

Hugh D. Hayes

Of Counsel

Naples
hhayes@gunster.com
(239) 514-1000



Practice & Industry Areas

- Business Litigation
- Alternative Dispute Resolution
- Probate, Trust & Guardianship Litigation

Education

- University of Nevada-Reno, Master of Judicial Studies 1988
- University of Florida, J.D., 1972
- University of Georgia, B.A., 1970

Bar & Court Admissions

- Florida, 1973
- U.S. District Court, FLMD

Overview

Hugh Hayes, the longest serving judge in Florida history, serves as a Supreme Court and Florida Middle District certified mediator, qualified arbitrator and special master to select clients. He is committed to providing a creative and balanced approach to problem-solving that meets the needs of the party constituents who retain him as a neutral.

Hugh is fluent in the roles and responsibilities of serving as a mediator, arbitrator and special master. He is well-versed in the authority and responsibilities of a neutral, as well as in preparing for and conducting the preliminary hearing, matters of eDiscovery, dealing with self-represented pro se parties, conducting research and investigations, and handling post-hearing matters. Hugh knows, from hands-on experience, the extent and limits of a neutral's authority and has proven time and again his ability to prepare and write awards that make sense for the constituents.

With a focus on being truly impartial and ethical, Hugh's goal is to serve as the catalyst for working constructively with disputing parties and their counsel to achieve a fair and just

outcome. He is experienced in ensuring efficiency throughout varied ADR processes and in addressing and dealing with delay tactics, disruptive panel dynamics and difficult attorneys. He strives to create binding awards that dispose of all legal and other issues and that offer the greatest potential to pass judicial review.

Hugh's character, judgment, business and legal acumen, and deep knowledge of the underlying causes that drive a dispute are the result of having served on the bench for more than four decades and in serving as a former U.S. Army Military Intelligence officer. Hugh formerly served both as a member of the 20th Judicial Circuit, as a Circuit Court judge, as Chief Judge of the Twentieth Judicial Circuit, the Administrative Judge for Collier County, and on multiple occasions has served as an Associate Judge on the Second District Court of Appeals. As a result, he brings longevity and skill to analyzing the underlying contested legal and business issues.

In addition to his judicial service, Hugh has served the Naples and broader Collier County community through his engagement with the United Way of Collier County, Naples North Rotary, Florida Bar-focused committees and various legal organizations. He is a published author within numerous legal publications and has been recognized as the Jurist of the Year by the American Board of Trial Advocates of Southwest Florida.

Honors

- 2015 Jurist of the Year, American Board of Trial Advocates, Southwest Florida Chapter
- Florida's first recipient of the Master of Judicial Studies degree from the University of Nevada-Reno

Publications & Presentations

- "Judicial Roundtable," speaker, The Florida Bar Real Property Litigation Symposium, May 2023
- "Evidence, Medical & Other Experts"; "The Deposition, a Discovery Device"; "Judicial Disqualification"; and "Civil Lawsuits Involving Prisoners," presentation as part of Education Committee for the Florida Conference of Circuit Court Judges
- "A View From the Probate Bench: Attorney's Fees and More," presentation at the Florida Bar Probate Law 2016 Seminar
- Introduction of the Florida Bar's CLE manual, Evidence in Florida, 5th & 6th Editions, and Chapter 13 "Florida Trial Objections," author
- "Capital Jury Selection in Florida and Texas", 12 Nova Law Review 743,1988, author

Professional Associations & Memberships

- The Florida Bar Association, 1973-present
- SW Florida Federal Court Bar Association
- Collier County Bar Association
 - Former Secretary
 - Honorary Past President
- Lee County Bar Association
- Real Property, Probate and Trust Law Section of the Florida Bar, Judicial Liaison to the Executive Council
- National Academy of Distinguished Neutrals
- Florida Middle District Certified Civil Mediator
- Florida Bar Code & Rules of Evidence Committee, Past Member
- Education Committee for the Florida Conference of Circuit Court Judges
 - Member
 - Teacher
- Florida Bar Foundation, Fellow
- Judicial Mentor for the 20th Circuit
- Michael R. N. McDonnell American Inns of Court, Collier County Chapter
- Supreme Court Steering Committee on Families and Children in the Court, Past Member, 2004-08
- 20th Judicial Circuit Indigent Services Committee, Chairman, 2004-08
- Supreme Court Committee on District Court of Appeal Workload and Jurisdiction, Past Member
- Supreme Court Committee on Standard Jury Instructions in Criminal (Misdemeanor) Cases, Past Member

Civic & Community Service

- Naples North Rotary
 - Former Secretary
 - President
- United Way of Collier County, Past Member, Board of Directors