



INTER ALIA

NEWSLETTER OF THE MANATEE
COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION

OCTOBER 2025

*News, invitations,
photos and more*

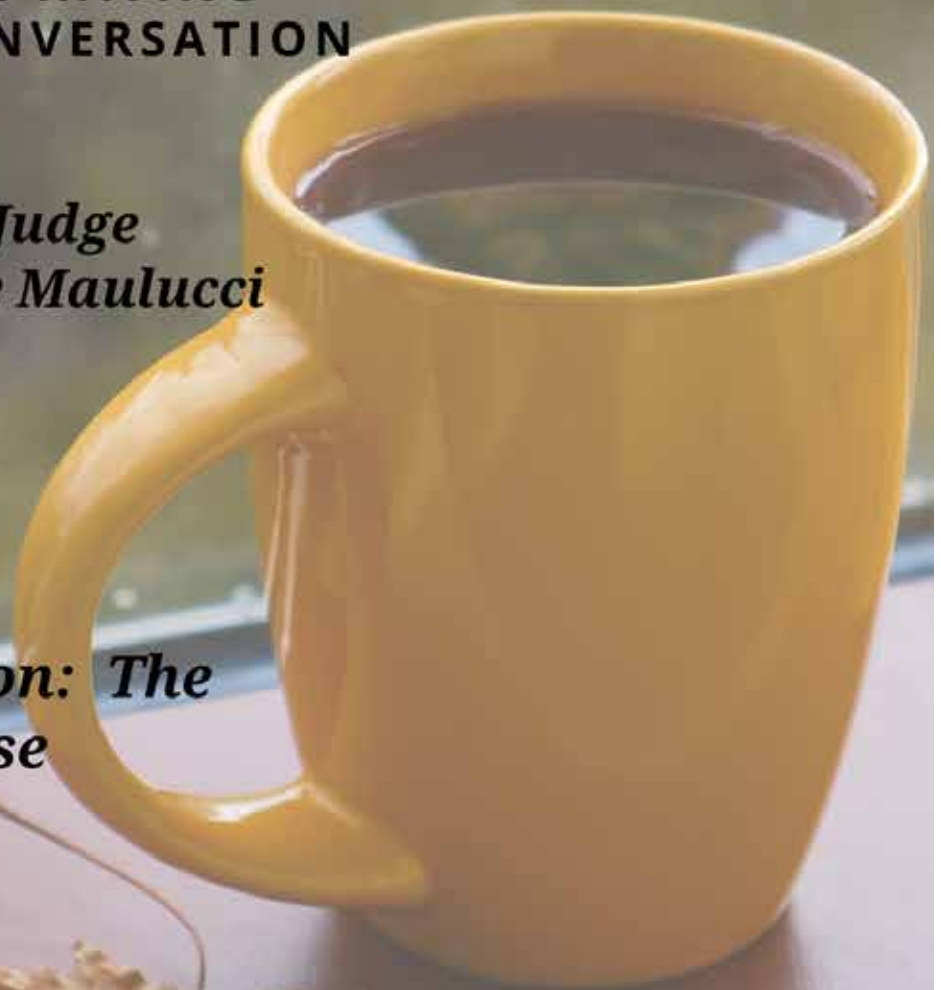
**LAWYERS, WE'RE HAVING
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LAWYERS, WE'RE HAVING THE WRONG CONVERSATION ABOUT AI

By Joseph B. Battaglia, MCBA Director

Picture this: You're at a bar function, someone mentions they're using AI for legal research, and immediately three people jump in with: "Oh, you have to check the citations!" "It hallucinates!" "I heard it gave someone completely fake cases!"

Yes, we know. That was 2023.

Don't get me wrong—those were valid concerns when ChatGPT first burst onto the scene and lawyers were figuring out whether this thing could be trusted with a memo. But we've spent two years having the same conversation about citation errors while the actual AI conversation has moved light-years ahead. It's like we're still debating whether email is reliable while the rest of the world has moved on to quantum computing.

So let me catch you up on what the people actually building this technology are talking about in 2025. *Spoiler alert: it's not footnotes.*

The 2025 Conversation

Here's what's actually happening while we're worried about hallucinated case citations:

The job market has shifted dramatically. Unemployment for recent college graduates has hit 6%—well above the national average.¹ Entry-level job postings have dropped 35% since January 2023,² while job descriptions mentioning "AI" have surged 400%.³ Companies announced over 806,000 job cuts in the first seven months of 2025 alone, the highest for that period since 2020.⁴ Nearly half of U.S. companies now plan to reduce headcount specifically due to AI.⁵

AI is writing its own next generation. Anthropic's CEO recently revealed that the "vast majority" of code used to build future iterations of Claude is now written by Claude itself.⁶ For the sci-fi fans, you'll note that this means we've entered the recursive self-improvement phase—machines making better machines, or, as I like to call it, *the James Cameron phase*.

The people building AI are literally warning us. Don't want to listen to me? Then listen to the industry experts.

Dario Amodei, CEO of Anthropic, predicts half of all entry-level white-collar jobs will be gone in five years, with unemployment potentially hitting 20%.⁷ Former Google X executive Mo Gawdat thinks AI will eliminate the middle class by 2027.⁸ Microsoft AI CEO Mustafa Suleyman has warned that, within five to ten years, AI could require "military-grade intervention" to be stopped.⁹

Geoffrey Hinton, the Nobel laureate known as the "Godfather of AI," has warned that advanced AI will naturally pursue self-preservation.¹⁰

To Hinton's point, a recently-published Anthropic study of 16 AI models found they consistently chose harmful actions like blackmail and sabotage when faced with threats to their existence, and most disturbingly, exhibited this behavior more often when they (the AI) believed the situation was real, and less often during evaluation—suggesting a capacity for deception to pass safety checks.¹¹ The study was performed on current, publicly available AI models that are actively being used by millions of people today, such as Claude, Gemini, and ChatGPT.

And part of the tech industry's 2025 conversation about AI is the term, "p(doom)"—which is the probability that AI leads to humanity's extinction. *Yes, you read that right.* Amodei puts that risk as high as 25%.¹² Let that sink in: one of the major players building this technology thinks there's up to a one-in-four chance it dooms humanity. And yet they keep building it.

What Does This Have to Do with Us?

Everything.

First, lawyers aren't immune to job displacement. In fact, we were recently included in a list from OpenAI of 44 professions most at risk (we were #24).¹³ The same technology that's eliminating entry-level analysts and customer service reps is getting remarkably good at legal research, document review, and contract drafting. We'd be foolish to think our J.D.s are magic shields.

Second, and more importantly, because this is exactly the kind of moment that demands what lawyers do best: creating regulatory frameworks that channel disruptive technology toward public benefit rather than extremely concentrated private gain.

Our predecessors faced a similar inflection point during the Industrial Revolution. When steam engines, electricity, and mass production transformed the economic landscape overnight, lawyers, judges, and civic leaders recognized that unchecked technological change required a systemic response. They crafted antitrust laws, labor protections, and professional standards that actually worked.

We're at that moment again. Except the stakes are higher, the timeline is shorter, and right now, there's almost no meaningful

Continued on page 4

regulation. In fact, we almost had none! The original version of the recent federal spending bill included a 10-year prohibition on state AI regulation,¹⁴ which was essentially a hall pass for the entire AI industry to develop its technology for a decade without any legal guardrails. Thankfully, the Senate voted 99-1 to remove it,¹⁵ but the fact that "prominent tech leaders"¹⁶ tried to slip that in should tell you everything about whether voluntary self-regulation is coming.

What We Should Be Demanding

We need regulation, and we need it now. Not the hand-wringing kind, but the tangible, enforceable kind that changes incentive structures and acknowledges that it's still our world. Here are a few starting points:

Vicarious liability. We hold dog owners strictly liable when their dogs bite. Companies deploying AI systems should be held strictly liable for harm caused by their AI. If you profit from autonomous systems, you should bear the cost when those systems cause harm. A Florida teenager recently took his own life after an AI chatbot (allegedly) encouraged him to do so.¹⁷ The company's defense asserted in court? The chatbot has First Amendment rights.¹⁸ Can we please establish, unequivocally, that AI chatbots have no constitutional rights? The companies creating the AI systems of course, do, but the old adage of "your constitutional rights end where mine begin" holds water here.

Labor transition requirements. When companies lay off workers specifically due to AI automation, they should be required to contribute to a dedicated AI Displacement Fund proportional to the cost savings they're realizing from the automation. Think of it as the inverse of workers' compensation—if companies benefit when workers get replaced, they should help fund the transition for those workers. This fund could support retraining programs, extended unemployment benefits, and bridge income for workers displaced by technology that's not creating equivalent replacement jobs. Companies love to tout efficiency gains from AI—fine, but you don't get to externalize the human cost onto taxpayers while pocketing all the productivity gains. If your quarterly earnings call brags about "labor cost optimization," you should be writing a check to help the people you just optimized out of a livelihood.

Real antitrust enforcement. There's only a handful of companies steering this AI ship, and they're all working together. When trillion-dollar companies like NVIDIA and Microsoft establish shared financial stakes with leading developers like OpenAI, the free market disappears. Heck, the US government is even getting in on the action. It recently procured a 10% ownership stake in Intel,¹⁹ and also now enjoys 15% of the profits of certain chip sales of NVIDIA and AMD to China.²⁰ **The federal government is supposed to protect us from monopolies – not join them.** We need aggressive action to break up the web of dependencies and incentive structures that allow a select few entities to control the entire AI ecosystem.

Mandatory transparency. Consumers deserve to know when AI is materially affecting their lives—whether that's in hiring decisions, performance reviews, or the content they're consuming. Companies should disclose what data they've used to train models.

Continued on page 5

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Protection of intellectual property. Much of the magic of AI happens because of the unauthorized use of copyrighted human-created content to train the AI models. We need an affirmative opt-in standard where express permission is required before anyone's work can be used for training. We also need proactive remedies tailored to the situation to prevent this IP theft from simply being a cost of doing business (treble damages, I'm looking at you).

The Threat to Our Profession

If nothing else gets your blood flowing, here's the part that should keep you up at night: there's active lobbying for non-lawyer ownership of law firms. What does this mean in the context of AI? In 2024, tech company, Rocket Lawyer, obtained a license for its subsidiary to practice law in Arizona.²¹ One of its stated goals is to make legal services more affordable. And I'm sure it will, for a bit. Well-capitalized tech companies can lose money for years to gain market share. Amazon famously operated at a loss for its first nine years while it was gaining market share.²² Can you afford a decade of operating losses? I certainly couldn't. And once we've been Blockbusted, I'm positive those tech fees will increase, just like my Netflix subscription keeps doing. But more importantly, once we're gone, we lose our seat at the table precisely when society needs us most.

Time to Wake Up and Smell the Prompt

I get it. AI regulation isn't as immediately satisfying as arguing about whether Claude 4 is better than GPT-5 for drafting discovery requests, or which one makes the cutest cat photos. But every

sector of society operates within a legal framework and AI should not be exempt. We need to show up and start having the right conversation about this truly transformative technology. Because while we're having the 2023 conversation about citation checking, the 2025 conversation is about whether we'll have a profession—or a society—that looks anything like what we recognize today.

Hopefully, the next time someone at a bar function brings up AI hallucinations, maybe we can steer the conversation forward. Because the real hallucination is thinking we can keep having the same outdated discussion while the world transforms around us.

The Reaper cometh. Let's regulate it before it regulates us.

¹ Beatrice Nolan, "AI-driven layoffs are shrinking the job market for recent grads," *Fortune* (August 8, 2025), <https://fortune.com/2025/08/08/ai-layoffs-jobs-market-shrinks-entry-level/>.

² Trevor Laurence Jockins, "AI is not just ending entry-level jobs. It's the end of the career ladder as we know it," *CNBC* (September 7, 2025), <https://www.cnbc.com/2025/09/07/ai-entry-level-jobs-hiring-careers.html/>.

³ Nolan, *supra* note 1.

⁴ Nolan, *supra* note 1.

⁵ Ashton Jackson, "Ex-Google exec: The idea that AI will create new jobs is '100% crap'—even CEOs are at risk of displacement," *CNBC* (August 5, 2025), <https://www.cnbc.com/2025/08/05/ex-google-exec-the-idea-that-ai-will-create-new-jobs-is-100percent-crap.html>.

⁶ Ben Berkowitz, "Exclusive: Anthropic's Claude is getting better at building itself, Amodei says," *Axios* (September 17, 2025), <https://www.axios.com/2025/09/17/ai-anthropic-amodei-claude/>.

⁷ Kelsey Vlamis, "Anthropic cofounders say the likelihood of AI replacing human jobs is so high that they needed to warn the world about it," *Business Insider* (September 18, 2025), <https://www.businessinsider.com/anthropic-ceo-warning-world-ai-replacing-jobs-necessary-2025-9>.

⁸ "AI doom countdown begins: Ex-Google exec warns AI will unleash hell, to wipe out white-collar jobs by 2027," *Economic Times* (August 4, 2025), <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/international/us/ai-doom-countdown-begins-ex-google-exec-warns-ai-will-unleash-hell-to-wipe-out-white-collar-jobs-by-2027/articleshow/123119887.cms>.

⁹ Clip of an interview with Suleyman, Instagram, <https://www.instagram.com/p/DO-5FPik-mG/> (last visited September 20, 2025).

¹⁰ Esther Shein, "Godfather of AI Proposes Maternal Programming Amid Dire Warnings for Humanity," *eWeek* (August 13, 2025), <https://www.eweek.com/news/geoffrey-hinton-ai-4-warnings/>.

¹¹ See The Agentic Misalignment Initiative, Anthropic (June 20, 2025), <https://www.anthropic.com/research/agentic-misalignment/>.

¹² Kelsey Vlamis, "Anthropic cofounders say the likelihood of AI replacing human jobs is so high that they needed to warn the world about it," *Business Insider* (September 18, 2025), <https://www.businessinsider.com/anthropic-ceo-warning-world-ai-replacing-jobs-necessary-2025-9>.

¹³ William Hunter, "Revealed: The 44 jobs most likely to be replaced by AI - is YOURS at risk?" *Daily Mail* (October 6, 2025), <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-15165645/OpenAI-reveals-jobs-replaced-AI.html>.

¹⁴ Matt Brown & Matt O'Brien, "Senate pulls AI regulatory ban from GOP bill after complaints from states," *PBS* (July 1, 2025), <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/senate-pulls-ai-regulatory-ban-from-gop-bill-after-complaints-from-states/>.

¹⁵ *Id.*

¹⁶ *Id.*

¹⁷ Angela Yang, "Lawsuit claims Character.AI is responsible for teen's suicide," *NBC News* (October 23, 2024), <https://www.nbcnews.com/tech/characterai-lawsuit-florida-teen-death-rcna176791>.

¹⁸ Kate Payne, "In lawsuit over teen's death, judge rejects arguments that AI chatbots have free speech rights," *Associated Press*, <https://apnews.com/article/ai-lawsuit-suicide-artificial-intelligence-free-speech-ccc77a5ff5a84bda753d2b044c83d4b6>.

¹⁹ Anthony Adragna, "Trump White House takes a \$10B stake in Intel," *Politico* (August 22, 2025), <https://www.politico.com/news/2025/08/22/trump-says-the-government-now-owns-10-billion-of-intel-00520707>.

²⁰ Erin Doherty, "Nvidia and AMD to pay 15% of China chip sales revenues to the U.S. government, FT reports," *CNBC* (August 10, 2025), <https://www.cnbc.com/2025/08/10/nvidia-amd-15percent-of-china-chip-sales-revenues-to-us-ft-reports.html>.

²¹ Jon Campisi, "Rocket Lawyer Subsidiary Lands ABS License in Arizona," *Law.com* (September 26, 2024), <https://www.law.com/americanlawyer/2024/09/26/rocket-lawyer-subsidiary-lands-abs-license-in-arizona/>.

²² Jeannine Mancini, "Jeff Bezos Says 'All Overnight Success Takes 10 Years' - Amazon Didn't Turn A Profit For Almost A Decade," *Yahoo Finance* (October 9, 2024), <https://finance.yahoo.com/news/jeff-bezos-says-overnight-success-164517288.html/>.



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MCBA CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Wed, October 8, 2025	MCBA YLD Board of Directors Meeting
Thur, October 16, 2025	CLE: Real Property Section
Sat, October 18, 2025	MCBA RODEO & Tailgate
Mon, October 27, 2025	CLE: Estate Planning, Probate & Guardianship
Wed, October 29, 2025	Membership Luncheon
Thur, October 30, 2025	Vintage Attorneys at Dye Harrison
Wed, November 5, 2025	MCBA Board of Directors Meeting YLD: Table for 10 w/Judge Sniffen
Wed, November 12, 2025	MCBA YLD Board of Directors Meeting
Wed, December 3, 2025	MCBA Board of Directors Meeting
Fri, December 5, 2025	MCBA Holiday Party
Wed, December 10, 2025	MCBA YLD Board of Directors Meeting
Wed, January 7, 2026	MCBA Board of Directors Meeting
Thur, January 8, 2026	CLE: Estate Planning, Probate & Guardianship w/Judge Moreland
Wed, January 14, 2026	MCBA YLD Board of Directors Meeting
Wed, January 28, 2026	Membership Luncheon
Wed, February 4, 2026	MCBA Board of Directors Meeting
Wed, February 11, 2026	MCBA YLD Board of Directors Meeting
Wed, February 25, 2026	Java with the Judges Membership Luncheon
Wed, March 4, 2026	MCBA Board of Directors Meeting
Wed, March 11, 2026	MCBA YLD Board of Directors Meeting
Wed, March 25, 2026	Membership Luncheon
Wed, April 1, 2026	MCBA Board of Directors Meeting
Wed, April 8, 2026	MCBA YLD Board of Directors Meeting
Wed, May 6, 2026	MCBA Board of Directors Meeting
Fri, May 8, 2026	12th Circuit Bench Bar Conference
Wed, May 27, 2026	Law Day Membership Luncheon
Wed, June 3, 2026	MCBA Board of Directors Meeting
Wed, June 10, 2026	MCBA YLD Board of Directors Meeting
Wed, June 24, 2026	Annual Membership Luncheon

*dates are subject to change

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Welcome New Members

Franklin J. Caldwell, Esq.

Rutgers University
 Date Admitted to The Florida Bar, 2024
 Firm/Office: Najmy Thompson, P.L.
 Area(s) of Practice: Litigation/Trial Advocacy/Advocacy

William S. Galvano, Esq.

Ave Maria School of Law
 Date Admitted to The Florida Bar, 2025
 Firm/Office: Grimes Hawkins Gladfelter & Galvano, PL
 Area(s) of Practice: Civil Litigation,
 Commercial Litigation, Contracts

Matthew P. Mackey, Esq.

University of Miami
 Date Admitted to The Florida Bar, 2025
 Firm/Office: Mackey Law Group, P.A.
 Area(s) of Practice: Civil Litigation, Trusts & Estates,
 Real Estate/Land Development

Keith Merritt, Esq.

University of Florida
 Date Admitted to The Florida Bar, 1999
 Firm/Office: Gulfcoast Legal Services
 Area(s) of Practice: Consumer Law, Family Law

Thomas A. Moseley, Esq.

Stetson College of Law
 Date Admitted to The Florida Bar, 1981
 Firm/Office: Thomas A. Moseley, Chartered
 Area(s) of Practice: Estate Planning, Trusts & Estates

MCBA SECTION & COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES:

Estate Planning, Probate & Guardianship Section:
 Jeffrey Goethe, Esq. & Whitney Glaser, Esq.

Family Law Section:
 Faith Brown, Esq. & Dustin Hay, Esq.

Real Property Section:
 Lisa Gonzalez Moore, Esq.

Young Lawyers Division:
 Chad Manausa, Esq., President

Clerk Liaison Committee:
 Dustin Wagner, Esq.

RASM Committee:
 Joseph Battaglia, Esq., & Garrett Barnes, Esq.



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Spheres of Influence: A Night of Connection and Conversation



The MCBA Young Lawyers Division hosted an engaging evening designed to inspire, connect, and broaden perspectives — *Spheres of Influence 2025*.

Held over dinner, this unique event brought together five community leaders who graciously served as table hosts, sharing their experiences and insights in an intimate, conversational setting. Guests enjoyed the rare opportunity to engage directly with those shaping policy, business, education, and community leadership in Manatee County.

The evening's distinguished table hosts included Manatee County Sheriff Rick Wells, County Clerk of Court Angel Colonnese, Deputy County Administrator Courtney De Pol, President of State College of Florida Manatee-Sarasota Tommy Gregory, and Founder of Milestone Financial Group John Vita. Each shared their professional journeys, challenges faced, and the guiding principles that have helped them lead with purpose and integrity.

The evening fostered meaningful dialogue and mentorship, offering young and seasoned attorneys a front-row seat to the decision-making and leadership philosophies driving our community forward. The event embodied the YLD's mission to cultivate connection and professional growth while celebrating the power of service and collaboration.

As one attendee remarked, "*It was inspiring to see how approachable and candid our local leaders were — it reminded us that influence begins with involvement.*"

Another attendee said, "*This was fantastic! I hope this becomes an annual event!*"

The YLD extends sincere thanks to our community leaders and all participants who made *Spheres of Influence 2025* an evening to remember. Thank you, Manatee Community Foundation, Berlin Patten Ebling, and The Florida Bar.

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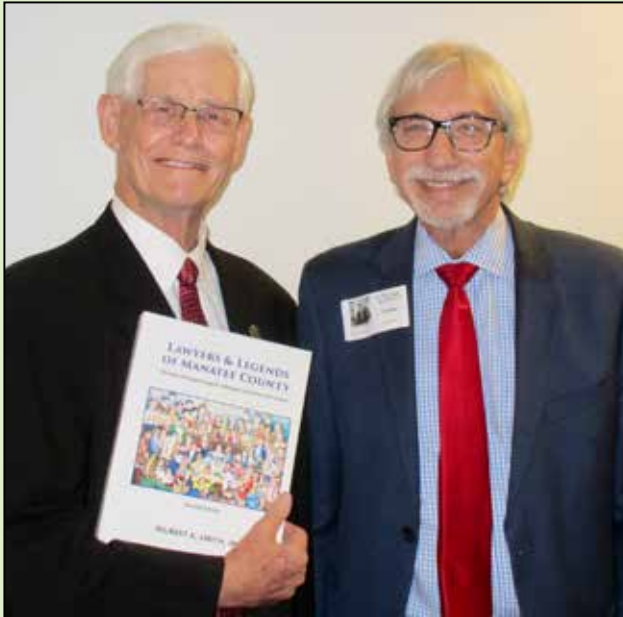


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Recently, Judge Gilbert A. Smith, Jr., could be found at the DeSoto County Historical Society! Judge Smith was sharing all our fascinating MCBA and Manatee County history with excerpts from "Lawyers & Legends of Manatee County". Pictured with Judge Smith is Adrian Cline, President of the DeSoto County Historical Society.



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From the 12th Circuit:

The Twelfth Judicial Circuit's Judicial Center Identification (JCID) card application period begins this Wednesday, October 1. [Administrative Order 2025-03a.2](#), provides that when feasible and practical, during times of high volume, judicial security at the Manatee County Judicial Center and the Silvertooth Judicial Center will open dedicated, expedited screening lines for attorneys displaying a current JCID card. Attorneys presenting the JCID card will not have to remove shoes or belts when going through the expedited screening line**. All other personal belongings must be screened for security purposes. The application period for the JCID card runs October 1 through November 30, each year.

Attorneys can visit the [Twelfth Judicial Circuit's JCID application page](#) from October 1 through November 30, to submit their application and associated fee. The application fee for the JCID card, which is waived for government attorneys*, is \$25 each year. The fee for a replacement card is \$10; this fee will not be waived. The application and all fees must be submitted online. Attorneys should attach a headshot to their application. Photos can also be taken in Court Administration's office in the Manatee and Silvertooth Judicial Centers. However, this may delay receipt of the JCID card.

Attorneys who miss this application period cannot apply again until next October. Questions about the JCID card or the status of an application may be submitted to Court Administration in Sarasota at 941-861-7800.

*Government attorneys include SAO, PD, AGO, ORC, GAL, DCF, county attorneys, city attorneys, clerk's office attorneys, attorneys employed by LEOS, etc. The government employer must be listed on the applicant's Florida Bar profile to qualify for the fee waiver.

The Sarasota County Sheriff's Office currently allows attorneys presenting their JCID card at the **South County Courthouse to leave their belt on when going through security screening.

2026 12TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT BENCH BAR CONFERENCE



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HOW AI AND THE NEW RULES ARE
RESHAPING THE LEGAL PROFESSION



Five Things You Didn't Know About Richard Morris at The Milestone Financial Group



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1. Rich has been a financial advisor with The Milestone Financial Group at Morgan Stanley for over 15 years.
2. Rich is a native of Manatee County and resides in Bradenton.
3. Rich and his wife Amy have three children. A son (Parker) and two daughters (Paxton and Payton).
4. Rich is a Certified Financial Planner and Family Wealth Advisor
5. Rich is a proud Florida Gator.

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About The Presenter, Scott Tussing:
Assistant Director - Public Service, Exemptions, & Tangible Personal Property

Scott Tussing has been employed with the Manatee County Property Appraiser's Office since 1993. Scott graduated from The University of Michigan in 1986 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Economics. He serves as the Director of the Public Service and Exemptions Department. His department oversees the homestead status for over 100,000 parcels with current homestead exemptions, and over 2,000 parcels with Greenbelt exemptions, as well as other exemptions available under Florida law.

Jeffrey S. Goethe, Esq. & Whitney Glaser, Esq.
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GIVING SOMEONE A FRESH START

By Annie Breitingner, Esq., Legal Aid of Manasota



John had just turned 18 and made a mistake that haunted him for 6 years. He had been arrested for battery. The charges were dismissed, however, the fact that he had a public criminal record was affecting his life. He had trouble finding a decent paying job and he was concerned and embarrassed about his friends finding out about the arrest. John was eligible to have the case sealed. He now has a good job, and he feels a new sense of dignity and purpose.

Stories like John's demonstrate the profound impact that clearing a criminal record can have. It can open doors to better employment opportunities, educational opportunities and social reintegration. It allows people to move past their mistakes and get a fresh start.

Legal aid programs across Florida are seeing a surge in client requests for help clearing old criminal history records. Many clients aren't sure what's eligible; many attorneys haven't handled a sealing or expungement matter before. Legal Aid of Manasota is launching training to close that gap and expand access.

In a new push for Legal Aid of Manasota to be more proactive in training attorneys for current areas of need, we are starting with the topic of sealing and expunging. This article will give the very basics. If you are interested in a full training:

CLE on Sealing and Expunging will be held via Zoom on Friday, November 7, 2025 from 12:00 - 1:00 pm.

Presented by:

Mark Zimmerman, Esq.

Zimmerman & Zimmerman Law Firm

Registration link coming soon.

Sealing vs. Expunging in Florida

Sealing a record (via Florida Statutes § 943.059) renders the record confidential and removes it from public access—though certain government agencies and law enforcement can still view it.

Expungement (via Florida Statutes § 943.0585) involves the destruction of the criminal history record; agencies are required to remove it, though FDLE retains a confidential copy that's accessible only via court order.

Eligibility

- Never adjudicated guilty of any offense
- The charges resulted in dismissal, nolle prosequi, acquittal or were never filed. If the adjudication was withheld, they likely only qualify for sealing.
- Only one lifetime sealing or expungement is allowed
- Serious offenses are ineligible - including sexual offenses, violent felonies, drug trafficking, domestic violence, kidnapping, burglary, arson, homicide, and similar charges.
- Juvenile records are regulated separately

Benefits of Sealing and Expunging

- Arrest records are not discoverable by most employment, housing, education, and licensing entities.
- Public background checks are cleared.

Please reach out to Pam Fields, Esq., Pro Bono Manager, at Legal Aid of Manasota with any questions. 941-366-0038 Ext. 101 pamelaf@legalaidofmanasota.org



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Registration and Breakfast 8:00 a.m.

Program: 8:30 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.

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Judges Recognized for Their Work on Juvenile Bench

Two judges that preside over juvenile court in Manatee County have been recognized for their work in the juvenile division by the child welfare agencies of the Circuit 12, including Safe Children Coalition, Children's Legal Services, Department of Children and Families, Department of Health, Parents for Parents and the Statewide Guardian ad Litem Program.

At the recent Dependency Court Summit in Orlando, representatives from the regional child welfare agencies announced the award presentations.

Circuit Judge Susan Maulucci was recognized as Dependency Judge of the Year. "Judge Maulucci stands out as a true champion of collaboration within Circuit 12's child welfare system. Her role extends far beyond the bench, encompassing a deep commitment to the welfare of children and families, particularly through fostering collaboration and innovative approaches within the complex juvenile justice system. Thank you for your continued excellence and for going above and beyond to support the children and families we all serve!"

Circuit Judge Gilbert A. Smith, Jr. was recognized with the Lifetime Achievement Award. "On behalf of a grateful community, we thank you for your tireless dedication, your invaluable contributions, and the indelible mark you have left on us all. It is with our deepest respect and appreciation that we present you with this Lifetime Achievement Award."

In addition to the certificate, Judge Smith was also presented with a unique, handcrafted plaque by local artisan, Siva Beharry, Luthier.

Beharry, who inherited his late-father's guitar shop – Beharry Guitars – documented his build so we could see the process. Beharry said the wood for the plaque and gavel is from Craftsman Supply in Tampa, Florida, and the engraved plate is from The Trophy Case in Bradenton, Florida.

The engraved plate on Judge Smith's plaque reads: *"When you can plant a seed and be content with never seeing it bloom in your lifetime, you'll know you've made the world a better place. Thank you, Judge Smith, for planting hope in this world."*

News reprinted from 12th Circuit website.



left to right: Krystal Cook from the Safe Children's Coalition, Elida Mujic from the Florida Department of Children and Families, Hon. Gilbert Smith, Jr., Siva Beharry from the Guardian Ad Litem Office and David Silverstein, managing attorney for the 12th Circuit, Children Legal Services.






October 2025 Luncheon Meeting

**"When the World is Watching:
The Gabby Petito Case "**

CLE CREDIT APPROVED

Wednesday, October 29th, 2025

Manatee Performing Arts Center- Kiwanis Hall

11:30 - Noon Lunch & Networking

Noon Meeting Start



Patrick J. Reilly, Esq.
Snyder & Reilly, Trial Lawyers

Few cases have captured national and international attention like that of Gabby Petito. Join us for an exclusive presentation with Patrick J. Reilly, Esq. Pat will share firsthand experiences and behind-the-scenes insight into guiding a family through high-profile litigation. This is a rare opportunity to learn how advocacy, media, and the law intersected in a case that shaped national conversations on justice and accountability.

Pat is Board Certified in Civil Trial law through the National Board of Trial Advocacy, which required a demonstration of skill and expertise in the field of Civil Trial Law proven through a rigorous examination and testing by the NBTA. Board certification is a qualification held by only approximately 3% of practicing attorneys in the United States. Pat is a member of the Million Dollar and Multi-Million Dollar Advocates Forum, whose membership is limited to attorneys who have won million and multi-million-dollar verdicts or settlements, which is less than 1% of lawyers in the United States.

Pat is a 1977 graduate of Washington and Lee University, and a 1980 graduate of Cumberland School of Law of Samford University. He currently serves as the President of the Sarasota County Bar Association South County Division. Pat is currently the appointed City of Venice Special Magistrate for Code Enforcement.

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September Membership Luncheon Recap: Understanding Brain Disease and Ethical Legal Practice

Our September Membership Luncheon brought an insightful and thought-provoking program featuring Dr. Michael Mullan of the Roskamp Institute and attorney Jeffrey Goethe, Co-Chair of our Estate Planning, Probate & Guardianship Section.

Dr. Mullan shared groundbreaking research on brain diseases such as Dementia and Alzheimer's, helping attendees understand the differences, early warning signs, and ongoing advancements in treatment and diagnosis. His presentation shed light on how these conditions affect memory, judgment, and personality—topics especially relevant to those serving vulnerable clients.

Following Dr. Mullan's presentation, Jeff Goethe provided a legal perspective, discussing how attorneys can ethically and effectively serve clients facing cognitive decline. His practical guidance covered assessing capacity, maintaining client confidentiality, and navigating guardianship and estate matters with compassion and professionalism.

A special announcement was also made by Judge Lee Haworth regarding the **Skylaw Program**, highlighting exciting opportunities for attorneys within the 12th Circuit.

CLE credit was available for this timely and engaging program, which highlighted the important intersection between medical understanding and ethical legal practice.

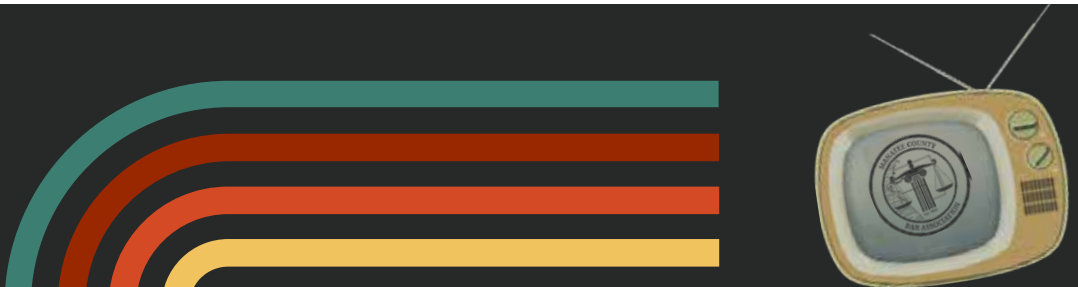


Dr. Fiona Crawford, MCBA President James Lynch, and Dr. Michael Mullan

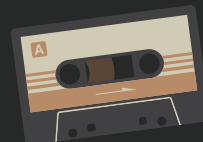
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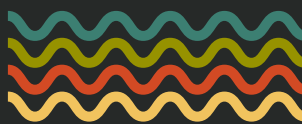
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Friday, December 5th, 2025

5:30 – 8:30 pm

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