know, you just know whether you –

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** I'm sure nothing but good for you though.

>>**JUDGE BREWER:** Well, you know – maybe you've never been investigated and you know, you're fortunate if you haven't. And that's good, but you still don't know what kind of things people have said about you and how they're going to impact people on the other end.

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** Jerry, as the Chief Judge, I'm sorry to see you departing. And on behalf of all the judges, and really all the citizens of the county, I want to thank you for your service to us as a judge, and really highlight once again that not just service as a judge, but you've truly had an entire lifetime of service to others, military, fire fighting, as a judge. And we're deeply indebted to you and I want to thank you so much for your lifetime of service. Thanks, Jerry.

>>**CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** Very kind of you to say. Thanks, Fred.

>>Thank you for listening to “Open Ninth: Conversations Beyond the Courtroom,” brought to you by Chief Judge Frederick J. Lauten and the Ninth Judicial Circuit Court of Florida. Please remember to follow us on Facebook and Twitter for more information about the Ninth Judicial Circuit Court.