

‘Top cop’ for the region is now Brodsky’s goal

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MANATEE -- Ed Brodsky says all he ever wanted to be is a cop.

He ended up with jobs throughout most of his life that required a suit and tie and not a blue uniform, but he secretly has never lost his childhood desire to be an enforcer of laws and to put people behind bars for their bad deeds.

At 46, a cop’s uniform with a shiny badge is probably out of reach, but Brodsky says getting to be “top cop” for the 12th Judicial Circuit will work in a pinch.

After 19 years, Brodsky has worked his way up to chief assistant state attorney responsible for overseeing the day-to-day operations of all 70 attorneys and 150 total staff in four 12th Judicial Circuit offices in Manatee, Sarasota and DeSoto counties.

He has now announced his intentions to replace six-term state attorney Earl Moreland in 2013.

Brodsky is slated to face Bradenton attorney Peter J. Lombardo in an Aug. 12, 2012, Republican primary that could decide the position since as of Friday, no Democrats and no other Republicans had filed to run for Moreland's job.

Brodsky is officially kicking off his campaign with a "Meet Ed Brodsky" fundraising event from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Tuesday at Dolphin Aviation at Sarasota Bradenton International Airport,

Lombardo just had a fundraiser June 16 at the home of attorney Derek Byrd in Sarasota and is planning three more over the summer at different locations.

Despite the profile of his current position, Brodsky is approaching the race not unlike a prosecutor preparing for a case. He is not taking anything for granted.

He has aggressively gone after endorsements. He lists Moreland, Manatee County Sheriff Brad Steube, former Manatee Sheriff Charlie Wells, retired North Port Police Chief Terry Lewis, retired Palmetto Chief Garry Lowe and current DeSoto County Sheriff William Wise in his camp.

He also has the endorsements of current public defender Larry Eger, retired public defender Elliott Metcalf Jr., the presidents of the Manatee, Sarasota and South Sarasota bar associations and a long list of business owners and lawyers.

Lombardo said Friday he is not asking for anyone to endorse him. "They and their constituents get preferential treatment so I won't do it, but I am supported by thousands of Republicans," Lombardo said.

Steube said Friday he is endorsing Brodsky for one reason. "I think he is the best person for the job," Steube said. "He has a lot of insight because of the number of years he has spent at the state attorney's office. He is familiar with some of the problems that we face regarding law enforcement and prosecution. I believe he is the right person for the job."

Brodsky says his overall experience in the state attorney's office separates him from Lombardo, even though Lombardo worked for Moreland from 1988 to 2006, including a stint as felony division chief in Sarasota from 1996 to 2006.

"I am the only candidate who is board certified in criminal trial work by the Florida Bar," Brodsky said. "I am the only candidate that has management and administrative experience in running the state attorney's office. Mr. Lombardo never managed our offices."

Lombardo's response is that he was felony division chief in Sarasota for the state attorney's office for 10 and a half years and that is an upper-level management position.

The two candidates differ on how the office handles its fiscal responsibilities.

Brodsky says the office is efficient and manpower is well used.

Lombardo says some of Moreland's people are grossly overpaid.

"Ed is in the office now and has control over those things and has chosen not to do it," Lombardo said. "The best thing I can say is how will we rely on him to do it in the future if he is not doing it now."

Brodsky's response:

"Since I have been chief assistant, I have been involved in the budgetary and legislative process and we are doing everything we can to run our office as efficiently as possible while ensuring public safety," Brodsky said. "We have been cut \$2 million since 2007 and have lost 11 positions."

If elected, Brodsky said he would focus on the drug epidemic, the plight of returning war veterans, exploitation of the elderly and children, gang violence, gun crimes and white collar crime.

"We have to get a handle on the drug epidemic," Brodsky said. "I have learned that in 75 percent of every autopsy performed, drug overdose is a factor. We are seeing too many people falling victim, either by committing crimes to support their drug addiction or becoming addicted. I will battle prescription fraud. I will battle so-called 'doctor shopping' where people go from doctor to doctor to get their drugs. I will go after shady pain management clinics."

Brodsky wants to do more at the grassroots level for war veterans, seeing them as a special case.

"If elected, I will do everything I can to get those cases identified and do everything I can to get them back on their feet and not in a cycle of crime," Brodsky said.

"I think I'm the right guy for the job because I am deeply passionate about being a prosecutor and serving this community," Brodsky said.

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