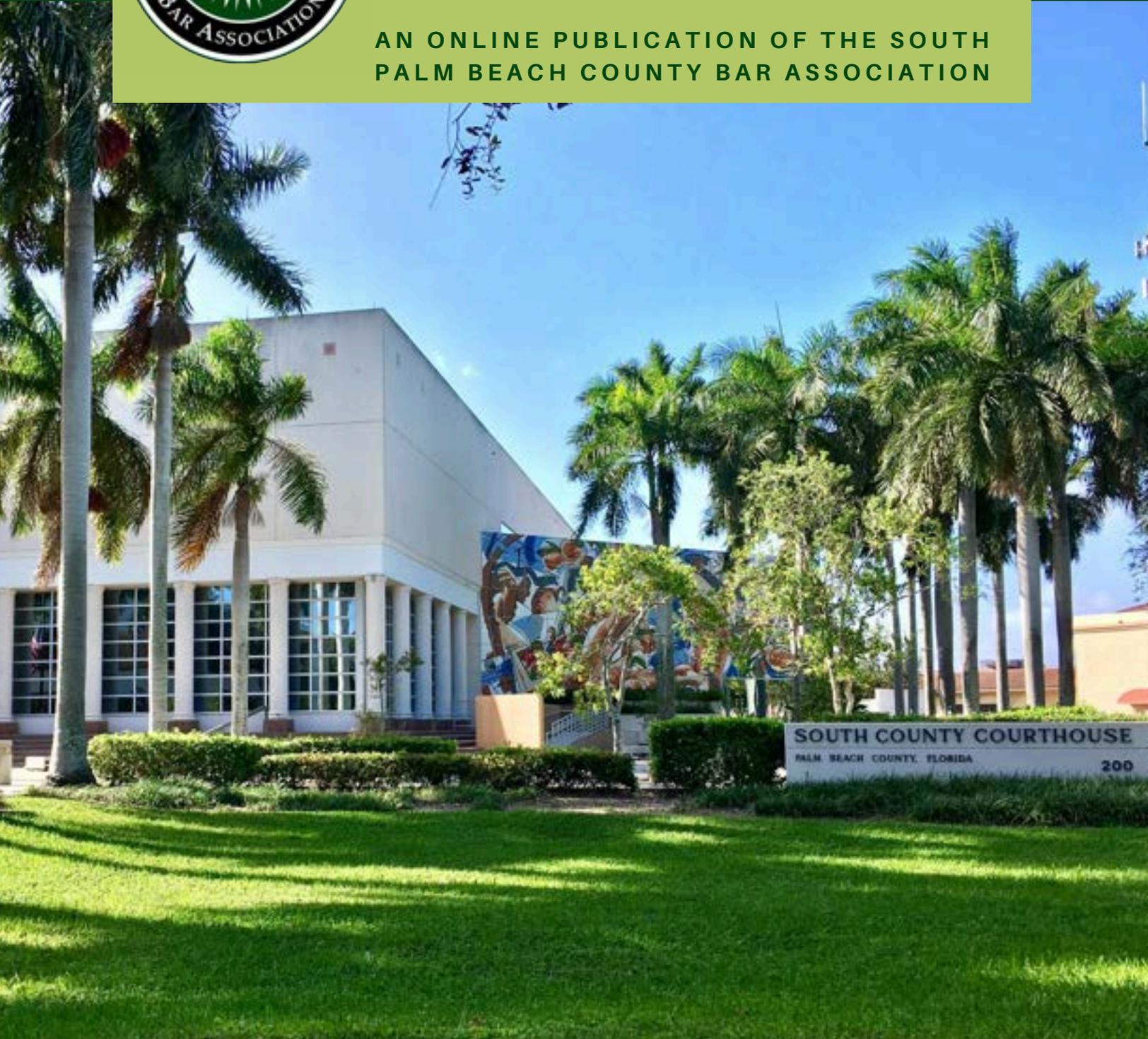




THE ADVOCATE

AN ONLINE PUBLICATION OF THE SOUTH
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SPRING/SUMMER 2025 EDITION



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Message from Our President Sean Lebowitz



Dear Members of the South Palm Beach County Bar Association,

Happy Summer!

I am excited to serve as your President for the 2025-2026 Bar year. I want to thank all of our members who attended the Installation Gala at the Delaire Country Club where we honored Judge Laura Burkhart with the Jurist of the Year award – this was very well deserved!

When we all return from our summer vacations, the Association will continue to offer a significant amount of networking and educational events. As always, we will start our bar year with a complimentary reception for our members – this event is to thank and show our appreciation for our membership, including those many members who have been a part of our Association for decades, and those who are brand new. Be sure to see our Executive Director, Kristin, and Assistant Executive Director, Caroline, at the event – they are such an integral part of the Association, and our board greatly appreciates their dedication and enthusiasm for helping our members. Details about the membership reception will be forthcoming. I also want to take this opportunity to thank our sponsors – they help keep our costs down, and I encourage all of our members to try to utilize their services.

Looking ahead, I am so excited about the remarkable events we have planned for the upcoming Bar year. Our Association will continue to offer reasonable CLE's, fabulous lunches at the Farmer's Table, and regular happy hours benefiting charities. We will offer a new event this year – a judicial reception with the Judges at the South County courthouse. This will be a great way to hear directly from the Judges that many of us practice before often, particularly those in the family and probate practice areas.

I am looking forward to seeing you at our many events – in the meantime, have a relaxing and enjoyable summer!

Sean M. Lebowitz, Esq.

President, South Palm Beach County Bar Association (2025-2026)

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Editor's Corner



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As we transition into Florida's long summer days, it's the perfect reminder that even the most dedicated legal minds need time to recharge. While our legal practices don't take summer vacation, we certainly should.

Family time isn't just restorative—it reminds us why we work so hard in the first place. Those conversations around the dinner table, impromptu trips to explore Florida's state parks, or lazy afternoons by the pool don't just create memories; they refresh our creativity and renew our energy in ways that benefit every aspect of our practice.

In this issue, you'll find updates on recent case law, upcoming CLE opportunities, and insights from colleagues across our association. You can also relive the many great events we hosted this year on our recap pages.

The South Palm Beach County Bar Association's Mission Statement

The South Palm Beach County Bar Association is committed to excellence in the legal profession through education, member interaction and collaboration, and community outreach. The Association welcomes diverse perspectives, ideas and experiences. We strive to create an environment where individuals of all races, colors, ethnicities, cultures, religions, genders, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, nationalities, ages, disabilities, and marital and parental status thrive professionally and contribute to our goals. In fulfilling this mission, the Association seeks to uphold the highest degree of civility, ethics and professionalism.

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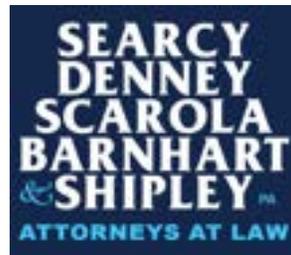


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People Want Referrals

By Daniel Haverman,
Board Certified
Civil Trial Lawyer



All of us would much rather get the name of a lawyer from someone who can recommend someone versus just picking one blindly. Would you go to a mechanic if you did not know him? How about a tax attorney? Of course not.

The following parable illustrates the point. Years ago, a San Diego bank hired a private investigator to track down a bank robber and retrieve the money. His search led him to Mexico. The investigator, realizing he needed an interpreter, called the first one that popped up in his search.

After finally tracking down the robber, the P.I. asked him, through the interpreter, "Where did you hide the money?" In Spanish, the thief replied, "What money? I don't know what you are talking about?" With that, the P.I. drew his pistol, pointed it at the thief and said to the interpreter, "tell him if he doesn't tell me where the money is, I will shoot him right here." Upon receiving the message, the thief said through the interpreter, "Senior, I have hidden the money in a coffee can, under the fourth floorboard in the 2nd floor men's room of the Palacio Hotel".

"What did he say?" the P.I. asked the interpreter. "Senior" said the interpreter, "he said he is prepared to die like a man!"

The point of the story: When you hire an attorney solely based on advertisement, you may be taking a big risk as to the quality of the service you receive. Referrals are wanted.

Secure Business Operations With Bank Fraud Prevention Tools

By Chantal Brassard



Fraud is a consistent threat to businesses. Data from the Association for Finance Professionals shows that 2/3 of businesses experience payment fraud attacks or attempts. Lax controls and poor fraud prevention strategies leave organizations vulnerable, impacting finances, business operations, and reputations.

Being a victim of fraud is more than a time-consuming and frustrating process. It can also lead to long-term strategic setbacks, hampering growth. Developing a fraud prevention strategy centered around identifying and mitigating risk can help deter fraudsters and maintain operational continuity. Here's why it matters and how to start.

Fraud is an evolving threat

Digital payments and communication create new vulnerabilities for exploitation. Sophisticated attacks involving payment fraud, AI-enabled deepfakes and impersonation, and business email compromise are increasingly common. And the rise of remote work has opened even more opportunities.

Recent research indicates that 71% of companies reported being victims of payment fraud through email, and 44% were unable to recover the funds. As more organizations become victims of fraud, regulators are expected to tighten standards to address escalating cybersecurity risks. Victims of attacks may face additional scrutiny evaluating the protective measures in place.

Incidents may erode customer loyalty and trust, disrupt operations and threaten revenue streams, leading to reputational damage. Implementing a proactive, multilayered fraud prevention and detection strategy can become a competitive advantage, mitigating risk while building long-term value.



Continued on following page

FRAUD

Take a collaborative approach to fraud prevention

As fraud continues to escalate, traditional prevention methods may not meet evolving threats. Of course, strong internal controls within the business are crucial, but you may struggle to navigate changing tactics without help from outside experts.

A collaborative approach with your banking partner can provide additional benefits, allowing you to:

- Leverage innovative fraud detection and prevention tools to help safeguard accounts from unauthorized transactions and cyber threats
- Receive expert guidance and strategies customized to your business needs and risk profile versus a one-size-fits-all solution
- Minimize the risk of disruptions caused by fraudulent activities to ensure operations run smoothly without setbacks during the loss and recovery processes
- Adhere to regulatory requirements to reduce the risk of legal penalties and improve customer confidence in your business practices
- Protect the business's reputation with customers and vendors, building long-term trust in your brand while demonstrating that you take security seriously
- Follow a structured and fast-acting response plan, minimizing financial and operational impact while enabling faster recovery

These underscore the importance of accessing external expertise and advanced solutions designed to defend against risks that internal measures may not catch.



Integrate advanced fraud protection tools

Fraud prevention services help businesses detect and prevent risky activities that may threaten your finances. In addition, you'll have access to premium security measures without the burden of developing and implementing sophisticated fraud prevention technology in-house.

These advanced protection tools counteract, anticipate and neutralize fraud before it strikes.

- **Positive pay services:** Positive pay cross-verifies checks and electronic debits presented for payment against the transactions issued by your company. Discrepancies are flagged for review, preventing unauthorized transactions.
- **ACH debit blocks and filters:** ACH blocks allow control over who's initiating payments from accounts, validating legitimate ones and blocking bad actors.
- **Check services:** This service examines each check and compares against an electronic file you submit.

FRAUD

- **Post no debits accounts:** Banks won't allow withdrawals or payments in these accounts without prior authorization, similar to products like UPIC (Universal Payment Identification Code) adding an extra layer of security to protect funds.
- **Transaction alerts:** Banks send notifications to inform you of various activities on your accounts and can be set up for a range of transactions, allowing for customized monitoring.
- **Online banking security features:** Banks offer advanced security measures, such as multifactor authentication and encryption, to secure transactions.

Cybercriminals continuously refine their techniques, exploiting vulnerability to commit fraud. This reality makes it critical for businesses to prioritize fraud prevention and find a partner that offers reliable solutions to detect and prevent unauthorized transactions.



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How to Create an Engaging Ownership Culture

By Eliot Popper

Learn how building a culture of ownership can help improve employee performance and loyalty.

A primary goal of many organizations is to attract and engage a talented workforce. Fostering a strong "ownership culture" is key. It encourages employees to have a stake in the organization and its future—and when combined with a well-structured equity compensation plan, it can be a powerful driver of employee motivation, performance and loyalty.

While creating this culture isn't always easy, there are steps you can take to help foster it. After consulting with Professor William G. Castellano, PhD, chair of the Rutgers University Human Resources Management Department, here are six practices to consider for your organization:



1. Enhance Employee Information Sharing

Widely sharing information with employees about the company's strategic, financial and day-to-day business decisions is an important first step in creating an ownership culture. Employees who own employer equity want to know how the company is performing. Sharing such information with them can help build their trust and empower them to feel they are having a real impact on the organization's performance. This helps foster employee loyalty and can also boost their willingness to own more equity.

2. Empower Employees to be Accountable

Giving employees greater authority and responsibility in how they perform their work goes a long way to building an ownership culture as well. Employees who feel more empowered in their roles tend to be more motivated to solve customer problems and come up with innovative ideas for improving their areas of business. Such employees also tend to feel more accountable for long-term organizational outcomes and have been shown to be more likely to increase their equity stakes.

3. Involve Employees in Decision-Making

Employees who have a stake in their organization's future—and who feel more informed and accountable—want to be involved in decisions that help drive outcomes for the organization. This involvement can take many forms, from problem-solving groups to an "open-book management" approach where employees get all relevant company financial information so they can make better decisions in their respective roles.

Continued on following page



4. Offer Training and Development Programs

Fostering an ownership culture also means providing opportunities for employees to enhance their skills. These may include training programs to improve role-related expertise and opportunities to build communication and teamwork. Such programs make strategic sense in two ways:

First, they give employees opportunities to improve their job performance—and to reap the potential rewards of performing better.

Second, they help organizations reinforce that employees are a valuable part of the team. This can help improve employee retention and contribute to a more stable, productive work environment.

5. Foster a Participatory Management Culture

A “participatory management” style is one in which managers willingly share information with employees, involve them in important decisions, recognize their accomplishments publicly and hold them accountable for results. By adopting this style and culture, your management team can play a key role in encouraging employees to think and act like owners.

6. Educate Employees about Risk

Equity is often a significant driver of wealth, so it’s important to educate employees about how equity ownership can help them achieve their long-term financial goals. Consider developing a financial wellness curriculum that discusses not only the risks inherent in most investments, but also the risk of not participating in the company’s equity program—namely, the costs of foregoing this additional, diversifying source of long-term wealth.

Creating a Culture that Drives Results

In a world of uncertainty, financial stressors and organizational upheaval, creating a culture of ownership among your employees can go a long way to helping them improve their financial well-being, build loyalty with the organization and become more productive, engaged workers. By creating a culture where your employees are as invested in the organization’s success as you, great things can happen.



Disclosure

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Death of Elway's Friend Reminds Us of the Dangers of Golf Carts

By Gary S. Lesser



The recent golf cart-related death of John Elway's friend and former agent, Jeff Sperbeck, shines a very bright light on the under appreciated dangers of golf cart accidents.

There's a lot we don't know about this incident, and what we do know raises legal questions about the serious risk of injuries and death associated with golf cart use.

We do not know the actual mechanism of injury, meaning what caused Sperbeck to fall from the golf cart being driven by Elway, striking his head hard on the ground and ultimately dying from these injuries.



The Riverside County Sheriff's Office has stated the incident "appears to be just a tragic accident," though the investigation remains open. Sperbeck died four days later, but police were not notified of the incident until two days after the incident. Criminal charges are unlikely without evidence of reckless behavior or intoxication. However, civil liability for negligence remains a possibility, especially if Elway's driving contributed to the fall. It is unknown whether Sperbeck simply lost balance or was ejected due to a driving maneuver.

What is clear is that injuries like these are not rare. While there's no national database for golf cart injuries, the National Electronic Injury Surveillance System (NEISS) offers insight. Between 1990 and 2006, there were 147,696 golf cart-related Emergency Room (ER) visits. From 2007 to 2017, that number rose to 156,040 -more injuries in a shorter time span. ER visits rose from 6,000 in 1990 to 18,000 in 2015. This increase corresponds with the rising use of golf carts far beyond the golf course. There are more golf cart-related ER visits in a shorter period of time because golf cart usage off the golf course has skyrocketed.

Golf carts are now common at sporting events, airports, schools, hospitals, and residential communities. In states like Florida, Texas, and Arizona, they're even allowed on public roads. While many view golf carts as convenient and inexpensive, they often lack the safety features of standard vehicles - and that makes them far more dangerous.

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First, very few states have laws that apply to golf cart operation or safety, including the minimum age of the golf cart operator. In 2023, Florida Senator Erin Grall led the efforts to change the age limit for driving a golf cart from 14 years old – which was hard to enforce and often resulted in much younger children driving golf carts – to 18 years old and requiring government issued identification. If the golf cart operator is under 18, then they need at least a learner's permit or driver's license.

Liability insurance for golf carts is also largely unregulated. In Florida, insurance is not required unless the cart is "street-legal." Some states, like Arizona, require liability insurance for carts on public roads. Often, insurance comes through expensive add-ons to homeowners or auto policies.

And there is a clear need for such coverage. Medical bills from golf cart injuries can be significant, and the design of the carts themselves compounds the danger. Rear-facing seats, limited braking systems, open-air frames, and the lack of mirrors, turn signals, or airbags make golf carts uniquely risky.

The lack of seatbelts has been shown to greatly contribute to the severity of injuries. The NEISS database, looking at ER data, reveals that the most common cause of injuries was falling from the golf cart, with 38.3% of people sustaining injuries this way. The cause of death for 62-year-old Sperbeck was described as "passenger fell from golf cart."

Studies published in the American Journal of Preventative specifically note that ejections and falls from moving golf carts are among the most common injury mechanisms observed in the emergency room.

The story of the death of Sperbeck due to falling from a golf cart is far from over. Even if there are no criminal charges filed against Elway, he should not be surprised if he ultimately sees a civil lawsuit filed by Sperbeck's family. The standard for criminal prosecution requires culpable behavior and the ability to prove this beyond a reasonable doubt. The standard for a civil lawsuit only requires proof by a preponderance of the evidence, and Elway may find himself the defendant in a personal injury wrongful death case. Insurance coverage and possible personal assets could all be in play.

Continued on following page



This case highlights how quickly a seemingly harmless activity can turn tragic. Golf carts may feel safe, but without regulation and safety features, they are not.

States must consider passing laws requiring basic safety equipment, like seatbelts, and clearer insurance requirements for golf carts used off-course. A passenger ejected from a moving golf cart carries that momentum - and the risk of severe injury skyrockets depending on the surface they strike. A fall on grass is very different from one on concrete or asphalt.

The death of Sperbeck is a painful reminder of how deceptively dangerous golf carts can be. What feels like a carefree ride can quickly become life-threatening. Hopefully, lawmakers will act to reduce the risk of similar tragedies by requiring the most basic of protections before more lives are lost.



Gary S. Lesser is the Managing Partner of Lesser, Landy, Smith & Siegel, and he focuses his practice on personal injury and wrongful death cases throughout the State of Florida. Gary has lectured and been published on personal injury law and legal ethics, and he served as the 74th President of The Florida Bar.



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Barbara L. Nohrenberg, a resident of Boca Raton,
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Agentic AI in Legal Practice: A Practical Guide for Attorneys

How Autonomous Legal Intelligence Is Reshaping the Future of Litigation

By Mark R. Osherow



Agentic AI is no longer a distant concept confined to academic circles or tech labs—it is now actively shaping the day-to-day workflows of law firms and legal departments across the country. As of 2025, this new breed of artificial intelligence is already embedded in case analysis, discovery planning, contract drafting, litigation strategy, and client advising. Unlike traditional automation tools, Agentic AI operates with autonomy and initiative. It doesn't wait for precise human prompts but instead interprets context, prioritizes actions, and adapts its behavior based on goals and feedback. For attorneys, that means a new form of collaboration—one where machines can act like junior associates, project managers, or even litigation strategists.

The shift toward Agentic AI isn't just a technical one—it's strategic. Law firms that adopt and train these systems now are building a long-term competitive advantage. They gain the ability to respond faster to client needs, manage litigation timelines more precisely, and identify winning strategies from vast data patterns that would take humans weeks to analyze. More importantly, the integration of Agentic AI frees attorneys from time-consuming, repetitive tasks and empowers them to focus on core judgment, persuasion, and client advocacy—the high-value elements of legal practice.

Understanding how Agentic AI works is essential. These systems are designed to be goal-seeking. Given a defined legal objective—such as preparing a case for trial or evaluating exposure across multiple jurisdictions—an agentic system can do such things as take initiative to assemble evidence, detect gaps, prompt for necessary disclosures, suggest deadlines, and even flag ethical or procedural risks. These systems often combine legal language models with workflow engines and rule-based logic, allowing them to reason within the constraints of jurisdiction-specific rules, such as the Florida Rules of Civil Procedure or the Federal Rules of Evidence.

But as with all powerful tools, the use of Agentic AI comes with ethical and social responsibilities. Attorneys must supervise these systems under Rule 4-5.3 of the Florida Bar Rules of Professional Conduct, the ABA Model Rules, or the rules of the particular jurisdiction in which the lawyer practices. Issues around privilege, bias in algorithmic outputs, and the duty to maintain client confidentiality are front and center. Judges and regulators are also watching closely. Using Agentic AI does not absolve lawyers of professional responsibility. In fact, it increases the need for clear documentation, explainable decisions, and continuous oversight.

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Still, the benefits are significant. Agentic AI can generate first drafts of interrogatories aligned to Rule 1.340, surface inconsistencies in discovery responses under Rule 1.380, monitor case management deadlines under Rule 1.200, and suggest motions in limine based on past trial patterns. Agentic AI can draft opening and closing statements and draft witness questions (along with referencing applicable exhibits), as well as cross-examination strategy and model questions and answers. It can analyze thousands of documents in ESI protocols, highlight potentially privileged materials under Rule 1.285, and manage proportionality arguments with direct citations to Rule 1.280(b)(1), now harmonized with the federal standard. In short, it is an indispensable teammate in modern litigation. While this article is targeted to Florida practice, similar rules exist in most jurisdictions.

LexisNexis, a leader in legal technology, recently released a comprehensive whitepaper exploring the implementation of Agentic AI in legal practice. [Agentic AI in Business: Transforming Legal Decision-Making and Strategy](#). This guide offers foundational knowledge for attorneys looking to begin their journey. It walks through the architecture of agentic systems, real-world use cases in litigation and transactional law, ethical implications, and step-by-step recommendations for integration. Whether your practice is focused on Florida business and commercial litigation, federal employment claims, or complex multi-jurisdictional matters, or other areas of litigation practice, the guide provides actionable insight.

Attorneys who embrace this shift now are not simply adopting new tools—they are reshaping how legal services are delivered. They are positioning themselves to lead in a landscape that values speed, accuracy, transparency, and innovation. Agentic AI is not here to replace the lawyer—it is here to empower the lawyer to practice at their highest and most strategic level. Those who are and will continue to dismiss or avoid this trend are missing perhaps the greatest shift in the practice of law ever, or at least since the invention of the facsimile machine or email. Only time will tell how enormous the shift is in the means and methods by which litigators do their jobs effectively. But these changes are surely here to stay and expanding literally daily.



Continued on following page



Now is the time to experiment, pilot, and deploy. The firms, both large and small, that do so will not only serve their clients better—they will redefine what legal excellence means in the AI era. I am looking forward to reflecting on these statements in a few years.



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Beyond the Courtroom: Overlooked Strategies for Litigators to Excel in Arbitration

By Ronald Ravikoff



Litigators often complain about the “problems” with arbitration without realizing many of these so-called problems can be resolved by abandoning the litigation mindset. Here are some points to consider:

Prepare for the Preliminary Conference

The first critical event in the arbitration will be the preliminary scheduling conference with the arbitrator. This, more than likely, will occur by telephone. Prepare for it! Much of how the arbitration will proceed will be set in stone at this point. Will you need discovery? What kind of discovery will be allowed and how much? Will dispositive motions be permitted? What type of award are you seeking?



When are the deadlines? Do you want a court reporter present? Will the hearing be bifurcated? What rules and law will apply? When and where will the hearing take place? How many days will be necessary? The arbitrator will usually block out the requested days, and if you exceed that, it may be weeks or even months before you can resume the hearing. Best practices suggest asking the arbitrator for a list of topics and having discussions with opposing counsel prior to the conference.

Consult With Opposing Counsel Often

Confer with opposing counsel often. The arbitrator will appreciate it, and it will greatly reduce time and costs for your client. For example, talk with opposing counsel to set up a schedule for the calling of witnesses before the hearing and how they will testify—whether it’s in person, by telephone or via videoconference. Waiting until the hearing may result in some witnesses being unavailable, which may lead to an adjournment. Consult with opposing counsel on the length of time anticipated for the arbitration, and strive to accommodate scheduling concerns before the hearing starts. If you think you will need more time for the hearing, select backup dates with opposing counsel and the arbitrator before the hearing. Consult with opposing counsel on the voluntary exchange of documents and what discovery may be needed.

Read the Rules, Read the Rules, Read the Rules!

As a litigator, you have immersed yourself in the Federal or State Rules of Civil Procedure, yet lawyers are regularly engaging in an arbitration without having thoroughly read the rules (e.g., JAMS, AAA, AHLA rules) or reviewing the controlling arbitration clause. You can bet your arbitrator has read them and will hold you to them!

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Rules and procedures (such as those relating to jurisdiction, arbitrability and discovery) differ depending on the tribunal for your case. For example, a commercial dispute may not have the same rules as a consumer dispute.

Modify the Arbitration Clause to Make your Arbitrations Efficient

Most attorneys do not realize that the parties can agree to modify the arbitration clause and the rules to make them fit the needs of the case. Arbitration clauses are usually boilerplate and have provisions that may or may not be appropriate for the case at hand. The parties are free, by agreement, to modify it. Similarly, arbitrators will usually allow a modification of the applicable rules if the parties request it.

The more a lawyer tries to make arbitration into something it is not—a trial—the less likely it is to be efficient, economical or final. Boilerplate arbitration clauses often call for application of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure or Rules of Evidence. If so, why are you in arbitration? The parties have all of the burdens of a litigation with none of the benefits or controls. If you can, agree with opposing counsel to eliminate such a provision and rely on the arbitration rules.

Forget Discovery as You Know It

Arbitration rules generally provide for very limited discovery—perhaps a voluntary exchange of documents and one deposition. Unlike a trial, the facts are not fully fleshed out until the hearing. If more discovery is needed, work that out with opposing counsel—the arbitrator will almost always accept what the parties agree on.

A smart arbitration guideline is to tailor your discovery to the size and complexity of the case. If you have received all discovery and it is deficient, document your effort to resolve the dispute. File a motion to compel only if all efforts to resolve it have failed.

Maintain Your Credibility

The arbitrator is not a jury. They have likely read all the submissions and case law and are experienced. If your arbitrator believes you have misstated a case or a witness' testimony or the contents of a document, they will likely conclude that you either do not know your case or are intentionally seeking to deceive. Another threat to your credibility is the "kitchen sink" arbitration demand or a response that includes numerous claims or defenses that have little chance of succeeding. Experienced arbitrators recognize these as make-weights that never should have been pleaded. They want to know right away what the case is about and what law and evidence support your position. A tight, short case goes a long way.



Do Not Waste Time and Money on Motions

Many inexperienced advocates file the same motions in arbitration as in litigation. This is usually a huge waste of time and client money. Arbitrators are keenly aware that, in arbitration, there is usually no appellate body to reverse an erroneous grant of a motion for summary disposition and that one of the few grounds for vacating an award is refusing to hear a party's evidence. Skip motions and get ready for the hearing as quickly as possible.

Opening Statement

If you have laid out your case in a pre-hearing brief, the arbitrator has almost certainly read it and will not appreciate an oral repetition. You should always request to file a pre-hearing brief. It is the best way to familiarize the arbitrator with the issues to be decided. If there were no pre-hearing briefs, keep your opening short, providing a brief summary of your case without getting into the weeds. Sum up key points in terms the arbitrator will remember. Mention your most compelling evidence and address your opponent's best evidence.

Forget the Admissibility of Evidence

Because the rules of evidence hardly ever apply in arbitration, nearly all evidence that any party wishes to present will be received "for what it's worth." Fighting over admissibility is usually unproductive. Any document whose authenticity is not disputed will usually be received.

Give the Arbitrator Post-Hearing Briefs With the Backup to Help Support Your Desired Award

By the time of closing arguments, most arbitrators are dealing with information overload. Poor advocates compound the problem by dumping everything on the arbitrator without organization. Instead, put this information in a closing argument binder that contains everything the arbitrator will need to write the award you want. It can accompany a pre-closing brief. Your arbitrator will greatly appreciate having this at their fingertips when writing the award. A well-prepared, well-organized binder isn't just helpful—it's a game changer to make sure your key points stand out in a crowded field of information.

Ronald Ravikoff, Esq., is a mediator, arbitrator and hearing officer with JAMS in Miami. He handles complex commercial matters with a particular emphasis on matters involving healthcare, parallel civil and criminal proceedings including False Claims Act matters, Foreign Corrupt Practices Act matters, antitrust and trade regulation, class actions, financial institution litigation, securities litigation and regulatory proceedings, and trade secrets matters.

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The Altidor Massacre

The Wall Lied

By E'lyn Bryan CFDE, BA

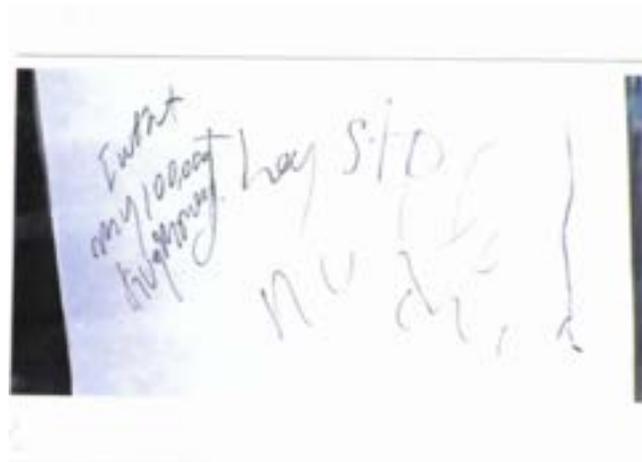
CRIME SCENE DO NOT CROSS



It was April 30, 1997, and a typical South Florida morning like every other in the quiet Miramar neighborhood. Sixty-nine-year-old Grandmother Theresa Laverne tended to her six-week-old and two-year-old granddaughters while her daughter Marie Altidor made breakfast. By 7:30 a.m., not so typical, they were dead. Brutally murdered in what police called the most heinous crime in the city's history. This a cold case.

The grandmother, Theresa in the kitchen, daughter Marie in the living room, six-week-old Sabrina in her bassinet and Samantha, the two-year-old in fetal position behind the sofa, were shot and beaten to death.

On the wall behind the sofa was a cryptic message; "I want my 100,000 drugs money they stole my drugs."



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When the managing editor of the Sun Sentinel called and asked if I would help and examine the hand written message on the wall, I was eager to assist. I am a state licensed board accredited detective specializing in handwriting identification and questioned documents.

Without knowing the intricate details of the case, but upon being told about the message on the wall, I immediately stated that the 'wall was lying.' The writing was an attempt to throw the police off track intimating the murders were drug fueled. There was no indication of a break in and nothing in the house was disturbed-other than the obvious. The police made the same determination in 1997.

Upon examining the hand printing and comparing it to known writing of the husband who was allegedly at work at the time of the murders, I found similarities. The police examiners found similarities as well, but not enough to opine with a high level of professional confidence to make an arrest. Listen to the Sun Sentinel Podcast "Felonious Florida" for all the details

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Are you ready for the E Everything Amendments to the Florida Rules of General Practice and Judicial Administration effective July 1, 2025?

By Amy Borman



In case number SC2023-1401, the Florida Supreme Court amended various rules of the Florida Rules of General Practice and Judicial Administration (“RGPJA”), which govern all practice areas. The following is a summary of 10 of the many changes in this rule packet; the changes take effect on July 1, 2025. Be sure to read the whole opinion and understand the changes – especially the representations the filer and all signers make to the court.

Rule 2.514 – Computing and Extending Time

- 1 Rule 2.514 (a)(4) – **Last Day defined:** Midnight has been replaced with 11:59:59 p.m. to avoid any confusion as to whether midnight refers to 12:00 a.m. at the beginning or end of a day.
- 2 Rule 2.514(b) – **Mail Rule:** Clarifying that an additional 5 days for calculating time applies when service is made only by mail (and not in conjunction with email service).

Rule 2.515 – Signatures and Representations to the Court

- 3 Rule 2.515(a) – **Signature Required:** Every filed or served document must be signed or it may be stricken by the court and the action may proceed as though the document has not been signed.
- 4 Rule 2.515(b)(1) and (3) – **Acts Constituting a Signature:** The act of filing a document equates to signing a document. Make sure that the E-Portal account used to file a document is the correct one! This also applies to documents that are served but not contemporaneously filed – the act of serving constitutes the server’s signature.
- 5 Rule 2.515(c) – **Signature Block:** The signature block must contain the **filer’s name** as well as each **signer’s name**, electronic signature indicator, mailing address, telephone number, and e-mail address for service of court documents along with an attorney’s bar number and the party they represent. All names included in the signature block **must also** have an electronic signature indicator.
- 6 Rule 2.515(d) – **Representations to the Court:** Both the **filer and every signer** to the document (every person listed in the signature block) represents that they have a) read the document; b) to the best of their knowledge and belief, there are good grounds to support the document; and c) the document is not interposed for delay. **The filer also**

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represents that a) they have complied with all the rules of procedure regarding filing and service; b) every person identified as a signer has authorized that person's signature and the filer accepts responsibility for proving that authority if later disputed; and c) that the document contains no confidential or sensitive information or that any confidential or sensitive information has been properly protected by complying with Rules 2.420 and 2.425. The **server** of the document under rule 2.516 makes all of the above representations.

Rule 2.516 – Service

7

Rule 2.516(b)(1) – **Service through the Portal**: Documents filed through the portal must be served using the portal's e-service function.

8

Rule 2.516(f) – **Certificate of Service**: Prima facie proof of service is established by including the following: 1) certification; 2) date of service; 3) name(s) of person(s) served; 4) services address(es); and 5) method of service. A sample Certificate of Service is included in the rule.

Rule 2.525 – Filing

9

Rule 2.525(b) – **Portal Filing** – Attorneys must file through the portal including when an attorney is representing him/herself. Unrepresented parties who are not members of The Florida Bar, or an attorney admitted pro hac vice, may elect to file through the portal and once the election is made, it may not be withdrawn without leave of court.

10

Rule 2.525(f)(1) – **Docketing by Clerk; Unsuccessful Filing Attempt; Noncompliant Electronic Documents; Corrections Queue**: Clerks will docket all documents submitted for filing unless the filing falls within 7 pend back reasons. The clerk may note if it appears that a document was not submitted in compliance with the rules of procedure in its associated docket entry, at which point the court may strike the non compliant document. The 7 reasons include: a) the document is filed after a case number is assigned and lacks a correct case number and the correct case number cannot be reliably and easily identified; b) the document lacks a case style or has the wrong case style; c) the filing consists of multiple documents filed as 1 document; d) the filing consists of a multi-page document filed as separate documents; e) the filing is a proposed order unless it is filed under a Notice of Filing for purposes of preserving a record; f) the filing is illegible, corrupt or blank; and g) the filing is barred by order of court or is otherwise incapable of being filed in the clerk's case maintenance system.

Amy Borman is the Chief Legal Officer and Chief Operating Officer of Courts & Official Records at the Palm Beach County Clerk's Office. Amy also is a member of the Florida Rules of General Practice and Judicial Administration Committee.

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When the Law Intervenes for Healing: The Marchman Act and the Fight Against Addiction

By Craig Robinson

In South Florida, and especially in Palm Beach County, we have a growing mental health crisis on our hands. Addiction has become so widespread that few individuals or families remain untouched by its impact. Despite the high concentration of licensed substance use and mental health treatment facilities in our area, the burden on society – particularly on law enforcement – remains significant.



In the evolving intersection of law, public health, and behavioral science, few statutes are as uniquely positioned to save lives as Florida's Marchman Act. Officially known as the *Hal S. Marchman Alcohol and Other Drug Services Act of 1993*, this piece of legislation provides a critical, court-enabled pathway for families and communities to intervene in the lives of individuals suffering from chronic substance use and co-occurring mental health disorders, especially when those individuals are unable or unwilling to seek help for themselves.

At its core, the Marchman Act balances individual civil liberties with the urgent need for treatment. It recognizes addiction not as a moral failing, but as a diagnosable, treatable disorder that can impair judgment and, if left unchecked, would lead to incarceration, institutionalization, or death. As the behavioral health crisis in the U.S. continues to deepen, especially in the wake of the opioid epidemic and rising rates of dual-diagnosis cases, the Marchman Act offers a vital legal mechanism that can mean the difference between continued decline and meaningful recovery. There has also been a notable increase in cases of cannabis-induced psychosis, likely linked to the higher potency of products now available.

Understanding the Framework

The Marchman Act allows for the involuntary assessment, stabilization, and treatment of individuals struggling with substance use disorders when they are deemed to be a danger to themselves or others. Importantly, it does not require a criminal act to initiate the process. Petitions can be filed by family members, medical professionals, or even unrelated individuals with firsthand knowledge of the person's substance use and the resulting impairment.

Once filed, the court may order a short-term assessment period (up to 72 hours), followed by a treatment period that can last up to 90 days, with potential extensions, if needed. The statute is designed with due process protections in mind—requiring legal notice, a hearing, and a right to counsel for the respondent, which can be free if qualified.

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A Unique Tool in Civil Law

What makes the Marchman Act especially powerful is its civil—not criminal—nature. Too often, individuals with chronic addiction fall into a cycle of arrest, short-term incarceration, release, and relapse. The Marchman Act interrupts that cycle by offering a treatment-based alternative that addresses the root cause of destructive behavior: the substance use disorder itself.

Moreover, the Marchman Act accommodates individuals who also suffer from co-occurring mental health conditions. In practice, many people with severe addiction also experience anxiety, depression, personality disorders, bipolar disorder, or trauma-related disorders. These dual diagnoses frequently complicate treatment and require an integrated approach—something that the Marchman Act framework supports by allowing treatment providers to consider and address both conditions simultaneously.

Legal Considerations and Challenges

From a legal practitioner’s standpoint, Marchman Act cases require a nuanced understanding of constitutional rights, procedural law, and the behavioral health landscape. Petitioners must demonstrate not only the presence of a substance use disorder but also that the individual is unable to appreciate the need for care and is at risk of harm. Judges must carefully weigh the evidence while upholding the respondent’s civil liberties.

Additionally, the availability and quality of treatment resources vary widely across Florida’s counties, creating a logistical challenge for courts and counsel. Not all jurisdictions have dedicated treatment facilities or consistent funding to support long-term recovery, making coordination between legal professionals, healthcare providers, and family members essential to success.

Attorneys working in this space must also navigate sensitive ethical terrain. Representing petitioners often involves guiding distraught families through a highly emotional and urgent process. For attorneys appointed to represent respondents, the challenge is to ensure the client’s rights are protected—while often recognizing the underlying behavioral health realities that compromise decision-making capacity.



Real-Life Impact

While the statute is not a cure-all, the Marchman Act has had demonstrable success in preventing overdose deaths, reuniting families, and providing individuals with the structured care they desperately need but cannot initiate on their own.

Consider a person with years of substance dependency and multiple hospitalizations who refuses treatment, believing they do not need help. Under the Marchman Act, loved ones can intervene before the person's behavior escalates to a tragedy. Once stabilized and in treatment, many individuals—when freed from the grip of addiction—come to acknowledge the necessity of care and begin their recovery journey in earnest.

The Role of the Legal Community

As the crisis of addiction and mental illness continues to grow, the legal community has a critical role to play—not only in advocating for the proper application of the Marchman Act, but in educating the public, policymakers, and even other attorneys about its purpose and power.

Legal professionals who practice in this area are often part of a multi-disciplinary effort that includes clinicians, social workers, and treatment providers. It's a challenging but deeply meaningful practice area—one that has the potential to change, and even save, lives.

Final Thoughts

The Marchman Act is more than a legal tool—it's a testament to the idea that law can be compassionate, responsive, and healing. For individuals with chronic addiction and co-occurring disorders, it can provide the critical structure necessary to access treatment, regain autonomy, and restore relationships. We have seen many incredible examples of individuals who have changed the course of their lives, and families who have been able to heal through this process.

In a system often stretched thin by reactive responses to addiction and mental illness, the Marchman Act offers a proactive, humane alternative. It deserves greater attention, broader understanding, and continued support from the legal and behavioral health communities alike.

Craig Robinson, Esq., MSW is the founder and a managing partner at Robinson & Casey, a law firm dedicated to helping families navigate complex behavioral health legal matters, with a focus on Marchman Act and Guardianship cases. He is known for his compassionate, solutions-oriented approach to protecting vulnerable individuals through legal intervention and advocacy.



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When Divorce and Real Estate Intersect: Why the Right Real Estate Agent Matters

By Todd Burrows, CDRE®



In divorce proceedings, the marital home is often the most valuable—and most emotionally charged—asset to be divided. For family law attorneys, the sale of that home introduces a range of legal, emotional, and procedural complexities. When the stakes are high for your client, the right real estate expert can be your pocket aces; the wrong one can leave you busted at the table.

The role of a real estate agent in a divorce case differs significantly from that of a traditional sale. Beyond market knowledge, the agent must demonstrate neutrality, conflict-management skills, and a functional understanding of the litigation process. Without these skills, the sale of the home can become a flashpoint for unnecessary conflict, costly delays, or additional litigation.

Common Challenges in Divorce Real Estate Sales

Attorneys routinely encounter the following issues:

- One spouse refuses to sign listing or closing documents
- Disputes over price, repairs, or acceptance of offers
- Agents appear to take sides, inadvertently or otherwise
- Emotional sabotage or unresponsiveness that delays progress

Unfortunately, most real estate agents are unprepared for these realities and may unknowingly escalate conflict or disrupt court-mandated processes through uneven communication or failure to follow legal directives.

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A Divorce-Focused Process

In the same way attorneys rely on appraisers, CPA experts, QDRO attorneys, and child specialists, the right real estate agent should be a trusted member of the professional team. To support your case, the agent must be able to do the following:

1. Maintain Neutral Engagement from the Start

The agent should treat both parties as equal clients, regardless of who initiates contact. Communications, disclosures, and decisions must be shared transparently and equitably. Maintaining this neutrality helps avoid claims of bias or misconduct that can later complicate proceedings.

2. Respect Court Orders and Legal Boundaries

Sales in divorce cases often involve orders regarding occupancy, price limits, or timing. A divorce-capable agent should:

- Review and follow court orders related to the property
- Coordinate with legal counsel to clarify expectations
- Set clear protocols for showings, decisions, and documentation

Overlooking these constraints can lead to violations, delays, or even sanctions.

3. Employ High-Conflict Communication Skills

Tension, mistrust, and poor communication between spouses are common. A qualified agent must:

- Use balanced, non-inflammatory language
- Keep both parties informed without escalating tension
- Enforce reasonable timelines and de-escalate disputes before attorney involvement is necessary

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This approach preserves the dignity of the parties and reduces your office's burden of managing day-to-day sales drama.

4. Provide Clear Documentation and Reporting

When disputes arise, documentation can be key. A real estate expert in contested divorce settings should:

- Keep records of all communications, delays, and refusal to cooperate
- Provide timely updates to counsel
- Be prepared to testify in a neutral, factual manner

These records may prove valuable in hearings, particularly when obstruction needs to be demonstrated.

5. Coordinate Strategically with Counsel

The listing agent should treat attorneys as collaborative partners, not distant observers. This includes:

- Proactive communication when sales issues arise
- Providing admissible data (CMAs, price rationale)
- Avoiding legal overreach while offering useful insight



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When Expert Handling Is Critical

Certain scenarios present heightened risk and require expert attention:

- One party in sole occupancy refusing access
- Active restraining orders or no-contact provisions
- Sales contingent on court orders or parenting plan timelines
- Properties at risk of foreclosure or underwater in value

In these cases, working with a trained professional can mean the difference between resolution and protracted litigation.

Benefits to Your Case and Your Client

Engaging a litigation-informed real estate professional benefits both attorney and client:

For attorneys:

- Fewer court appearances over procedural issues
- Reduced time managing client disputes about the home
- Greater confidence that the real estate component will support—not obstruct—the legal strategy

For clients:

- A more respectful and stable process during a chaotic time
- Increased likelihood of closing the sale without further conflict
- Assurance that both parties are treated fairly

Final Thoughts

Family law attorneys are rightly focused on custody, support, and equitable distribution—but overlooking the sale of the marital home can undermine your client's outcomes. The right real estate agent not only supports your case logistically, but also acts as a neutral force that helps stabilize emotionally volatile transactions.

Continued on following page



Many agents claim divorce experience, but few are equipped to operate within the litigation landscape. Your referral can directly impact the client's financial future—and your case timeline. Choose wisely.



Todd Burrows is a Certified Divorce Real Estate Expert (CDRE®) trained by family law attorneys to handle the sale of real property in divorce cases. He is the only CDRE® serving Palm Beach County and has completed over 1,400 real estate closings since 2001. Todd works exclusively with family law attorneys as a neutral listing agent in court-involved transactions.



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Chaos at the SSA increases as DOGE makes cuts

By Jeffrey M. Freedman, Esq.

Staffing cuts and closed field offices are dramatically affecting the Social Security Administration's (SSA) ability to serve Social Security Disability (SSD) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) applicants. Disability backlogs continue to climb and wait times for decisions nationwide have risen from an average of 236 days to 412 days. Last year, according to former Commissioner Martin O'Malley, 30,000 individuals died waiting for a decision on benefits, and that number is projected to double in 2025.

DOGE (Department of Government Efficiency) recommended cutting 7,000 employees (12 percent of the SSA's staff), the closing of 47 field offices including two in New York State (White Plains and Poughkeepsie, according to the Associated Press), and reducing phone services. Wait times for appointments and calls to the 1-800 number continue to increase. Members of our firm report a decrease in customer service, with increased wait times on hold at the local field offices (frequently there is no response to calls). Some offices are taking months to process general documents instead of weeks.

In a letter, members of the House of Representatives Ways and Means Committee requested newly confirmed Commissioner Frank Bisignano appear before them to answer their questions about the administrations' plan for SSA. The letter points out that long wait times, systems outages and challenges scheduling appointments have been ongoing issues due to the lack of sufficient funding for the agency and outdated technology. Members, led by Chairman, Jason Smith (R-MO), say the agency needs additional funding to update its systems to improve service for programs that "touch the lives of virtually every American and provide critical benefits to millions of seniors, disabled workers and their families each year."



Continued on following page

SOCIAL SECURITY

Chaos at the SSA increases as DOGE makes cuts

By Jeffrey M. Freedman, Esq.

Senator Elizabeth Warren (D.-Mass), led a group of Democrats in objecting to the upheavals at the agency. In addition to staff cuts and office closures, there has been a loss of institutional expertise as experienced personnel and technical staff leave; concerns for the safety of Americans' private data impacted by DOGE representatives' access to the system; and technical malfunctions due to DOGE's instructions to falsely mark migrants as "dead" as a method of encouraging them to leave the country.

The SSA reports a payment accuracy rate of 99.7 percent. The .03 percent error rate reflects incorrect amounts paid to beneficiaries, not payments made to ineligible individuals. AARP recently reported that although undocumented migrants may have fake Social Security numbers and pay into the system, they cannot collect benefits unless they are legal residents.

Social Security is popular across the political spectrum, with one in five Americans receiving benefits, more than 7 million Americans counting on SS for 90 percent of their income, and 85 percent of Americans expressing a desire to see SS strengthened, not cut. The concern of leaders like Senator Elizabeth Warren and Representative Jason Smith, is that by compromising customer service and access to benefits in effect, the administration is cutting the programs. Representatives of SSA, including Bisignano himself, have been declining reporters' requests for comments and avoiding speaking opportunities, which adds to leadership's concerns for the future of the agency.

Jeffrey Freedman is the managing attorney at Jeffrey Freedman Attorneys, PLLC. Jeffrey Freedman Attorneys have handled more than 25,000 Social Security Disability claims since 1980.

The CHOICE Act

By Ellen Leibovitch



Florida's new law – Contracts Honoring Opportunity, Investment, Confidentiality and Economic Growth Act (the "CHOICE Act"), which is expected to be signed by the governor and go into effect on July 1, 2025 – will significantly strengthen the ability of a business (whether an employer or a contracting party) to enforce non-compete and garden leave agreements against employees (and contractors).

OVERVIEW

The CHOICE Act was enacted in the wake of the Federal Trade Commission's 2024 failed effort to enact a rule prohibiting the use of non-compete agreements nationwide. After the FTC failed, Florida lawmakers first enacted a law prohibiting a geographic limitation on the enforcement of a non-compete agreements entered into after July 1, 2024. Then, on April 24, 2025, the Florida legislature enacted the CHOICE Act to further strengthen businesses' rights to enforce such agreements.

Importantly, the CHOICE Act creates a presumption that "covered" non-compete and garden leave agreements are enforceable, do not violate public policy, and must be enforced by injunctive relief.

WHAT IS "COVERED"?

A "covered" employee is an employee (or a contractor) who (a) works primarily in Florida or works for an employer (or the contracting entity) whose principal place of business is in Florida, and (b) who earns or is reasonably expected to earn an amount greater than twice the annual mean wage of either the county where the employer has its principal place of business or the county where the employee resides if the employer's principal place of business is not in the state.

A "covered" non-compete agreement is a written agreement between an employee and an employer in which, for a period not to exceed four years, the covered employee agrees not to provide services to another business, entity or individual (a) similar to the services provided to the employer in the preceding three (3) years or (b) if it is reasonably likely the employee would use the confidential information or customer relationships of the employer.

Continued on following page

ADVOCATE: SPRING/SUMMER 2025 EDITION



A “covered” garden leave agreement is a written agreement between an employee and an employer (a) agreeing to provide notice before terminating the relationship, (b) the employee agrees not to resign before the end of such notice period, and (c) the employer agrees to retain and continue to provide to the employee the same salary and benefits that the employee received in the last month before the commencement of the notice period.

WHAT DOES THE CHOICE ACT DO?

Upon request and proof of a valid agreement, the CHOICE Act requires courts to issue a preliminary injunction against an employee and against the employee’s new employer unless the former employee or the new employer can prove the new employment will not result in unfair competition.

The CHOICE Act will make it much easier for businesses to obtain a preliminary injunction to prohibit competition because the business is no longer required to prove the non-compete is reasonably necessary to protect a legitimate business interest. However, agreements that do not contain the language required by the CHOICE Act are still enforceable under Florida’s current non-compete statute, Fla. Stat. §542.335, which requires an employer demonstrate that it has a legitimate business interest in enforcement.

Any injunction entered under the CHOICE Act may only be modified or dissolved upon a showing of clear and convincing evidence that (a) the employee will not perform similar work during the restricted period or use confidential information or customer relationships, (b) the employer failed to pay the salary or benefits required under a covered garden leave agreement, or failed to provide consideration for a non-compete agreement, after the employee provides a reasonable opportunity to cure the failure; or (c) the new employer is not engaged in or preparing to engage in a similar business as the employer within the restricted territory.

WHAT IS REQUIRED FOR ENFORCEMENT?

Non-compete Agreements. The CHOICE Act permits non-compete agreements to extend up to four (4) years post-employment if such agreements provide:

- At least seven (7) days in advance of execution of the agreement, the employer must provide notice in writing advising the employee of the right to consult an attorney;
- Acknowledgment in writing from the employee regarding access to confidential information or customer relationships; and

If part of a garden leave agreement, the non-compete period is reduced day-for-day by any non-working portion of the notice period.



Covered Garden Leave Agreements. A garden leave agreement requires an employee to give up to four (4) years advance notice of resignation. These agreements are enforceable if the following conditions are met:

- At least seven (7) days in advance of execution of the agreement, the employer must provide notice in writing advising the employee of the right to consult an attorney;
- The time to provide notice does not exceed four (4) years;
- Employees must receive their base salary and benefits during the notice period; and
- Acknowledgment in writing from the employee regarding access to confidential information or customer relationships.

Furthermore, a garden leave agreement must provide that:

- After 90 days, employee is no longer obligated to perform services for the employer;
- The employee may engage in non-work activities at any time for the remainder of the notice period;
- The employee may start employment for another employer for the remainder of the notice period with the former employer's consent; and
- The employer can shorten the notice period with at least 30 days' written notice to the employee of this change.

CONCLUSION

The CHOICE Act is a big win for the business community and, as an attorney who often litigates these agreements, I can say that this law will change the landscape for businesses who are routinely thwarted in their efforts to enforce restrictive covenants against employees, contractors and competitors.

With the CHOICE Act's effective date fast approaching, employers should align their non-compete and garden leave agreements to comply with the new law. For any questions about the new CHOICE Act, please contact me.

Ellen M. Leibovitch
Board Certified Labor & Employment Lawyer

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Schwartz Sladkus Reich Greenberg
Atlas LLP Welcomes Attorney Allison
Kapner to the Firm's Boca Raton
Office. She Joins Partner Joel Feldman
in the Family Law Practice Group.



Allison Kapner
Senior Associate



Joel Feldman
Partner

Allison has focused her practice on Family Law for the past two decades. She handles matters involving:

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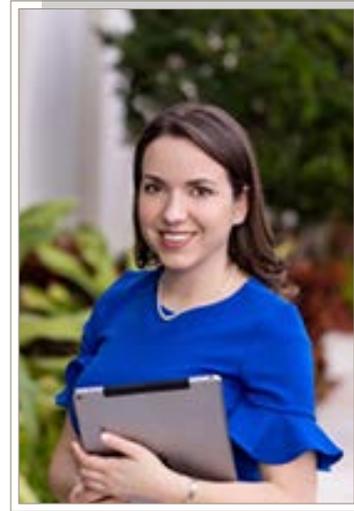
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YLS President's Message

Connection. Growth. Community.

In any strong organization, connection and growth are essential. As young lawyers, our mission is no different. We aim to secure meaningful careers, grow in our roles, and reach new heights in the legal profession.



Heather Beale

But we don't do it alone.

We do it by learning from one another, by supporting each other's journeys, and by building networks that open doors and create opportunities. That spirit of collaboration and advancement is at the heart of the Young Lawyers Section's mission for the 2025–2026 term.

Our section proudly represents a diverse group—from brand-new attorneys just out of law school to junior partners balancing growing practices and young families. No matter where you are in your legal journey, YLS is here to support you.

This year, we're excited to continue our signature events, including the School Supply Drive, Toy Drive, Law Day, and other philanthropic initiatives that give back to the community. We're also continuing our dynamic programs focused on professional development, networking, and practical tools to help you grow your practice and your career.

And of course, we haven't forgotten the fun! Our happy hours and social events will be a great way to unwind, connect, and build lasting friendships in a relaxed, welcoming environment.

We recognize that young lawyers are the future of the legal profession. That's why we're committed to setting the standard for the kind of lawyers we aspire to be—ethical, engaged, and empowered.

Let's make this a year of meaningful connections, shared growth, and collective success. I look forward to seeing you at our events and getting to know each of you this year.

Warm regards,

**Heather Beale
President, Young Lawyers Section**

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BAR

TALK



South Palm Beach County Bar Association Congratulates Judge Edward Artau on Nomination to Federal Bench

BOCA RATON, FL — The South Palm Beach County Bar Association proudly congratulates Judge Edward Artau on his nomination to serve as a United States District Judge for the Southern District of Florida.

Judge Artau currently serves with distinction on Florida's Fourth District Court of Appeal. His exemplary legal career includes prior service as a Trial Judge on Florida's Fifteenth Judicial Circuit Court and as General Counsel to the South Florida Water Management District. In addition to his judicial and legal leadership, Judge Artau also served as President of the South Palm Beach County Bar Association from 1997 to 1998.

Please join us in congratulating and recognizing Judge Artau on this momentous achievement.



The Advocate's Bar Talk Section is where our members can share news about their practices. Please send us your news so that it may be featured in future issues.

DAD BAR

TALK



Chioma Deere Joins SSRGA's Estate Planning Team in South Florida
Schwartz Sladkus Reich Greenberg Atlas LLP (SSRGA) welcomes attorney Chioma Deere as senior counsel in its Boca Raton office. With nearly four years running her own firm, Deere brings deep expertise in estate planning, probate, Medicaid planning, and digital asset protection. She joins as SSRGA expands its Trusts and Estates practice in Florida. Active in both legal and community organizations, Deere is dedicated to helping clients protect their legacies and families.

Mark J. Berkowitz is pleased to share his recent appointment as a Panel Member to the Labor and Employment Panel of the American Arbitration Association (AAA). It is an honor to join such a respected organization dedicated to fair and effective dispute resolution.

He looks forward to serving in this role and contributing to meaningful outcomes in labor and employment arbitration.



Jeffrey Freedman Attorneys, PLLC, a law firm founded in 1980 in Buffalo, NY., has opened an office in Boynton Beach, FL., to serve Social Security Disability (SSD) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) claimants. Over the past four-plus decades, the firm has successfully assisted more than 22,000 clients in obtaining SSD and SSI benefits.

"We are happy to bring our expertise in SSD and SSI to Florida. As many applicants and attorneys are aware, it is extremely challenging to provide the Social Security Administration with the medical and employment evidence that proves an individual who has paid into the Social Security system can no longer work at any job in the local economy," Freedman said.

"Our team of attorneys and paralegals has unparalleled knowledge and experience in this area of the law."

Jeffrey Freedman Attorneys PLLC, has offices in Buffalo and Rochester in addition to the new offices located at 625 Casa Loma Blvd. Suite 1202, Boynton Beach, Florida , 33435.

The Advocate's Bar Talk Section is where our members can share news about their practices. Please send us your news so that it may be featured in future issues.

COMMITTEE EVENTS

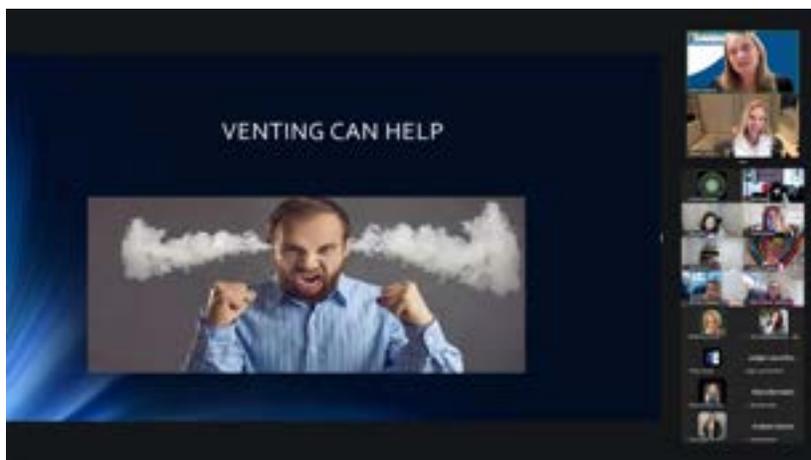
CIVIL PRACTICE & APPELLATE COMMITTEE

On January 10, 2025, the Civil Practice, and Appellate Committee hosted a CLE Lunch and Learn at the South County Courthouse with guest speaker, Judge Delgado.



ADR & MEDIATION COMMITTEE

On January 22, 2025, Florida Supreme Court Certified Family, Circuit & Dependency Mediator, Hadas Stagman, Esq., gave a presentation geared to help mediators and attorneys with difficult clients to be able to achieve a positive outcome in mediation.



COMMITTEE EVENTS

SMALL & SOLO COMMITTEE

On January 29 2025, Chantal Brassard of First Citizens bank gave a presentation about Maintaining a steady, positive cash flow is essential for a law firm's stability and growth. It ensures smooth daily operations by covering expenses like salaries and rent. Strong cash flow also supports expansion opportunities, reduces financial stress, and enhances flexibility by making it easier to repay loans and handle unexpected challenges. Additionally, understanding cash flow trends enables firms to make informed strategic decisions for long-term success.



FAMILY LAW COMMITTEE

On February 14, 2025 the Family Law Committee held a CLE Meet & Greet with Judge Delgado. SPBCBA is excited to welcome Judge Delgado back to the South County Courthouse.



COMMITTEE EVENTS

SMALL & SOLO COMMITTEE

On February 26 2025, Jason Soman & David Akiva of Soman Stewart Business Valuation and Forensic CPAs spoke to our members about financial tips in managing a small/solo law firm, including managing cash flow, taxes, entity structuring and growth.



ADR/ MEDIATION COMMITTEE

On March 6, 2025, Retired Judge Peter Weinstein, gave a presentation on effective mediation strategies, sharing his practice tips for successful and meaningful civil mediations.



January Monthly Luncheon

Guest Speaker Chief Judge Glenn Kelley





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Reception



1.30.25



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3.5.2025



3.11.25



Happy Hour

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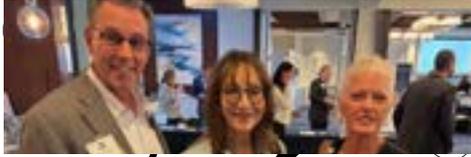
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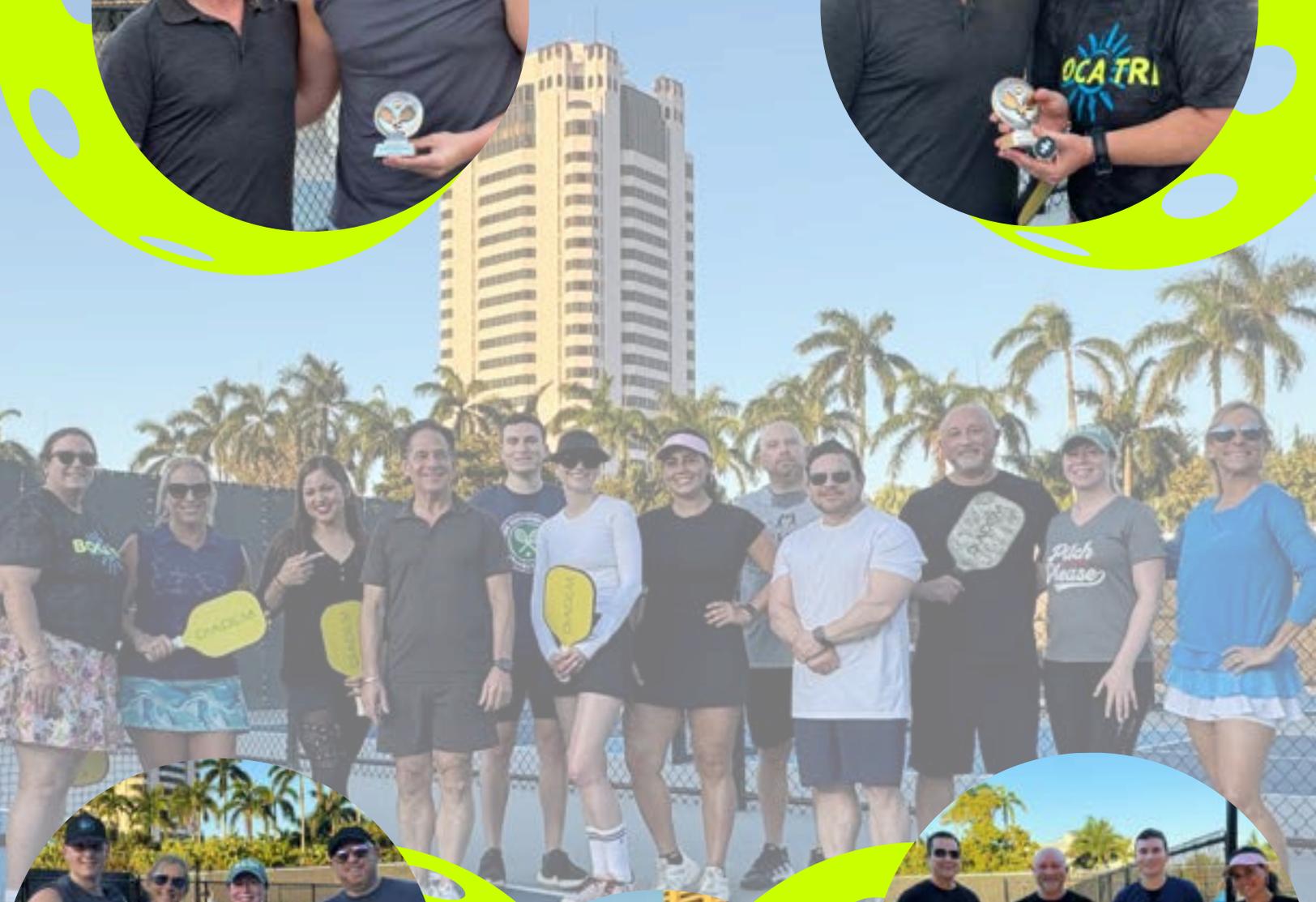




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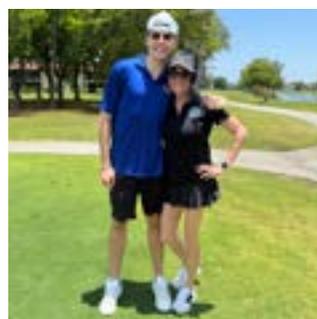


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Shiner Law Group is a personal injury, commercial and business litigation firm founded by attorney David Shiner. Attorney Shiner has dedicated his law practice to help individuals and businesses that were injured or wronged by others.

On the personal injury side of the practice, Mr. Shiner leads a team of professionals who focus their daily activities on fighting for the rights of their clients. In addition, Mr. Shiner has been defending and prosecuting commercial and business litigation from the day he became a lawyer. Client satisfaction and customer service is a crucial part of his law practice and an important trait that many businesses have forgotten. The Shiner Law Group team goes over and beyond what you would expect from a typical law firm when it comes to client satisfaction.

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Advanced Professional Services has been an Annual Sponsor for the SPBCBA since 2017. They have supported the association, events, and the Young Lawyers Section with steadfast dedication. Learn more by visiting their website at <https://advancedprofessional.com>

BRINKLEY MORGAN

Brinkley Morgan is a respected South Florida law firm, celebrating 50 years of providing personalized legal services. Known for excellence in marital and family law, business litigation, real estate, and trusts and estates, the firm's attorneys deliver strategic solutions tailored to each client's needs.

Brinkley Morgan's commitment to excellence has earned national recognition, including Tier 1 rankings in the 2024 U.S. News - Best Lawyers® "Best Law Firms" for Commercial Litigation, Family Law, Insurance Litigation, and Real Estate Law. Seventeen attorneys were honored in the 2024 Best Lawyers in America®, and the firm boasts five Board Certified Marital & Family Law attorneys, two Board Certified Real Estate attorneys, and one Board Certified Estate Planning attorney. Several attorneys are Fellows of the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers (AAML), and Roberta G. Stanley is a Fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers (ACTL).

Brinkley Morgan fosters a collaborative, client-focused culture built on "performance with humility," ensuring top-tier representation in complex legal matters. With offices in Fort Lauderdale and Boca Raton, the firm continues to serve as a trusted leader in the South Florida legal community.

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First Horizon Bank, a subsidiary of First Horizon Corporation (NYSE: FHN), is a leading regional financial services company dedicated to strengthening the lives of our clients and communities. With a legacy that spans more than 160 years, First Horizon provides a wide range of commercial, private, and consumer banking services through a relationship-focused approach.

Our commitment to innovation, integrity, and client satisfaction positions us as a trusted partner for individuals, families, and businesses across the Southeast and beyond. First Horizon has been recognized nationally for our culture, client experience, and dedication to creating a more inclusive and prosperous future for all.

In the Palm Beach region, First Horizon Bank combines deep local knowledge with the strength of a regional institution to deliver tailored financial solutions that meet the unique needs of individuals, families, and businesses. Our experienced team is dedicated to providing personalized service in private banking, wealth management, and commercial lending. Beyond banking, we are proud to invest in the community through partnerships with local nonprofits, cultural institutions, and civic initiatives—reinforcing our long-standing commitment to helping Palm Beach area thrive.

For more information, please visit our website at www.FirstHorizon.com.



We are a full-service US immigration law firm. Our main office is located in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

However, we serve clients throughout the United States and the world. Our experienced immigration attorneys are dedicated to serving our clients' individual needs. Our clients enjoy personal and direct access to an immigration attorney who will handle their immigration case. We look forward to hearing about your situation and finding the best solution for your US immigration needs. Choose from the categories on the left for details about various US immigration options.

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Gladstone, Weissman, Hirschberg & Schneider, P.A. serves families throughout Broward, Miami-Dade, and Palm Beach counties with unwavering discretion, compassion, and legal acumen. Founded by two of Florida's most respected legal professionals, the firm offers strategic guidance on complex marital and family law matters, including high-net-worth divorce, asset division, parental responsibility, modifications, prenuptial agreements, and paternity.

Five of our attorneys—Partners Peter L. Gladstone, Jeffrey A. Weissman, David L. Hirschberg, Denise L. Schneider, and Senior Associate Abigail M. Cohen—are Board Certified in Marital and Family Law by The Florida Bar, a distinction held by fewer than 1% of Florida attorneys.

The firm's clients include entrepreneurs, executives, physicians, lawyers, professional athletes, and public figures—each receiving tailored support rooted in preserving privacy, protecting assets, and promoting stability for their children.

GWHS continues to earn recognition at the highest levels of the profession. With back-to-back honors from Best Lawyers in America, Partner Peter L. Gladstone was named 2025 Family Law Lawyer of the Year, and Partner Jeffrey A. Weissman received the same honor in 2024. Additionally, Partners David L. Hirschberg and Denise L. Schneider, along with Senior Associate Abigail M. Cohen, were recognized as Best Lawyers, and Senior Associates Joshua L. Plager and Tova N. Tsikis were named Ones to Watch by 2025 Best Lawyers by U.S. News. Tsikis was also honored as a 2024 On the Rise Honoree by the Daily Business Review - highlighting her as one of South Florida's most promising attorneys under 40.

Our clients not only find experienced representation but also trusted advocates committed to securing the best possible outcomes for their families.



GrayRobinson is a multidimensional team of attorneys, advisors, and consultants providing integrated legal, lobbying, and regulatory services to leading and emerging businesses, state and local governments, industry stakeholders, and entrepreneurs nationwide.

The firm's professionals are agile, adaptable, and fully embedded to deliver results at the local, state, and federal levels, collaborating with clients nationally from 16 key markets in Florida and Washington, D.C.

GrayRobinson has been deeply rooted in Palm Beach County for over a decade. The firm established its Boca Raton office in 2013, followed by the opening of its West Palm Beach office in 2018. GrayRobinson continues to serve a broad client base, focusing on personalized service and community engagement.

GrayRobinson professionals are known for their legal acumen, civic leadership, and commitment to the communities they serve, actively participating in local initiatives and dedicated to making a meaningful impact beyond the courtroom. To learn more, visit gray-robinson.com.

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At Kogan & DiSalvo, representing injury victims is more than just practicing law—it's a commitment to guiding people through some of the most difficult times in their lives. Our team includes four Florida Bar Board-Certified Civil Trial Attorneys and a deep bench of experienced litigators dedicated to achieving exceptional results for our clients and our referring partners.

We handle a broad range of serious injury and wrongful death cases, including car, truck, and motorcycle accidents; bicycle collisions; catastrophic injuries; and complex liability matters. Every case is approached with the diligence and precision it deserves, with strategies built to maximize compensation and stand strong in court if needed.

Our firm has a wide geographic footprint across Florida, with offices in North Miami, Broward, Palm Beach (visit our new Boca Raton Office!), Martin, Indian River, Brevard, Pinellas, and Hillsborough counties. This regional presence enables us to serve clients statewide while maintaining close, collaborative relationships with referring attorneys.

We are proud of our longstanding commitment to the South Palm Beach County Bar Association (SPBCBA), which we've supported since 1994. Our founding shareholders, Darryl B. Kogan and Theodore L. DiSalvo, are past presidents of the SPBCBA. Shareholder Rachel R. Schragger is the past president of the Young Lawyers Section and currently serves as President-Elect of the South Palm Beach Chapter of the Florida Association for Women Lawyers (FAWL).

We value the trust of our peers and welcome attorney referrals with professionalism, transparency, and a shared commitment to client success.



Laurie Dubow is a highly credentialed Real Estate Broker and trusted advisor who specializes in complex real estate matters involving divorce, probate, and litigation. With over two decades of experience, Laurie blends real estate and mortgage expertise with a Master's in Psychotherapy and a Post-Master's in Business Administration—giving her a unique ability to navigate the financial, legal, and emotional dimensions of high-stakes transactions.

Laurie is a recognized leader in South Florida's real estate market, honored as Broker of the Year by the Realtors' Association. She is a two-time recipient of the Women's Council of Realtors' Blue Diamond Elite Award, and has also earned the NADP National Leadership Award and the Real Estate Award from South Florida Business and Wealth Magazine. Laurie holds numerous professional designations, including Certified Divorce Specialist, Senior Real Estate Specialist, Certified Luxury Home Marketing Specialist, Accredited Buyer Representative, and Certified Distressed Property Expert. Laurie has extensive experience as an Expert Witness, and works in close partnership with attorneys and professionals to provide detailed property valuations, strategic marketing for court-ordered sales, expert testimony, and compassionate guidance to clients under stress. She is a founding Director of the Boca Chapter of the National Association of Divorce Professionals, has long served on the Realtors Association Professional Standards Committee, was appointed to Palm Beach County's Housing and Finance Commission and is on the Board of Trustees of the Faulk Center for Counseling.

Known as a "Real Estate Concierge," Laurie is the go-to broker when discretion, complexity, and precision matter. Attorneys trust her to protect their clients' interests, preserve asset value, and ensure seamless real estate outcomes in even the most sensitive legal contexts.

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"I love recommending LEAP to others, especially in my local legal community...when you know you have software that can improve your quality of work and the productivity of your staff...I want them to have that kind of success."

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A more efficient law firm starts here. LEAP's all-in-one cloud-based legal software solution integrates practice management, document automation, legal accounting, billing, and AI tools into a secure, centralized platform. LEAP empowers legal professionals to combine their skills, judgment, and creativity with transformative technology to help maximize productivity and deliver exceptional client service.

Explore how LEAP's award-winning solution supports law firms:

Practice Management: A unified system keeps teams connected and cases organized while providing a single source of truth.

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App Integrations: Seamlessly access Microsoft 365, WealthCounsel, Xero, LawConnect, Power BI, QuickBooks InfoTrack, DecisionVault, and more directly within LEAP—all from LEAP's platform.



**LESSER LANDY
SMITH & SIEGEL PLLC**
ATTORNEYS AT LAW
Personal Injury Law Since 1927

Lesser, Landy, Smith & Siegel, PLLC is a third-generation personal injury law firm with nearly a century of standing up for those who have been injured or suffered the loss of a loved one due to the negligence or wrongdoing of another.

With offices in Boca Raton, West Palm Beach, Wellington, Stuart, and Bradenton, our team of skilled trial attorneys represents clients in personal injury, nursing home neglect, negligent security matters, and wrongful death cases. They guide clients through every step of the legal process and deliver the best results for their cases.

Our personal attention to our clients, along with a proven record of success, has earned us an unparalleled reputation. As a result, we can rely solely on referrals from clients and professionals in the community. We do no formal advertising as we believe that a job well done, and a client well served, is the best way to generate new business and grow our firm.

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From the boardroom to the courtroom, at the seats of government or at community association meetings, Sachs Sax Caplan, P.L. offers effective legal and business solutions individuals, businesses, not-for-profit organizations, government agencies and community associations who call Florida home. They have built a significant presence in Florida through dedicated, active involvement and leadership in the professional, legislative and civic communities.

Sachs Sax Caplan prides themselves on offering their clients representation from diverse backgrounds, adding breadth and depth to our experience and bringing insight and expertise to the firm. With their knowledge and achievements as public officials, members of law enforcement, auditors and public accountants, general counsel and real estate developers, their talented professionals provide value added legal services. Many of their attorneys are board certified by the Florida Bar in their fields of expertise, and Sachs Sax Caplan, P.L. is rated AV® by Martindale-Hubbell®, the highest peer review rating attainable, awarded to only one percent of law firms reviewed. Sachs Sax Caplan has been involved with the South Palm Beach County Bar Association for many years. Spencer Sax, Peter Sachs, and Joel Kenwood are all past presidents of the SPBCBA, Steven Rappaport is the treasurer on the board, and Jeremy Dicker is a current board member. Learn more at <https://ssclawfirm.com/>



Scott J. Edwards, P.A. is a boutique appellate law firm, serving clients throughout the state of Florida in the areas of appellate law, trial support, and complex motion practice. Attorney Scott J. Edwards is a third-generation Florida lawyer who is passionate about working with clients to meet their legal needs.

Scott has an extensive experience in complex, high-stakes commercial, tort, and insurance appeals and litigation, with clients including major corporations in the insurance, automotive, theme park, railroad, construction, homeowners/condominium association, and maritime industries. He is skilled in the drafting and successful arguing of appellate briefs, summary judgment motions, and other complex and dispositive motions. He is experienced in all aspects of litigation from inception through trial and appeal. <https://EdwardsAppeals.com>

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Soman Stewart CPA PLLC

Forensic Accounting Business Valuation Experts

At the crossroads of forensic accounting and business valuation, our firm is committed to delivering credible solutions for our clients' most crucial forensic accounting and business valuation matters. Forensic & Valuation services are not a division of our firm - They are our sole focus.

Whether navigating divorce proceedings, trust/estate matters, or multi-generational planning, our specialized expertise consistently facilitates effective dispute resolution. Our analyses withstand rigorous scrutiny from courts, opposing counsel, experts, boards of directors, fiduciaries, and government agencies.

At Soman Stewart, we understand the gravity of your challenges and excel in providing clarity in high-stakes financial issues.



Yaffa Family Law Group is a boutique family law firm serving clients from Stuart to Miami with strategic, compassionate, and outcome-driven representation. Under the leadership of Founder and Managing Partner Doreen Yaffa, the firm is built on a core belief: resolution should be prioritized, and litigation approached with purpose.

With over 30 years of experience, Yaffa understands that divorce is not just a legal event, it's a life transition. The firm applies a cost-benefit mindset to every case, guiding clients to make informed decisions that balance legal strategy with emotional and financial realities. "The best court result isn't always worth the time, cost, and emotional toll," Yaffa notes.

This philosophy inspired the development of SplytUp Services, a streamlined legal offering for couples prepared to divorce amicably throughout the entire state of Florida. It's one of several innovative options aimed at making legal support more accessible and efficient.

Board Certified in Marital and Family Law since 2001, Yaffa brings the highest level of expertise to the courtroom. As both a seasoned litigator and Certified Life Coach, she leads a team that combines legal acumen with human understanding.

The firm's mission is clear: empower clients, pursue resolution with compassion, and litigate with precision when necessary. Through mentorship, innovation, and a client-first approach, Yaffa Family Law Group is redefining how family law is practiced, one strategic, empathetic case at a time.

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Lexitas is the industry-leading legal tech provider of solutions for the legal profession, serving lawyers, law firms, courts, corporations, third-party administrators, and insurance companies across the country.

Lexitas' product offerings include court reporting, record retrieval, process service, and legal staffing, with customized, high-quality solutions backed by more than 1,300 full-time team members, Lexitas is ready to deploy—anytime, anywhere.

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A century of innovation, expansion, and commitment. An Am Law 100 firm with more than 700 lawyers in 25 cities across the United States. A celebrated, sterling provider of legal advocacy and guidance for industries from the generators of technologically complex ideas, to the builders putting fresh bricks, mortar, and timber on the ground. That's the Akerman story.

Akerman's accomplishments revolve around you - the companies, industries, entrepreneurs, and individuals we have been privileged to serve over these many years. You enjoy crucial roles in the economy nationally and locally, in the livelihoods of your customers and employees, and in the communities where you thrive. As you navigate change - and often lead it, we are there by your side as you fight through the barriers that stand in your way to seize new opportunities.

Throughout boardrooms and executive suites, we are known for delivering results across the full scope of our practice areas, including Labor and Employment; Bankruptcy and Reorganization, Consumer Financial Services, Data and Technology (CFS+); Corporate; Government Strategies; Healthcare; Intellectual Property; Litigation; Real Estate; and Tax.

Our Labor and Employment Practice Group is perennially ranked by leading industry publications, including by Chambers USA, which notes our "extraordinary" approach to client service. We defend companies of all sizes, from multinational Fortune 500 corporations to tech startups and everything in between, in employment litigation—including class and collective actions—under federal, state, and local employment laws.

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City
National
Bank

Claudia Rodney
Vice President, Business Banker
Cell number: 786-723-9864
claudia.rodney@citynational.com

As a professional, you set the bar high with your clients and deliver every time. Why not expect the same from your bank? At City National Bank, we take pride in our best-in class service. Whether you wish to run your business more efficiently or extend your capabilities, our experienced advisors can help you achieve your objectives. Let's talk.



First
Citizens
Bank
forever first®

At First Citizens, we've been helping families and businesses make more of their finances for 125 years. We've shared their dreams, helped make budgets work harder and built financial plans to last them the rest of their lives. And in that time, we've built a solid track record of service, stability and reliability.

The Way We Work

Long-Term Thinking: We build relationships that last with deeper learning and more effective ideas, solving problems and creating opportunities.

Service Excellence: We're dedicated to helping the people, companies and institutions that rely on us, acting always with integrity, transparency and respect.

Powerful Results: From our customers to our associates to our communities, we strive to create better outcomes and a better world.

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With a panel comprised of nearly 500 retired judges, private practice attorneys, and other alternative dispute resolution professionals, JAMS successfully resolves and manages business and legal disputes by providing efficient, cost-effective and impartial ways of overcoming barriers at any stage of conflict.

JAMS offers customized dispute resolution services locally and globally through a combination of industry specific experience, first-class client service, top-notch facilities and highly trained panelists. Our diverse panel of South Florida neutrals have proven track records and extensive practice area experience handling business and commercial, construction, employment, insurance and personal injury matters. Our deep practice and industry knowledge enables our neutrals to adeptly handle cases ranging from two-party personal injury mediations to complex, multi-party, multimillion-dollar arbitrations in the United States and other jurisdictions worldwide.



Our Approach: Aggressive Advocacy with Compassion

We pride ourselves on our aggressive advocacy on behalf of our clients. Johnson Ritchey Family Law understands that family law disputes can be contentious, and we are committed to vigorously representing your interests in and out of the courtroom. Our team is well-versed in the intricacies of family law, and we leverage our legal expertise to develop strategic and effective litigation plans tailored to your unique situation.

Alternative Dispute Resolution: Mediation and Collaborative Divorce

Not every family law matter needs to be resolved through aggressive litigation. At Johnson Ritchey, we can offer a more amicable and cost-effective approach to resolving family disputes, such as mediation and Collaborative divorce. Both options can be an effective solution for couples seeking a less adversarial approach, enabling them to maintain control over the outcome of their case. By offering alternative dispute resolution options, we aim to provide our clients with a spectrum of options to fit their unique circumstances.

Whether you choose aggressive litigation or opt for a more collaborative approach, Johnson Ritchey Family Law is dedicating to achieving the best possible outcome for you and your family.

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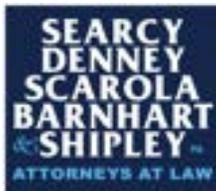
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Osherow, PLLC is a distinguished South Florida law firm concentrating on business and commercial litigation, construction litigation, mediation, and arbitration.

Founded by Mark R. Osherow, who has been practicing law since 1989, the firm brings over three decades of experience and trusted legal insight to complex commercial disputes.

Mr. Osherow is a Florida Bar Board Certified Specialist in Business Litigation. He is widely recognized for his leadership in the legal community, commitment to ethical practice, and dedication to resolving high-stakes matters with precision and integrity. Osherow, PLLC stands as a steadfast advocate and solution-focused partner for clients throughout Florida.



DAVID P. VITALE JR. is an experienced litigator who has tried cases to verdict in both federal and state court. In 2024 alone, Mr. Vitale tried four separate cases in Palm Beach County, including one in which he was brought on as trial counsel on the eve of trial and received a \$1.5M+ verdict.

Mr. Vitale has a broad practice that focuses on personal injury, wrongful death, and medical malpractice claims on behalf of injured victims, but which also includes complex commercial and business litigation matters. Mr. Vitale graduated second in his class from Boston College Law School and has been recognized in numerous legal publications.

Mr. Vitale regularly consults with local firms on the viability of Searcy Denney serving as co-counsel on high-value cases and cases fast approaching trial, particularly where the defense has refused to make reasonable settlement offers. For inquiries, he can be reached at (561) 613-9368 and dvitale@searcylaw.com.

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REAL ESTATE FINDER, LLC
MATTHEW H. MASCHLER
REAL ESTATE BROKER
www.RealEstateFinder.com

Matthew H. Maschler has been in Real Estate his whole life. Real Estate is his passion and he is committed to helping his customers buy and sell homes with the highest level of expertise. Matthew can provide invaluable assistance in all areas of the real estate purchase including listing, negotiation, selection and closing.

He leaves no stone unturned when marketing his listings through traditional and cutting edge modern techniques. And he provides a high level of service to all of his buyers, whether they are buying a home for the first time or have a lifetime of experience investing in real estate. Due to his professionalism, tenacity and laser focus, Matthew has been successful in selling millions of dollars' worth of properties in every segment of the market including homes on the water, golf course, 55 and over, rental properties, single family homes, estates and country clubs.

Aside from his real estate work, Matthew lends support to numerous charities, and is on the board of directors of Frank McKinney's Caring House Project Foundation, where in direct contrast to selling housing to the wealthiest people on earth, Matthew builds homes for the poorest.

Matthew lives in Boca Raton, Florida with his wife, son and daughter. He enjoys all things Disney World, Las Vegas, WWE Wrestling, Social Media and Technology, Baseball, FAU Football and all South Florida sports teams.



Schwartz Sladkus Reich Greenberg Atlas LLP (SSRGA) is a dynamic, full-service law firm committed to delivering exceptional legal counsel and personalized service. With offices in New York City and Boca Raton, Florida, SSRGA is uniquely positioned to serve clients whose legal needs span both states.

Entrepreneurial at heart, the firm combines deep legal experience with a proactive, solutions-driven mindset—qualities that resonate strongly with individuals, families, and businesses navigating today's legal and regulatory environments.

The firm's South Florida office, located at 2424 N. Federal Highway in Boca Raton, is led by Managing Partner Robin Bresky, a recognized appellate attorney and community leader. The Boca office concentrates on Appellate Law, Litigation Support, Trusts & Estates, Probate Administration, Civil Litigation, Family Law, and Condominium & HOA Law.

SSRGA's Florida attorneys – several of whom have been recognized by Best Lawyers, Super Lawyers, and Florida Trend's Legal Elite – collaborate closely with colleagues firmwide, leveraging deep legal knowledge and a team-oriented approach to address clients' complex and evolving needs. Whether navigating a high-stakes appeal, guiding clients through thoughtful estate planning to preserve wealth and family legacies, or handling sensitive family matters, the firm is dedicated to protecting its clients' interests with clarity, care, and strategic insight.

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Shapiro Partners of Raymond James is a distinguished team of financial professionals based in Boca Raton, led by Managing Director, Michael Shapiro. With over 25 years of experience, Michael and his team bring a unique perspective to Wealth Management, combining his background in law and accounting to deliver comprehensive financial planning protection strategies. Michael has consistently received distinctions for excellence, including being named as one of the Top US Advisors by Barron's and a Best in State Advisor by Forbes on multiple occasions.

Michael is joined by his two partners: Craig Lannaman, and Erik Modansky. Craig, with over 10 years at Shapiro Partners, specializes in financial planning and investment management. He holds designations such as Financial Planning Associate, Investment Management Consultant, and Accredited Domestic Partnership AdvisorSM. Erik focuses on next-generation clients, holding designations such as Accredited Portfolio Management AdvisorTM (APMATM), Accredited Asset Management Specialist[®] (AAMS[®]), and Chartered Retirement Planning Counselor[®] (CRPC[®]).

To ensure high-quality service to our clients, Shapiro Partners also consists of four Client Service Associates - Imias Ansara, Susan Clark, Michelle Giovanelli, and Daniel Valente.

Shapiro Partners integrates Retirement Planning, Estate Planning, and Intergenerational Wealth Management, and coordinates with clients' other professional advisors to ensure a comprehensive strategy. We manage investments to align with clients' goals, striving for cash flow and growth while mitigating risks and taxes.

At Shapiro Partners, we maintain the highest standards of confidentiality and professionalism, working to meet the unique financial and lifestyle needs of each client.



When you've been involved in a serious accident or harmed by the negligence of another, you need a legal team you can count on, one that will fight for you, your rights, and your recovery.

At Smith, Ball, Báez & Prather, we understand just how important it is that you secure the full, fair compensation you are owed.

Our West Palm Beach personal injury lawyers are ready to advocate tirelessly for you and your family so that you can get back on your feet and move forward with your life. When you turn to Smith, Ball, Báez & Prather, you'll find a compassionate and approachable team. We genuinely care about you and your well-being, which is why we prioritize client communication and accessibility. As a client, you will work directly with your attorney throughout the legal process and will have access to our entire support staff. We are always available to answer your questions, address your concerns, and provide the guidance you need to navigate your recovery.

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