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Ex-Palm Beach Circuit Judge Joins Schwartz Sladkus

By **Madison Arnold**

Law360 (February 17, 2026, 3:42 PM EST) -- After retiring from Florida's Palm Beach County Circuit Court, a former judge joined the Boca Raton office of Schwartz Sladkus Reich Greenberg Atlas LLP to lead the launch of a private judging practice area, the firm announced Tuesday.

Jim Martz is tasked with creating a dispute-resolution offering for civil litigants that's meant to help them avoid prolonged court delays. He'll also serve as the leader of Schwartz Sladkus' family law division in Florida.

"Joining SSRGA allows me to leverage my collective experience to serve the legal community in a new and impactful way," Martz said in a statement. "I'm excited to lead the family law practice and help build a private judging platform that delivers fairness, efficiency, and real value to litigants."



Jim Martz

Martz has almost two decades of judicial experience and served on both the criminal and civil benches. During that time, he presided over thousands of matters involving dissolution of marriage, probate, guardianship, juvenile dependency and delinquency, mental health court proceedings and complex civil disputes, the firm said.

"Judge Martz's depth of experience, judgment, and leadership are unmatched," Robin I. Bresky, managing partner of the firm's Florida office, said in a statement. "He understands the court system from the inside and brings a level of credibility and sophistication that will immediately elevate our family law practice. Just as importantly, his leadership will allow us to offer private judging as a meaningful solution for clients who cannot wait years for resolution in an overburdened court system."

As head of the family law division, Martz will oversee litigation strategy and client advocacy while leading the firm's expansion in that practice area.

As a private judge, he'll handle eligible civil cases pursuant to Florida law. Sunshine State statutes permit experienced attorneys to serve as private judges in civil, non-jury matters if all parties agree, the firm said.

Private judging allows litigants to select a neutral decision-maker, maintain control over scheduling and get to a resolution more quickly. Decisions rendered in private judging are appealable, the firm said.

"Private judging is a powerful tool that gives parties efficiency, certainty and control," Martz said in a statement. "Many civil litigants — particularly business owners and professionals — want timely, thoughtful decisions without waiting indefinitely for a trial date. This process allows them to move forward while still preserving their appellate rights."

The firm's new private judging practice will initially focus on family law-related civil matters, with plans to expand into business litigation, general civil litigation and probate disputes, the firm said.

While private judges may not preside over custody cases involving minor children, Martz may serve as a mediator in such matters and adjudicate eligible issues by agreement of the parties, the firm said.

"The court system is overwhelmed, and the backlog isn't easing anytime soon," Bresky said. "Private judging helps unclog the system while giving clients a white-glove, concierge-style experience handled by a seasoned jurist who knows how to manage complex cases and protect the record."

Martz was appointed to the bench in 2006 by then-Gov. Jeb Bush and was elevated to circuit judge in 2010. Earlier in his career, he served as a prosecutor in the Palm Beach County State Attorney's Office.

Before working as an attorney, Martz served as a police officer in Santa Monica, California. He later continued his law enforcement career in New York, where he eventually retired as an administrative sergeant, the firm said.

Martz has contributed to international rule-of-law initiatives, including work with the war crimes tribunals of the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, anti-corruption and judicial reform projects in the Philippines and Myanmar under U.S. Agency for International Development programs and justice system reform efforts in the Bahamas and Eastern Europe.

He earned his law degree from Nova Southeastern University's Shepard Broad Law Center.

Schwartz Sladkus is a full-service law firm that maintains offices in New York City and Boca Raton.

The firm offers legal services in appellate law, matrimonial and family law, fertility law, labor and employment, real estate transactions, real estate and commercial litigation, cooperative and condominium board representation and landlord-tenant disputes. It also handles healthcare, trusts and estates, probate administration, not-for-profit, corporate, financing and intellectual property matters.

--Editing by Nicole Bleier.

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