



BROWARD COUNTY HISPANIC BAR ASSOCIATION

JUDICIAL CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Full Name: Samuel D. Lopez
2. Current County of residence. Broward
3. Date and place of birth. 6-29-1966 Bronx, New York
4. Does your campaign have a website or Facebook page? If so, please list it. Samuel D. Lopez for County Court Judge- Facebook
5. List the colleges and law schools you have attended, including your dates of attendance and degrees awarded. Florida State University, BS 1988. Nova Southeastern University, JD 1996.
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.

Anthony Borrás, PA 1996, Associate

Green and Ackerman, PA, 1996-1997, Associate

Samuel D. Lopez, PA 1998 – present, President, Senior Partner

8. Have you ever been arrested? Explain. I was falsely accused and acquitted of Federal charges in 1997 in New York.
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?



BROWARD COUNTY HISPANIC BAR ASSOCIATION



Criminal law- I have trial experience ranging from a traffic ticket defense to capitol sexual battery to 1st degree murder cases involving the death penalty.

I have had a significant number of cases involving substance abuse and mental illness.

Family court- I have dissolution of marriage cases where there is contested child custody matters and alimony and equitable distribution. I have a significant amount of experience with Dependency matters and termination of parental rights cases. I have a significant amount of appellate experience with dependency cases and termination of parental rights cases.

Foreclosures- I have a significant amount of experience in litigation of foreclosure cases. This area of law is cutting edge and ever changing and evolving. I have a great deal of experience of contested trials and have appealed many cases.

11. If you are currently a judge, what type of cases do you typically preside over in your court? None

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? None

13. What percentage of your litigation or trial experience was related to:

a. Civil? 75

b. Criminal? 25

14. How many cases have you tried to verdict? I have tried about 100 cases to verdict.

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



State v. Jose Garcia ,Case No.:03-9377CF10A, ASA- Felice Dizon, Esq. Judge, Lee Seidman. As Chief Counsel I was able to witness a Judge dismiss a case during trial when the video of the incident revealed in color that the Defendant was not the person in the color video. The black and white video received by the SAO had the Defendant look similar, but the color video was clearly not the Defendant. 2-15-04

State v. Cedrick Dawkins, Case No.: 98-19152 , Judge Barry Goldstien. As Chief Counsel this case had significance to the Identification of the Defendant by the victim to a crime. The victim was from China and new to the USA and thought all Black People looked alike and the Defendant had been offered to take a polygraph and was too young to appreciate the impact a polygraph would be if he had failed and had been stipulated to its admission. The Defendant had an alibi witness but she was young and left some window of time open. The Defendant was acquitted and I think the testimony of the victim's prejudice and arrogance played a major part in the acquittal. 7-19-99

State v. Anthony Roberts, Case No.: 99-7007CF10A SAO, Jusitn Grotz J. James Cohn. As Chief Counsel in this Case the Defendant was charged with Possession of a firearm by a convicted felon. The Eyewitness was shown a single mug shot of the Defendant when she couldn't Identify the Defendant in Court, and was shown a Photo of the Defendant's girlfriend, who was in a battered condition in a hospital bed. Both photos were admitted in evidence and I objected that the Mug shot was unduly suggestive and the photo of the beaten girlfriend was more prejudicial that probative. 6/18/99. On appeal the Appellate Court agreed the Photos were inadmissible 778 So.2d 512 (4th DCA 2001) - 4/01 retrial as Chief Counsel the Defendant was acquitted

- 16. Why do you want to be a judge (circuit or county)? I want to be a Judge because I want to inspire others to seek and achieve the goal of becoming a Judge. I was introduced to the legal profession by a judge. From that experience I learned a great deal about what it takes to be a good judge and have been determined to attain a judgeship where I can inspire as many people to seek and achieve a judgeship of their own. As a Judge I can make a difference in the lives of the people who seek justice.**
- 17. What qualities do you believe are most important in a judge? Explain how you have demonstrated that you possess those qualities.**



BROWARD COUNTY HISPANIC BAR ASSOCIATION



I believe a Judge must first and foremost, be a good listener. As a practicing attorney, listening is the skill that I have been able to achieve results that have led me to be successful in the courtroom. I believe a judge must also be compassionate. This will allow the parties who appear before the court to know they were heard and treated with dignity and respect.

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

From my opportunity to intern with the judge that introduced me to the legal profession, I have been seeking to be judge since the entry of law school. I have diligently gained a significant amount of legal experience and have been able to appear in front of many judges throughout Florida as well as every Court in Broward County. I am able to utilize this experience to the bench.

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 pro-bono general Counsel to U.T.B., Inc since 1997. In 2007, This non-profit civil rights organization was prevent from operating its annual parade and a federal action successfully filed and settled so as to allow the parade to run without interference.

I am a volunteer mentor to the Flanagan High School Entrepreneurship Program, where I grade students learning about the legal profession at my law office. I have been able to inspire one child, who is currently an assistant state attorney. I have empowered many of the students I have mentored to go on to College in different fields of study.

I have with the Mission United Veteran's Pro Bono Legal Project to foreclosure cases. I have accepted Cases from Legal Aid to volunteer to take foreclosure cases and family cases as well as consumer interest cases with disputes with the credit card companies.

I have served as a volunteer Guardian Ad Litem in Dependency Court. I had started with one child and have served 5 children overall.

20. Please list noteworthy professional or personal accomplishments.

In 2007, UTB , the non-profit civil rights organization was prevented from operating its annual parade and a federal action successfully filed and settled so as to allow the parade to run without interference.



BROWARD COUNTY HISPANIC BAR ASSOCIATION



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

Florida Federal Court and Florida State Court.

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?

Yes. In 2012 I agreed to receive a public reprimand to resolve disputes I had with two clients who claimed they were not adequately informed of their case and what the terms of the representation encompassed. Through the involvement and use of technology, I have been able to fully inform all of my clients of their case through the use of email.

26. Have you or your law firm ever been sued by a client? If so, please explain. I was sued by a client and I obtained a monetary Judgment against the client.

27. Please discuss your view/opinion of proper judicial temperament. I believe Judicial Temperament is an important and necessary skill to have as a Judge. It allows the court to function properly and permits all the parties in the court to be given justice.

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.

A plea bargain permits the parties to the dispute. When the crime involves a victim, it is imperative that the victim have input to the plea and agrees to the sentence. There are circumstances when the Court will not accept the plea. Here the Court must believe the plea is not in the best interest of either the Defendant, the State or the Victim.

29. Tell us about any plans you have to improve the administration of the court or make it more efficient. I plan to implement a trial schedule at the beginning of each case to show a roadmap to trial. This will improve the administration to the court and prevent delay to justice. I would hold open calendar days to allow the parties to walk in agreed orders and matters that do not require a great of time to resolve. This innovative concept would assist in the administration of justice. I would have a calendar that



BROWARD COUNTY HISPANIC BAR ASSOCIATION



places an emphasis on giving allotted time to trials of disputed matters and to resolve matters that may not need time to resolve.

- 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.**

I have a significant interest in Real Estate Law. I taught the PCAP classes to residential closings for home purchases for the Attorneys Title Insurance Company.

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

See answer 19.

- 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 have served as founding Officer to the Puerto Rican Bar Association of Florida. I have served as Treasurer and Board member to the Broward County Hispanic Bar Assoc. I have had the honor to be the first law school scholarship recipient to this organization.

- 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 a member of Kwanis Club of Pembroke Pines. I am a member of The Men of St. Mark. I am a member of the U.T.B. Inc.

- 34. What is your judicial philosophy?**

My judicial philosophy is one of a moderate philosophy. I believe a Court must first use judicial Restraint. By this I mean court must interpret the law and not legislate new polices and to avoid Judicial Activism. I believe the law must first be viewed form the legislative original intent. However, my philosophy becomes moderate as with the development of caselaw and legal precedent. The law may have been expansive to establish what is not in the written law and must be followed. To that extent, I believe our Courts must use the caselaw but limit its expansiveness to the written law.



BROWARD COUNTY HISPANIC BAR ASSOCIATION



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

Through the UTB, Inc I have participated in the empowerment to the Hispanic community through voters registration drives, educational and cultural events that enhance the knowledge of the Hispanic community.

I am general Counsel to the Florida/Puerto Rican Chamber of Commerce of Florida, where this organization provides opportunity throughout Florida to grow small businesses and to be a bridge for large businesses that serve and reach the Hispanic community of Florida.

As founding Officer to the Puerto Rican Bar Association of Florida, this organization has offered an opportunity to make better lawyers through the Mock Trials conducted annually.

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

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

My strengths are that I am an excellent listener. I am humble to know I do not have all the answers to some questions and know that I can research and communicate with others to get the answers. I am a spiritual person and have an attitude of perseverance and optimism that allows me to be exceed my expectations of results to know no limitation.

My weaknesses are that I am trusting to a fault on occasion. My desire to work hard for a long period of time sometimes prevents me from taking a break where it may be beneficial to breathe and come back to finish. I strive for perfection when at times when I know perfection is not what is to be expected.

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

I am the best candidate because I have dedicated my entire legal career to becoming the best lawyer to be the best judge. I believe I can offer the most of my legal experience and community involvement to make substantial difference as a judge in providing justice to our community. I believe I can inspire many people to the bench and am committed to



BROWARD COUNTY HISPANIC BAR ASSOCIATION



providing as much of my knowledge of the law combined with my life's experience to ensuring our future judges have the guidance and courage to seek justice for all people.

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