

A View from the Bench with Judge Michael Casale & Judge Marie Lihotz

April 27, 2022 | by Patricia M. Barbarito

Worried about facing the stern-faced, black-robed presiding judge who is overseeing the end of your marriage? Don't be! Host Pat Barbarito welcomes The Honorable [Michael Casale](#) and The Honorable [Marie Lihotz](#) and leads the duo through a candid conversation with anecdotes that demystify the judge's role and responsibilities in divorce court.



Highlights include:

- What to expect during a typical first day in divorce court;
- How your courtroom presence impacts the judge's impression of the facts;
- Understanding emotional paralysis and disparity between the parties involved in the divorce;
- The scope of power judges wield in civil court and whether that includes jail time;
- Factoring in 'fault' and why it doesn't really change the allocation of assets;
- How detailed orders are used to control unhelpful (but not quiiiiite illegal) behaviors that unnecessarily complicate divorce proceedings;
- How judges prioritize the many considerations of a divorce – child safety, parenting time, finances, assets, etc.;
- Knowing your alternative dispute resolution options and why those may provide a better result than a trial.

BONUS: Features an in-depth discussion regarding the case for open dialogue with children about the reasons for the divorce and how to approach those conversations without demeaning the other party.

In 2016, **Judge Michael Casale** retired from the New Jersey Judiciary following over 20 years of service as a Superior Court Judge in Essex County, serving at the trial court level in the Criminal (1996

– 2008), Civil (2008 – 2011) and Family (2011 – 2016) Divisions. He now focuses his practice on mediation, arbitration, settlement conferences and discovery management, and also encompasses consultation and trial strategy in child custody, relocation, child support and domestic violence matters.

For 20 years, **Judge Marie E. Lihotz** served as a member of the New Jersey Judiciary, including more than eleven years in the Appellate Division. Judge Lihotz now concentrates her practice in resolving legal disputes through mediation and arbitration, including family, business, estate, employment as well as appellate arbitration matters. She is a member of the American Arbitration Association Commercial and Employment Roster of Arbitrators, an approved Rule 4:21A arbitrator and Rule 1:40 civil mediator.

Heartbreak & *hope* with Pat Barbarito



Divorce lawyer **Pat Barbarito** thought she knew all about

complex relationships and the laws that govern them – until her own marriage of 17 years ended and she determined to get to the heart of love, marriage, and human connection. Her journey spanned the entire scope of relationships – from the science of attraction to the financial impact of separation, to old myths that society still touts as true to new laws that outline how to navigate both uniting and uncoupling.

Heartbreak & Hope with Pat Barbarito offers insights, anecdotes, and guidance from a variety of experts and includes her own perspective on how best to thrive through any stage of relationship building.

