

Area lawyer no longer faces battery charge

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SARASOTA COUNTY

Prosecutors have dropped a domestic battery charge against a well-known attorney who quit his campaign for county judge after his arrest.

Tracy Lee, 41, was the first candidate to file for next year's judicial election. But he withdrew after his wife told a deputy last month that he had pushed her down during an altercation.

Lee denied her account to deputies in which she said he had shoved her to the ground and tried to slap her. At a hearing Thursday, prosecutors said they would not pursue the charges.

"It would have been a very difficult case for them to prove," said Lee's attorney, Derek Byrd. "He feels relieved but he's still devastated. His lifelong dream was to be a judge, and that was taken away from him with baseless allegations."

Attempts to reach his wife, Alexandria Lee, for comment were unsuccessful.

Lee, a Sarasota native whose father, Dick Lee, was a prominent attorney,



Tracy Lee shelved his hopes of becoming a judge after his recent arrest.

said he had spent the last 15 years preparing to become a judge.

But the stigma of a domestic battery arrest made him unelectable, Lee said when he announced his withdrawal from the race.

Lee had already met with city and county officials and leaders in the judicial community and invited 300 guests to a major fundraiser this month. He had lent his campaign \$15,000 and was in the process of collecting signatures when he was arrested.

He is a member of Sheriff Tom Knight's advisory board and a former senior assistant attorney general under Gov. Charlie Crist.

Lee had his initial court appearance two weeks ago before retiring County Judge Emanuel Logalbo, whom Lee was hoping to replace on the bench.

Three other candidates are vying for the open spot on the bench: Lon Arend, Maryann Olson Boehm and Thomas Beach.