

JOURNAL

Newsletter of the Fairfax Bar Association

www.fairfaxbar.org

Winter 2022/2023

2022 Fairfax Bar Association FALL GOLF TOURNAMENT

By Robert S. Letnick, Esq.



(L-R) Hon. Bruce D. White (Ret.), Pat Cavanagh, Jim Bitner, and Tom Carter

On Monday, October 17, 2022 the Fairfax Bar Association held its Fall Golf Tournament at the Country Club of Fairfax. Fortunately, those who played in this golf tournament were treated to excellent weather which made for a very pleasant afternoon on the golf course. With the global pandemic waning, those who played in this event had none of the restrictions that we had to endure in prior years.

The format for this golf tournament was a scramble (Captain's Choice). All members of each foursome hit a tee shot and the team then select which is the best ball to play for the next shot. From there, each player hits the next shot and this process continues until the golf hole has been completed. Every year, I hear about some of the great shots that our players had during this event, as well as some of those horrendous shots that add a bit of levity to the occasion.

The first place team of Bob Letnick, Jeremy Letnick, and Justin Daniel shot a 17 under par 54. The team of Steve Cochran, Scott Heon, Carl VanPelt, and Cary McMichael came in second place with a 15 under par 56. In third place with a 13 under par 58 was the team of Shawn Richardson, Tommy Klop, Taft Hawken, and Ray Titus. While in most years there is an intense competition for the award for last place team, this year that team outplayed their nearest competitor by 10

Pro Bono Honorees Celebrated at State of the Judiciary Luncheon

By Arlene Beckerman, Esq., Director of Pro Bono Services

Volunteer lawyers who have done outstanding work received well-deserved honors at the State of the Judiciary Luncheon in November.

This year the James Keith Public Service Award was presented to Stephen Cochran, a lawyer who has practiced law for the past 50 years and has conducted more than 300 trials. Steve has represented clients in a wide range of cases in both state and federal courts and has spoken frequently on litigation topics. He was the first Chair of the Fairfax Bar Civil Litigation Section, as well as the Virginia Trial Lawyer Association's Business Litigation Section.

In Steve's first *pro bono* case, he represented a mother seeking payment of child support, both current and past due. The father had claimed he was penniless, but after spending a week in jail for contempt, he magically came up with enough money for the mother to put a down payment on her first home, a small condominium. She was ecstatic.

For several years, Steve managed Womble Carlyle's *pro bono* program in conjunction with the Northern Virginia Pro Bono Law Center. He established a Saturday morning clinic at a community center in southern Fairfax County. He not only organized the clinic, but also regularly offered his services there.

After Hurricane Katrina, Steve worked on a team resolving real estate issues for clients who had serious issues with title to real estate because the property had passed through generations without documentation.

Most importantly, Steve taught many lawyers how to step up and contribute. Without his encouragement, many of these lawyers would have stayed in their own fields, believing that they did not know enough to take on *pro bono* cases.

The Northern Virginia Pro Bono Law Center presented a new award this year, the *Pro Bono Champion*. This award was designed to recognize a special volunteer who has already made significant contributions of their time while still in the beginning years of the profession.

The inaugural winner of the *Pro Bono* Champion Award was Lily Saffer, an associate at Maddox & Gerlock, PC, practicing family law and estate planning.

Lily has a long history of public service, beginning even before graduating from law school. At William & Mary, she worked extensively with the Special Education Advocacy Clinic, spent both of her summers interning with legal aid organizations, and was a member of the Domestic Violence Clinic.

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President's Column

By Aaron J. Christoff, Esq., President, Fairfax Bar Association



The Season of Giving (Back)

It was great to see so many at this year's State of the Judiciary Luncheon. All those in attendance received thorough updates from the Chief Judges of each Court. Things are moving and for the most part, in the right direction!

One aspect of the Fairfax Courthouse community where much help is still needed are the various programs and posts filled by attorney volunteers. And no, I do not (necessarily) mean your dollars. I mean your time and your service.

Whether it was at the luncheon, any of the recent Court Committee meetings, or your own observations as a regular in the Courthouse, you know our programs are in desperate need for more attorney volunteers. Both the General District Court and Juvenile & Domestic Relations District Court want attorneys willing to serve on their respective lists for court-appointed counsel, as well as those ready and able for Guardian ad Litem work. The Fairfax County Adult Protective Services Program needs attorneys to volunteer as guardians/conservators and Lori Jones with the Fairfax County Department of Family Services is the one to talk to if you're interested.

Of course, you can always check in with Arlene Beckerman in our own FBA offices if you want to cast a wider net in terms of options as pro bono counsel. Maybe you have a colleague or coworker who you know is interested in getting some more courtroom experience, exploring ways of expanding the scope of their own practice, or just doing good for their community; be sure to spread the word because the opportunities are there.

Interested in helping but looking for something a little less involved, at least in terms of billable hours allocated? Try the Conciliation Program spearheaded by Sonya Duchak, where you help parties and counsel (and judges and their law clerks!) resolve disputes on the motion dockets of the J&DR and Circuit Courts. Or talk to our very own Courtnie Norris to find out how you can help with the Court Tour Program, which provides direct exposure to the Courthouse and its participants in an effort to promote an interest in, and appreciation for, the law among Fairfax County middle school students.

The opportunity for financial contributions to help local programs and our courthouse community as a whole, is as simple as connecting with the Fairfax Law Foundation. We all have myriad considerations to weigh when faced with these requests, not to mention competition for our time and enthusiasm. But during this time of year when many of us celebrate holidays with family and friends centered around the joy of giving, if you find yourself thinking it's time for a new outlet for your own generosity, the FBA, Law Foundation, and Court programs and services can make finding that avenue very easy.

FAIRFAX BAR JOURNAL

Official Newsletter of the

Fairfax Bar Association

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The McCammon Group

is pleased to announce our newest Neutral



Geetha Ravindra, Esq.

Mediator & Vice President of Ombuds Services

Geetha Ravindra has recently joined The McCammon Group to serve as a mediator and as our Vice President for Ombuds Services. Geetha has over 30 years of dispute resolution experience in international, federal, and state organizations. She began her career with the Supreme Court of Virginia where she managed court-connected mediation programs for 11 years. For many years she provided mediation and training for the World Bank Group, and several federal and state agencies. Geetha then served as in-house Mediator and Ombuds for the International Monetary Fund and the Center for Global Development. Most recently, she was Director of Workplace Relations for the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit. She is an International Ombuds Association Certified Organizational Ombuds and a Virginia Supreme Court Certified Mediator. Geetha is past Chair of the ABA Section of Dispute Resolution, past President of the Virginia Mediation Network, and past Chair of the VSB-VBA ADR Committee. Geetha now brings this wide-ranging background and experience to The McCammon Group to serve the mediation and ombuds needs of lawyers, litigants, and organizations throughout VA/DC/MD and the Nation.



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The Law Related Education Committee's Mission— Bringing Children and the Law Together

By Joanna Faust, Esq., and Nathan Olson, Esq., Co-Chairs

For decades the Fairfax Bar Association has worked with the Fairfax County Public Schools to teach FCPS students about the legal system and the role of the judicial branch in government. FSPS serves a student population of more than 180,000 children (speaking over 200 languages!) in elementary, middle, and high schools; and education centers throughout the County.

In turn, the primary mission of the FBA's Law Related Education Committee has always been to help connect FBA members with the County's children. Every year, FCPS teachers contact the FBA to request attorney volunteers to visit schools and speak at civics, government, and business law classes, to conduct mock trials for elementary students, and participate in Career Days.

By far the most successful FBA-FCPS partnership has been the Court Tour Program. In connection with the Fairfax Law Foundation, which has generously sponsored the Court Tour Program throughout the years, local FCPS eighth graders take a field trip to spend the morning at the Fairfax County Courthouse. Accompanied by attorney guides, the students tour the courthouse, speak with the Sheriff's deputies, and perform a mock trial in front of a Juvenile & Domestic Relations District Court judge. The Tour is capped off by visiting General District Court or Circuit Court courtrooms and observing trials and motions, with a chance to speak to one of the presiding judges (time permitting).

Not to be overlooked though is the FBA's participation in the City of Fairfax's annual Chocolate Lovers Festival. First held in 1993, the festival is an annual three-day event traditionally scheduled on the first full weekend of February, featuring activities for the whole community to enjoy, but especially for children.

FBA members play a critical role in helping the festival succeed. Each year, the Historic Courthouse is opened to the public and a selection of historical documents from the County's Archives (such as George and Martha Washington's wills) are displayed. Fairfax judges and FBA members also come together to host a mock trial where children act as the "jury" to decide such conflicts a who was right and who was wrong among the *Three Little Pigs* or Beauty & the Beast-themed *Gaston v. The Prince*. Children can also participate as contestants in the game show *So You Think You're Smarter Than A Lawyer*? (based on the hit TV game show *Are You Smarter than a 5th Grader*?) with the chance to win prizes—chocolate of course!—for correct answers.

Due to the pandemic, the Court Tour Program has been on hold and the Chocolate Lovers Festival was cancelled in both 2021 and 2022.

But finally it appears that a corner has been turned. The FBA has started hosting court tours again, with a record number of FCPS middle schools (and even high schools) requesting visits. And preparations are continuing busily for the 2023 Cocolate Lovers Festivsal, this year to be held from Friday, February 3 to Sunday, February 5, 2023.

The FBA and Law Related Education Committee are in great need of attorney volunteers to help these events run smoothly, particularly the Court Tour Program. If you volunteered as an attorney guide in the past, please consider signing up again. If you are a new volunteeer, we would love to you and you can be paired up with a seasoned court tour guide for your first tour. And if your schedule won't permit volunteer time, the FBA welcomes any donations to the FLF's Adopt a School Program. All donations are tax deductible and sponsorships can be made in the name of specific FCPS middle schools.

The FBA and our Committee would love to have any and every FBA member who is looking to give back to the County's children! Please contact Courtnie Norris at *cnorris@fairfaxbar.org*, Joanna Faust at *joanna.faust@fairfaxcounty.gov*, or Nathan Olson at *nolson@cgglawyers.com*, for more information or to volunteer.



Wills, Trusts & Estate Section

By John P. Morgan, Co-Chair

The Wills, Trusts, and Estate Section of the Fairfax Bar plans on resuming in-person events in the spring of 2023, likely at the Courthouse. If you have a desire to speak or have suggested topics, please communicate them to the co-chairs, John Morgan and John Heck. Current plans include presentation on estate planning for crytocurrency and what Virginia estate planning attorneys should know about Florida estate planning. Additionally, we hope to have another "Ask the Commissioner" event.

We would like to thank Jason Pardo and Dirk Whitaker for joining us in October for the annual "Ask the Clerks" event, which was held virtually. The participating clerks provided us with a great deal of insight as to issues they are currently seeing at the Probate Office and gave us a preview as to some anticipated changes.

One area of interest for estate administration practitioners in Virginia is a change to Virginia Code Section 64.2-508, governing notice to heirs at law and beneficiaries of estates. Before July 1, 2022, notice was not required to be sent to heirs at law or beneficiaries under a will when the decedent's probate estate was \$5,000 or less. As of July 2, 2022, however, no such statutory exception applies, a notice regarding estate must be sent to all heirs at law and named beneficiaries of a will, even if a probated estate has no known probate assets. Still, some more notable exceptions apply. Among those, a beneficiary of a "pecuniary bequest or of a bequest of tangible personal property, provided in either case the beneficiary is not an heir at law and the value of the bequest is not in excess of \$5,000." Therefore, an heir at law must receive notice no matter the circumstances. A named beneficiary in a will who is not an heir at law and is entitled to \$3,000 (and nothing else) under the terms of a will need not receive notice but would be required to receive notice if the bequest were, instead for \$6,000, or if the beneficiary is also to receive valuable articles of tangible personal property. Practitioners would be well advised to review the notices their clients have sent for estates probated since July 1, 2022, and supplement notices as necessary. Additionally, preexisting exceptions including, but not limited to, not requiring notice being sent to a personal representative, proponent of a will, persons who have waived the right to receive notice, and unborn, or unascertained persons, continue to apply.

The Wills, Trusts, and Estates Section also has opportunities to serve as a co-chair. The term of the current co-chairs expires as of the end of June 2023. Traditionally, three lawyers serve as co-chairs of the Section. If you are interested in getting a head start and joining us a third co-chair for the next six months—or if you simply want to know more about what the job entails—please contact us! We thank you for your interest and support and look forward to seeing you in the spring.

Have a great idea or interesting topic in mind for a future CLE?

Contact the FBA
to submit your ideas for the
CLE Committee's consideration.
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Law Practice Management Section

By Julie Curran Gerock, Esq., Co-Chair

Are you the managing partner of your firm? Do you run a small firm or solo practice? Are you thinking of starting your own practice? Are you curious about how a law practice is run?

If you answered yes to any of those questions then I strongly encourage you to join the Law Practice Management Section of the Fairfax Bar Association (LPM Section). The LPM Section is a very active group of lawyers and law-related business owners who meet monthly via Zoom to plan and organize CLEs and webinars, and to discuss topics related to the management of a law practice.

Although I understand law education has changed, it was true then when I went to law school, there were no classes or training on how to run and manage a law firm. No one taught lawyers how to set up, establish, or pay taxes, software, technology, accounting, payroll, insurance, trust accounts, business plans, partnership agreements, compensation structures, office procedures, and other necessary business-related processes. The members of the LPM Section help to fill this gap by sharing with one another their knowledge and experience, through monthly meetings, webinars, and CLEs,

Last year, the LPM Section planned and organized two high-quality CLEs: one on the topic of COVID-19 and Remote Work held in the spring; and then the 20th Annual Law and Technology CLE which included a presentation on crytocurrency, 60 Tech Tips, and a Judge's Panel. In addition, the LPM Section hosted three lunch and learn webinars on the topics of Social Media, Going Paperless, and How Technology is Shaping the Practice of Law.

Thiis spring, the LPM Section is planning a CLE on the topic of Fees and Compensation and will be held online on either April 19 or April 26 from 12:00-2:00 PM. The LPM Section is also planning one of several lunch and learn webinars. The first one for 2023 will take place in February from 12:00-1:00 PM and will likely be on the topic of Wellness in the Workplace. The fall Technology CLE is still in the planning stages.

The LPM Section is also hosting a Social Event on May 10 at Hamrock's from 4:30 - 6:30 PM.

As you can see, the LPM Section is a very active and social group, committed to improving the way in which law firms are managed and educating other lawyers on how to run a law firm effectively and successfully. As a section, we do not have all of the answers and invite anyone who is interested in the work we do to join us at a monthly meeting, help us with planning a CLE or webinar, or join us at Hamrock's on May 10 so we can get to know you. If you have any questions about the LPM Section, please do not hesitate to reach out to me or my co-chair, Corrie Sirkin.

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Pro Bono Honorees Celebrated at State of the Judiciary Luncheon

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In addition to providing direct *pro bono* legal services, Lily serves as a Guardian ad Litem for children, is a frequent volunteer with the Circuit Court's Conciliation Program, is Vice Chair of the Fairfax Bar Association's *Pro Bono* Committee, and the Publicity Chair and Vice President of the Board of the Fairfax Law Foundation.

The *Pro Bono* Lawyer of the Year Award was presented to Ann-Lewise Shaw, who earned her JD from the University of Texas School of Law. After practicing law in a variety of interesting legal jobs from in-house counsel, trust banking, managing a local political campaign, and working at small and medium size firms, Ann-Lewise took the plunge and opened up her own law firm as a solo practitioner.

Since law school, Ann has been engaged in various *pro bono* projects including volunteering as Guardian ad Litem for children in foster care, helping incarcerated people with legal research, and assisting people facing eviction. Since becoming licensed in Virginia, she has been a regular volunteer, giving her time and energies to different programs including those of the Northern Virginia Pro Bono Law Center. Over many years, she has volunteered to regularly help clients with consumer and housing issues.

In addition, Ann-Lewise has focused a substantial amount of her *pro bono* work with the Good Samaritan Advocates (GSA). GSA is a nondenominational, faith-based group of lawyers in Northern Virginia and Maryland who run several clinics serving people who have a wide variety of civil legal problems. She presently serves as a Co-Director of one of the Saturday clinics, the Director of The Lamb Center walk-in legal clinic, held in a day shelter for the homeless located in the City of Fairax, and on the Board of Directors.

The other *Pro Bono* Lawyer of the Year Award was presented to Stan Blacker. Stan is an inspiration for everyone, but particularly to those who are no longer active or retired from legal practice. Stan is so dedicated to helping others, he sought out and obtained Emeritus status from the Virginia State Bar solely so that he could do *pro bono* work, which he has done regularly for the past four years.

Stan has made a difference in the lives of his many clients. In a matter involving hospital debt, Stan discovered that the hospital did not inform the patient about the option to file for financial aid. A Warrant in Debt was filed. Stan convinced the hospital to accept the aid application two years later. The hospital accepted the hardship application and dismissed the suit.

In another matter, an unemployed woman lived with her infant in Great Falls. She worked only in the home and never had to handle any financial obligations. Two days before Christmas, the woman discovered that her husband had committed suicide in their home. Everything was taken by the creditors. The now indigent widow returned to Fairfax County unable to register the car without paying a collection agency \$1,200. Stan called the Fairfax Department of Tax Administration delinquent claims manager who apologized for the collection agency actions, removed the penalty and interest fees, worked out an extended payment plan, and immediately permitted the car to be registered.

Stan talked with an 89 year old woman who was on Virginia State electric and gas subsidies, but was being charged 30 times more gas usage during summer compared to winter. The utility's response was always that there was nothing wrong. Stan contacted the State Division of Public Utilities, who initially agreed with the utility. Stan finally reached the utility corporate office to engage. After working with that office, the client received a \$1,200 credit on future gas usage. Stan thinks that she is tough enough to outlive the credits.

The winner of the awards have contributed much to the lives of others in the community. And we are forever grateful.

For those interested in participating in the programs of the Northern Virginia Pro Bono Law Center, please contact Arlene Beckerman, Esq., at abeckerman@fairfaxbar.org.



Paralegal Food Drive Photos







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Upcoming Events/CLEs

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Additional details will be announced soon!

23rd ANNUAL SPRING GOLF TOURNAMENT Friday, May 12, 2023 Noon - 1:00 PM | Registration 12:30 PM - 1:00 PM | Putting Contest 1:30 PM - I Shotgun Start Westfields Golf Club 13940 Balmoral Greens Avenue Clifton, VA 20024

FBA FALL GOLF TOURNAMENT

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strokes, shooting a 9 over par 80. As in our prior golf tournaments, we shall not reveal the identity of the members of this team who won this most coveted award. All who participated in this annual event experienced a beautiful day on the golf course while having the opportunity to enjoy the camaraderie of all of the other golfers who participated. In addition to box lunches, subsequent to the round of golf, everyone had the opportunity to enjoy an excellent Italian buffet dinner.

There were a number of special events during the tournament, which included a closest-to-the pin competition on hole #2 which was won by Jeremy Letnick at a distance of 8'1"; a closest-to-the pin competition on hole #6 that was also won by Jeremy Letnick at a distance of 8'10"; a closest-to-the pin competition on hole #10 which was won by Ray Titus at 7'6"; and a closest-to-the pin competition on hole 13 which was won by Tom Simeone at a distance of 7'8".

While the annual Spring Golf Tournament is a substantially larger tournament with more sponsors, the sponsors that we had for this fall tournament helped to make it a great success. Special recognition once again goes out to Michael H. Doherty, PLLC, as the exclusive lunch sponsor. Scott Sevart played in this event for the first time and his business Sevart Vocational and Forensic Services provided us with a birdie sponsorship. An additional birdie sponsor who we initially classified as anonymous turned out to be our own Fairfax Bar Association Executive Director, Courtnie L. Norris. Maybe next year we can impose upon her to go one step farther and play golf in our event. Par sponsors to this tournament included Letnick Law Firm, PLC, and Roeder, Cochran, Phillips, PLLC. In addition, we had a special par sponsorship by Jerry Phillips who did not participate in this tournament but was so kind as to offer his sponsorship. All of these sponsors assisted in making this tournament possible through their generous donations. Subsequent to the award of prizes, many of our participants received golf clubs as raffle items. The golf clubs were once again provided by The Fitting Studio at Westfields Golf Club.

The Fairfax Bar Association's 23rd Annual Spring Golf Tournament has been scheduled at Westfields Golf Club on Friday, May 12, 2023 with shotgun start commencing at 1:00 PM. In addition, the Fairfax Bar Association has already scheduled the 2023 Fall Golf Tournament on Friday, September 22, 2023 at The Heritage Hunt Golf & Country Club which is also scheduled for a 1:00 PM shotgun start. Please note these dates on your calendar so that you have the opportunity to join us for a great day on the golf course away from all of the stress related to work. Both of these events take place on dates when Court is in session; however since they are on Friday afternoons, hopefully you will take the opportunity to join us for a great day on the golf course as the start of a long weekend. As in all of the tournaments of the FBA, these tournaments are enjoyed by participants of all skill levels including a number of players who only play during the year in the FBA tournaments. All are encouraged to participate in our future golf tournaments. We look forward to seeing you next spring on the golf course.



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Michael H. Doherty, Esq., and his teammates





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 - · Suite 214/215 \$1,425/mo, full service 2-room office on rear corner
 - Suite 206 \$1,600/mo, full service 2-room suite on front corner; OR lease as individual offices separately: Suite 206 \$900/mo: Suite 208 - \$800/mo
- 4023 Chain Bridge Road, Suites 6 & 8 Suite 6 \$850/mo Large private windowed office wits own full BA and some furniture avail. to convey for tenant's use. Suite 8 - \$950/mo - Large front corner office w/built-in book-cases & decorative fireplace. Tenants have shared use of the common waiting area, rear porch, and courtyard areas. Signage and parking available. LEASE - 1-5 yr. lease term. Rent discount for leasing both suites together! Avail. immed.
- 103 Chain Bridge Road Location! Flexible office suite sizes! Elevatored office building wiplenty parking across from Fairfax Courthouse! 3-5 yr. term. LL will provide new paint & carpet w/3 year min lease.
 - Suite 102 1,779 rsf Suite 204 - 1,923 rsf

 - Suite 400 4,400 rsf

LEASE - \$23 PSF, full service. Additional build-out negot.

Call for more details, more listings, or to schedule a showing:

10640 Page Avenue - Located next to Post Office on corner of Judicial within walking distance of FFX Courthouse.

1st Floor - 2,519 rsf

2nd Floor - 1,560 up to 5,200 rsf

LEASE - \$23 psf, full service, 2 - 5 yr. lease term. Owner will provide paint & carpet in tenant's choice w/3-yr. min. lease. Additional buildout negot.

3915 Old Lee Highway, Units 22-A & B - 2,300 SF 1st flr. double-unit facing Old Lee Hwy w/2 prvt. entrances! Spacious layout w/large conf. room wtable & chairs, several prvt. windowed offices, waiting/recep/admin area, 2 BAs, 2 kitchenettes, and storage closets. Plenty free surface parking avail. LEASE - \$3,737.50/mo (\$25 psf) + elec, cleaning, phone & internet paid by tenant, 3 - 5 yr. lease term. Owner will provide paint & flooring w/3-yr. min. lease. Additional build-out negot. Avail. immed.

 Lobby Level Suite 101 - 3,150 rsf avail. for office/medical/limited retail use, signage facing Rt.123, and direct entrances from front street-side and from rear parking deck. Layout includes recep. area, several prvt. offices, conf. rm, large kitchen breakroom, BA, and storage areas. LEASE - \$6,037.50/mo (\$23 psf), full service, 2 - 5 yr. lease term. Avail. immed.

4085 Chain Bridge Road, LL - 750 sf office suite wits own storage unit, walk-in level from covered parking area; suite has small waiting area, private office, open central office area & breakroom w/kitchenette. LEASE - \$1,500/mo, full service, 1 - 5 yr. lease term. Avail. immed.

10521 Judicial Drive, Unit 100 - 2,842 SF 1st flr. comer office in elevatored building across from FFX Crthse! Floor plan features: recep/wait. area w/built-in recep. desk, lrg. conf. rm, admin. areas, 5 good-sized prvt. offices, kit, BA & Irg. storage rm. Recently renovated - move-in ready! Plenty sur-face parking avail. SALE - \$650,000 (\$228.71 psf)

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