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JANUARY 2020

NEWSLETTER OF THE MANATEE COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION

2020 Florida Law Changes in the Court System and for Notarial Acts

By Alexandra St. Paul, Esq., MCBA Imm. Past President

Effective January 1, 2020, we have some significant changes in the court system in the area of civil cases, which are as follows:

1. Dollar limits for civil cases in county court double to \$30,000.00
2. Small claims cases are increasing to include claims up to \$8,000.00
3. In cases valued at more than \$8,000.00, a cover sheet must be included by civil filers specifying the amount of money in dispute

The increases in county court jurisdictional limits were passed by the Florida Legislature and signed into Law by the Governor. The civil cover sheet requirement and small claims increase were adopted in rules approved by the Florida Supreme Court.

Also effective January 1, 2020 are amendments to the notary law (Chapter 117, Florida Statutes) and the record of conveyance of real estate law (Chapter 695, Florida Statutes.) There are other changes, but the focus of this article is on notarial certificates for acknowledgements and jurats. For notarial acts on or after January 1, in addition to the current requirements, every notarial certificate must state (*check the appropriate box*) if the person signing the document personally appeared before the notary by means of physical presence or by online notarization, a means which became effective with the passage of new laws. Examples of these forms of acknowledgement for individuals and entities are as follows:

For an Individual acting in his or her own right:

STATE OF FLORIDA
COUNTY OF MANATEE

The foregoing instrument was acknowledged before me by means of physical presence or online notarization, this (date) by (name of person acknowledging), who is personally known to me or who has produced (type of identification) as identification.

(Signature of Notary Public - State of Florida)
(Print, Type, or Stamp Commissioned Name of Notary Public)

For a Limited Liability Company:

STATE OF FLORIDA
COUNTY OF MANATEE

The foregoing instrument was acknowledged before me by means of physical presence or online notarization, this (date) by (name of member, manager, officer or agent, title of member, manager, officer or agent), of (name of company acknowledging), a (state or place of formation) limited liability company, on behalf of the company, who is personally known to me or has produced (type of identification) as identification.

(Signature of Notary Public - State of Florida)
(Print, Type, or Stamp Commissioned Name of Notary Public)

For a Partnership:

STATE OF FLORIDA
COUNTY OF MANATEE

The foregoing instrument was acknowledged before me by means of physical presence or online notarization, this (date) by (name of acknowledging partner or agent), partner (or agent) on behalf of (name of partnership), a partnership. He/she is personally known to me or has produced (type of identification) as identification.

(Signature of Notary Public - State of Florida)
(Print, Type, or Stamp Commissioned Name of Notary Public)

(continued on page 2)

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE - JANUARY 2019



By Charles W. Telfair, IV, Esq.

"The Only Constant is Change and that's Not all Bad"

In 2009, we wore analog watches, had landline phones, hung out in bookstores and hailed taxis. Now we have self-driving cars, iPhone 11 Pros with 6 inch screens and artificial intelligence that talks back to us (just ask Alexa). See the Inside View by Andy Kessler, WSJ 12/30/2019.

The Brookings Institute projects that advances in logistics and food distribution have reduced poverty in most of the world from 550 million (outside of Africa) in 2010 to 100 million today (however, the number of poor in Africa has actually increased). Ibid Andy Kessler

The Russians have faded (or, are they back?) and a new world power is rising – China.

We all complain about social media and skewed news but in many ways we have more media outlets than ever. In the 1970s the mainstream media consisted of three major TV networks and a handful of national newspapers, news agencies and magazines. See "This Isn't Your Father's Impeachment" WSJ 12/30/19. Today, there are multitudes of media outlets all presenting news directed to their audience. Are we better or worse off? In my opinion, we are better off but I also believe that to decipher the truth multiple sources need to be reviewed and an open mind employed.

On a personal note, my boys in 2010 have grown into men in 2020. Raising them was my most humbling experience. My wife and I are empty nesters except when my grown men come home (which is, thankfully, early and often). My wife and I like our new life together, so she says. My law practice has changed tremendously in the last decade. I constantly challenge myself to push outside my comfort zone – it's not really that much fun but it is very rewarding in the end.

Yes, we live in scary times. Humanity faces many dangerous and real threats and the world as we know it really could end at any moment. But, that has been true for as long as man has walked the face of the earth.

So, personally, I say enjoy every moment and embrace change. It is inevitable – like death and taxes. Cheers to the new decade.

(Florida Law Changes, continued from page 1)

For an Individual acting as Principal by an Attorney in fact:

STATE OF FLORIDA

COUNTY OF MANATEE

The foregoing instrument was acknowledged before me by means of physical presence or online notarization, this (date) by (name of attorney in fact) as attorney in fact, who is personally known to me or who has produced (type of identification) as identification on behalf of (name of principal).

(Signature of Notary Public - State of Florida)

(Print, Type, or Stamp Commissioned Name of Notary Public)

Jurat for an Oath or Affirmation:

STATE OF FLORIDA

COUNTY OF MANATEE

Sworn to (or affirmed) and subscribed before me by means of physical presence or online notarization, this (date), by (name of person making statement), who is personally known to me or who has produced (type of identification) as identification.

(Signature of Notary Public - State of Florida)

(Print, Type, or Stamp Commissioned Name of Notary Public)

If the date of the signing and acknowledgement on the document was on or before December 31, 2019, and in the prior format, it is acceptable to record the document after January 1, 2020. It is the date of the signing and acknowledgement that is controlling. Please refer to Chapters 117 and 695, Florida Statutes for details and more changes.

The Manatee County Bar Association supports diversity and inclusion in our membership and welcomes lawyers of all backgrounds, ethnicities, races, religions, cultures, sexual orientations and abilities. As part of this initiative, the Manatee County Bar Association has created the Diversity and Inclusion Committee (DAIC) and fully supports its mission to increase the diversity of our membership and the local legal community.

MCBA 2019-20

SECTION CHAIRS:

Solo/Small Firm Section:	Steele Williams, Chair
Probate Section:	Rebecca Proctor, Co-Chair Alexandra St. Paul, Co-Chair
Real Property Section:	Joe Battaglia, Chair
Family Section:	Faith Brown, Chair

Welcome Judge Matt Whyte!

By Angelina "Angel" Colonnese

Manatee County Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller



I would like to take this opportunity to welcome the Honorable Stephen Mathew Whyte as our newest member of the Judiciary. I met Matt nearly 20 years ago when I first began my career as an Assistant State Attorney. Matt showed me the ropes during my first year with the office. Matt moved to the Felony Division not too long after I began. After a few years, Matt moved on to private practice and broader areas of practice. Interestingly enough, Matt and I found ourselves very much in an adversarial position on one of the more peculiar cases of my career. Needless to say we survived being zealous advocates on a hotly contested case. Matt went on to join me as my General Counsel. Many people do not realize the depth of legal work involved internally at the Clerk's Office. With 1,000 statutory functions and many procedures in place to carry out these functions the need for a multitasking attorney in-house is crucial. Matt also held positions in various legal groups within the Florida Clerk's Association assisting clerks with pressing issues such as Amendment 4 and various rule change proposals as well as, Best Practices in multiple areas. Matt tackled this job and gave it one-thousand percent! It is such a pleasure to see someone you know who is a good person and has worked hard to achieve a goal in reaching the pinnacle of their career. Judge Whyte is a dedicated member of the legal community and has also volunteered his time within the community. He shared one story with me of his experience when we both participated

in the Dive Into Reading program. It was the end of the last day of the one hour summer program. The child was lagging behind his classmates when it came time to return to the bus and Matt told him that he needed to get going or he would miss the bus. The little boy turned and looked at Matt and told him, "That's okay if I miss the bus, it means that I get to stay here with you." Judge Whyte is a dedicated member of this community and gives his very best in all that he does. He is also very devoted to his family whether it was taking his sons to soccer or joining in a scavenger hunt with his daughter. We welcome you as the newest member of the Judiciary for the 12th Judicial Circuit, Judge Whyte.



Jesse Butler Receives Florida Bar Pro Bono Service Award



Jesse R. Butler, a partner with Sarasota law firm Dickinson & Gibbons, P.A., has been selected as the 2020 Florida Bar President's Pro Bono Service Award honoree for the 12th Judicial Circuit. This award encourages lawyers to volunteer free legal services to those in need by recognizing those who make outstanding public service commitments in each judicial circuit. Mr. Butler will formally receive this award on January 30, 2020 at the Florida Supreme Court.

Jesse Butler represents clients in legal actions involving civil and commercial matters, focusing on cases involving consumer protection, product liability, legal malpractice, and general civil litigation. Mr. Butler is Board Certified in Appellate Practice by The Florida Bar and holds the prestigious AV Preeminent™ Rating from Martindale-Hubbell®.

Dickinson & Gibbons, P.A. represents a broad range of individual and corporate clients in complex litigation matters. Founded in 1937, the Sarasota-based firm holds the prestigious Martindale-Hubbell® AV rating, and is a member of ALFA International, a global network of 150 law firms.

Congratulations, Jesse!



MCBA Members Out And About!

On January 9, 2020, MCBA President Charles Telfair, Judge Charles Williams, and Judge Gilbert Smith, Jr. attended a reception at New College with special guest, Chief Justice Charles T. Canady. Chief Justice Canady was the guest speaker at an earlier luncheon, and served as a judge in a mock trial with students of New College that afternoon.

CHAPMAN MEDIATION

As both a Certified Circuit Civil Mediator and a trial attorney Board Certified in Business Litigation, I have over 28 years of experience in a broad range of disputes, including construction, business, condominium/HOA, real estate, non-compete, property tax and probate/trust matters. Let me put this experience to work for you in helping you resolve your client's case - at your office or mine.



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ESTATE PLANNING FOR BLENDED FAMILIES

By M. Brandon Robinson, Esq.



Forbes estimates that more than half of modern families are “blended families.” In a blended family, one or both spouses have children from a previous marriage. Blended families present unique challenges for estate planning both in planning for the care of the children during the life of both spouses, as well as the distribution of assets following the death of each spouse. Many of the challenges facing blended families can be addressed by

having thorough, thoughtful, candid, and sometimes uncomfortable conversations with the married couple regarding their feelings, wishes, goals, and potential conflicts.

Documents for the care and custody of the minor children while both spouses are living:

Perhaps the most pressing concern for the majority of newlyweds with children from a previous marriage is medical care. To ensure that the new spouse is able to obtain medical treatment for their now stepchildren, a Designation of Health Care Surrogate for a Minor can be utilized. A form is provided in § 765.2038, Florida Statutes. The Designation will allow the natural parents to appoint the new stepparent as a Health Care Surrogate for the minor child, thereby allowing the stepparent to consent to medical treatment, access medical records, etc. It does not remove the natural parent’s authority to make medical decisions.

The second most pressing concern for newly made blended families is access to the educational records of the minor stepchild, picking the minor child up from school, and speaking with the child’s teachers. While the large majority of schools allow the natural parent to make such a designation on the schools’ registration paperwork, a better option is for the natural parent to execute an *In Loco Parentis* Power of Attorney. It is based upon federal law for members of the Armed Forces and their families pursuant to Title 10, United States Code, § 1044b, and executed by a person authorized to receive legal assistance from the military services. This document allows the natural parent to delegate parenting authority to a temporary guardian, or to a stepparent. It should be noted that while Florida Statutes do not specifically authorize *In Loco Parentis* Powers of Attorney, nor provide a suggested form, they also do not prohibit them. Many short, direct, and easily modified *In Loco Parentis* Power of Attorney forms that are Florida-specific may be located online. Additionally, this type of Power of Attorney is also very useful in a situation where the minor child is staying with a family member or friend for an extended period of time, such as when the natural parent will be deployed for military service, incarcerated, or undergoing long-term medical treatment, and can be used to register the child for school, sign the child up for after-school or sports programs, etc.

Documents concerning each spouse’s healthcare and finances:

Most married couples name each other as their designated Health Care Surrogate, as well as their Agent under a Durable Power of Attorney. However, in blended families, especially those with adult children from a previous marriage, this can lead to hurt feelings and familial strife and conflict, as the adult children may argue that the spouse is not following what the parent would really have wanted to be done. While it is possible to appoint Co-Agents under a Durable Power of Attorney who must act together and thereby consult with one another, this is typically not recommended in the context of a Designation of Health Care Surrogate as conflict among the co-surrogates may lead to a delay in necessary healthcare treatment. Florida Statutes also do not specifically authorize joint health care surrogates. Additionally, the Health Care Surrogate could potentially restrict access to the patient, meaning either the spouse or the children would not be allowed to visit their spouse or parent while they are in the hospital. This is especially true in situations where the stepparent and stepchildren do not have a good relationship. The savvy estate planner may consider including a provision in the Designation of Health Care Surrogate that specifically prohibits the agent from restricting access to visitation by family members unless recommended by the medical team.

Whether in a blended family or not, it is imperative that the principal choose an Agent/Health Care Surrogate who is levelheaded, and who is able to get along with other family members. Additionally, to prevent surprises and potential sources of conflict, the principal’s wishes should be discussed with the entire family early and often.

Documents for use upon the death of the first spouse to die:

The most difficult part of estate planning for a blended family is determining how assets will be divided upon the death of the first spouse. While in a typical estate plan for a married couple the spouses leave all of their assets outright to the survivor, this may not be ideal in the context of a blended family. The surviving spouse may remarry, or may choose to disinherit the deceased spouse’s children from a previous marriage by modifying their own estate plan. Therefore, a simple Last Will and Testament is insufficient to protect the interest of the children from a previous marriage.

One option many estate planners use is to have the assets of the deceased spouse go directly to the surviving spouse under a Last Will and Testament, joint ownership, etc., while also naming the children from a previous marriage as beneficiaries of a life insurance policy. This way, the surviving spouse has the benefits of the deceased spouse’s assets, while also leaving a legacy to the children from a previous marriage.

A second option frequently employed is to have the spouses execute reciprocal Last Will and Testaments, providing for the outright distribution of the assets to the surviving spouse, with the children receiving an inheritance upon the death of the surviving spouse. After the reciprocal Wills are executed, the spouses then enter into an Agreement to Maintain Wills and Beneficiary Designations, whereby each spouse gives up the right to unilaterally change their

(continued on page 6)

(Estate Planning, continued from page 5)

Last Will and Testament, or any beneficiary designations, without the consent of the other spouse. The requirements for this type of agreement are listed in § 732.701, Florida Statutes. The downside to this planning technique is threefold. First, the surviving spouse may have very legitimate reasons to change their Will or beneficiary designations that have nothing to do with disinheriting the children. Second, the children from a previous marriage will generally have to wait a significant amount of time following the death of their natural parent to receive their inheritance, causing resentment and hard feelings toward the stepparent. Lastly, the needs of the surviving spouse may completely deplete the deceased spouse's assets, leaving no inheritance at all for the children from a previous marriage.

To address the above issues, some planners use the Last Will and Testament of the spouse with children from a previous marriage to make a bequest directly to the children of a portion of the estate upon their death, with the remainder going to the surviving spouse. However, planners should take note of the Homestead Rights, Elective Share Rights, and other statutory rights of surviving spouses in the State of Florida.

"AB Trusts," or "ABC Trusts," have historically been used for estate tax avoidance purposes. However, estate planners have now found the value in these types of Trusts for estate planning for blended families. In the best scenario, the spouse with children from a previous marriage will make a bequest of a portion of their assets directly to the children upon their death, with 25% of the decedent's assets seeming to be the most common figure used. The remainder of the assets are held in Trust for the benefit of the surviving spouse, with the remainder going to the children upon

the death of the surviving spouse. By using this method, the children receive an inheritance upon the death of their natural parent, the surviving spouse is supported throughout their lifetime with a stream of income to support their customary standard of living, and the majority of the assets ultimately end up passing to the deceased spouse's children.

While a Trust is an excellent planning vehicle for a blended family, special care should be used in selecting a Trustee. To avoid the potential for conflicts of interest and familial discord, many experts recommend the appointment of a sophisticated, neutral, and independent third-party trustee, such as an Attorney, Professional Fiduciary, Bank, or Trust Company. Should the principal wish to have some decision-making involvement from the family, the independent Trustee can be appointed to serve as a Co-Trustee with a family member. In the Co-Trustee context, the family member understands the family dynamics, relationships, and priorities, while the independent third party trustee provides objectivity, practicality, and a wealth of experience.

In a standard estate plan, a Tangible Personal Property Separate Writing is not given a great amount of thought. However, in the context of a blended family, this can be one of the most important parts of the estate plan. Hard feelings and disappointment often arise if a child does not get a particular heirloom item that they are convinced their parent wanted them to have, even if the item is of little financial value. Many petty fights, and sometimes costly litigation, can be avoided by a well thought out Tangible Personal Property Separate Writing.

A Quick Word on Marital Agreements:

The value of pre- or post-nuptial agreements in a blended family cannot be overstated. These marital agreements generally spell things out in detail, including the surviving spouse's rights to the estate of the deceased spouse. Many of these agreements include important provisions such as waivers of homestead rights and elective share rights. From an estate planning perspective, the most important feature of these agreements is that it forces the couple to have a "meeting of the minds" concerning their plans and goals, how they intend to provide for one another, and to what extent they want to leave assets to their children. This "meeting of the minds," and having clarity of intentions upfront, is invaluable to maintaining familial harmony in a blended family. For the attorney, there are complex ethical issues which may require a waiver of the potential conflicts of interest, separate representation, financial disclosure, and other considerations to avoid an ethics violation by the attorney, and litigation challenging the validity of the agreement by the surviving spouse.

Conclusion:

While every adult should have a written estate plan, it is especially important that members of a blended family seek qualified legal representation, put their plan in writing, and then implement and maintain the plan. Otherwise, the laws of intestacy will govern, which most often do not comport with what the deceased spouse would have wanted. By employing the techniques described above, estate planners can help to ensure that a blended family remains a happy family, even following the death of one or both spouses.



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Congratulations Amanda Tullidge!



The law firm of Blalock Walters, P.A. is pleased to announce that real estate attorney Amanda C. Tullidge has become a principal of the firm.

Tullidge joined Blalock Walters in 2013 and is a member of the firm's Real Estate and Banking practice groups. Her practice is in commercial and residential real estate law, with a focus on commercial leasing, commercial transactions, and residential real estate.

Tullidge is a Licensed Realtor®, a member of Realtor Association of Sarasota and Manatee, serves on the Manatee County

Bar Association Young Lawyers Division board of directors and is a member of Lakewood Ranch Business Alliance and Manatee Young Professionals. She was named Finalist for both 2019 Sarasota Young Professional of the Year and Manatee Young Professional MVP. Active in the community, Tullidge serves as board member and grants chairperson of Lakewood Ranch Community Foundation and co-founded Cheers for Charity, a women's giving circle comprised of over 30 young professional women who raise funds for local nonprofit organizations.

"Since joining Blalock Walters immediately upon graduation from the University of Florida, I knew it was a special place to work," says Tullidge. "The commitment to producing high-end legal work that would make a difference in the community was evident. I am honored to be joining the ranks of the talented partners here. I look forward to continuing to represent parties in a wide range of real property matters."

"Amanda has made a difference in our firm not just through her thorough and attentive care of her clients but also in how she gives back," says Managing Partner Matthew Plummer. "Through her many years of leadership with the bar and local nonprofit organizations, you can see her active engagement and her passion for her community."

Tullidge earned her B.A., cum laude, from University of Florida and her J.D., magna cum laude, Order of the Coif, from University of Florida Levin College of Law.

Congratulations, Scott E. Rudacille



Blalock Walters, P.A. is pleased to announce that the City of Bradenton has hired Blalock Walters, P.A. to serve as its legal counsel.

Scott E. Rudacille will serve as City Attorney. Rudacille is Board Certified in City, County and Local Government Law by the Florida Bar and holds an AV Preeminent™ Peer Review Rating from Martindale-Hubbell. He serves as counsel to a wide variety of local government entities, and he represents private clients in all aspects of the permitting and development process.

In addition to general government matters, the firm will also provide representation to the City in related matters such as litigation, real estate, land use and labor and employment.



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Se habla Espanol

Welcome New Members

Deborah J. Blue, Esq.
Stetson College of Law, 1985
Year Admitted to the Florida Bar, 1985
Ms. Blue is a shareholder with Dickinson & Gibbons, PA,
401 N. Cattleman Road, Ste. 300, Sarasota, FL 34232.

Adam Shapiro, Esq.
Stetson College of Law, 2017
Year Admitted to the Florida Bar, 2017
Mr. Shapiro is a partner with Shapiro / Delgado,
308 Cocoanut Avenue, Sarasota, FL 34236.

M. David Shapiro, Esq.
FSU College of Law, 1985
Year Admitted to the Florida Bar, 1985
Mr. Shapiro is a partner with Shapiro / Delgado,
308 Cocoanut Avenue, Sarasota, FL 34236.

Carl Taylor Smith, Esq.
Stetson College of Law, 2017
Year Admitted to the Florida Bar, 2017
Mr. Smith is an associate attorney with Dickinson
& Gibbons, PA, 401 N. Cattleman Road, Ste. 300,
Sarasota, FL 34232.

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Contact Ed Sobel
(941) 746-1203
ed@sobelattorneys.com

DATES TO REMEMBER:

January 16, 2020	Diversity & Inclusion Committee Meeting - MCJC
January 23, 2020	Solo/Small Firm CLE
January 29, 2020	General Membership Luncheon Pier 22
February 4, 2020	Family Law Section CLE
February 5, 2020	Board of Directors Meeting - MCJC
February 12, 2020	YLD Board of Directors Meeting - MCJC
February 20, 2020	Diversity & Inclusion Committee Meeting - MCJC
February 26, 2020	General Membership Luncheon Pier 22
March 4, 2020	Board of Directors Meeting - MCJC
March 11, 2020	YLD Board of Directors Meeting - MCJC
March 12, 2020	YLD Joint Social with Sarasota YLD - details to come
March 13, 2020	MCBA at Spring Training – see flyer
March 14, 2020	MCBA at the Arcadia Rodeo – ticket sales on your own
March 19, 2020	Diversity & Inclusion Committee Meeting - MCJC
March 25, 2020	General Membership Luncheon Pier 22
April 1, 2020	Board of Directors Meeting - MCJC
April 8, 2020	YLD Board of Directors Meeting - MCJC
April 14, 2020	Family Section CLE: Details to Come
April 16, 2020	Diversity & Inclusion Committee Meeting - MCJC
April 24, 2020	MCBA Beach Party – Grimes Family Beach House
May 6, 2020	Board of Directors Meeting - MCJC
May 13, 2020	YLD Board of Directors Meeting - MCJC
May 20, 2020	LAW DAY Luncheon *Note: This is NOT the last Wednesday of the month
May 21, 2020	Diversity & Inclusion Committee Meeting - MCJC
June 3, 2020	Board of Directors Meeting - MCJC
June 4, 2020	Intellectual Property CLE – details to come
June 10, 2020	YLD Board of Directors Meeting - MCJC
June 18, 2020	Diversity & Inclusion Committee Meeting - MCJC
June 23, 2020	Family Section CLE – details to come
June 24, 2020	General Membership Luncheon Pier 22

*dates are subject to change

The Florida Bar Standing Committee of Professionalism is encouraging submissions for the Group Professionalism Award as well as the William M. Hoeveler Judicial Professionalism Award.

The deadline to submit nominations is February 14, 2020.

For more information, please visit www.floridabar.org/prof/pawards

MCBA Holiday Party 2019

The MCBA Holiday Party 2019 has come and gone – but the bar was raised high! MCBA members and guests gathered once again at the Bradenton Country Club for an evening of delicious hors d'oeuvres and cocktails wearing their holiday attire. Throughout the evening, over 100 attendees enjoyed live music sponsored by Lutz, Bobo, & Telfair and made acquaintance both old and new. The annual Holiday Party traditionally is one of the highlight events of the year, and gives members, guests and business sponsors a chance to reconnect and celebrate during the season of cheer. Special thanks to this year's sponsors!



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The firm's attorneys practicing in the areas of Wills, Trusts and Estates are currently accepting referrals and new clients in the following areas:

- Estate planning;
- Probate and trust administration;
- Probate, trust and guardianship litigation
- Homestead issues
- Elder Law
- Elective share
- Rights of surviving spouse
- Public benefits and Medicaid planning
- Veteran's benefits
- Guardianship.



Jeffrey S. Goethe, Esq.

- Admitted to the Florida Bar in 1990
- Florida Bar Board-Certified in Wills, Trusts & Estates
- Fellow, American College of Trust and Estate Counsel
- AV-rated by Martindale-Hubbell
- Current member and past chair of the Florida Probate Rules Committee
- The Florida Bar's RPPTL Section Executive Council, Homestead Committee Co-Chair, Bar Journal Co-Chair
- Past Director and President of the Manatee County Bar Association



Lawrence W. Thomas, Esq.

- Admitted to the Florida Bar in 1985
- Past Director and Secretary of the Manatee County Bar Association
- Practice areas include wills, trusts, estates, guardianship and elder law



M. Brandon Robinson, Esq.

- Admitted to the Florida Bar in 2015
- United States Department of Veteran's Affairs Accredited Attorney
- Executive Board Member, Thomas E. Penick, Jr. Elder Law Inn of Court
- Combat Veteran, United States Marine Corps
- Practice areas include wills, trusts, estates, guardianship, elder law, and veteran's benefits

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5:30 - 8:30 pm
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5 Things You Didn't Know About Me:

Judge Charles Sniffen

1. I was born in Edina, Minnesota. My family moved to New York City when I was just a few weeks old. I have never been back to Minnesota but still plan to visit one day.
2. I once gave a speech at the General Assembly Hall of the United Nations.
3. I studied French in school for twelve years, but sadly I am so out of practice that I can no longer speak conversationally.
4. I like to cook. I do most of the cooking for my family.
5. I don't like Watermelon or Shrimp. Many people find this strange. I don't like Lima Beans either. Nobody finds this strange.



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Grimes Goebel Grimes Hawkins Gladfelter & Galvano, P.L. ("AV" rated law firm) is seeking an experienced litigation attorney. Candidates should have excellent research and writing skills, along with practical case management experience including attending hearings and conducting depositions. Candidates should also be proficient at Microsoft Office, Westlaw, and billing software. Competitive salary with benefits based on experience. Candidates should submit a cover letter, resume, writing sample, and salary history to jdanziger@grimesgoebel.com. Communications will remain confidential. We are not accepting third-party/recruiter submissions.

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Get Ready for the January General Membership Luncheon – The Arcadia Rodeo is Rolling into Town! Welcome Judges Hall and Parker!

By Judge Gilbert Smith, Jr.

I figured out a long time ago that the Arcadia Rodeo is one of the best events in Florida. Growing up in Florida and visiting my relatives in Arcadia, meant that I was going to the parade and Arcadia Rodeo once or twice a year. It was tradition. It was always a treat to see my grandmother, Grace Gilbert Smith playing the washboard with the Arcadia Ladies Band while riding on a float. But the real treat was to see all the cowboys and cowgirls riding magnificent horses through downtown Arcadia. And often there was a gunfight with real gunfighters, or I thought so at the time. And then to top it off, we would follow the parade goers to the rodeo arena where the action really happened. Bull riding, mutton busting, barrel racing, steer wrestling, bronc riding and so much more. What an exciting time. So much fun.

After I graduated from college, periodically I would return to Arcadia during the rodeo season and relive my childhood memories. For many years, the judges of the 12th Circuit have had leadership roles with the rodeo; Judge Vince Hall, Judge Jim Parker and Judge Don Hall. Judge Don Hall serves as president and Judge Parker serves as vice president and you can be sure that you will see them at the rodeo each and every day of the event.

The Arcadia Rodeo began back in the middle of 1928 when the American Legion wanted to raise money to help pay for a new building. A local businessman, who was a member of the American Legion, asked a prominent rancher (Zeb Parker) if a rodeo could be held to raise money. Mr. Parker agreed it could be done and offered to furnish the stock for free.

In preparation for this event, special arrangements were made to bring in a group of Seminole Indians. The American Legion and the Lion's Club volunteered to sponsor a parade. Two thousand Shriners were expected to march in the parade. The Governor of Florida, Doyle E. Carlton, notified officials he would be attending the rodeo and the Wauchula band provided the music. The first rodeo was such a success that the American Legion was able to pay off the mortgage on the new building in just four years.

During the early thirties (even though the local economy was

devastated by the Great Depression) the rodeo continued as people struggled to simply earn enough to afford the necessities of life. During these years the rodeos were held in the Limestone Community of Desoto County, where the interest in rodeo was kept alive. In 1938 at the urgings of his son (Billy Welles) and a friend (Gerald Taylor- a local rancher and businessman), Ed Welles agreed to promote and finance the rodeo. The Arcadia rodeo became an annual event at the Welles' arena until the sudden death of Ed Welles on June 11, 1950. However, the tradition of rodeo was so firmly entrenched in the hearts of so many Desoto Countians that on January 10, 1952, at a meeting of the Rotary Club, what would become the Arcadia All-Florida Championship Rodeo, Inc. as we know it today was reactivated.

The rodeo continued at the Welles' arena until 1959 when the arena was moved to location south of downtown Arcadia. Then in 2017, the rodeo moved to its present location, the Mosaic Arena. In 1973 the Arcadia All-Florida Championship Rodeo, Inc. joined the ranks of the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association (PRCA). The Arcadia All-Florida Championship Rodeo, Inc. has evolved from its pioneer beginnings (when competing cowboys and ranchers matched their skills for the entertainment of local audiences) to a national sport, drawing top cowboy athletes from all over the nation. Cowboys who compete for purses and points are aiming for the "Super Bowl" of rodeo: The National Finals held annually in Las Vegas.

The Arcadia All-Florida Championship Rodeo provides over \$60,000 in donations including two \$2,000 scholarships to local graduating seniors. We are proud to be the largest fundraiser each year for the Desoto Band Boosters and Boy Scouts Troop 39. The AAFCR does not only give monetary contributions to the DeSoto 4-H and FFA but provide an opportunity for students to learn about Florida agriculture, ranching and cowboy heritage.

In 2008, the AAFCR created the Arcadia Youth Rodeo Association (AYRA). The AYRA allows local youth, ages 4 to 18, to compete for points and prizes. Participants must keep at least a C grade av-



erage and log 20 volunteer hours in order to compete. The AYRA has grown to be the second largest youth rodeo organization in the state of Florida.

Once again, this year, our very own retired Judge Doug Henderson will be taking the stage with his bluegrass band, "The Manatee River Bluegrass Band", at the Arcadia Rodeo on March 14th & 15th. You definitely won't want to miss that! We cannot wait for the Arcadia Rodeo to get here. Although the MCBA has already completed its ticket sales, some tickets remain by contacting the Arcadia Rodeo directly. Please go to their website at: <http://arcadiarodeo.com/> to get yours. See you at the rodeo on March 14, 2020.

In the meantime: RSVP with Graceann at MCBA@ManateeBar.com to reserve your spot at the January 29th, 2020 General Membership Luncheon.



Florida Bar's Board Of Governors Seek Applicants

The Board of Governors is seeking applicants for the following vacancy to be filled during its March 20, 2020, meeting:

Supreme Court's Judicial Ethics Advisory Committee: One lawyer to fill a four-year term commencing July 1, 2020, and ending June 30, 2024. This is a 12-member committee that renders 20 to 25 written advisory opinions a year to inquiring judges and judicial candidates regarding application of the Code of Judicial Conduct to specific instances of contemplated judicial and non-judicial conduct. The committee meets once a year at The Florida Bar's Annual Convention and attendance is strongly encouraged. The majority of the committee's work, however, is undertaken via e-mail and phone conferencing. The committee is also responsible for judicial campaign conduct forums scheduled in election years.

Persons interested in applying for these vacancies may download the Application for Special Appointment or should call Bar headquarters at (850) 561-5757, to obtain the application form. Completed applications must be received by the Executive Director, The Florida Bar, 651 East Jefferson Street, Tallahassee, Florida, 32399-2300 or submitted via e-mail to specialapptapp@floridabar.org no later than the close of business on Friday, February 7, 2020. Resumes will not be accepted in lieu of the required application. The Board of Governors will review all applications and may request telephone or personal interviews.



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