



## BROWARD COUNTY HISPANIC BAR ASSOCIATION

### JUDICIAL CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Full Name: Doreen Turner Inkeles
2. Current County of residence. Broward. Since 1992. Florida resident for 37 years.
3. Date and place of birth. 9/4/63 New York
4. Does your campaign have a website or Facebook page? If so, please list it. Doreen Turner Inkeles for Circuit Court Judge, Group 24
5. List the colleges and law schools you have attended, including your dates of attendance and degrees awarded. Emory University, Atlanta, GA 1981-85, B.A. in English. St. Thomas University School of Law, Miami, FL 1989-1992 J.D.
6. Have you ever served in the military? No
7. List where you have been employed since graduation from law school, including dates employed, your position and the nature of your employment responsibilities.

Law Offices of David H. Nevel (1992-93), Associate for small firm handling civil, employment, and marital law. Assisted in all areas of trial litigation and appellate matters. Handled motion calendar and evidentiary hearings.

Law Offices of Minervino Rodriguez (1993-1994). Associate in small firm handling family law, corporate law, and civil litigation. Drafted pleadings, motions, memoranda of law, argued at evidentiary hearings and trials.

Doreen Inkeles, P.A. (1994 – 2008) Solo practitioner handling all family law and domestic relations litigation matters in tri-county area including appeals.

Beiner, Inkeles & Horvitz, P.A. (2008-present) Partner in a family law litigation firm; also handle matters involving Estates and Trusts and appeals.



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8. Have you ever been arrested? Explain. No
9. Have you ever been convicted of a crime? Explain. No
10. What is the general nature of your practice? Indicate areas of practice in which you concentrate or concentrated? I concentrate on family law and domestic relations litigation, including domestic violence, as well as dependency. I also work on Estate, Trust and Guardianship matters when litigation is involved.
11. If you are currently a judge, what type of cases do you typically preside over in your court? Not yet.
12. If you are currently a judge, have any of your decisions ever been appealed and overturned? How many times in the last two (2) years? When and what case? N/a
13. What percentage of your litigation or trial experience was related to:
  - a. Civil? I handle mostly all civil matters; sometimes criminal matters present themselves such as in the area of domestic violence, and indirect criminal contempt.
  - b. Criminal? See above
14. How many cases have you tried to verdict? I have tried over 100 cases to verdict as lead counsel in bench trials. Early in my career when I worked with Mr. Nevel, I assisted with his prolific jury trial practice. I cannot recall from 25 years ago how many jury trials I assisted with.
15. Describe three of the most significant litigated matters, which you personally handled and give the citations thereto, if the cases were reported. I consider all of my cases significant as they involve the emotional and financial futures of children and families. Most of my trials take place over several days with hundreds of hours of preparation beforehand. One of my cases, Eckert v. Eckert, involved a 6-day trial, an appeal (which I won) and then a 7 day trial before a successor judge. Early in my career, I handled an appeal for someone who had been pro se at trial, received a very bad decision, and I had that decision reversed without a record (Ross v. Botha)—that case is often cited for the premise that a judge should not rubber-stamp orders submitted to him by counsel and without opportunity for review by the other side and independent thought. I represent men and women equally, zealously in my role as advocate.
16. Why do you want to be a judge (circuit or county)? In my 24 years of experience as a trial lawyer representing people in hundreds of evidentiary hearings and trials before a variety of judges, I have learned that not all judges are fair, not all judges are diligent, and not all judges do their jobs. These are some critical areas where I want to make a difference and believe that I can. I



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believe that the Broward bench needs people to serve who have both the legal experience and the maturity that my 52 years of life experience have to bear to do the honest job of making tough but intellectually honest decisions, and serve the people of the community with dignity, heart, and commitment.

17. What qualities do you believe are most important in a judge? Explain how you have demonstrated that you possess those qualities.

**Experience:** My 24 years of litigation experience is most important. I understand how the system works, I know and understand evidence, procedure, and having achieved Board Certification in Marital & Family Law, have a depth of knowledge of the law that most candidates don't have. But knowledge of the courtroom alone does not make for a good judge. I also have a significant amount of life experience overcoming financial struggles because I was not a child of privilege. I earned scholarships and worked my way through college and law school where I graduated in the top 5% of my class and served on the St. Thomas Law Review. I opened my own practice on a shoe-string budget and built up my clientele and my credentials, and have achieved a great deal of success in my legal career. I have raised two children through college who are very successful in their own right. There is a great deal of maturity that is required to take on the challenges that a judge faces every day in serving well the people that come before the Court hoping that their voices are heard and expecting justice to be served. I believe that my legal experiences and life experiences have afforded me that maturity to serve well.

**Humility:** I come from a humble background being raised by a single working mother and believe that humility is perhaps the most important quality for a judge. Even with the knowledge that I have, I do not believe that I know everything; however, I am resourceful and diligent to be able find the answers when I don't always know them—and I am a good problem solver. The thousands of cases that I have been able to settle without court intervention over my many years of practice are a testament to that. I have tremendous respect for time and resources and have always gone to great lengths, including sacrificing my personal time, to accommodate the schedules of my clients, judges, and other attorneys.

**Commitment:** As someone who is not a child of privilege, I understand that life is often not fair. I am experiencing that even today. And therefore, my commitment to upholding the integrity of the process, to protecting the law, and to ensuring that everyone has a voice is exponentially much stronger than almost anyone, I submit, because I have walked in those shoes. I cherish a judiciary that is fair, impartial, restrained, respectful, and independent. And I offer that to the people.

18. Why do you believe that you are the best candidate for the seat you are running for?



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My experience sets me apart from my opponent. First, number of years—24 years for me —ALL OF IT in Circuit Court, versus 12 for him (I believe mostly in County Court according to the docket I have seen). This is a Circuit Court seat. But even moreso, it is the quality of that experience. Not only do I have significant courtroom experience, I have worked to distinguish myself in my career—and that has had the added benefit of improving the profession and making other lawyers better lawyers. For example, I am an AV-Preeminent Rated, Board Certified attorney—depth of knowledge of the law is important because it improves our profession and allows the judges to rely on us to balance the scales of justice. I am published in the Florida Bar Journal and The Commentator, I have served on Bar Committees that have shaped legislation in this state, and I mentor young lawyers. I also serve the community on boards of Boys Town of South Florida, Kiwanis of Deerfield Beach, and the Committee for Mothers Against Drunk Driving in Broward. I am a past board member of the American Jewish Committee. I work with SOS Children’s Villages to help raise money to maintain children in clean, safe, and nurturing environments, and I work with the American Cancer Society on its fundraising efforts. In short—to my profession and to my community, I give back. And that sets me apart from my opponent and makes me the best candidate for a seat on the Circuit Court bench. And that would be what I would want to continue to do on the bench—improving it and giving back.

19. Describe your civic activities and community involvement for the past five (5) years, listing what years you participated in each activity or were involved.

Board Member, Boys Town of South Florida -current  
Board Member, Kiwanis of Deerfield Beach-current

Steering Committee, MADD, Broward County-current (past 2)

Parole Board, American Cancer Society Jail & Bail-current (past 3)

Gala Planning Committee, SOS Children’s Villages

Associate Member, Margate 10-13 Club –current

Past Board Member, American Jewish Committee (past year)

Advocate, Reauthorization of Children’s Services Council (2014)

Mock Trial Judge, Student Advocacy Trial Competition (2014 & 2015)

Career Day Speaker, Deerfield Middle School and Park Ridge Elementary School (2014)



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**20. Please list noteworthy professional or personal accomplishments.**

**Board Certified, Marital & Family Law**

**National Board of Trial Advocacy (specialist, family law)**

**AV Preeminent Rating with Martindale Hubbell**

**Florida Bar Certification Steering Committee (family law)**

**Craig S. Barnard Inns of Court**

**Published, The Florida Bar Journal and The Commentator**

**Co-Chair, NW Section of BCBA (2015-16)**

**Admitted to the Southern District of Florida**

**Admitted to Practice in Virginia**

**Publications, Children's Issues, Domestic Violence Committee, Family Law Section of the Florida Bar.**

**Honoree, 100 Outstanding Women in Broward County (Boys & Girls Club)**

**Endorsed by the Puerto Rican Bar Association (judicial campaign)**

**Endorsed by the National Women's Political Caucus (judicial campaign)**

**Graduated top 5% from law school**

**Articles Editor, St. Thomas Law Review**

**Six Book Awards (Property I, Torts II, Agency & Partnership, Legal Research & Writing, Wills & Trusts, Arts & Entertainment Law)**

**Fellowship, Legal Research & Writing**

**Summer intern, Southern District of Florida, The Honorable Edward B. Davis**

**21. Please list the federal and state courts where you are admitted to practice. Florida, Virginia, Southern District of Florida.**



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22. How many times did you take the Florida Bar Exam? Once. Also once in Virginia in 2007, it was a full Bar exam.
23. Have you ever failed Bar exams in any state? If so, when and where? No
24. Have you ever been investigated by a State Bar grievance committee or by the State Commission on Judicial Conduct? I had two grievances in 2012 by opposition. Both were dismissed without disciplinary action.
25. Have you ever been disciplined or reprimanded for your conduct as a lawyer or judge? If the answer is yes, please explain? No
26. Have you or your law firm ever been sued by a client? If so, please explain. No
27. Please discuss your view/opinion of proper judicial temperament. I believe that a judge should be kind but firm –it is a delicate balance that I have come to embody over time both personally and professionally. A judge should listen more than she speaks and should have a calm and even temperament to balance the chaos that surrounds the bench with continual disruptions and high levels of emotion.
28. If you are seeking election or re-election to a criminal court, discuss your view of plea bargains and when they should and should not be accepted. I am seeking election to a Circuit Court seat. The Chief Judge decides to put the newly elected judge in the division he decides is best. As a general principle, plea bargains can be a very effective tool for resolution of cases provided they are well-thought out and carefully explained. According to the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice, "[t]he judge's role is not that of one of the parties to the negotiation, but that of an independent examiner to verify that the defendant's plea is the result of an intelligent and knowing choice and not based on misapprehension or the product of coercion." There is much scholarly debate on the various roles that judges tend to play in the plea-bargaining process. What I can tell you is that, as in all things, I would use my analytical mind and intellectually honest approach to ensure that the process is fair and the law and rights are protected.
29. Tell us about any plans you have to improve the administration of the court or make it more efficient. I believe in getting to work early, leaving late, using pockets of free time to get things done quickly. Above all, I believe in preparation—it is a key time saver. I have excellent time management skills and am always prepared. I take work home with me, including on the weekends. I believe that technology is key to efficiency as well and would hope my staff would embrace it.
30. Have you ever taught any law school courses or any continuing legal education courses? If so, describe the extent and nature of those teaching experiences. During my service to the



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Florida Bar I have co-chaired CLE seminar presentations, and through the body of work that I have published, have also engaged in a form of teaching. I currently mentor young lawyers through the Broward County Bar Association.

**31. List any significant pro bono work completed since graduating from law school.**

Early in my career I handled some cases pro bono through Legal Aid. I also served as a Special Public Defender in the Dependency Division where hourly rates were significantly reduced. I currently take on about two pro bono cases per year privately through my firm. One most recently involved two days of trial, and another will be coming up for hearing.

**32. List any leadership positions, or participation in any committees in voluntary bar associations and/or professional societies, which you believe to be of particular significance (e.g. judicial selection committees, disciplinary committees, grievance committees, etc.).**

Above I have mentioned my Board Membership positions, which are leadership roles in those organizations. Also mentioned is my position as Co-Chair of the NW Section of Broward County Bar Assoc. in 2015-16. I have also served as Guest Editor of an issue of The Commentator and in 2009-2010 I served as Vice Chair on the Publications Committee of the Family Law Section of the Florida Bar.

**33. List all organizations and associations, or professional societies, other than bar associations, of which you are or have been a member, including civic, charitable, religious, educational, social, and fraternal organizations. See question 19.**

**34. What is your judicial philosophy? I believe that a judge's role is to be independent and to protect the law. I do believe in judicial restraint and adherence to precedent when you have it. I do not believe, however, that that necessarily means that decisions reflect archaic standards and mores. Thoughtful decision making involves scrutinizing the language of a statute or rule, being aware of the body of case law on the subject, carefully applying the facts of a the particular case at hand to that body of law and rendering a decision that can be supported with fact and law and integrity.**

**35. Describe what contributions you have made to the Hispanic community in the past five (5) years. Aside from the fact that many of my clients and personal friends are Hispanic, I currently mentor a young lawyer who is Hispanic, and last summer, our intern (now taking the Bar exam) was Hispanic. My first real mentor was Hispanic and I learned a great deal from him, not just about the law but also about ethics, professionalism and maintaining integrity. In 2013, I tutored Hispanic students in language and reading skills for the Palm Beach County Literacy Coalition. After taking Spanish throughout high school, I sought to become proficient**



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and preferably bi-lingual by working with a private tutor in my home in 2014-15; I would like to continue to work with her once the campaign is finished and normal life resumes. Retired Judge Susan Greenhawt was bi-lingual and I was extremely impressed by her ability to fluidly communicate with pro se Hispanic litigants before her without the need to call for an interpreter, although her accent could have used some work.

**36. Are you a Member of the Broward County Hispanic Bar Association? No, but I try to support its events.**

**37. As a prospective judge, or as a current Judge, what do you consider your greatest strengths and weaknesses? I think I have detailed my strengths in questions 18 and 19 above. Everyone has weaknesses, myself included. I have a low tolerance for judges that are not fair. I am outraged that I see experience, distinction, integrity and commitment take a back seat to political connections and high-powered family relationships. But after a few hours of thought, introspection, and learned advice of others, I shake off these negatives, and keep moving forward to improve myself, my profession, and my community.**

**38. Why are you the best candidate for the position you are seeking?**

I will just summarize questions 18, 19, and 37 by saying experience is the difference and there's no substitute for it. I have 24 years of legal experience in the trenches working with people during some of the most challenging and frustrating times of their lives. I have 52 years of life experience, encountering personal challenges, raising children, and using those life experiences to grow and mature as a person. There is texture to the fabric. I would hope that the voters of this community would want their judge to be someone who is mature, who understands struggle and overcome challenges, who has distinguished themselves in their career, who has worked to improve their profession and serve their community—and I can only hope that they see that I am that person. Thank you for this opportunity.

**ON BEHALF OF THE BROWARD COUNTY HISPANIC BAR ASSOCIATION, THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME  
AND COOPERATION!**