

9TH UNPLUGGED

HONORABLE DIANA TENNIS

CIRCUIT COURT JUDGE

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HOSTED BY HONORABLE ALICIA L. LATIMORE

JUDGE LATIMORE: Hi, I'm Judge Latimore.

JUDGE TENNIS: Hi, I'm Judge Tennis.

JUDGE LATIMORE: And you're listening to 9th Unplugged.

(Music)

JUDGE LATIMORE: So we're absolutely going to get unplugged in just a moment but before we do that, would you please tell everyone what your title is and what your duties are.

JUDGE TENNIS: Okay, I'm a circuit judge here in the 9th. And I'm in family division. I've been in family division, this is my 7th year, pretty much throughout my judicial career. I'm also –

JUDGE LATIMORE: And prior to your judicial career, correct?

JUDGE TENNIS: And prior. And prior, yes, yes, yes, yes. For twenty some years prior. So – and I'm also the associate administrative judge over family divisions.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay. All right, what is it that draws you to family? What is it about family that you really enjoy?

JUDGE TENNIS: So, what I like as a judge were some of the things that I did not like as a lawyer. So as a lawyer, family practice is very frustrating. You don't know what people are going to do. You don't know what the judge is going to do. You don't have control over your client. You don't have control over the other side. There's a lot of emotion involved and people are honestly kind of in a not good period of their lives mentally. But as a judge I get to get super involved and I get to manage the cases and I get to try to help people work through these things

and get through their travails as quickly as possible. So I like the level of involvement that you get to have as a family judge.

JUDGE LATIMORE: So I would imagine that after a day or week of involvement in the working with families who are often time in crises, et cetera –

JUDGE TENNIS: Yep.

JUDGE LATIMORE: -- that when you leave the job, you are ready to get unplugged.

JUDGE TENNIS: Yes.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay. So what is it that you mostly do to get unplugged? Just give us some examples.

JUDGE TENNIS: So I love being out in nature when the pollen count isn't so high.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay.

JUDGE TENNIS: So I try to get a big long walk in with my husband sometimes or with a girlfriend. And then I enjoy cooking, thinking about cooking, planning to cook.

JUDGE LATIMORE: You actually – yes, I've had the pleasure of tasting and eating some of your –

JUDGE TENNIS: You have been to my house, that's true.

JUDGE LATIMORE: I have and it's delicious. I can't wait until I'm invited back.

JUDGE TENNIS: Thank you. Thank you.

JUDGE LATIMORE: So what are some of the most exotic places that you've done hiking?

JUDGE TENNIS: Well, I love to go travel to hiking is awesome. We went to Utah, to Bryce and Zion a year or so ago and that was amazing. So beautiful.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Yeah, tell me about it. Tell me about it.

JUDGE TENNIS: It's just so rocky. All that beautiful red rock that's so gorgeous in the light and all different kinds of hikes. Like some very, very technical and difficult, some you're wading through water up to your hips.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Wow.

JUDGE TENNIS: Some you're you know in just lovely forest settings. So they've got – it's just a lot to offer so it's really kind of awesome. It's really easy to get unplugged when you're in nature and listening to it and feeling it. And so – and I try to really like leave things behind.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Yeah.

JUDGE TENNIS: You know what I'm saying.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Yes, yes. Are there any particular destinations that you'd like to visit for hiking that you haven't been able to –

JUDGE TENNIS: I think out west in the U.S. is absolutely amazing. I mean, I've certainly been to other places in Europe and South America. I mean, like everywhere you go, they're going to have some beautiful places to get to, so I'm hoping, this year we're planning a trip to France and Luxenberg. And Luxenberg allegedly has some very nice nature places.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Yes.

JUDGE TENNIS: So I'm excited about that.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Let me know when you get back if they hold up to their reputation.

JUDGE TENNIS: I shall.

JUDGE LATIMORE: All right, let's go back to food. Okay.

JUDGE TENNIS: Yes.

JUDGE LATIMORE: All right, because we both kind of like food, right. So what's your favorite food? What's your favorite cuisine to, you know, share that with us.

JUDGE TENNIS: So I've always been all about Italian food.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay.

JUDGE TENNIS: I mean, I just – pasta all day every day. When we go to Italy, I eat pasta twice a day every single day.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Um-hum.

JUDGE TENNIS: And love it. And I like – you know, I like good wines and wines that pair well with food and that's always fun. I like cooking Indian food.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay.

JUDGE TENNIS: I just find that to be like really fun, lots of flavors and spices.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Very spicy, isn't it?

JUDGE TENNIS: Yeah. It can be. It can be, which I like, so I do a lot of that in my instant pot.

JUDGE LATIMORE: All right. So what's your favorite wine, though? You're a wine pairer, right? Do you have a favorite?

JUDGE TENNIS: Well, I love a Sauvignon Blanc, if you're doing whites with fish or something lighter, or something that's a little richer. If you're having meats or red sauces, I like a Zinfandel or a Cabernet, or something like that. So, yeah, I'm going out to wine country actually again next month, so I'm hoping that maybe I'll pick up a few new ones, who knows.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Maybe. Maybe you'll do that. Okay. All right. If you had, or if you held an epic feast for yourself, or I'll do it. How about that? I'll do it for you, okay. If I held an epic feast for you and in your honor, what would be on the table? What would be on the menu?

JUDGE TENNIS: So while I love to travel to go to Michelin star restaurants and you get the little teeny tiny portions and there's like 18 of them, that is super fun. But to me an epic feast would definitely be family style. It would be warm and cozy, and you know, it could just be a big lasagna with garlic bread and a tiny little salad on the side. It may be tiramisu for – when am I coming over for this dinner? When am I coming over?

JUDGE LATIMORE: It's very soon. Yes.

JUDGE TENNIS: You just promised me that you're making me this huge lasagna bash.

JUDGE LATIMORE: I did. And it's on the record.

JUDGE TENNIS: I can't wait. I can't wait. Perfect.

JUDGE LATIMORE: It's going to be great.

JUDGE TENNIS: That sounds perfect.

JUDGE LATIMORE: It's going to be absolutely great. So I wanted to speak to you about your background. I found it interesting that you have a background in dance. Can you share more?

JUDGE TENNIS: Yeah, so growing up, that is what we did after school. I was in like five or six different dance classes, and then you'd spend a quarter of the year getting ready for the big recital. The outfits. And I just – just always loved being on stage and so did a lot of competitions and went to New York a few times.

JUDGE LATIMORE: What's your favorite type of dance?

JUDGE TENNIS: Well, growing up it was tap. I mean I know that's like – it's got to be a dead art at this point and sadly. I'm sure –

JUDGE LATIMORE: I'm hoping there's someone still out there tapping.

JUDGE TENNIS: I'm sure that outside of the Rockettes, I'm sure nobody is tap dancing anymore but I did love that. I did love that. I like – so I like to go watch it now. But I do believe that that really imparted this – this love of the theater and performance is what led me in part to wanting to be a trial lawyer. I mean, you know, the courtroom is theatrical. And talking to a jury and communicating with the jury has a lot of those same kind of good feelings, so I'm sure that that had something to do with my path to the courtroom.

JUDGE LATIMORE: And since you worked previously as a trial lawyer, you had a lot of high profile cases and dealt with the media. Any words, quick words of advice for anyone who might be out there and having to work with the media?

JUDGE TENNIS: Absolutely. This is very, very simple. A, keep your answer short and B, answer the question they should have asked.

JUDGE LATIMORE: There you go. All right. Thank you. Thank you for those who are listening. If you learned that today was your very last day on earth, what would you rush to do?

JUDGE TENNIS: Well, I wouldn't –

JUDGE LATIMORE: You know, we're already past noon.

JUDGE TENNIS: I wouldn't be here talking to you.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Talking to me, right. I'm sorry.

JUDGE TENNIS: Love ya, but no, no, no. So unless you've got that lasagna dinner waiting for me, I would – I would be spending it with my husband and my two cats and eating as much as one human could possibly shovel in –

JUDGE LATIMORE: Because you're definitely going to get the food in before you go.

JUDGE TENNIS: I'm definitely getting the food in.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Before you go.

JUDGE TENNIS: Definitely getting the food in.

JUDGE LATIMORE: All right, so you have cats, right.

JUDGE TENNIS: Yeah.

JUDGE LATIMORE: All right, is that your preference for a pet? Do you like dogs?

JUDGE TENNIS: I've always had cats like since I was five.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Always grew up on –

JUDGE TENNIS: I've never not had a cat.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Have you ever had a dog?

JUDGE TENNIS: We had a dog once when I was a kid but we just – he was a second-class citizen. That poor thing, we lived in Minnesota and that poor dog lived in the shed outside. It was horrible.

JUDGE LATIMORE: It's cold out in the shed.

JUDGE TENNIS: It's horrible. I know. And I mean, as a kid, as a five year old, I guess I thought well, all dogs just shiver and you know are covered with frost, but no, I think my parents should have been reported to somebody. This was wrong.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Yeah, pet rescue or somebody, you know what I'm saying.

JUDGE TENNIS: It's super wrong. It's super wrong. And we have tornados in Minnesota. I mean, yeah, it's not good.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Have you ever experienced a tornado?

JUDGE TENNIS: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

JUDGE LATIMORE: What was that like?

JUDGE TENNIS: It was really scary. So my mom babysat little kids in our house. That was probably also illegal. I don't know. And so we'd go down in the basement and –

JUDGE LATIMORE: I hope your mom is safe somewhere because you're just telling it all, okay.

JUDGE TENNIS: We would watch the tornado from the little windows in the basement but you could like totally see them coming in. Very, very frequent. This was a couple times a year.

JUDGE LATIMORE: But always safely came through.

JUDGE TENNIS: Always, yes. Always, yes.

JUDGE TENNIS: Well, we're grateful for that.

JUDGE TENNIS: Yes, and the dog lived.

JUDGE LATIMORE: And the dog was okay too.

JUDGE TENNIS: Everybody. Everybody. The dog was fine. The dog was fine. Chocolate was fine.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Thank you for being unplugged with me today.

JUDGE TENNIS: You're very welcome. Great to see you.

(Music)