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SPBC FAWL

Promoting Women's Leadership Roles within the Legal Profession Since 2003



LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

by Heather F. Beale, Esq.

It has been my distinct honor to serve as President of the South Palm Beach County Chapter of FAWL during the 2024-2025 term. Reflecting on this past year, I am truly amazed by our incredible Board of Directors, the strides our members have taken, and our collective accomplishments as a community.

Our greatest achievement this year has been our unwavering commitment to our core values: supporting women, uplifting women in the legal profession, and ensuring that there is ample room at the table for every woman and professional, without leaving anyone behind.

Following our installation last May, our Board swiftly took action to support the Summer Youth Program (now aptly named "Rise Up") run by the Palm Beach County Juvenile Court and spearheaded by Judge Melanie Dale Serber, donating our time and resources over the summer. Shortly thereafter, we partnered with four local voluntary bar associations (VBAs) to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month with a joint happy hour. In October, we collaborated with the Women's Foundation and nine other VBAs for a Women on the Bench speed networking event, where we learned from our esteemed Judiciary about the dedication required to be elevated to the bench. We also united as the "Legal Crewsaders" (organized by Past President Kara Brotman) to participate in the Every Boob Counts 5K race, benefiting breast cancer research. October also brought us an unforgettable Think Pink Luncheon, where we achieved record attendance and raised donations for the Boca Raton Regional Hospital's Go Pink! Challenge. We heard inspiring testimonials from young women who saved their lives through early detection and listened to Dr. Christine Pestana's educational presentation on screening and care.

Everyone loves our luncheons at Mariposa, and this year we didn't disappoint with incredible CLE presentations on topics such as the mental load and mental health resources for attorneys, employment law issues including pregnancy accommodations, and small business concerns, as well as valuable insights from the PBC Clerk's Office. We are grateful to our speakers, including Joseph Ankus, Amy Borman, Past President Ellen Leibovitch, and State FAWL President Jessica D. Thomas. Additionally, we joined our sister VBA, SPBCBA, for memorable luncheons in February and March. March's luncheon, a first of its kind in honor of Women's History Month, featured powerhouse panelists such as PBC State Attorney Alexia Cox, President & CEO of the Business Development Board for PBC Kelly Smallridge, and Commissioner Maria Sachs, moderated by President-Elect of The Florida Bar and our 2024 Woman Lawyer of the Year, Sia Baker Barnes. We are equally grateful for our past presidents who continue to support our Chapter by hosting monthly Table for 8 meals, mentoring, and giving back to our members.

Our dedication to pro bono efforts and the community has been evident through our sponsorship of the 15th Judicial Circuit Pro Bono Committee's Pro Bono Awards and Ice Cream Social, and our third year of fundraising and donating to the Rochelle Kerner Scholarship for a law student at Nova Southeastern University. We are deeply grateful for the time and support our Judiciary provides to our Chapter and community. In recognition of their contributions, during our Judicial Reception we made a \$1,500 donation to the Legal Aid Society of Palm Beach County (LASPBC) on their behalf. We also look forward to SPBCBA's inaugural Run for the Brave 5K benefiting LASPBC's Veteran's program on May 31st, which we are proudly sponsoring. Please consider registering for this run and joining our team: "Legal Crewsaders."

On the membership front, while still recovering from pre-Covid numbers, our Chapter has experienced significant growth this past year, welcoming many new and known faces. This growth is a testament to the vibrant and inclusive environment we have cultivated.

Additionally, I am proud to announce that our Chapter has taken on the vital responsibility of caring for the lactation room at the South Palm Beach County Courthouse, ensuring it remains a welcoming and supportive space for all.

Finally, I know that our accomplishments this year are largely due to our generous sponsors. Thanks to their support, we have been able to host events, make donations, and further the mission of FAWL.

As we prepare to welcome our new President and Board of Directors, I am confident that the foundation we have built will continue to support the growth and success of our Chapter. I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the incoming Board and look forward to seeing all that they will achieve.

Thank you for your enthusiastic participation and support throughout this year and for providing me with the privilege of serving as President. Together, we have strengthened our Chapter and made a lasting impact on our community. My hope is that we carry this momentum forward, continuing to make a difference for women in our profession and beyond.

FAWL IN REVIEW

By: Cassandra Jelincic, Esq., Historian of SPBC FAWL

It's been another wonderful year thus far for SPBC FAWL! We have worked hard to fill our calendar with as many meaningful, valuable and fun events as possible, which allow for us to network on a professional and personal level.

The Board met on August 11, 2024 to kick off the FAWL year with a Retreat at Chloe's Bistro to begin planning yet another exciting and interactive year. Since then, we continue to meet monthly to effectuate our plans and adapt as necessary.



On August 9, 2022 our members brought smiles and school supplies to the Clerk of Circuit Court for Palm Beach County for their youth summer program with Judge Melanie Dale Surber. Our Adventure Group continued to meet monthly for actives such as Publix Apron cooking classes, sunset catamaran cruises, Jazz and Gospel in the Gardens, and kayaking!

We officially kicked off the year on September 18, 2024 with our Membership Reception at American Social. It was striking start to the new year and was fabulous reuniting with current and past FAWL members, sponsors of our fantastic organization, as well as welcoming the new members to our chapter!

On October 24, 2022, we held our Annual Think Pink Breast Cancer Awareness Luncheon at Farmer's Table. The event featured a charitable raffle, inspiring stories of survival by Marisa Spiro and Mandy Friedlander, and an educational piece by our key note speaker, Dr. Christine Pestana, of the Lynn Women's Institute. As a result of the success of the event \$2,650 was donated to Lynn Cancer Institute.

Our first monthly luncheon of the year was schedule to take place on November 14, 2024 at Mariposa at Neiman Marcus where Joseph E. Ankus, Esq., presented an insightful message regarding the "Introduction to Attorney Mental Health & Wellness". We had numerous other successful Monthly Lunches, including on January 9, 2025 with a wonderful CLE presentation by Amy Borman, Esq., on "What's New at the Palm Beach County Clerk's Office", a joint membership Luncheon with the South Palm Beach County Bar Association on February 21, 2025, and our own past president of SPBC FAWL, Ellen Leibovitch's, Esq.'s, presentation on "Common Misconceptions About Employment Laws" on April 10, 2025. At our last monthly luncheon of the year, on May 8, 2025, the State FAWL President, Jessica D. Thomas, Esq., traveled all the way from Orlando to provide an insightful CLE presentation about all the incredible legislative initiatives that State FAWL is implementing for its members!





SPBC FAWL's Annual Holiday Party was held at The Club at Boca Pointe on December 11, 2024. We collected shoes to donate to In Jacob's Shoes as well as donations for the Rochelle Kerner Scholarship and there was certainly a festive spirit for all to enjoy!

On February 27, 2025, SPBC FAWL members were able to show our appreciation to our esteemed Judiciary and their staff at the Judicial Reception held at the Warren Delray.

Along with all of the incredible events noted above, there have been numerous networking and mentoring opportunities at our Table for 8 events hosted by SPBC FAWL Past Presidents Heather Samuels, Leorah Greenman, Kara Brotman, Ellen Leibovitch, Tammy Saltzman, and Dominique Sciuolo (with a special guest appearance by the Honorable Ori Silver). If you are interested in attending a Table for 8 please be on the look out to register for an opportunity to dine with these lovely ladies!

The year is far from over. Please save the date to celebrate the Ms. Stacey D. Mullins as the Women Lawyer of the Year on May 21, 2025 at Woodfield Country Club! We can't wait to see you there and finish the year strong!





THINK PINK LUNCHEON & RAFFLE/AUCTION

October 24, 2024

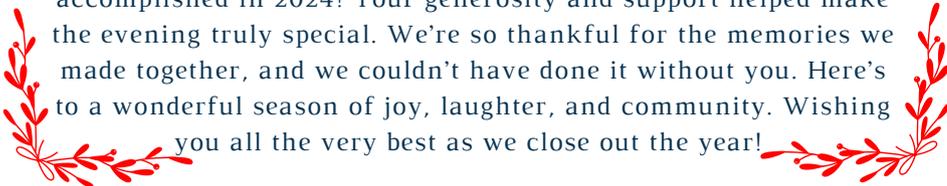
Our annual Think Pink Luncheon exceeded all expectations and then some! We're thrilled to extend our heartfelt gratitude to our cherished sponsors and generous donors for their unwavering support, which made this remarkable event a reality!



HOLIDAY PARTY

December 13, 2024

We just wanted to take a moment to express our heartfelt gratitude to all our incredible holiday party sponsors and everyone who attended our celebration all that we have accomplished in 2024! Your generosity and support helped make the evening truly special. We're so thankful for the memories we made together, and we couldn't have done it without you. Here's to a wonderful season of joy, laughter, and community. Wishing you all the very best as we close out the year!





ANNUAL JUDICIAL RECEPTION

February 27, 2025

We are so excited to honor our esteemed Judiciary!
Thank you to everyone who joined us and to our generous event sponsors. See you all soon!



WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH LUNCHEON

March 20, 2025

What an incredible group of panelists and luncheon! When South Palm Beach County Bar Association asked us to partner with them for Women's History Month we of course said yes. We were honored to share the event with Palm Beach County Chapter of FAWL and Palm Beach County Sheree Davis Cunningham Black Women Lawyers Association.

The panelists, moderated by President-Elect of the Florida Bar and our 2024 Woman Lawyer of the Year Sia Baker Barnes, included State Attorney Alexcia Cox, Kelly Smallridge, and Commissioner Maria Sachs. They spoke about women getting things done and about the importance of supporting women and men in promoting gender equality in the business world - our FAWL mission!!

A big congratulations to our State FAWL Liaison, Jennifer Fulton Styblo, for being recognized by her peers during the luncheon and being voted to join the South County Bar's board of directors.

SECOND ANNUAL UNITY SEDER

SPBC FAWL is grateful for the opportunity to co-host the Second Annual Unity Seder that took place last night together with other incredible local voluntary bar associations. We wove the traditional Passover story together with perspectives from other faiths and cultures to shine a light on our shared values of freedom, resilience, and hope. Thank you to our sponsors and members for attending with us to share in this special experience.



APRIL - TABLE FOR 8

Thank you to Past President Dominique Sciullo and Special Guest, Judge Silver, for hosting the Table for 8 (actually 10 in attendance) held on April 17, 2025 at Sixty Vines. Attendees included Amy Shield, Cory Morris, Heather Cooper, Steven Clarfield, Mark Astor, Audra Simovitch, Giuliana Santini and Jenifer Chapkin. A great opportunity to network while dining and getting to know your colleagues.

APRIL MONTHLY LUNCHEON

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to Ellen Leibovitch for serving as our guest speaker at yesterday's monthly luncheon.



MARCH MONTHLY LUNCHEON

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MARCH - TABLE FOR 8

Thank you to Angelina Namia and Tammy Saltzman, Past Presidents of FAWL-South Palm Beach County, for hosting the Table for 8 on March 5, 2025 at Dada's in Delray. We discussed general legal issues, ideas to get involved for the betterment of the community and heard views from the bench offered by Judge Martz. A great time was had by all! Attendees included Judge Martz, Juliana Gaita, Tracy Nagle and Sherene Stenger. Join us for our next Table for 8 with Past President Dominique Sciullo and Special Guest Judge Ori Silver scheduled for April 17, 2025 at 6pm. See our website to register <https://www.spbcfawl.org/>



FEBRUARY MONTHLY LUNCHEON

Thank you to everyone who joined us for another successful monthly luncheon at Farmer's Table! We're grateful for the great company and delicious food. A special thank you to Lesser, Landy, Smith & Siegel for sponsoring this month's luncheon—we truly appreciate your support! Looking forward to seeing you all next month!

FEBRUARY TABLE FOR 8

Thank you Ellen for hosting such an incredible lunch! A great time was had by all and we all left having a stronger connection. We discussed the importance of having a network that you can reach out to and how beneficial it is to be part of this organization that promotes friendship and networking amongst our members. Ellen was instrumental in spearheading the conversation. Current President, Heather Beale was also in attendance.



JANUARY MONTHLY LUNCHEON

A huge thank you to Amy Borman, Esq. for being our incredible guest speaker at today's luncheon! Your insight and expertise made for a truly inspiring and engaging session. We're so grateful for your time and contributions!



DECEMBER TABLE FOR 8

Another incredible Table for 8 hosted by our wonderful past presidents Leorah Greenman and Cynthia Pyfrom!



NEW ATTORNEY WELCOME BREAKFAST

SPBC FAWL was so happy to join the New Attorney Welcome Breakfast organized by Palm Beach County Bar Association and the 15th Judicial Circuit Court of Florida last week. Our President Heather Beale, President-Elect Alicia Gross and Treasurer Rachel Schrage were so excited to welcome the new attorneys in Palm Beach County and to hear inspiring words of advice from our esteemed judiciary and leaders in our community.



NOVEMBER MONTHLY LUNCHEON

A huge thank you to Joseph A. Ankus, Esq. for sharing your insights on mental health and wellness at today's luncheon. Your expertise and passion sparked important conversations, and we're grateful for the valuable knowledge you provided.



EVERY BOOB COUNTS 5K

We are so proud of our Team Legal Crewsaders who ran/walked the Every Boob Counts 5K this morning. Thank you to our partners at the South Palm Beach County Bar Association and our generous t-shirt sponsors, Robertson, Anschultz And Schneid, P.L., City National Bank and Shiner Law Group.

Thank you to everyone who participated and made the run a success for an incredibly good cause!



MEMBERSHIP RECEPTION

Last night we held our annual Membership Reception. It was a pleasure to see so many of our members come together for an evening of networking and celebration. Your continued support and engagement make our SPBC FAWL community strong and vibrant

Also, Congratulations to our member, Wilnar Jeanne Julmiste, who is serving as President of the South Palm Beach County Bar Association on the kick off to their great year!



THE FIVE BIGGEST APPELLATE MISTAKES MADE

By Amy D. Shield, Esq.

If a Court Reporter Didn't Transcribe It, Then It Didn't Happen!

In a scene from the movie "My Cousin Vinny," the character Vinny, played by Joe Pesci, is defending his clients on a murder charge, and finds out that the prosecutor intends to have a surprise expert witness testify that the tire marks on the road could have only been made by the car owned by one of the defendants. This evidence would clinch the prosecutor's case by placing the defendant's vehicle at the scene of the crime. When the prosecutor calls the expert witness, Vinny objects to having the surprise witness testify and his objection clearly and concisely provides the appropriate reasons for disallowing this testimony. Yet the judge overrules the objection, and allows the expert to testify. Had the defendants been found guilty, the transcription of the judge's ruling on the objection would have provided an exceedingly strong basis to have overturned the verdict. However, without a court reporter present, there would be no transcribed record of that contemporaneous objection. It was if it never happened!

A court reporter should attend a hearing you think not only is important at that time, but may become important later on, especially if your case turns on dispositive questions of fact. Not having a transcript of that key hearing may be fatal to an appeal. *Applegate v. Barnett Bank of Tallahassee*, 377 So. 2d 1150 (Fla. 1979), the seminal case on this issue; *Schwartz v. Rodriguez*, 394 So. 3d 174, 175 (Fla. 3d DCA 2024). When an issue on appeal involves the content of a hearing without a transcript, you would, in general be limited to errors that appear on the face of the judgment. *Edman v. Edman*, No. 4D2024-0077, 2025 WL 908072 (Fla. 4th DCA March 26, 2025); *Larocka v. Larocka*, 43 So. 3d 911, 913 (Fla. 5th DCA 2010).

Through the years my law partner, Roger Levine, and I have spoken to many potential clients who tell us about the errors they believe were made at an important hearing or at trial, and what they felt were bad rulings by the judge that cost them a substantial amount of money or resulted in life-changing results. We then have the unpleasant task of explaining to them that they really have no chance of winning an appeal because of the failure to have a court reporter at that crucial hearing.

Making Timely Specific Objections Is Crucial

Using the same example of Vinny objecting to the testimony of the expert witness, it is essential to make your objections contemporaneously so that the judge will have the opportunity to correct any error that may have been committed. A general "I object" is insufficient; you need to state the appropriate grounds for the objection. *Pescatore v. Fernandez*, No. 4D2023-0823, 2025 WL 610931, *3 (Fla. 4th DCA Feb. 26, 2025) (objecting only on the general, nonspecific grounds of "predicate" and "hearsay" lacked specificity and was insufficient to preserve the error for appellate review). You cannot later raise a different ground for the objection on appeal because the trial court did not have an opportunity to rule on that different basis. *Bertolotti v. Dugger*, 514 So. 2d 1095, 1096 (Fla. 1987). The appellate court will not consider any point raised for the first time on appeal, with the rare exception of fundamental error. *Philip Morris USA, Inc. v. Ledoux*, 230 So. 3d 530, 537 (Fla. 3d DCA 2017).

Include All Your Issues, Evidence, and Arguments

When at a hearing or at trial, it is essential to raise all the issues and arguments and include all evidence that is germane to your case. *Klein v. Manville*, 363 So. 3d 1163, 1169-70 (Fla. 6th DCA 2023).

Just like with objections, if not first properly brought to the trial court's attention, none of this will be considered by the appellate court unless the error is fundamental or on the face of the judgment. *Combined Services, Inc. v. City of Opa-Locka*, 394 So. 3d 98, 102-03 (Fla. 3d DCA 2024); *Favela v. Ramtalhal*, 50 Fla. L. Weekly D333 (Fla. 5th DCA Feb. 7, 2025).

Motions for Rehearing and Reconsideration

The appellate court is a reviewing court, and is there to determine if the lower court made erroneous rulings which require reversal. The appellate court wants the judge to have a final opportunity to correct any mistakes that were made during the divorce proceedings. This is accomplished by having the party that is not satisfied with the rulings in a final judgment file a motion for rehearing.

Many lawyers are confused about whether to file a motion for rehearing or motion for reconsideration from an order. Motions for rehearing are filed from final orders or judgments.

Presently, a motion for rehearing must be served not later than 15 days after the return of a verdict in a jury action or the date of the filing of the judgment in a non-jury action. See Fla. R. Civ. P. 1.530(b).

Motions for rehearing should include every possible issue you believe the court got wrong or omitted from the final judgment, not just ones that you think are the most important or that can be won on a motion for rehearing. In fact, most motions for rehearing are denied. However, they serve several important purposes:

- 1) Providing an additional opportunity to get some or all of the relief you are seeking should the trial court agree with your motion;
- 2) Preserving your issues for appeal; and
- 3) Creating a last chance to build your record for the appeal.

In some cases we advise the client to file an affidavit or add other documents that were discussed at trial to their motion, which have ultimately resulted in getting a reversal of that issue on appeal.

Most of the time opposing trial counsel does not object to the attachments, but when they do, there is case law that gives the court the discretionary authority to consider new matters raised in a motion for rehearing. *Fitchner v. Lifesouth Community Blood*, 88 So. 3d 269, 278-79 (Fla. 1st DCA 2012). Keep in mind that this is the court's discretion to consider rather than being required to consider. "And even where a point is raised for the first time on rehearing, it is still 'properly presented to the trial court... and thus preserved for appellate review.'" *Goez v. AGB Tampa LLC*, 335 So. 3d 228, 231 (Fla. 2d DCA 2022) (internal citations omitted); *Stone v. Stone*, 132 So. 3d 377, n.1 (Fla. 4th DCA 2014).

Although Fla. R. Civ. P. 1.530(e) and Fla. Fam. L. R. P. 12.530(e) provide that a motion for rehearing is not necessary in a non-jury action where the sufficiency of the evidence to support the judgment is raised on appeal, we advise our clients to still file a motion for rehearing, especially in family law cases, where an issue is waived unless brought to the trial court's attention. A very limited exception in family law cases is the Fourth District Court of Appeal's stance that motions for rehearing are not required for statutory findings under Chapter 61, Florida Statutes. *Fox v. Fox*, 262 So. 3d 789, 793 (Fla. 4th DCA 2018); See also *Fine v. Fine*, 308 So. 3d 172, 173 (Fla. 4th DCA 2020) (wife required to file motion for rehearing where a statutorily required finding was not an issue). The filing of a timely motion for rehearing tolls the time for filing the Notice of Appeal until the court rules on rehearing.

Motions for reconsideration are filed for nonfinal orders. Since they are not considered authorized motions, there is no specified time for filing them, but far more importantly, they will not toll the time for filing a Notice of Appeal.

File Your Appeal on Time!

It is crucial to timely file the appeal so that the appellate court has jurisdiction to consider your case. For appeals from final and nonfinal orders, the Notice of Appeal must be filed with the clerk of

the lower tribunal within 30 days of rendition of the order to be reviewed, which again, is tolled for rehearings, but not for reconsiderations. Fla. R. App. P. 9.110(b) and 9.130(b). An order is rendered when a signed, written order is filed with the clerk of the lower tribunal. Fla. R. App. P. 9.020(h). If you miss the 30-day jurisdictional deadline, your appeal will be unable to be considered and will be dismissed by the appellate court. In one of our cases, The opposing party filed the Notice of Appeal through the court portal late at night, but it was not actually filed until 12:02 a.m. on the 31st day. Although only two minutes late, the appellate court determined it lacked jurisdiction and dismissed the appeal.

It is also crucial to know the difference between a final and nonfinal order. A potential client came to us after a judge found him in contempt and he wanted to appeal the order. His attorney thought the order was final, and had filed a motion for "rehearing" which was denied more than thirty days after the contempt order had been entered. Unfortunately, that specific contempt order was actually a nonfinal order, and so the motion was instead for reconsideration rather than rehearing despite its title, leaving appellate court without jurisdiction to review the contempt order. The litigant was devastated as a result of the burdens the contempt order had placed on him.

These are five of the most common serious mistakes that can make an appeal needlessly more difficult, if not impossible. Still, there are many others that we have seen in our practice. The appellate process is complicated, and working with a knowledgeable and experienced appellate attorney is essential to preserve your issues and provide the strongest record in case of an appeal.

Amy D. Shield is an AV Preeminent rated appellate attorney, who is presently writing a book on divorce with Roger Levine, that will be published later this year.



Andrew Rader, Esq., Rader Law Group, is board-certified in Civil Trial in Florida. Through his work in the IVF legal space, Florida became one of the first states to recognize emotional damages for the negligent destruction of embryos, setting a powerful precedent in reproductive justice.

IF FLORIDA'S PROPOSED "FETAL PERSONHOOD" BILL PASSES, COULD "PETRI DISH EMBRYOS" BE CLASSIFIED AS "PERSONS" NEXT?

By Andrew J. Rader, Esq.

Hope, heartbreak, science, and ethics often collide in the world of IVF. There is no denying that it is a medical marvel that has given countless individuals the chance to have children. However, the legal system is not only grappling with how to address negligence in fertility care, but also navigating uncharted territory shaped by rapidly evolving government regulations.

Just three years ago, I handled a case where a woman in Florida froze four embryos in the hope of becoming a mother. When one was found to be nonviable, she consented to have it discarded. But the clinic mistakenly destroyed all four embryos thereby, eliminating her chance at biological motherhood in an instant.

At the time, Florida law viewed embryos strictly as property, similar to a pet or a piece of furniture. Emotional damages were not recoverable in court. I challenged that framework head-on, arguing that embryos are far more than property. They represent the hopes and dreams of future families and deserve to be treated as such.

The judge agreed, denying the clinic's motion to dismiss under Florida's "impact rule." This wasn't just a courtroom win; it was a shift in how our state's judiciary views reproductive justice and accountability. For the first time in Florida, a family could sue for the emotional devastation of losing embryos. It gave other would-be parents a sense of

legal recognition for the trauma they endure if IVF clinics fail them.

However, negligence isn't the only cause of concern when it comes to IVF. In an op-ed I previously wrote for the Sun Sentinel, I explored the question: What happens to embryos when a patient is deported? Many embryos are left behind, frozen indefinitely, abandoned in legal limbo, with no clear plan for their future. These are not hypothetical scenarios. And if we are now to consider embryos as "people," does the state then have a duty to protect and fund their survival? Who pays for their storage, their transfer, or their adoption?

These questions have become alarmingly urgent with Florida Senate Bill 1284. The bill proposes to redefine "unborn child" as beginning in the womb at the moment of conception. This represents a legal shift that could wreak havoc on IVF and reproductive medicine. Though the bill currently excludes embryos created outside the body, it opens the door to more radical interpretations in the future. If embryos are considered "extrauterine children," as was recently ruled in Alabama, will patients be charged with homicide for discarding unused ones? Could clinics be criminally liable for routine lab errors?

When I litigated the negligent embryo destruction case just a few years ago, I was fighting for embryos to be treated as more than property. Now, with proposed legislation, we could be hurtling in the other direction treating embryos as fully formed people, with all the legal weight and criminal liability that implies.

It's easy to think these are fringe issues, limited to rare lawsuits or political debates. But with over 1 million embryos currently frozen across the U.S., the legal status of embryos could soon touch the lives of countless families. Defining the rights of an embryo is no longer a philosophical question. It may be a reality with sweeping medical, emotional, and financial consequences.

Now is the time to demand clarity, compassion, and careful regulation. Because every embryo may not become a child, but every patient walking through a fertility clinic's door deserves to know that their dreams and their dignity are protected by the law.



PREPARING YOUR COLLEGE CHILD FOR THE UNEXPECTED

By Jennifer L. Fulton, Esq.

Those of you sending your children off to college may be surprised and frustrated by the barriers that suddenly exist to receiving information about your fledgling adult making their way in the world. Now that they are 18, your little darlings are considered adults here in Florida, and in many other states, and colleges are careful to protect their privacy rights. There is usually an election your child can make at the financial aid office so that you can figure out how much you owe to keep them enrolled in classes, and another form they can fill out if they decide to share their grades with you. That's all well and good, but what about if they are seriously hurt or ill? There are a couple of forms that are not on the typical college website that you should consider having them prepare with an attorney before leaving for college.

They are: a Durable Power of Attorney and a Designation of Health Care Surrogate.

The Durable Power of Attorney allows your 18-year-old to name an agent (like, perhaps, their parents) to act on their behalf. If Florida it is effective immediately and continues until they revoke it, a court guardianship is created, or at death. This allows the agent to take care of finances and non-health care-related actions that may be necessary on behalf of the principal. This could include withdrawing from classes if they became sick or hurt, and cancelling housing and meal plans, or even signing them up for government benefits if necessary.

Another important document is the Designation of Health Care Surrogate. This document states in advance whom your college-bound child will name to

make health care decisions for him or her if they are incapable of doing so themselves, and to obtain health care information. It should include HIPAA language, or be used in conjunction with a separate HIPAA waiver. It also can include a Living Will, which would state their intention that they don't want to receive life-prolonging.

Another important document is the Designation of Health Care Surrogate. This document states in advance whom your college-bound child will name to make health care decisions for him or her if they are incapable of doing so themselves, and to obtain health care information. It should include HIPAA language, or be used in conjunction with a separate HIPAA waiver. It also can include a Living Will, which would state their intention that they don't want to receive life-prolonging services if they have a severe health care issue from which they are not likely to recover.

These documents are important for every incoming college Freshman, and offers parents the peace of mind that they can assist their child if necessary. So as you are packing up your Freshman's supplies, consider also giving a call to your local estate planning attorney and setting up an appointment for your college-bound child.



Jennifer L. Fulton, Esq. is an attorney of counsel at Schwartz Sladkus Reich Greenberg Atlas, LLP ("SSRGA") (www.ssrqa.com) focusing on Estate Planning, Probate, and Estate and Trust Administration. A member of the Florida Bar since 1996 with a Juris Doctor degree from Nova Southeastern University, Fulton works with clients to plan for the milestones of life (college, "adulthood", marriage, children, grandchildren, aging parents, pre- and post-divorce, loss of a spouse, aging, diminished mental capacity) and administration upon death. She can be reached at 561-769-5600 or jfulton@ssrqa.com.

This information is provided for general educational purposes and may not apply to your specific situation. Please consult with an attorney before relying on this information.



Judge Silver enjoys being active in the community and is a dedicated member of the Board for FAWL-South Palm Beach County. She is also involved in the South Palm Beach County Bar Association, Florida Bar committees, Craig S. Barnard Inns of Court, and other voluntary bar and community organizations.

In her spare time, Judge Silver loves to spend time with her husband and her three children. She also enjoys watching her children on the tennis courts and soccer fields.

JUDGE’S CORNER FEATURING JUDGE ORI SILVER

By Sherene C. Stenger, Esq.

Judge Ori Silver is first generation American and a lifelong Palm Beach County resident. Her mother is from Israel and her father is from Mexico. She obtained her undergraduate degree from the University of Florida and went on to attend University of Florida Levin College of Law.

After law school, Judge Silver returned to South Florida where she worked as a prosecutor in the Office of the State Attorney of the 17th Judicial Circuit for over 20 years. At the State Attorney’s Office, Judge Silver served in the County Court trial unit and felony trial unit, specialized division of domestic violence unit, and in the specialized elder abuse unit. She also spearheaded and ran the Elder Task Force. The task force is a multi-agency working group that puts on police and community trainings, various community outreach programs and organized unannounced nursing home spot checks.

Governor DeSantis appointed Judge Silver to the Palm Beach County bench in December of 2021, and since that time, she has served in both the Criminal and Civil divisions.



Sherene C. Stenger
Law Office of Sherene C. Stenger, PLLC



Question 1: What early encouragement or inspiration made you choose to be a judge or lawyer?

I always wanted to be a lawyer, specifically a trial lawyer. My mother was a prosecutor in Palm Beach County, so I grew up watching her go to court and listening to her practice her arguments. While I was in college, I interned at the State Attorney's Office in Palm Beach County, an experience I truly enjoyed. After law school, I worked at the State Attorney's Office in Broward and had a very good experience there. After 17 years, I applied to be a judge. Growing up seeing my mother as a prosecutor and the positive experience I had during my internship influenced my decision to work at the State Attorney's Office in Broward.

Question 2: Where do you find meaning and joy in your career?

County Court is the people's court and this is where I started my practice at the State Attorney's Office in Broward. When I was a young attorney, I appeared before many kind judges who helped me and I try to replicate that to the young lawyers in County Court who now appear before me. I see my time on the bench as a teaching opportunity and I try to pay forward what was extended to me. I enjoy the lawyers who appear before me and I learn a lot from them.

When I was appointed in December 2021, I started in County Criminal. Since August 2022, I am now in County Civil. I like being patient and kind to people. I want people to feel heard and I value being respectful to all.

Question 3: What have you sacrificed to grow in your career?

Like most women, I feel like I have to sacrifice time with my family to advance my career. Put differently, I have to put extra work in. I try to achieve some type of balance. I believe it is important for my children to see me working as I want them to mimic my example and become productive members of society. Balance is hard and I feel like everybody struggles with it. What I have learned is if you don't do things for yourself, resentment will set in so I try to eliminate that before it occurs.

Question 4: What attributes do you appreciate in the attorneys that appear before you?

Professionalism, this is first and foremost. Being prepared and presenting me with arguments and caselaw ahead of time so that I can be better prepared. I take pride in being prepared when I hear my cases, so provide me with the information, case law and arguments early. Be concise when making an argument. I, like many other judges, am most turned off by unprofessional behavior.

Question 5. What are some things a young lawyer or law student can do that would contribute to being professionally successful?

Networking and getting involved with bar associations because it exposes you to different lawyers in other areas of law. As a young lawyer, you want to gain knowledge and contacts so it is important to know attorneys in different practice areas so that you can potentially co-counsel with them. My advice to young attorneys is to figure out what speaks to you, what type of law do you like and work with more experienced lawyers in those areas. To truly learn how to practice law, it takes more than just reading the statutes and case law.

I recall a young prosecutor who had a trial before me and he was not able to get into evidence certain business records. Once that mistake was made, that young prosecutor learned that lesson. In short, certain lessons, you have to experience and they will never be forgotten.

Question 6: What are some things a seasoned lawyer can do that would contribute to being professionally successful?

Establish a good rapport with other lawyers in your practice area. There is no need to have a contentious relationship with your peers. What you feel about opposing counsel's client, should not impact how you treat your colleague. In litigation, you don't need to fight on every issue. It goes back to professionalism.

Question 7: What is the most enjoyable part of being a Judge?

When a litigant approaches me and thanks me for my professionalism and states how patient I was when I listened to their side of the case.

Question 8: What is the least enjoyable part of being a Judge?

You are there alone. It is a bit isolating. Being a lawyer, you are able to bounce ideas off of other lawyers. When you are on the bench, you are alone. It is an adjustment.

Question 9: What are your techniques for managing stress?

Exercise. I walk or run in the mornings. If you have a task before you and it is causing you stress, I have found it is best to get it done and then the stress is relieved. Don't be afraid to ask for help about the best way to relieve stress. It is hard for me to ask for help, but when I finally do, I am happy about it. I've learned that I don't always have to figure everything out by myself. I use the circuit staff attorneys and others to help me.

Question 10: What qualities come easy for you and how did you realize they are valuable and harder for others?

Having patience with litigants and dealing with other people's conflicts. Dealing with conflict is part of the job. Being patient with lawyers and litigants who appear before me comes easy to me.



THERE ARE NO “STANDARD” SALES IN FLORIDA!

Each property is unique. Each Seller is unique. Each Buyer is unique. Everyone is SPECIAL! Don't you want to be SPECIAL TOO?

By Leorah G. Greenman, Esq.

All kidding aside... This is my 25th anniversary of practicing law! I have made it my goal in the last 18 years practicing real estate law in Florida to educate consumers on why they should hire a real estate attorney to represent their legal interests in the sale or purchase of residential real estate. Forms of Listing Agreements, Broker-Buyer-Representation Agreements, Florida As-Is Residential Contracts for Sale and Purchase are ever changing! It is important to hire a real estate attorney to be on your side to minimize your risks and liabilities in a real estate transaction and to represent your best legal interests.

When signing a 12–16-page contract with a stranger, which obligates you to buy or sell an asset worth hundreds of thousands of dollars, you should have an attorney representing you, explaining the Contract to you, explaining the risks to you, outlining your obligations, and rights under that Contract.

REPRESENTATION: Having a good Real Estate Agent/Broker is essential for

marketing and negotiating the sale, however many Sellers and Buyers overlook the critical role of a Real Estate Attorney. Florida law doesn't require a Seller or Buyer of real estate to hire an attorney but doing so can give you the benefit of legal protection, peace of time and potential savings down the road. Real Estate attorneys are trained to understand Florida real property laws and how they apply to your specific transaction. A real estate attorney can guide you through the disclosure process and help draft proper documentation, reducing your risk of post-sale disputes or legal claims. We can prepare and revise contracts and provide language tailored to your specific transaction and goals. Real Estate Attorneys add contingency clauses, clarify ambiguous terms, and help explain the legal consequences of everything being signed. We review and satisfy title requirements, assist with title searches, resolve liens and encumbrances, clear and identify title and survey defects, if any. The closing process involves much paperwork. A Real Estate Attorney can

review/prepare the paperwork you will be signing to make sure you are only signing what you are contractually obligated to sign and nothing more. We also ensure that the deed is properly drafted, signed, and recorded, and that disbursements are made properly and timely, protecting your legal and financial interests even after the sale.

Contracts aren't always as simple as they seem. Legally binding, the As-Is Residential Contract for Sale and Purchase may be referred to as “standard” in the industry but once signed, you are committed and if not properly or timely acted upon, money may be at risk. Real Estate Attorneys follow time-lines, provide and review deliveries such as underlying title documents and governing documents that affect and govern real property. We review surveys, check for encroachments, and handle any such issues based on the best interest of the client. We can refer clients to a team of professionals like inspectors, surveyors, insurance agents who will educate buyers or sellers and help make for a smoother closing process. We review and prepare closing statements, mortgage documents, explain rules and requirements concerning association governing real property.

Final thoughts: Real Estate transactions can be stressful; having a dedicated legal professional on your side looking out for your interests is peace of mind worth far more than reasonable real estate attorney's fees. Title Companies do not have clients; they have customers. Real estate agents/Brokers and title agents are not attorneys.

Real estate agents, mortgage brokers, and title companies all have important roles in a real estate transaction, but they don't represent your legal interests. A real estate attorney works solely for you, providing unbiased advice and ensuring your side of the deal is legally sound. As a real estate attorney, I am bound by strict ethical and legal standards to act in the best interests of my clients.

Please feel free to contact me for a quote of legal fees or to discuss any real estate questions or legal needs.

Leorah G. Greenman, Esq.
lgreenman@fwblaw.net
FRANK WEINBERG & BLACK PL
561-989-0700



PARTNERING FOR JUSTICE: HOW PI FIRMS CAN SUPPORT FAWL MEMBERS' CLIENTS

By Rachel Schragger, Esq., Shareholder & Attorney at Kogan & DiSalvo Personal Injury Lawyers

In a legal landscape that's increasingly specialized, one truth remains constant: our clients' lives—and legal challenges—rarely exist in a vacuum. As attorneys, we each play a vital role in helping them navigate complex, often overlapping legal issues. At **Kogan & DiSalvo**, we've seen firsthand how impactful it can be when personal injury firms and attorneys in other practice areas work together to support a client's full journey to justice. That's why we believe in the power of collaboration—especially within our professional community here at **South Palm Beach County FAWL**.

Why Cross-Practice Collaboration Matters

When a personal injury client comes to us, their case may be just one part of a much larger picture. An injured mother may be going through a custody battle while also facing a loss of income due to her accident.

A traumatic brain injury client might need both financial compensation and long-term care planning. Sometimes, a wrongful death case will overlap with probate or estate law—areas where we rely heavily on trusted colleagues. We believe that every case is different, each client is a person and not a diagnosis. We look into how each injury has affected their life. Clients' subjective and emotional damages matter. In personal injury claims, you are not just compensated for your economic damages, but also non-economic damages which includes pain and suffering.

At Kogan & DiSalvo, we view our clients as whole people—not just case files. That means recognizing when their legal needs extend beyond our practice and making sure they're in the right hands. "We're proud to refer our clients to fellow FAWL members who

share our values of compassion, integrity, and relentless advocacy.

What PI Firms Can Offer Other Practice Areas

Personal injury attorneys bring unique strengths to the table, including courtroom experience, a contingency-based model that enhances access to justice, and a deep familiarity with negotiating high-stakes outcomes. But our ability to serve clients is enhanced exponentially when we're part of a broader support system.

We frequently collaborate with attorneys in:

- **Family Law** – for clients dealing with divorce or custody issues triggered by an accident
- **Probate & Estate Planning** – especially in wrongful death cases or when settlements impact long-term planning
- **Employment Law** – when injuries interfere with workplace rights or accommodations

"These partnerships aren't just about referrals—they're about building a network of trust for the client," "It's incredibly rewarding to know we're working alongside other dedicated attorneys to help someone rebuild their life from every angle."

Strengthening FAWL Connections

We see FAWL as a powerful platform for fostering these connections. Its membership spans a wide range of practice areas, united by a commitment to advancing women in law and championing client-centered justice.

A Shared Commitment to Justice

At **Kogan & DiSalvo**, we don't just fight for compensation—we fight for dignity, stability, and the opportunity for our clients to move forward. That mission is only made stronger when we link arms with colleagues across the legal spectrum who share our dedication to justice.

We encourage our fellow FAWL members to see personal injury attorneys not just as outside specialists, but as **potential partners**—ready to collaborate, refer, and co-counsel when it's in the best interest of those we serve.

Together, we're not just practicing law. We're building a better, more responsive legal community for everyone.

Rachel R. Schragger, Esq.
Shareholder
KOGAN & DiSALVO, P.A.



FEATURE COMMUNITY OUTREACH PROGRAM: SOUTH COUNTY COURTHOUSES' JUVENILE SUMMER PROGRAM

By: Tiffanie Waldman, Esq., Community Outreach Director of SPBC FAWL

In 2024, the South Palm Beach County Florida Association of Women Lawyers proudly resumed its sponsorship of the South County Courthouses' Juvenile Summer Program. This initiative is designed to support juveniles on probation by equipping them with essential educational tools and resources to improve their lives and future prospects. The program aims to provide a structured and supportive environment where participants can learn valuable life skills, build self-confidence, and develop a sense of responsibility. By investing in these young individuals, we hope to foster a brighter future for them and our community as a whole.

Our sponsorship had been paused during the COVID-19 pandemic, making our 2024 sponsorship even more significant. The pandemic brought unprecedented challenges, and many community programs faced disruptions. We were thrilled to reactivate our sponsorship of the program and to continue our support for this vital community initiative. The resumption of our sponsorship symbolizes a return to normalcy and a renewed commitment to the well-being of our youth. It also highlights the resilience and dedication of our association in

overcoming obstacles to make a positive impact.

We are immensely grateful to the 15th Judicial Circuit's Judiciary, the Clerk's Office, and especially, the Honorable Judge Serber and Cristy Altaro for allowing us to participate in the program year after year. Their unwavering support and collaboration have been instrumental in the success of this initiative. This program, created by past president Tammy Saltzman and the dedicated judges of the Juvenile Division, has been a cornerstone of our community outreach efforts. Their vision and dedication have laid a strong foundation for the program, ensuring its continued growth and effectiveness.

Our association worked closely with the program manager to coordinate donations, ensuring the provision of healthy snacks, water, hygiene kits, and participation gift cards. The program, which spans ten weeks, meets every Friday for a full day. We provided a nutritious, well-balanced lunch from a local eatery for each session, ensuring the participants are well-fed and ready to engage in the day's activities.

Throughout the program, a variety of topics are covered, ranging from

development and educational advancement to career planning and life skills. Special guests, including local professionals and community leaders, are invited to share their stories, advice, and knowledge with the participants. These sessions provide invaluable insights and inspiration, helping the juveniles envision a brighter future.

One of the highlights of the program was our board collectively organizing to donate new backpacks, pens, pencils, notepads, and highlighters. With the board's help, we were able to provide each participant with a comprehensive set of school supplies. On the final day of the program, members of our board of directors, including Heather Beale, Dori Gerstein, Tammy Saltzman, Yesenia Calderon, and Tiffanie Waldman, personally delivered the school supplies to the participants.

During this visit, our board members took the time to speak with the teens about the legal profession and the importance of the program. They shared their personal journeys, discussed the challenges and rewards of being an attorney, and emphasized the value of education and perseverance. Seeing the smiles on the kids' faces and hearing their expressions of gratitude reaffirmed the significance of this initiative to our chapter.

The impact of South County's Juvenile Summer Program extends beyond the ten weeks. It provides a supportive environment where participants can learn, grow, and develop positive relationships with mentors and peers. The program aims to instill a sense of hope and motivation, encouraging the juveniles to make positive choices and strive for a better future.

We are excited to continue our sponsorship of South County's Juvenile Summer Program in 2025. Our commitment to this program reflects our dedication to making a meaningful difference in the lives of young individuals in our community. We look forward to building on the success of this year's program and making an even greater impact in the years to come.



THE RISKS OF NON-LAWYER OWNERSHIP OF LAW FIRMS AFTER THE ARIZONA KPMG APPROVAL

By Gary S. Lesser, Esq. Managing Partner, Lesser, Landy, Smith & Siegel, PLLC

The recent decision to authorize KPMG to open and operate a law firm in Arizona has created shockwaves of concern in the legal profession, and we should rightfully be concerned. Arizona's decision in 2020 to eliminate the prohibition against non-lawyers having an economic interest in law firms was nothing short of seismic. By scrapping this rule, Arizona became the first state in the nation to allow businesses like accounting firms to co-own law firms — provided they have court approval. But we must recognize that opening the door to non-lawyer ownership of law firms introduces serious risks that we cannot ignore.

First and foremost, lawyers have ethical obligations that are fundamental to the attorney-client relationship. We are duty-bound to uphold confidentiality, avoid conflicts of interest, and zealously

advocate for our clients. When law firms are co-owned or influenced by non-lawyers — whether they be corporations, investors, or accounting firms — those duties are at risk of being compromised as non-lawyer owners are not subject to the ethics rules that lawyers have taken an oath to follow.

One of the key arguments for non-lawyer ownership of law firms was the lack of access to the legal system by many people who felt they could not afford to do so. Studies show that 80% of low-income individuals don't know if they can afford a lawyer, and up to 60% of middle-class respondents don't have their legal needs met, depending on the issue.

Advocates of non-lawyer ownership of law firms have argued (without any real supporting data) that competition caused by non-lawyer owned law firms would

lower the costs of legal services for regular people.

This has not happened in Arizona so far, and the focus of these non-law owned firms - as one would expect - has been to follow the money. They have focused on plaintiff's employment law, personal injury law and the like. Grandma is not getting her more affordable will and families are not seeing more affordable legal services based on these changes. The new initiative by KPMG is also aimed at profit not people, and that's just the tip of the iceberg of this approach.

The legal profession — like every profession — is evolving. Technology has changed how we communicate, manage files, and how clients find lawyers. But these recent developments go far beyond innovation. They strike at the very heart of what it means to be a lawyer — and what it means to protect the public.

Accounting firms are governed by entirely different ethical standards and are driven by a very different model. There is no fiduciary duty to a client in the same sense that lawyers are bound by. KPMG has stated its new law firm will “provide technology-powered legal services including legal operations consulting, volume contracting and other managed services.” What happens when the bottom line begins to influence legal strategy?

Supporters of Arizona's model argue that these reforms reduce costs, promote innovation, and expand access to legal services. There is almost no data to support these claims almost five years later. And even if this argument had validity, the question becomes “at what cost?”

Legal advice is not a product you can simply streamline or mass-produce without consequences. It's deeply personal and rooted in professional judgment, integrity, and independence.

We've already seen these concerns play out elsewhere. Utah experimented with a more limited version of Arizona's reforms, but other states — like California — have backed away, citing the potential for ethical abuse and erosion of client protections.

If the goal is to increase greater access to the legal system, then I'd like to point to the work done by The Florida Bar's Special Committee on Greater Access to Legal Services, which submitted its final report to the Florida Supreme Court. Notably, the key recommendations focused on realistic, pragmatic solutions that could greatly increase access to legal services in three areas: pro se, legal aid and pro bono, and making legal services more affordable and accessible.

Recommendations for pro se litigants focused on standardized electronic pro se litigation forms, which will eliminate much confusion for pro se litigants, and make things easier for clerks of courts — who have historically borne the brunt of repeated filings and dismissals. The committee made further recommendations concerning civil legal aid organizations, whose work focuses on meeting the legal challenges of people facing wrongful evictions, victims of elder abuse, veterans and other vulnerable populations. The Special Committee recommended the increased use of certified legal interns. Imagine if every legal aid organization suddenly had two or three CLIs to assist their overworked staff. The impact would be substantial.

Another key recommendation of the committee was to promote and expand prepaid legal service plans, which have been permitted in Florida since 1970 with the specific purpose of providing for more affordable legal services. But this approach has not seen widespread use. Typically, these plans start at only \$12 per month for an individual basis plan, and \$75 per month for a business plan, and they provide a number of legal services for free — such as a free consultation, phone conference or initial letters on a matter. Some plans also include a free will, with supplemental services being offered at a much lower affordable hourly rate.

This is a tremendous economic opportunity, as the best-known data estimates that only 2.5% of the people who may be eligible to have a prepaid plan actually do have one.

This is partially due to the fact that many Florida lawyers have not taken the opportunity to expand their practices to become providers. The lack of plan providers plays a role in the general public being unaware of the availability of the plans. There is a huge potential market that is not being served. There is massive opportunity for expansion of law firm providers here, which will greatly benefit people who sign up for this low-cost legal services system.

These recommendations for greater access to legal services are lawyer driven and are designed to serve the public. Non-lawyer legal service providers have included software companies and settlement finance companies — but commercial entities may be more focused on where they can make a profit than on benefits to the public or the legal system.

The independent legal profession and the independent judiciary ensure ethical and legal protections for clients and the public. These protections are of paramount importance to the judicial branch and to legal practitioners and are not for sale. While there may be no “Hail Mary” action that can immediately solve the challenge of greater public access to the legal system, a combination of realistic, pragmatic strategies can move the ball forward 10 yards for a first down. And that's what we have to keep doing.

As Arizona and KPMG move forward with this experiment, the rest of the country should watch carefully — and tread very cautiously. The promise of innovation must never come at the expense of ethics, professionalism, and protecting the public.

There's a reason almost every state, including Florida, has consistently reaffirmed that only lawyers should practice law, own law firms, and share in legal fees. These principles are not arbitrary — they are there to protect the public. Once you introduce outside non-lawyer ownership, it's no longer just about the client. It's about revenue streams, quarterly earnings, and corporate interests. Lawyers are oath bound and regulated to make sure that our ethics rules are paramount, and client interests are protected above all else.



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PALM BEACH COUNTY LEGAL COMMUNITY UNITES FOR UNITY SEDER IN POWERFUL DISPLAY OF SOLIDARITY AND HOPE

By Staci Burton, Esq., Unity Seder Co-Chair

Members of the Palm Beach County legal community came together on April 21 at Temple Israel in West Palm Beach for the 2025 Unity Seder — a moving evening that underscored the values of unity, compassion and justice in the face of increasing antisemitism, racism and other forms of hatred.

After a brief hiatus, the Unity Seder was revived in 2024, and the response has been truly overwhelming. What began as a modest effort to bring back the Unity Seder has quickly become one of the most meaningful and highly anticipated events within the Palm Beach County legal community. The event outgrew its previous space, prompting the move to Temple Israel

to accommodate the surge in attendance and support. The demand reflects not only a strong desire for tradition, but also, the deep need for healing, connection, and shared understanding across communities. Eleven voluntary bar associations in the county came together to co-host the Unity Seder, which is a rare and moving testament to the strength found in diversity and the shared belief in justice.

The second annual Unity Seder was led with grace and depth by Rabbi Carlie Daniels of Temple Israel and Reverend Gerald Kisner of the Historic Tabernacle Baptist Church. Attendees honored the ancient story of the

Exodus, while confronting the modern plagues that continue to afflict our world today: discrimination, the poisoning of our earth, the ravages of war, chemical dependency, disease, world hunger, religious intolerance, denial of human rights, the threat of nuclear holocaust, and apathy.

This year, we were blessed by the beautiful voices of Cantorial soloist Marcy Morris of Temple Beth Am and Flora Jackson of Ebony Choir, who used their musical talents to uplift the room and deliver powerful messages through song. The singing of the United States National Anthem, the Israeli National Anthem or Hatikvah, meaning “The Hope,” and the Black National Anthem “Lift Every Voice and Sing” reminded us all of the enduring power of freedom.

The Haggadah, which was specially written for this event, wove together traditional Passover themes with contemporary messages of justice. A highlight of the program this year was the reading of “Caged Bird” by Maya Angelou, which drew powerful parallels between the Passover story and the ongoing global fight for liberation and dignity. The meal was equally symbolic, combining traditional Jewish Passover fare with dishes from Black and Hispanic culinary traditions, serving as a celebration of shared fellowship.

After an extremely successful event yet again, one thing is clear: the Unity Seder is not just another bar event. It’s a true community effort, and a testament that we can come together to reclaim the power of unity. We are proud of the enthusiastic support of this special evening, and we look forward to continuing this tradition for many years to come.

Next year in Jerusalem!



REFLECTIONS ON MY TIME WITH SPBC FAWL

By Ellen Leibovitch, Esq.

I want to use this precious space to reflect on the changes to SPBC FAWL since I served as President 15 years ago. At the time, the chapter was the same collegial, friendly group it is today, but it was somehow very different. The changes over the last 15 years have made this chapter the voluntary bar organization that most women choose over any other. Our members are known for being welcoming to all, mentoring young attorneys, referring business to each other, and more. I can never thank Leorah Greenman enough for recommending her nanny's daughter Juliana to me – she has been my secretary/paralegal/right-hand person, etc., for the last eight years.

Another thing that has awed me has been the growth of the board. Not only do we have officers and directors but also committee chairs and program directors. Moreover, every single member of the board, whether voting or non-voting, works really hard for the benefit of this organization and does it with a smile on their face. That is so incredibly rare in any voluntary service organization, but I think it speaks to the character of our amazing leaders.

As the board has grown so has membership; we have more members now than ever before and many younger attorneys.

I think back to all of the babies that have been born over the years, and these amazing moms – including Leorah, Lisa, Rachel, Heather, Staci, Alicia, Taryn, Rina, Cassandra, Nicole, and Elissa – have never wavered from their participation. That alone to me is amazing since, when I was a young mom, I barely had enough time to get my kids dressed and fed, dropped at school, drive to work (and make sure to get my billable hours in), get home, make dinner, put the kids to bed, say hello to my husband, and repeat the next day – all without a smartphone (yes, I am a dinosaur). Needless to say, participation in any voluntary bar organization was not on my schedule.

When I was the President of SPBC FAWL, we had just two sponsors on whom we depended for financial support. Now we have so many annual and event sponsors – many of whom are not attorneys – all of whom are invested in and support the mission of SPBC FAWL. I am thankful to all of them, especially Laurie Dubow who is probably our longest standing, continuous sponsor.

I have also been impressed by the breadth of chapter programming far beyond what we ever did before. Over the years, we have added joint programs with other bar and non-profit organizations, including In Jacob's Shoes and Dress For Success, Table for Eight mentoring events hosted by our past presidents and, my personal favorite, the annual Woman Lawyer of the Year ceremony that we now combine with our annual installation of officers. Also, I would be remiss not to give a shout out to Kara Brotman for starting the Shelley Kerner Memorial Scholarship Fund to benefit female law students. Shelly, my friend and a past president who passed away several years ago, would have been so honored to have a scholarship named in her honor.

I know that I speak for myself and all the other past presidents when I say we are proud to bear witness to the amazing growth of this organization and the development of a new generation of leaders. I cannot wait to see what the next 15 years brings!



STACEY D. MULLINS

Boca Raton Deputy Managing Shareholder

stacey.mullins@gray-robinson.com

T: 561.368.3808

F: 561.368.4008

One Boca Place 2255 Glades Road Suite
301 Boca Raton, Florida 33431

FOCUS:

- Marital and Family Law
- Litigation
- Mediation and Alternative Dispute Resolution

PRESENTATIONS AND SEMINARS

- “Advanced Family Law in Florida: Navigating Complex Asset Cases,” National Business Institute’s (NBI) Live Online Seminar, June 14, 2024
- Frequently lectures on mediation skills

ARTICLES AND PUBLICATIONS

- Co-Author, “Orthopedic Disability and Expert Testimony,” John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1993
- “The Deposition Manual,” Professional Education Systems, Inc., 2003

MEDIA

- “Verify: Do these five states prevent pregnant couples from getting divorced?” WUSA-TV CBS, June 1, 2022

STACEY’S BIOGRAPHY

Stacey is a collaboratively-trained attorney with extensive experience in the area of marital and family law. She is certified for practice by the Florida Supreme Court as well as a family law mediator. Her approach is to focus on resolution of disputes and avoiding litigation and court time if possible.

Extraordinary dedication, intense case preparation, outstanding courtroom performance, and admirable integrity distinguish Stacey’s work as an attorney. Stacey emphasizes a team approach within her practice and serves her client’s needs 24/7.

AREAS OF EMPHASIS

- Divorce
- Alimony and Spousal Support
- Paternity
- Post-Divorce Modification
- Premarital and Post-marital Agreements
- Child Custody, Support and Timesharing
- Property Division and Debt Allocation
- Domestic Violence
- LGBT Legal Issues

BACKGROUND

- Prior to joining GrayRobinson in 2020, Stacey was a partner at premier Boca Raton law firm Schuttler Greenberg and Mullins LLC where she helped clients with cases involving divorce, alimony, child custody, timesharing, child support, mediation, same sex relationships, relocation, and more.
- Stacey founded the EBC Foundation, Inc., a nonprofit organization that raises awareness for the importance of early detection of breast cancer primarily through athletically inspired events.
- Stacey resides in Boca Raton with her husband and her three children. In her free time, she enjoys playing golf with her husband, running marathons and triathlons and spending time with her children.

EDUCATION

- University of Florida, B.A. (1987)
- University of Florida, J.D. (1991)

ADMISSIONS

- Florida

CERTIFICATIONS

- Florida Supreme Court
 - Certified Family Law Mediator

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS AND MEMBERSHIPS

- South Palm Beach County Bar Association
 - Board of Directors
- South Palm Beach County Florida Association for Women Lawyers, 2015-2018
 - Board member
- Cooperating Attorney Network, Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund
 - Member
- Florida Justice Association
 - Board member, 2001-2005

AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

- AV Preeminent® rated by Martindale-Hubbell
- Best Lawyers in America, Collaborative Law: Family Law, Family Law, Family Law Mediation, 2024-2025
- Eleanor Goodman Spirit Award, Susan G. Komen Foundation, 2013
- Florida Super Lawyers, 2020
- Top Lawyers of 2023, The Boca Raton Observer
- “Top Lawyer,” Palm Beach Illustrated, 2020-2021
- American Institute of Family Law Attorneys, 10 Best Attorneys, 2019
- Association of Trial Lawyers of America, Top 100, 2018
- Florida Association for Women Lawyers
 - Woman of the Year, South Palm Beach County Chapter
 - Leader of the Law, 2016
- Soroptimist International, Woman of Distinction, 2014

• CIVIC

- Susan G. Komen, South Florida
 - Board of Directors, 2013-2018
- EBC Foundation, Inc., Founder and Director
- Sharsheret
 - Florida Community Advisory Committee, 2020
 - Jewel Circle, 2019-present
 - National Board of Directors, 2023-present



PRESENTS

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Milestone Reporting is proud to introduce a patent-pending technology that delivers deposition summaries alongside your full transcript. Throughout 2025, you can experience how to streamline your litigation process and enhance your firm's efficiency for just \$50 per transcript.

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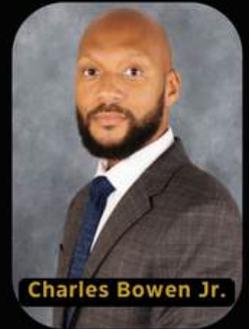
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Event Details

7 **BOARD MEETING**
Wed May 7 2025

8 **MONTHLY MEMBERSHIP LUNCHEON**

Venue: Mariposa at Neiman Marcus
Address: Level Two, 5860 Glades Rd Boca Raton, FL, 33431, US
Starts: Thu May 8 2025, 11:45am EDT
Ends: Thu May 8 2025, 1:00pm EDT

10 **JUSTICE FOR ALL CELEBRATION**

Venue: Kravis Center
Starts: Sat May 10 2025, 06:00pm EDT

13 **SUIT UP**

Venue: Cozen O'Connor
Address: 1801 North Military Trail #200 Boca Raton FL 33431, US
Starts: Tue May 13 2025, 6:00pm EDT
Ends: Tue May 13 2025, 8:00pm EDT

21 **2025 WOMAN LAWYER OF THE YEAR & INSTALLATION OF 2025-2026 SPBC FAWL BOARD**

Venue: Woodfield Country Club
Address: 3650 Club Place Boca Raton FL 33496, US
Starts: Wed May 21 2025, 6:00pm EDT
Ends: Wed May 21 2025, 8:00pm EDT

31 **RUN FOR THE BRAVE 5K**

Venue: South County Regional Park
Address: 20405 Amphitheater Circle Boca Raton FL 33498, US
Starts: Sat May 31 2025, 7:00am EDT

25 **FAWL ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

Venue: South County Regional Park
Address: 20405 Amphitheater Circle Boca Raton FL 33498, US
Starts: Wednesday, June 25-27, 2025

UPCOMING EVENTS

May

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7 Board Meeting	8 Monthly Membership Luncheon	9	10 Justice for All Celebration
11	12	13 Suit Up	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21 2025 Woman Lawyer Of The Year & Installation of 2025-2026 SPBC FAWL Board	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31 Run for the Brave 5K

June

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
			FAWL Annual Conference			
29	30					



MISSION STATEMENT

SPBC FAWL was founded in 2003. SPBC FAWL's mission is to advance the professional status of women lawyers, to promote the rights of women generally, to enhance the visibility of women within the legal profession and within their communities, and to create and maintain supportive networks among women in the legal and other professions.



BECOME A SPONSOR

Becoming a sponsor of SPBC FAWL is a wonderful way to meet our members and educate them about your business while at the same time supporting the advancement of women in the legal profession and enabling this organization to thrive. SPBC FAWL welcomes annual sponsors at all levels as well as sponsors for specific events.

For more information about sponsorship opportunities and the many benefits of being a sponsor of SPBC FAWL, please contact Development Director Dori Gerstein, Esq. dg@usaimmigrationlaw.com.

Member Benefits

Being a member of SPBC FAWL has so many wonderful benefits! Networking, friendship, mentoring, invitations to a variety of events, access to the newsletter, and automatic membership in State FAWL. The benefits of being a member of State FAWL are numerous- including a vast library of free CLEs!

Newsletter Submissions

Articles: Would you like to contribute an article to the newsletter? We welcome both members and sponsors to contribute articles on a variety of topics--anything from the legal, to the educational, to the fun, to the causes that are near to your heart. Please submit a headshot along with your article. All article submissions should be in Microsoft Word format.

Member News: Our newsletter is your platform for sharing your successes, good news, future plans, or anything else! Let our members know what's going on with your business or your life. Please submit a headshot along with your member news. All member news submissions should be in Microsoft Word format.

Educate members on your area of expertise. Did you receive an award? Did you give a lecture or presentation? What is your specialty? Let's support one another. Let us in on your news!

For any questions regarding membership, please contact Membership Director Giuliana Santini at giuliana@sinatralegal.com.

For a list of membership benefits, please visit <https://www.spbcfawl.org/membership>.
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