

MARLENE LYNCH FORD
Ocean County Prosecutor



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Biography of Marlene Lynch Ford

Marlene Lynch Ford was born February 23, 1954 in Yuma, Arizona, where her parents worked as farmers. The family relocated to Belmar, NJ, where she attended and graduated from St. Rose Schools. She attended Georgian Court University on an academic scholarship and was graduated in 1976, *Magna Cum Laude*. She continued her post graduate studies at Seton Hall University School of Law and was awarded a Juris Doctor degree in 1979. She was admitted to the bars of the State of New Jersey and the Federal District Court of New Jersey the same year.

Prosecutor Ford practiced law in Jackson Township and Point Pleasant Beach. She also was elected by voters in the 10th Legislative District to two terms in the New Jersey General Assembly (1984-1986; 1990-1992). She worked as General Counsel to the Assembly Democratic delegation (1988-1990), and was a delegate to the Democratic National Convention in 1984 and 1988. She also worked, until her appointment to the Superior Court, as General Counsel to H. Hovnanian Industries, a large scale residential and commercial real estate developer and investor.

Assemblywoman Ford sponsored over 75 bills that were signed into law, including the Domestic Violence Prevention Act of 1990; the Victims Rights amendment to the NJ Constitution; enhanced penalties for parental kidnapping, and the Ford Act, the largest tax reduction at that time in NJ history.

As Judiciary Committee Chairperson, she posted and saw enacted into law a ban on assault weapons; extensions of civil rights to include sexual orientation, and legislation to permit advanced medical directives and living wills.

In 1992 she was honored by New Jersey Monthly magazine as one of New Jersey's "heroes" for her role in expanding the rights of people to fair housing and employment regardless of their sexual orientation.

In 1992, Prosecutor Ford was nominated by Governor James Florio to be a Superior Court Judge. She served in the family division for four years, and for ten years in the civil division. In 2006 she was appointed by Chief Justice Zazzali to be Presiding Judge of the Family Division.

In June, 2007, she was appointed by Governor Jon Corzine to be Ocean County Prosecutor, the chief law enforcement officer of the county. She continues to hold that position today. She has the distinction and the honor of having served the public in all three branches of government: Legislative, Judicial and Executive.

She lives in Toms River with her husband, Dr. Frank Kelly, and her daughter, MaryJo Lin Kelly.