

Circuit Judge Candidate Circuit 20/Group 19 Questions – 2026

Name: Vera Bergermann

Date: July 22, 2026

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

An exceptional judge has extensive legal experience—both in breadth and length—as well as judgment “seasoned by life.” I have practiced law for over 45 years compared to 18 for my opponent. My legal background includes the State Attorney’s Office (homicide unit) in Chicago; four multinational corporations in four states in contracts and US Customs; taxation; and family law. The voters’ other choice for Seat 19 spent his entire career in the State Attorney’s Office in Collier County. Lastly, although judges are required to apply the law (not their personal beliefs), there is much discretion given to the Court, especially relating to credibility of witnesses. Experiences gained over a “senior length” life (e.g. one with 45 years legal experience) should provide greater discernment on the Bench than that exercised by a younger generation.

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

Given that I am a candidate for Seat 19 in the entire Twentieth Judicial Circuit (which also includes Lee, Hendry, Collier and Glades counties), I will serve where the Chief Judge places me. Just to be clear, it may not be Charlotte County. I plan “to ensure fairness and impartiality in (my) decisions” by pledging to apply the law, not make the law, and follow statutes, rules, and case law as compared to my own

beliefs. I begin by demonstrating independence and impartiality as a candidate: I do not solicit and/or advertise endorsements, nor do I accept money from political action committees, (unlike my opponent).

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

Enhancing access to justice is partially a marketing effort. There's a saying, "You don't know what you don't know." That is the story of many people who enter our judicial system without legal representation. If we provide solid information on self-representation both inside the courthouse and on the judges' websites, that would be a strong beginning. The information on WHERE to find this information needs to be placed where people go: government offices, libraries, medical facilities, and places of worship.

Improving the efficiency of the judicial process involves the community. Many years ago, I was part of an initiative begun by a (now retired) judge working through the Association of Family Law Professionals. It was called the "Quality and Best Practices Committee." For three years, we researched what improvements were most needed, what other counties in Florida were doing to meet these needs, created solutions, and implemented those new practices. One of the changes identified and implemented was the system of case managers to move cases along more smoothly in the judicial system. I hope to organize a similar community effort when I am on the Bench.

I have been part of a statewide leadership group in the area of Collaborative Law. The principles of Collaborative Law are used in courtrooms in both Palm Beach and Orange Counties. I pledge to bring these into my efficiency initiatives here in SWFL.

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

