

ROSEMARY BARKETT

Chief Justice Rosemary Barkett brings to the judiciary a background rich in its diversity and based on a strong family work ethic. Justice Barkett was born in Ciudad Victoria, Mexico. Her Syrian parents settled south of the border in 1920 when U.S. immigration quotas delayed them from coming directly to America from Syria. In 1945, the Barketts were finally able to move to Miami, and at age six, Rosemary Barkett entered her first American school speaking no English.

Her interest in public service began at age 17 when she entered a Catholic convent, where she served for eight years and taught school, before leaving the order to continue her education.

She graduated in 1967, *summa cum laude* from Spring Hill College in Mobile, Alabama. Three years later, she graduated from the University of Florida College of Law, where she was the first woman to be awarded the J. Hillis Miller Memorial Award as the outstanding senior graduate. Since then, Chief Justice Barkett has received seven honorary doctorates from institutions of higher learning.

After graduating from law school, Justice Barkett practiced civil and trial law for nine years before resuming her public service career in 1979 when then-Governor Bob Graham appointed her as a circuit court judge in the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit of Florida.

This began her progression toward the state's highest judicial office. In 1982, she was appointed administrative judge of the civil division. She was elected chief judge of Florida's Fifteenth Circuit in 1983, the first woman chief judge in the state's history. In 1984, Graham appointed her to serve as an appellate court judge on Florida's Fourth District Court of Appeal. Graham then appointed her to serve on the Florida Supreme Court on October 14, 1985. Justice Barkett's appointment marked the first time in the Court's history that a woman had been named justice. On July 1, 1992, she became Florida's first woman chief justice. In November of 1992, Florida voters overwhelmingly voted to retain her in office.

Justice Barkett has long advocated children's issues and the improvement of juvenile justice in Florida. During her tenure on the Florida Supreme Court, she was selected to chair the Florida Child Welfare Study Commission, the Florida Child Support Study Commission, and to co-chair the Florida Juvenile Justice Task Force. During her term as Chief Justice, Justice Barkett directed the implementation of family divisions in each of Florida's judicial circuits. She worked with the Associated Marine Institutes, Inc., a marine-related educational and rehabilitative alternative program for juvenile delinquents and problem youths. Additionally, Justice Barkett worked on a national level with the American Bar Association's Steering Committee on the Unmet Legal Needs of Children and Their Families.

The recipient of seven honorary degrees, Judge Barkett has also earned dozens of prestigious honors including being named by the 11th Judicial Circuit Historical Society as a

2008 Legal Legend. She has also received The Margaret Brent Women Lawyers of Achievement Award, presented by the ABA Commission on Women in the Profession, and the Latin Business and Professional Women Lifetime Achievement Award, in addition to being inducted into the Florida Women's Hall of Fame. She has served on dozens of boards and committees, and is a member of the American Law Institute, The International Women's Forum, and the American Society of International Law, where she serves on the Judicial Outreach Program Advisory Board. She sat on the Board of Trustees of Barry University, and was also the National Association of Women Judges Honoree of the Year in 1999.

Each year, two awards are given in honor of Judge Barkett - the Rosemary Barkett Outstanding Achievement Award, given to an outstanding lawyer by the Florida Association of Women Lawyers, and The Rosemary Barkett Award which is presented by the Academy of Florida Trial Lawyers, to a person who has demonstrated outstanding commitment to equal justice under law.

She has served on the faculty of Florida's Judicial College, the National Judicial College, The Institute of Judicial Administration's New Appellate Judge Seminar, the Aspen Institute's Justice and Society Seminars, and various other Appellate Judges Seminars and law courses. She has taught seminars on Constitutionalism and Human Rights and Comparative Constitutions at Columbia Law School with Professor Louis Henkin. In addition, she has lectured in Damascus, Turkey, Algeria, China, Haiti, Khyrgystan, Mexico, and Russia on various substantive and procedural topics as well as on matters pertaining to court administration.

Justice Barkett credits her diverse upbringing for making her appreciate the freedom Americans enjoy, and for making her appreciative of all points of view. "I am fortunate to have come from a tri-cultural family, which has helped me to understand different experiences, different points of view," she says.
