



## BROWARD COUNTY HISPANIC BAR ASSOCIATION

### JUDICIAL CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

**1. Full Name:**

Russell Miller Thompson, Candidate for County Court Judge, Group 21

**2. Current County of residence.**

Broward County

**3. Date and place of birth.**

October 10, 1954 (61 years old) - Rahway, New Jersey

**4. Does your campaign have a website or Facebook page? If so, please list it.**

[www.russellthompson4judge.com](http://www.russellthompson4judge.com)

**5. List the colleges and law schools you have attended, including your dates of attendance and degrees awarded.**

Nova University – BS, Psychology 1981 – 1983

University of Miami School of Law – JD – 1983 – 1985

**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.**

Pylon Manufacturing Corp. (1971 – 1998) President & CEO Full profit & loss responsibility

Law Offices of Russell M. Thompson (1999 – current) Solo law practice

**8. Have you ever been arrested? Explain.**

No.



## BROWARD COUNTY HISPANIC BAR ASSOCIATION



**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?**

My practice is focused primarily on personal injury, business litigation, employment and collections matters. I have successfully conducted litigation in a variety of cases and have achieved favorable results for my clients. I have conducted trials through verdict, including a verdict exceeding \$2.6 million as a result of a troubled business transaction. However, I also do a small amount of family law and most of my pro bono work is also in family law. I have one client (my former business partner) for whom I handle all of his personal business, real estate and estate planning needs. I also preside as a traffic court hearing officer twice a week at the courthouses in Deerfield Beach and Plantation.

**11. If you are currently a judge, what type of cases do you typically preside over in your court?**

**NO, I AM NOT A JUDGE;** However, in January 2012 I was appointed to be a Traffic Court Hearing Officer by the Chief Judge of the Seventieth Judicial Circuit. As a magistrate, (quasi-judicial experience) I have handled thousands of traffic cases for the citizens of Broward County and have done so meticulously and efficiently. I have taken great care to be sure anyone who comes before the court has an equal chance to be heard no matter who they are, who their attorney may be or who they know. All cases have been decided on the facts and the applicable law alone. I will continue to conduct myself with honor and dedication as a county court judge.

**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? 100%
- b. Criminal?

**14. How many cases have you tried to verdict?**

7 Jury – 22 Bench (Many hundreds of evidentiary hearings.)

**15. Describe three of the most significant litigated matters, which you personally handled and give the citations thereto, if the cases were reported.**



## BROWARD COUNTY HISPANIC BAR ASSOCIATION



I have learned that every case is significant to the litigants involved. However, the one that stands out to me the most is Kareen Dryden v. The State of Florida and Childnet, Broward, Case No. 08-021017 (04), This was a wrongful death case involving a little boy who died while in the care of DCF and Childnet. I was representing the boy's estate. He was taken away from his mother by DCF over allegations of neglect. The mother repeatedly warned Childnet about the danger of leaving the children with the father; but those warnings went unheeded. Amazingly, all of the warnings were documented within the Childnet case file. Unfortunately, the child died of head trauma while in the father's care. This case opened my eyes to the problems within the child welfare system and was what caused me to volunteer my time with the Tracey McPharlin Pro Bono Project, representing children in dependency court.

### **16. Why do you want to be a judge (circuit or county)?**

I want to be a judge because I feel qualified to serve our community in the capacity of judge. I have the professional experience needed for service. Before running, I took advantage of an appointment to traffic court to gain valuable quasi-judicial experience. I am now ready for this new responsibility. Moreover, I look forward to doing my part to ensure the integrity and independence of our judiciary.

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

I believe the most important qualities that comprise a good judge are knowledge of the law and respect and fairness for those who come before the Court. As a Traffic Court Hearing Officer, I have learned that what matters most in court is treating people fairly and with respect. If I am fortunate enough to be elected judge, members of the community can be assured the only issues I would pass judgment on are the facts and law in the case, never on those who come before me.

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

I have the skill, experience, temperament and commitment to service required to be a judge. Over my career I have gained knowledge of the law and courtroom procedures. As a traffic magistrate I have presided over thousands of civil traffic hearings and trials. However, my perspective is balanced with my 25 years of business management experience. I have seen the courtroom from all sides, as a litigant in business, as an attorney representing clients and as a traffic court hearing officer.

### **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.**

I am President Elect of the Tamarac Kiwanis Club, a member of the Board of Directors of the Deerfield Beach Rotary Club and an Ambassador and Guardian for Honor Flight South Florida,



## BROWARD COUNTY HISPANIC BAR ASSOCIATION



taking WWII veterans to Washington to visit their Memorial. Also, after many years as a successful entrepreneur, I enjoy giving back to the business community. I have knowledge that can help many individuals interested in starting new businesses in Broward County. I am Vice Chair of SCORE (Service Core of Retired Executives) and a certified business mentor, mentoring small business owners and individuals looking to start a business in Broward County. I am also a workshop presenter for Broward SCORE and teach the workshops "Legal & Tax Implications When Setting Up Your Business in Florida" and "Simple Steps for Starting Your Business".

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

**21. Please list the federal and state courts where you are admitted to practice.**

Florida Bar and Federal Court, Southern District of Florida

**22. How many times did you take the Florida Bar Exam?**

One.

**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?**

No.

**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.**

To manage a courtroom efficiently and professionally while rendering fair and just decision, while giving my attention and full consideration to each party. To decide matters only of the facts and the law.

**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.**



## BROWARD COUNTY HISPANIC BAR ASSOCIATION



**29. Tell us about any plans you have to improve the administration of the court or make it more efficient.**

The changes our county has taken to implement new programs (electronic filing, document viewers on every bench and online scheduling) for the more efficient disposition of cases is exciting, and I would like to be a part of these forward-looking changes. My business management experience will be helpful in this regard.

**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.**

Yes. Broward Bar Assoc. 5/21/2015 CLE: Taking Care of Business (Starting a Law Practice) 2 General CLE Credits. Nova Law Center 6/19/2015 CLE: Law Center Plus "Going Your Own Way" What you need to know to start your own law practice. 2 General CLE Credits.

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

I received the 2016 Florida Bar President's Pro Bono Award for the Seventeenth Judicial Circuit and Attorney of the Year for 2016 from Coast to Coast Legal Aid of South Florida.

I have been taking pro bono cases through Broward Lawyers Care - Coast to Coast Legal Aid of South Florida and the Mission United Veteran's Project Pro Bono Project for many years (2003). I am also a volunteer attorney ad litem for the Tracey McPharlin Dependency Pro Bono Project, providing legal representation to children within the dependency court system.

Most of my pro bono service is in areas outside of my general practice such as, divorce, custody/visitation, federal subsidized housing, and landlord tenant matters. I recently helped a client who was a victim of domestic violence with a dissolution defense. The client's spouse served her once he had secured a personal injury settlement from an accident, which she helped care and provide for her spouse during that time. I was able to help the client obtain the divorce and a part of her spouse's settlement award as well.

---

**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.).**

I am on the Board of Directors of the Broward County Bar Association (second term). I serve on The Florida Bar Traffic Court Rules Committee. I am on the Bench and Bar Committee of the BCBA and Professionalism Committee. I am a member of the Broward County Trial Lawyers Association (Justice Assoc.)



## BROWARD COUNTY HISPANIC BAR ASSOCIATION



**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.**

I am President Elect of the Tamarac Kiwanis Club, a member of the Board of Directors of the Deerfield Beach Rotary Club and an Ambassador and Guardian for Honor Flight South Florida, taking WWII veterans to Washington to visit their Memorial. I am Vice Chair of Broward SCORE, mentoring small business owners in Broward County.

**34. What is your judicial philosophy?**

As a County Court Judge my judicial philosophy would be to follow legal precedent and the statutory laws as they are written, regardless of my personal beliefs. I would not bend or twist them to fall in line with any preconceived ideas of how things should be.

**35. Describe what contributions you have made to the Hispanic community in the past five (5) years.**

As Vice Chair of Broward SCORE we have brought business workshops to the Hispanic business community through Hispanic Unity. Additionally, I believe the contributions I have made to my community as a whole has benefited the Hispanic community as well.

**36. Are you a Member of the Broward County Hispanic Bar Association?**

No.

**37. As a prospective judge, or as a current Judge, what do you consider your greatest strengths and weaknesses?**

During my time as an attorney I have developed a wide range of legal experience that will enable me to serve in any capacity on the bench. I have experience in business, in corporate law, family law, civil litigation and dependency court. I am currently a traffic court hearing officer (a quasi judicial position). I also serve on the Florida Bar's Traffic Court Rules Committee. I believe my life experiences and my executive management background will serve me well on the bench.

It will be important for me to continue learning. Particulary in areas of the law I have little experience. However, I'm confident I have the intellectual capacity and the work ethic nessassary to overcome this.

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

See Answer to question #18 above.



BROWARD COUNTY HISPANIC BAR ASSOCIATION



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