

Eric DuBois, Sharon Franklin, Zachary Gill, Kemba Lewis and Adam McGinnis:

Five Alumni Now Seated On The Bench

As all eyes focused on the outcome of the presidential race on election night last November, Barry Law School was making news of its own. When the votes were tallied that evening, Barry alum Eric DuBois ('04) had won the election for judgeship on the Orange County Court ... and joined fellow Barry grads Sharon Franklin ('05), Zachary Gill ('05), Kemba Lewis ('02) and Adam McGinnis ('05) as the fifth Barry Law alum to be seated on the bench in Florida.



ERIC DUBOIS

DuBois won his campaign to become a County Court Judge after a career as an attorney practicing community-based law and as an educator in the legal arena. His connection with legal education actually began as a student at Barry Law when he served on the team that succeeded in establishing accreditation for the Dwayne O. Andreas School of Law. Later, he became Barry's Associate Dean for Administration, and helped start the law-student division of the Orange County Bar Association. In addition to being an educator at Barry Law School, he has taught legal curriculum at Florida A&M University College of Law and has coached trial teams for UCF and Timber Creek High School in Orlando.

Today, DuBois is active in the Orange County Bar Association and is a member of the Central Florida Association of Women Lawyers. He also is a board member of the Central Florida Inns of Court, a group that guides the standards of ethics and professionalism in the Orlando area, while also serving on the Family Law Inns of Court. Additionally, he works with programs that offer alternatives to the Juvenile Justice process, such as Teen Court, and he has maintained a high number of pro bono cases through the Legal Aid Society.

In the weeks leading up to last November's election, DuBois campaigned on his status as an AV Preeminent attorney as rated by Martindale-Hubbell Peer Review Ratings and a 2015 Super Lawyer as named by the Super Lawyers peer review organization. Both of these honors reflected his professional achievements and the respect earned from his colleagues in the Central Florida legal community.

During his 2016 campaign, DuBois was endorsed by the West Orange Political Alliance, by the Central Florida Police Benevolent Association (PBA), and the Orlando Sentinel. In part, the Sentinel's endorsement read "...we give the edge to DuBois, who has broader experience in civil as well as criminal cases, and as a mediator. DuBois has been endorsed by more than 200 fellow lawyers – the people best qualified to judge his credentials – including 18 past presidents of the Orange County Bar Association. DuBois has received top ratings for his ethics and ability from his peers ... (and is) active in an organization that promotes civility and professionalism among lawyers, and has been recognized for his efforts representing clients pro bono..."

Upon DuBois' swearing-in in January, he officially joined the judgeship ranks of his four fellow Barry grads – Franklin, Gill, Lewis and McGinnis.



ADAM MCGINNIS

McGinnis was the first Barry Law School graduate to join the judiciary, running for election in 2012 and winning a judgeship on the 9th Judicial Circuit Court. His first judicial assignment was as Orange County Judge for civil cases from 2013-14, and in 2015-16 he served as an Orange County Judge handling criminal cases. In 2017, he is assigned to the Orange County Jail handling first appearances.

McGinnis decided to enter his judicial campaign after practicing law in Orlando for a number of years. He cites the challenges that can sometimes occur in the legal process as one of his motivations for running for office. "The court system can be a very intimidating experience for almost any individual," he says. "Having witnessed many individuals walk out of court feeling disappointed and mistreated with

their experience, I felt as though, if elected, I could make a difference and maintain the integrity of our legal system."

And his 2012 campaign was an eye-opening experience for McGinnis as a first-time candidate for elected office. "Everybody at one time or another should run for office," he says, "because you will see the best in people and the worst in people." But McGinnis also learned another important lesson during his successful campaign to earn a seat on the bench. "The stories, memories, friendships and bonds that you make will last a lifetime," he recalls.

Today, after four years of experience on the bench, McGinnis understands the responsibility and duty that every judge must undertake – whether elected or appointed. "Every day I make decisions that have an immediate, drastic and lasting effect on individuals' lives. Whether those decisions are made in a criminal or civil arena, it is my hope that these individuals understand it is my goal to help and assist them through the legal process," McGinnis says.



SHARON FRANKLIN

Franklin was the next Barry alum to take a seat on the bench when she was appointed by Florida Governor Rick Scott in May 2015 to Polk County Court in that Central Florida county. Prior to her appointment Franklin had served as an assistant state attorney for the 10th Judicial Circuit. In 2016 she was required to run for election to retain her seat on the bench and she, too, was victorious in last November's election. Today, Franklin is assigned to the county's civil division which includes landlord-tenant cases and small claims cases between \$5,000 - \$15,00. "I love working with the newer attorneys," she says, "primarily the public defenders and assistant state's attorneys. It's rewarding to see them flourish and progress in their careers."

KEMBA LEWIS

In April 2016, Lewis became the third Barry alum to take a seat on the bench when she was appointed by Governor Scott to fill a vacancy in the Sixth Judicial Circuit Court which serves Pasco and Pinellas counties. Lewis was an assistant public defender for the Florida 6th Circuit Court from 2002 until her appointment. Currently, she is assigned to the Foreclosure and Family Law Divisions, and finds her new role provides both rewards and challenges. "The most rewarding aspect of being a judge is that I get to provide a valuable service to the community by guaranteeing litigants the opportunity to be heard and treated fairly," she says. "The most challenging aspect is dealing with very serious and sensitive cases regarding the well-being of children whom I may never meet."



ZACHARY GILL

Gill became the fourth Barry alum to earn a judgeship when he was appointed by Governor Scott in June 2016 to Lee County Court in southwest Florida. At the time of his appointment, Gill was a partner in a Fort Myers law firm, which he joined after serving as assistant state attorney in the Twentieth Judicial Circuit and the Ninth Judicial Circuit. Today, Gill handles civil cases in his role as one of eight judges in the Lee County Court.

Five distinguished Barry Law grads. Five distinguished judges on the bench in Florida. Quite a newsworthy development for the Dwayne O. Andreas School of Law.