

9TH UNPLUGGED

HONORABLE TINA CARABALLO

COUNTY COURT JUDGE

JUNE 21, 2023

HOSTED BY: HONORABLE ALICIA L. LATIMORE

JUDGE LATIMORE: Hi, I'm Judge Latimore.

JUDGE CARABALLO: Hi, I'm Judge Caraballo.

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

(Music)

JUDGE LATIMORE: Welcome, Judge Caraballo. How are you today?

JUDGE CARABALLO: Well, I'm fine. Thank you.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Thank you for being with us on unplugged. We're going to take a moment and introduce yourself to the audience. Could you please tell them how long you've been a judge and what division you're assigned to?

JUDGE CARABALLO: Thank you. I was elected in 2014 so I took the bench in January of 2015. And since serving, I've been in the civil division, criminal division. I was briefly over veteran's treatment court and now I serve as the Administrative Judge for County Court.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Wonderful. So we're going to talk about you being unplugged. Okay.

JUDGE CARABALLO: Okay.

JUDGE LATIMORE: I really would like to know what it is that you enjoy doing to bring joy, fun, and happiness to your life?

JUDGE CARABALLO: What I love more than anything is gardening.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Oh.

JUDGE CARABALLO: We live on a little over two acres out in East Orlando. We have 16 chickens, two dogs and I have a beautiful vegetable garden so I grow carrots, lettuce, peppers, tomatoes, eggplant, all my herbs.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Awesome. Now, how did you get into doing all of that? Were you always someone who was interested in gardening or did that just come later in life?

JUDGE CARABALLO: It came much later in life. When we bought this property in 2018, we lived in a dense subdivision and then we found this property in 2018 and I said, hey, I'd like to try gardening. So I googled it. I went to a lesson at Leu Gardens. There was a gentleman there that gave a presentation. And so I got a couple of raised beds and planted it and I've been doing it ever since.

JUDGE LATIMORE: That's wonderful. So you pick your own food to cook with and I would love to be invited to dinner one day just for the record. Okay, with that, I understand that, and we all know that you are a veteran.

JUDGE CARABALLO: Yes.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Would you share with us your service?

JUDGE CARABALLO: Yes, so I served in the United States Army. I joined in 1984. I was 17 years old. So I enlisted prior to graduating from high school under the delayed entry program and I went on active duty after I graduated. And I served from '84 to '94. I served in – I was stationed in Germany for five years and then Fort Riley, Kansas for the rest.

JUDGE LATIMORE: And what is the most memorable experience as it relates to your service?

JUDGE CARABALLO: Oh, that's a tough question.

JUDGE LATIMORE: That's hard, isn't that. I know.

JUDGE CARABALLO: That is. There were so many memorable things. I think really going to war is probably the most memorable because it's so – it's an upheaval just even preparing to deploy, everything that we had to do. Our son, my brother-in-law and mother-in-law came and picked him up. And so – and both my husband and I were in the service so we both deployed and so all of that, the personal stuff. And then being in combat and not knowing what's going to happen, it was just – it was very – it was quite the upheaval in our lives and very memorable.

JUDGE LATIMORE: I'm sure. I'm sure. And you still remain engaged with veteran affairs, is that correct?

JUDGE CARABALLO: Yes, I'm a life member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. I was, up until COVID, I was an officer in my local chapter and then after COVID, things, you know, everyone's life kind of went different ways after COVID. But I try to remain active in veterans' events.

JUDGE LATIMORE: If you were able to speak to three individuals over coffee or wine or any – water if you prefer, all right, and talk to them about anything, who would it be?

JUDGE CARABALLO: Oh, that's a tough question, Alicia.

JUDGE LATIMORE: I'm sorry, you didn't give me your form in the beginning, remember that?

JUDGE CARABALLO: So wow, that's really, that's a great question. Who would it be? You know, I would love to speak to my grandfather. He passed away when I was young, and I don't remember a lot about him. My sisters who are older than I am tell me stories and so I would love to talk to him. He was very – he had a college degree. And for his time that was really unusual. And he worked for Bendix Corporation and he worked on all the Apollo missions. So he just did some really fascinating things so I would love the opportunity to speak to him as an adult. I think I would love to speak to Michelle Obama. I think she's such an incredible person and everything she's done in her life and raising her daughters in the public eye. I really would like to talk to her. And what third person, who would it be?

JUDGE LATIMORE: Well, do us good, how about that?

JUDGE CARABALLO: Do us good.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Since I put you on the spot, what's the worst job you've ever had?

JUDGE CARABALLO: Burning the stuff from the field toilets.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Oh, right. In the service.

JUDGE CARABALLO: Yeah.

JUDGE LATIMORE: There it is.

JUDGE CARABALLO: That was really – that's a really crappy job.

JUDGE LATIMORE: I bet. No punt intended.

JUDGE CARABALLO: Punt intended.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Punt intended, okay. If you had to pick, tell me, extrovert or introvert?

JUDGE CARABALLO: I'm actually an introvert which people don't believe it but I think I'm an extrovert/introvert, but –

JUDGE LATIMORE: Yes.

JUDGE CARABALLO: -- on my Myers-Briggs, I'm an introvert.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Yeah, we have to be, I call it a forced extrovert. We're introverted but we because of our job and things that we do, we have to bring that extrovert out of us, correct?

JUDGE CARABALLO: Yes, absolutely.

JUDGE LATIMORE: And up to now you enjoy it but I want to go inside afterwards and –

JUDGE CARABALLO: It's so draining though afterwards, when you put yourself out there, afterwards I need time to recover –

JUDGE LATIMORE: Yep.

JUDGE CARABALLO: It's very draining.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Zoo or aquarium?

JUDGE CARABALLO: Zoo.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Jeep or jet ski.

JUDGE CARABALLO: Oh, jeep.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Small groups or big crowds?

JUDGE CARABALLO: Small groups.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Yep, we just talked about that. Meat or vegetables?

JUDGE CARABALLO: Meat.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Steak or seafood?

JUDGE CARABALLO: Oh, steak. Red, rare.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Rare, all right. Okay, then I'm going to guess that I know the answer to this, turkey, bacon, or bacon bacon?

JUDGE CARABALLO: Bacon bacon.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Bacon bacon. All right, sounds good. With that if you were able to travel anywhere that you'd like to, is there a particular place you'd like to go?

JUDGE CARABALLO: There is.

JUDGE LATIMORE: That you haven't been already.

JUDGE CARABALLO: Yes, I would love to go to Norway. So in my – my maiden name is Larson and I've been told by family, my father's side that it's Norwegian so I would – I would love to go and visit there. I joke around with my husband that I'm a Viking, but you can clearly tell by my height that that's true so I'd like to – I'd like to go find out if the Larson-Owen is really from there.

JUDGE LATIMORE: How long have you been married?

JUDGE CARABALLO: We've been married now for 37 years.

JUDGE LATIMORE: How did you meet him?

JUDGE CARABALLO: In the Army. He was on duty in – my first duty assignment, he was on duty the night I reported in.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Nice. The night you reported in.

JUDGE CARABALLO: Yes.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Wow. That's great.

JUDGE CARABALLO: And I had just turned 18 when I met him so we've been together for 38 years, married for 37.

JUDGE LATIMORE: What's the favorite dish you cook with your garden? What is it that you cook or do you cook?

JUDGE CARABALLO: I do.

JUDGE LATIMORE: You do.

JUDGE CARABALLO: Yeah, so I love roasted carrots. I grow my own carrots and I love to roast them. It's just so delicious. They're so sweet and it's just – it's unlike a store-bought carrot.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Um-hum. I heard the same from a friend who grew tomatoes and so now she will not eat a tomato out of a grocery store.

JUDGE CARABALLO: It's so hard when you grow your own vegetables, it's so hard to eat them from the grocery store because they have so little flavor and you don't even realize, we

become accustomed to eating those vegetables and we don't realize how fresh one's taste. And it's so different.

JUDGE LATIMORE: So we all make mistakes, right. How do you pick yourself back up after you make a mistake? What do you do?

JUDGE CARABALLO: What do I do? I have short term memory. It's like a pitcher in baseball when you throw that bad pitch, you got to go throw again. So you just got to get up there and throw the next pitch and that's what I do.

JUDGE LATIMORE: I love that. I love that. I have to remember that and apply it. That's wonderful I'm sure for all those who are listening. I've really enjoyed my time with you. Thank you for being unplugged with me.

JUDGE CARABALLO: Thanks for inviting me. I enjoyed it too.

(Music)