

Circuit Judge Candidate Circuit 20/Group 27 Questions – 2026

Name: Hon. Amanda Levy-Reis, Circuit Judge **Date:** July 27, 2026

What do you believe distinguishes an exceptional judge, and how do your qualifications align with those standards?

I believe an exceptional judge consistently demonstrates judicial temperament, integrity, legal knowledge, a commitment to public service, and a strong work ethic. A judge must remain patient, dignified, calm, impartial, and respectful in every interaction, recognizing that the public's confidence in the judiciary is built not only on fair decisions but also on how people are treated throughout the judicial process.

Over the past year presiding on the circuit court bench, I demonstrate these qualities every day. Before my appointment, I served for two of my 20 years of legal practice as a traffic hearing officer in Lee and Hendry Counties, where I presided over hundreds of non-jury proceedings and developed the judicial demeanor essential to the role.

As a circuit judge assigned to the Family Division, I manage a family law docket as well as a portion of the probate docket. My caseload includes domestic violence injunctions, divorce, paternity cases, adoptions, name changes, and risk protection motions. The litigants who appear before me often are experiencing some of the most difficult moments of their lives. Every day, I strive to be patient,

respectful, and compassionate while making difficult decisions based on the law and facts. I believe that firmness and fairness can co-exist with kindness, and I ensure that every person who enters my courtroom is treated with dignity and respect.

An exceptional judge must also possess a broad knowledge of the law. During my 20 years as an attorney, I gained extensive experience in both state and federal courts. My background includes litigation, serving as a traffic hearing officer (a quasi-judicial role), and, immediately before my appointment, working as a family law attorney and pro bono coordinator for a local legal aid organization. I have presided over hundred, if not thousands, non-jury trials. These experiences have given me a well-rounded legal foundation and prepared me to handle a wide variety of matters thoughtfully and efficiently.

Integrity is another essential quality. To me, integrity means doing the right thing whether anyone is watching or not. Throughout my career, I have worked to earn a reputation for honesty, professionalism, and ethical conduct, and I carry those values with me to the bench every day.

Finally, an exceptional judge understands that judicial office is a position of public trust and remains accountable to the people he or she serves. My two decades of legal practice reflect a longstanding commitment to public service. I have also demonstrated a strong work ethic by managing the demands of a busy judicial docket while campaigning across all five counties of our circuit. I approach every responsibility with dedication, preparation, thoroughness and the understanding that serving as a judge is both an honor and a profound responsibility.

How do you plan to ensure fairness and impartiality in your decisions while serving as a judge in Collier County?

A judge must always be fair and impartial. I took an oath to uphold the Florida Constitutions of the state of Florida and the United States Constitution. The oath emphasizes the judge's duty to uphold the law impartially.

Every day on the bench, I treat people with fairness and impartiality. I treat everyone equally. A judge's role is not to legislate from the bench or reach a preferred outcome, but to follow the law, respect precedent, and safeguard the rights of every person who enters the courtroom.

I give each party a meaningful opportunity to be heard, maintain a respectful and orderly courtroom, and disclose potential conflicts. I decide cases solely on the admissible evidence, the governing law, and the record before me - never on outside pressure, public opinion, or personal preference.

The people of Collier County deserve a judge who is prepared, consistent, transparent, and faithful to constitutional limits. I've displayed these traits every day since taking the bench. There are no favorites in my courtroom—everyone is treated equally.

What initiatives or reforms do you propose to enhance access to justice and improve the efficiency of the judicial process in our community?

Improving access to justice and the efficiency of the judicial process requires sustained community effort among the courts, attorneys, legal aid organizations, and local partners.

Before my appointment to the Circuit Court bench, I spent two years with a local legal aid organization, serving as a pro bono coordinator and a litigation attorney in family law matters. I organized legal clinics that provided free advice and, in some cases, representation to individuals who could not afford an attorney. These efforts included family law clinics and Helping Heroes, which provided wills and advance directives for veterans, first responders, and their surviving spouses. I also recruited volunteer attorneys and coordinated the meetings for pro bono legal services.

Providing litigants with reliable legal guidance does more than expand access to justice. It also helps people understand their rights and responsibilities, present relevant information, and navigate court procedures more effectively. This can reduce unnecessary delays and help the courts resolve cases more efficiently.

I also served on the Twentieth Judicial Circuit's Pro Bono Committee and as co-chair of the Lee County Bar Association's Pro Bono Committee. In those roles, I helped encourage attorneys to provide pro bono services, supported educational opportunities including the planning of a half day seminar in Lee County on family law, and recognized lawyers who generously contributed their time and skills to the community.

As a circuit judge, I continue to serve on the Twentieth Judicial Circuit's Pro Bono Committee. Consistent with the proper and limited role of the judiciary, I support practical initiatives that improve access and efficiency, including plain-language information for self-represented litigants, effective case management, appropriate use of technology, timely hearings, and continued collaboration with the legal community. These measures must always preserve due process, judicial

impartiality, and the constitutional rights of every person who comes before the Court.

Please answer each question in 300 words or less and email back to bwhite@charlottecountychamber.org on or before July 31, 2026.

