

Dennis Ross was born October 18, 1959 in Lakeland, Florida. He was the youngest of five children born to Bill and Loyola Ross who moved to their Polk County home in 1955. Being raised on modest means, Dennis attended Catholic school for nine years before going to high school at Lakeland Senior High School, where he graduated in 1977. Throughout his high school career, Dennis was active in Student Government where he met his wife, Cindy. In 1977, The Ledger's prestigious Silver Garlands Award gave their first Award of Citizenship to Dennis for his efforts in outstanding citizenship in Polk County as a high school senior.

After high school, Dennis attended the University of Florida for one year before transferring to Auburn University where he graduated in 1981 with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Organizational Management from the School of Business. Dennis went on to work for a year as a legislative aide in St. Petersburg to Representative Dennis Jones in 1982.

Following Representative Jones' successful re-election, Dennis went to work in the newly developed micro-computer industry working for several companies. With one Company he was installing computer systems throughout Eastern United States in small town pharmacies and with another company he was selling computer systems throughout the Eastern United States to collection recovery organizations.

In 1983 Dennis and his wife Cindy were married in Lakeland. Within one year of their marriage Dennis went off to law school at the Cumberland School of Law at Samford University in Birmingham, Alabama. Upon completion of law school, Dennis returned to Lakeland to begin his work as an Associate Attorney for the firm of Holland & Knight. After two years at Holland & Knight, Dennis then went in-house counsel with Walt Disney World handling the workers' compensation defense matters for this company.

Having always wanted to have his own law practice and exercise his entrepreneurial skills, Dennis borrowed \$10,000.00 from a neighbor and started his own law practice in October of 1989. That firm has grown to seven lawyers and twenty-seven employees and is now known as Ross Vecchio, P.A. Not only did Dennis get involved in the practice of law, having served as past president of the Lakeland Bar Association, but he also served as a Board Member of the Lakeland Chamber of Commerce and on various charity and community boards as well.

Politically, Dennis has been active in the Republican Party since returning to Lakeland in the late 80's. In 1990, Dennis was the President of the Greater Lakeland Young Republicans and in 1992 was elected as Chairman of the Polk County Republican Executive Committee. He served in that position until 1995. During his term as Chairman of the Polk County Republican Executive Committee, the party elected many local Republican officials and developed a tremendous organization which helped spread strong principles of individual freedoms, personal responsibility, less government and lower taxes.

In 1996, Dennis ran unsuccessfully for the State Senate, losing to a very well liked Incumbent, Senator Rick Dantzler. However, the race taught him many things about the political process and about being true to one's self and to your community. In 2000

Dennis had an opportunity to run for the State House of Representatives and was elected overwhelmingly. Dennis continued to serve in the Florida House of Representatives until he was term limited in 2008. Throughout his term as a member of the Florida House of Representatives, Dennis distinguished himself as a strong proponent of conservative principles and was well respected by members of both parties. In 2007, Dennis, along with his friend Rep. Don Brown, were the only two legislators to vote against the property insurance bill that made Citizens the largest property insurer in Florida. For voting against his party and with his free market principles, Dennis was stripped of his Chairmanship and many said his career was over. But Dennis is a conservative leader, not only of independent thought but of independent action as well.

Dennis is a proud conservative Republican who will do what is right, not what is easy.

Dennis and Cindy have two boys, Shane who graduates from high school in 2009 and Travis who will graduate from high school in 2011. The family enjoys traveling throughout the United States. They have been to each of the 48 continental states, predominantly by motor home and with their several family dogs. The family enjoys the passion for American history, national parks and the great outdoors. Dennis is an avid hunter and so are his boys who enjoy not only hunting, but also fishing and camping.

Cindy continues to be a close advisor, confidant, wife and mother of their two boys. They have endured many political and personal events together and represent what they believe is good about the American family. They are members of First Presbyterian Church in Lakeland, Florida and Cindy has been Volunteer of the Year at Rochelle School of the Arts and George Jenkins High School. She also serves on the Polk Community College Board of Trustees, the Polk Museum of Art and has served as the past Chairman of the Polk Arts Alliance. Together the family believes that community service, regardless of how performed, is one of the most responsible acts a person can give to their fellow man.