

Third District Court of Appeal Mourns Passing of the Honorable Mario P. Goderich



The Third District Court of Appeal mourns the loss of retired Third District Court of Appeal Judge Mario P. Goderich, who passed away peacefully at his home in Miami on February 10, 2022, at the age of 89.

Judge Goderich was a trailblazing lawyer and jurist who served with honor in Florida courts for thirty years. He was appointed to the Third District Court of Appeal by Governor Bob Martinez in 1990 and served there until reaching mandatory retirement age in 2005. Prior to his appointment to the appellate bench, Judge Goderich served as a circuit court judge for the Eleventh Judicial Circuit of Florida from 1978 to 1990 and as a judge of Industrial Claims from 1975 to 1978. He was the first Cuban-American to sit on all three of those courts.

Judge Goderich was born in Santiago de Cuba, Oriente, Cuba, and received his Doctor of Civil Laws degree from the University of Havana School of Law in 1957. He practiced law in Cuba with the firm of Castellanos & Goderich. Judge Goderich immigrated to the United States in 1961, working in non-legal positions to support his family. He continued to work while attending the University of Miami School of Law, and he received his Juris Doctor in 1966.

While going through the naturalization process and thus ineligible for Bar admission immediately after law school graduation, Judge Goderich worked as an associate law librarian, instructor, and Law Library Director at the University of Miami School of Law. After becoming an American citizen, he was admitted to The Florida Bar in 1969.

Judge Goderich was one of the founding members and the first president of the Cuban American Bar Association (CABA). He helped establish the Cuban-American Lawyers Program that allowed exiled Cuban-educated lawyers to attain membership in the Florida Bar. Judge Goderich received numerous honors and awards. In 1981, the Florida Council on Crime and Delinquency awarded Judge Goderich its Outstanding Judge recognition. In March 1986, he was presented with The Lawyer of the Americas Award by the *University of Miami InterAmerican Law Review*. In 1988, the Republic of Colombia bestowed on Judge Goderich the Order of Democracy. He was the first recipient of the Francisco Garcia-Amador Award presented by the Center for Hispanic and Caribbean Legal Studies at the University of Miami School of Law in 1997. He was honored in 2004 with St. Thomas University School of Law's Jurist of the Year Award, and by Florida International University with the creation of a Cuban American Bar Association Merit Scholarship in his name. In 2005, CABA established the Mario P. Goderich PAVER Award to recognize members of the judiciary who demonstrate the qualities of professionalism, achievement, values, excellence, and respect.

In addition to his remarkable accomplishments, Judge Goderich was a consummate gentleman who treated all with kindness and respect no matter their status in life. He was a valued mentor, colleague, and friend, who enjoyed tennis, travel, opera music, and spending time with family. The Court extends its deepest sympathy and condolences to Judge Goderich's family and friends.