

## Broward County judge faces four misconduct charges



**Broward County Judge Terri-Ann Miller**

By Paula McMahon | South Florida Sun-Sentinel  
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The Judicial Qualifications Commission filed four misconduct charges against Broward County Judge Terri-Ann Miller on Wednesday, accusing her of misleading voters into thinking she already was a sitting judge when she ran for election last year.

The commission accused Miller of distributing campaign materials "calculated" to imply she was the incumbent when she was not. Her campaign material also included a photo of her wearing a judicial robe, the state agency charged.

Miller was a judge for eight years in Miami-Dade County, but did not seek re-election there in 2000. She was in private practice when she ran for election in Broward last year and beat Brenda Lynn Di Ioia.

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If the commission finds her guilty of misconduct, she faces anything from a reprimand to removal from the bench.

The commission said Wednesday that Miller "made a continuing deliberate effort to misrepresent your qualifications for office." Her cumulative misconduct "constitutes a pattern and practice unbecoming a candidate for and lacking the dignity appropriate to judicial office, with the effect of bringing the judiciary into disrepute," the agency wrote.

Miller referred questions to her lawyer, Michael Catalano.

Catalano said the judge never intended to do anything wrong and will fight the charges.

"She made it abundantly clear her experience was in Miami-Dade," Catalano said.

Miller hears civil cases in county court at the Hollywood satellite courthouse. She earns about \$137,000 per year.

In November, Broward's Fair Campaign Practices Committee dismissed a similar complaint against Miller. The committee found Miller might have been "stretching the envelope" with her material, but found she did not deliberately set out to deceive the public.

At the time, Miller said she used yard signs left over from a 2000 campaign. She said she put small stickers saying "former" before the word judge and posted about 10 signs near polling places.

The Florida Elections Commission also dismissed a similar complaint against Miller earlier this year.

Judicial canons or rules hold judges to the highest standards of conduct.

Last year's campaign was Miller's third bid for a seat on the Broward bench, and those three campaigns have been controversial. She drew criticism when she decided not to run for re-election in Miami-Dade in 2000 after a Cuban-American candidate challenged her. Miller said at the time: "This was not the year of Miller. It was the year of the Hispanics."

She said she felt vulnerable to defeat because she gave the maximum fine to a truck driver during a protest over the Elian Gonzalez custody dispute.

She challenged Broward County Judge Robert Zack in 2000, but was tossed off the ballot because of residency issues – she lived in Miami-Dade. The Florida Supreme Court later ruled that she should have been allowed to run. And in 2002, Miller unsuccessfully challenged Broward County Judge Steven DeLuca.

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