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Meet Scott Richardson, local lawyer representing Trump's campaign manager

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Hours after attorney Scott Richardson was tapped on Tuesday to represent Donald Trump's campaign manager on a battery charge, the phone in his West Palm Beach office began ringing with requests for interviews from political pundits throughout the country.

But the 62-year-old wasn't talking.

Richardson, who has handled dozens of high-profile cases during his 38-year legal career, rarely talks to the press. It's not his style.

Further, unlike the bombastic GOP presidential candidate whose campaign manager, Corey Lewandowski, is now his client, Richardson is famously low-key. His demeanor in court is professorial, not flamboyant.

"He has a calming approach and style and I tend to be a little louder," attorney Michael Salnick said of his longtime friend several years ago when Richardson was involved in a far different kind of case that generated enormous publicity.

Richardson and former U.S. Attorney Kendall Coffey, who are teaming up to be among the most powerful defense attorneys to ever try to help a client beat a misdemeanor charge, also don't share Trump's political bent.

Coffey was appointed by Democratic President Bill Clinton to head South Florida's U.S. Attorney's Office. He left three years later amid allegations he bit a dancer at a strip club. Richardson, who has no salacious stories in his past, is a registered Democrat.

But they are both former prosecutors — something observers said should help Lewandowski as he tries to bury allegations that he manhandled Michelle Fields, then a reporter for the online Breitbart News Network, at a March 8 event at Trump National Golf Club in Jupiter. While Lewandowski is to be arraigned on May 4, he is not expected to appear.

"Mr. Richardson is well respected by judges, prosecutors and the defense bar," said Elizabeth Parker, a former prosecutor who has worked with him.

"He's an excellent choice to represent this man," said Salnick, who shares Richardson's love of baseball, the Beach Boys and Brian Wilson.

Throughout his career, Richardson has proved adept at persuading prosecutors and juries to take another look at what the press had portrayed as slam-dunk cases — often ones against cops.

That didn't happen in 2014 when he was on the defense team for John Goodman after the Wellington polo mogul's first conviction for DUI manslaughter was thrown out because of jury misconduct. Goodman was again convicted in the 2010 crash that killed 23-year-old Scott Wilson.



But few expected Goodman would be acquitted.

The same can't be said for West Palm Beach police officers Glen Thurlow and Stephen Rollins, charged with second-degree murder in the 1990 beating death of Robert Jewett. Richardson, along with future State Attorney Barry Krischer, persuaded a jury to ignore an autopsy that showed Jewett suffered a broken neck, nine broken ribs, a bruised lung, a puncture in his heart and battered testicles. It cleared the officers of wrongdoing.

In 2004, Richardson worked the same magic for Palm Beach Gardens police officer Gwen Napier. Accused of shooting her husband seven times on Thanksgiving Day 2000, a jury found she was a battered woman who justifiably feared her husband. Richardson took the calculated risk of putting her on the witness stand. The jury believed.

A year later, he used a similar tack while representing Delray Beach police officer Darren Cogoni in the shooting death of 16-year-old Jerrod Miller at a school dance. While attorneys rarely allow their clients to testify before grand juries, Richardson did. The panel cleared the rookie officer.

He is known for getting good plea deals for clients. Rev. John Skehan, a longtime priest at St. Vincent Ferrer Catholic Church in Delray Beach, in 2009 was allowed to plead guilty to grand theft and received a 14-month sentence. Another priest, charged with stealing as much as \$8 million from the same collection plates, was handed a four-year term.

When State Attorney Michael McAuliffe was elected in 2008, Richardson surprised some by returning to the office that gave him his first job out of law school in 1978. McAuliffe named Richardson as his chief counsel.

Richardson was widely expected to run for the seat when McAuliffe resigned. Instead, he returned to private practice.

This past year, he applied to become a circuit judge but wasn't appointed.

Even when Richardson talks to the press, his comments aren't the kind that fuel TV talk shows. Years ago, asked why he counted so many cops as clients, he said he liked bursting fallacies about highly publicized cases.

"I enjoy being able to present the facts within the rules governing the admissibility of evidence and oftentimes overcoming initial misconceptions about the guilt or innocence of the officer," he said.
