

Palmetto Bay news

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Palmetto Bay attorney skillfully uses decades of experience in courtroom

BY ANTHONY MONZON

Perched above the rhythmic bustle and city sounds of Dixie Highway in Palmetto Bay sits a remarkable collection of artifacts. On display are documents, excerpts, and snapshots of some of the most captivating legal moments in South Florida history spanning the past several decades.

Sitting at his desk below the clusters of tightly arranged keepsakes and family photos adorning his office walls works Russell Spatz, the curator of this gallery. Spatz has played a crucial role in the outcome of all of these cases as one of South Florida's most experienced and skillful attorneys.

"I've learned a lot in 43 years; I can tell you that," Spatz said, chuckling over his mahogany desk. "I have handled a great many cases, as a former prosecutor and in my experience in private practice dealing with clients. In fact, it's a rare moment something comes across my desk that makes me say, 'Oh, I've never seen that before.'"

Spatz has led the defense of thousands of clients over the course of his career, and served as a division chief within the state attorney's office under the leadership of Dick Herst and Janet Reno. Having overseen cases across the legal spectrum, Spatz has gained indispensable insight into the inner workings of the court system.

"A mentor of mine once told me when one is searching for a good lawyer, always look for experience. He actually said, 'When a man with experience meets a man with money, the man with experience



RUSSELL SPATZ

will walk away with the money, and the man with money will walk away with an experience.' I have found that he was right — experience is the key."

Although Spatz is now an accomplished lawyer, there was once a time in his past that a career in the courtroom was never even considered. He once was a National Science Foundation Fellow, graduating from the University of Miami with departmental honors in mathematics.

It wasn't until his post graduate studies that Spatz began exploring the prospect of a career in criminal law. Inspired by *Perry Mason* and other TV courtroom dramas, the on screen excitement he experienced helped propel him into a successful career prosecuting major crimes.

"I was extremely excited about putting bad guys who did bad things in jail,"

Spatz said. "The idea of seeing a horrible crime in the newspaper, and then being the person who could successfully prosecute that individual was very attractive to me."

After fulfilling his dream of becoming a prosecutor, Spatz left the state attorney's office to open his own private firm. Now located in Palmetto Bay, the Spatz Law Firm has earned a reputation for expertly managing cases involving criminal and family law.

"I think it's safe to say that what I do is practice a lot of 'suburban law.' People's kids and grandkids get in trouble with drugs, alcohol, and DUI's. Very often even serious crimes like manslaughter, theft, white collar crimes, and other cases like that."

Spatz said most of his clients are decent people who got caught up in regrettable situations. As an active member of the Palmetto Bay community and a founder of "Alive Again Ministries," a ministry dedicated to helping people recover from addiction, Spatz demonstrates his commitment to helping others succeed in their personal lives, as well as in the courtroom.

"I count it as a success when a client has a really good feeling, and they're doing much better because of our interaction. They're coming in with all sorts of problems, and I really try to personally help them out."

To seek help, whether legal or personal, Spatz welcomes anyone to reach out and have a conversation with him.

The Spatz Law Firm is located at 14707 S. Dixie Hwy. in Palmetto Bay. Contact Spatz at 305-442-0200 or via email at rspatz@spatzlawfirm.com.