



**Judge Debra Bernes** is a native Georgian, having been born in Atlanta, Georgia on October 15, 1955 to Alvin Halpern and Sherry King Halpern. After graduating from Atlanta's Henry Grady High School in 1973, she attended the University of Florida, where she graduated with high honors in 1976 with a Bachelor of Arts in Education. While earning her undergraduate degree, she also was an active member of Phi Kappa Phi, Alpha Lambda Delta and Mortar Board Honor Societies.

Judge Bernes received her Juris Doctorate from the University of Florida's Fredric G. Levin College of Law in 1978 and became a member of the Georgia Bar in 1979. She subsequently became a member of the bars of the Supreme Court of Georgia, Georgia Court of Appeals, United States Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit, and the United States District Court for the Northern District of Georgia.

Judge Bernes began her legal career as an assistant district attorney for the Cobb Judicial Circuit, Marietta, Georgia, where, until 1999, she concentrated in felony prosecutions and appellate law. During her tenure as an assistant district attorney in Cobb County, she regularly appeared before the Georgia Supreme Court and Georgia Court of Appeals, arguing several cases of first impression.

In 2000, Judge Bernes began her own law practice, where she handled a wide variety of litigation matters at both the trial and appellate levels, including criminal and civil defense, business disputes, municipal and county government issues, and zoning and personnel issues. Indeed, while serving in public and private practice, Judge Bernes authored or co-authored over 400 appellate briefs and argued over sixty cases in the Georgia state and federal appellate courts.

On November 23, 2004, Judge Bernes was elected as the seventieth judge to the Georgia Court of Appeals. Her term of office began on January 1, 2005.

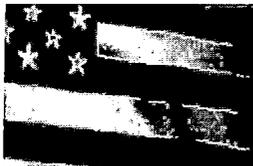
Over the course of her legal career, Judge Bernes has dedicated herself to serving in a wide array of professional organizations. In 2003-2004, she served both as President of the Cobb County Bar Association and as Secretary of the Appellate Section of the State Bar of Georgia. She is a Fellow of the Lawyers Foundation of Georgia and is a member of the Georgia Association of Women Lawyers, the Cobb Justice Foundation and the Lawyers Club of Atlanta.

As part of her professional commitments, Judge Bernes has played an active role in teaching and lecturing on a host of legal topics, including criminal law and appellate practice. She has lectured on appellate practice at seminars of the Local Government and Appellate Sections of the State Bar of Georgia. She has served as an instructor for the North Georgia Police Academy, the Prosecuting Attorney's Council of Georgia, and the National District Attorney's Association. She also has been active in continuing legal education, having served as co-chair of several appellate advocacy seminars and Chair of the Continuing Legal Education Committee for the Cobb County Bar Association.

In addition to her professional service, Judge Bernes has volunteered her time and energy to a broad spectrum of civic and charitable organizations. Judge Bernes is a member of the Kiwanis

Club of Marietta, and was awarded the club's Distinguished Service Award in 1997. She is a former member of the Cobb 2000 Commission, the Cobb-Marietta Junior League, the East Cobb Jaycees, the Willow Point Service League and the Erwin Zaban Leadership Development Program. She currently serves as a member of the Jewish Educational Loan Fund Board. In 2002, Judge Bernes participated in Kids Voting Cobb, a project designed to increase voter participation by focusing on elementary school students. In March 2004, she was honored by the Y.W.C.A. of Northwest Georgia as a 2004 Woman of Achievement.

Judge Bernes has been married for twenty-four years to Gary Lee Bernes. They have two children, Lanie and Matthew. The Bernes family attends Ahavath Achim and Congregation Etz Chaim Synagogues. They live in Marietta, Georgia.



# BERNES OF THE COURT OF APPEALS



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## ABOUT DEBRA

From her legal experience to her life experience as a mother and wife to her community involvement, Debra Bernes has experience that matters.



Bernes has practiced law in Georgia for 25 years, both as an Assistant District Attorney in Cobb County prosecuting felonies and handling appeals to the Georgia Court of Appeals and the Georgia Supreme Court and as a general practitioner in Marietta. With over 50 cases argued and over 400 legal briefs filed in the Court of Appeals and the Georgia Supreme Court, Debra Bernes is widely respected across Georgia for her experience in appellate law. She has lectured on Appellate Practice for both the Local Government Law and Appellate sections of the State Bar of Georgia. Debra Bernes served as the President of the Cobb Bar Association and the Secretary of the Appellate Section of the State Bar of Georgia for the 2003-2004 year.

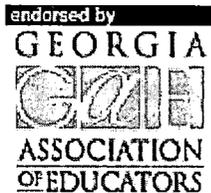
In just over 5 years, Bernes earned a Bachelors degree and a Juris Doctorate from the University of Florida. In 1979, she was admitted to the State Bar of Georgia and later was admitted to the Bar of the Georgia Court of Appeals, Supreme Court of Georgia, United States District Court, Northern District of Georgia, and the United States Court of Appeals.

From 1979 to 1999, Debra served as an Assistant District Attorney in the Cobb Judicial Circuit concentrating in felony prosecutions and appellate law. Since 2000, Debra has operated her own private practice, Debra Halpern Bernes, P.C., and has served in an of counsel capacity to the law firm of Bentley, Bentley, & Bentley. In private practice, Debra has represented clients in civil and criminal cases at the trial and appellate levels. She has handled a wide array of legal matters for clients including criminal and civil defense, business disputes, municipal and county government issues, and zoning and personnel issues.



Debra Bernes has also been an active partner with our law enforcement community. She authored case law update materials for the Cobb County Police Department and has been a frequent instructor at the North Georgia Police Academy. She has also been an instructor for the Prosecuting Attorney's Council of Georgia as well as the National District Attorney's Association. In 1979 Bernes was given a special award by the Marietta Police Department in recognition of her service as a legal advisor for a "Sting" operation that resulted in the recovery of a large quantity of stolen goods.

Debra Bernes has also been an active leader in her community. She is a member of the Kiwanis of Marietta, and current co-chair of its Community Service Committee. In 1997, she was granted the Distinguished Service Award by her Kiwanis group. She is a former member of the Community Service Committee of her son's school, the Cobb-Marietta Junior League, the Willow Point Service



League and the East Cobb Jaycees. Debra is also a supporter and participant of Kids Voting Cobb, a project that hopes to ultimately increase voter participation by starting with elementary school students.

A native Georgian, Debra and her husband, Gary, have two wonderful children: Lanie (21) attends Indiana University, and Matthew (17), is a twelfth grader attending high school in Cobb County. The Bernes attend Congregation Etz Chaim and Ahavath Achim synagogues. They live in Marietta, Georgia.

