

# Miami's Barbara Lagoa is the next Florida Supreme Court justice

BY DAVID OVALLE

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On Wednesday, January 9, 2019 Governor Ron DeSantis, left, announces the appointment of Judge Barbara Lagoa, third from the left, to the Florida Supreme Court as his wife, Casey, second from the left, and members of Lagoa's family look on inside the Freedom Tower at Miami Dade College, Miami, Florida. CARL JUSTE [CJUSTE@MIAMIHERALD.COM](mailto:CJUSTE@MIAMIHERALD.COM)

Barbara Lagoa, the first Cuban-American woman to serve on Miami's appeals court, was named Wednesday morning to the Florida Supreme Court.

Newly sworn-in Gov. Ron DeSantis made the announcement in front of Miami's Freedom Tower, a symbol for Cuban immigrants arriving in South Florida.

"Judge Lagoa's credentials are impeccable," DeSantis said.

## Miami Herald

It was DeSantis' first selection for Supreme Court justice in what is expected to be a conservative makeover of the state's highest court. The Republican governor will select two more candidates. He is replacing three retiring Supreme Court justices: Barbara Pariente, Fred Lewis and Peggy Quince, who often sided on liberal issues and against the Republican-controlled Legislature.



Judge Barbara Lagoa smiles as she exits the announcement by Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis to of her appointment to the Florida Supreme Court Wednesday, Jan. 8, 2019, inside the Freedom Tower at Miami Dade College in Miami.  
Carl Juste [cjuste@miamiherald.com](mailto:cjuste@miamiherald.com)

Lagoa, 52, was appointed to the Third District Court of Appeal in 2006 by then Gov.-Jeb Bush. An author of over 300 majority opinions, Lagoa was in line to be the chief justice of the local appeals

court.

She is married to Paul Huck Jr., an attorney and the son of senior Miami federal judge Paul Huck Sr. She and her husband have three children. By law, one of the selections for the state Supreme Court must be from either Miami-Dade or Monroe counties.

As a private lawyer, Lagoa was part of the legal team that defended Elian Gonzalez, the Cuban boy who was at the center of a controversial international custody dispute in 2000. She joined the U.S. Attorney's Office in 2003 before Bush appointed her to the bench.

On the bench at the Third DCA, Lagoa has ruled on many noteworthy cases.

Last month, she authored the opinion that reversed the conviction of Adonis Losada, a former Univision comic actor who was [sentenced to 153 years in prison](#) for collecting child porn. Lagoa ruled that a Miami-Dade judge erred in [not allowing Losada to defend himself](#) at trial.

Also, she was one of three judges who allowed a Miami judge to close a courtroom to the public for a key hearing in a high-profile murder case. The Third DCA ruled that publicity surrounding the machete murder of a student in Homestead might unfairly sway jurors at a future trial, a [ruling decried](#) by advocates of press freedoms.

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Barbara Lagoa as she was sworn into the Third District Court of Appeals in June 2006. She was the first Cuban-America woman appointed to the court, she was named to the Florida Supreme Court on Wednesday by Gov. Ron Desantis.- *THIRD DCA HISTORIAL SOCIETY*