

Ellen L. Leesfield (Retired Judge, 11th Judicial Circuit)

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Ellen Leesfield conducts a full-service Alternative Dispute Resolution practice. She frequently serves as a Mediator, Arbitrator Umpire and Special Master. She has been a panel member (neutral) for the American Arbitration Association since 2013, and over the past 11 years, Leesfield has arbitrated over 100 cases, and mediated over 600 cases concentrating in the areas of Complex Commercial, Employment, Hospital/insurer (Payor/Payee) disputes as well as International (ICDR) cases and Injured Seaman cases.

In the past Four years, her caseload has had a concentration of Commercial, personal injury, and employment law issues. Judge Leesfield also has a deep understanding of trial dynamics, having been a Trial Lawyer, and Trial Judge, she has arbitrated and mediated complex Aviation issues under the FAA, Maritime issues, medical malpractice cases and settled numerous personal injury cases, including sensitive sexual assault cases involving establishments.

Representative clients (mediations, arbitrations, or special master work) include American Express, Apple Inc., Avocet Aviation, International Aerospace Group, Corp, Burger King, Carnival Cruise lines, Celebrity Cruise Lines, Dade County, Florida, Ford Motor Company, Honeywell, Orkin Pest Control, Numerous Hospital and Doctor Groups, Starbucks, Starwood Hotels, and The United States of America. She has been extremely successful in settling her cases through pre-case preparation and tenacity, following any case that might not settle on its appointed day, until it finally does resolve.

Judge Leesfield served 19 years on the Circuit Court Bench. During that time, she served as an administrative chief, a judge in the Complex Civil Extended Trial Division, and a judge in the General Jurisdiction division. In those divisions, she presided over thousands of cases and hundreds of trials, including a trial against the government of Cuba for the execution of an American businessman, a condominium cat burglar and countless commercial, professional malpractice, products liability, construction, employment, civil RICO, real estate and other actions. She also won numerous prestigious awards including the Judge Steve Levine Award for Integrity, Fairness and Professionalism; the Justice Gerald Kogan Judicial Distinction Award; and the Judge Mattie Belle Davis Award for Community Service. Throughout her tenure on the bench, Judge Leesfield taught at the Advanced Judicial College and the Florida Judicial College--the training program for all incoming judges in the State of Florida.

In addition to her work as a mediator and arbitrator, Judge Leesfield also accepts selected cases in which she consults with lawyers preparing matters for trial, especially in expert witness presentations. Prior to taking the bench, Judge Leesfield was the founding partner of her own law firm, and a prominent trial lawyer who tried over 60 criminal and civil cases to verdict as lead counsel, most frequently in Federal Court. She has spent her career in the courtroom and has taught Trial Skills as an adjunct professor at the University Of Miami School Of Law.

Judge Leesfield writes and lectures extensively on the Presentation of Expert Testimony. She has written and spoken on numerous other areas including evidence, business valuation, DNA evidence, professional ethics, closing argument, and the Torture Victim Protection Act--a federal law that permits victims of terrorist regimes to bring claims in state and federal court. She was an innovative jurist, dubbed "revolutionary" by the *Daily Business Review* for being the first judge to author a model order appointing receivers for the collection of maintenance fees in cases involving condominium owners and investors. She has taught Judges at Judicial College, as well as Trial Skills as an adjunct professor at the University of Miami over the past 20 years.

Judge Leesfield is a member of several bars including the Florida Bar, the Southern District of Florida, the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals, and the Supreme Court of the United States. She was a founding President of the Florida Association for Women Lawyers, Miami Chapter and a member of the Board of Directors of Legal Services of Greater Miami, the Dade County Bar Association and the Florida Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, Miami Chapter. She is presently a member of the Cuban American Bar, and the American and Florida Bar Association's Business, Employment, and Arbitration Divisions.