



The Docket

SARASOTA COUNTY
BAR ASSOCIATION
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**Happy
Holidays
from the
SCBA**

The Docket



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The Docket encourages submissions of interest to SCBA members. Contact the SCBA office via e-mail (scba@sarasotabar.com) or phone (861-8180) for further information. The Docket is published 10 months a year. Deadline is the first Friday of the month preceding the month of publication.

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Annual awards presented

By **DANA B. KEANE, Esq.**
Chair, SCBA Annual Awards Sub-Committee

Our profession includes some of the most charitable and civic-minded people in our community. On September 18, the SCBA Awards Committee members had the privilege of helping recognize the men and women of our Bar Association and community who had set themselves apart for their work and achievement.

Ed Ford presented **Neil Scott**, who was unable to attend, with the *C.L. McKaig Award* in recognition of his efforts to restore the public's faith in the legal profession through his dedication of countless hours as an inventory attorney. Neil has served more than 300 hours to date in this often thankless and unrecognized role and his work continues.

Jim Toale presented **Cenacle Legal Services** with the *Distinguished Service Award* in recognition of its devotion to providing pro bono legal services to the poor and vulnerable residents of South County without regard to race, creed, gender, language, ethnicity, disability, or immigration status. Cenacle's award was accepted by its Executive Director **Evelyn Moya**.

Erin Itts presented **Charles Hines** with the *Distinguished Community Service Award* in recognition of his dedication to improving the lives of the youth of Venice through coaching, mentoring, and ensuring the financial stability of youth sports organizations in South County. Charles devotes many hours each week to coaching youth baseball even though his own sons have aged out of playing and volunteers with the Venice High School Touchdown Club and Venice Vikings Football.

Nancy Cason presented **Ilyas Sayeg** and **Keith DuBose** (who was not in attendance) with the *President's Award* for their service with the Council for Diversity & Inclusion. **Patrick McArdle** received a President's Award for his service as

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Members, enjoy your discounts!

By **JENNIFER GROSSO, Esq.**
Bentley and Bruning

For the past few years, the Board of Directors for the SCBA has analyzed its role in the Sarasota legal community and has tried to refocus its efforts on serving its membership. We've tried to hone in on what our membership wants from our organization, and then tailor our efforts toward that end. As a result, we have expanded our continuing education offerings through the Sections, and we have focused on providing a variety of networking and socializing opportunities for our members. These efforts have been quite successful, and the SCBA continues to pursue them.

Another avenue we sought to pursue was to acquire tangible membership benefits. As the Chair of the Membership Committee, I was tasked with spearheading this effort. Over the course of the past year, we reached out to more than one hundred local businesses to establish partnerships to provide a benefit



Jennifer Grosso, Esq.
Bentley and Bruning

to our members, and in turn, to promote these local businesses. We received overwhelming support in response to our outreach, and we are excited to roll these out to you.

In the next few weeks, you will be receiving a new SCBA Membership card in the mail, along with a list of the current benefits. These benefits include discounts at local hotels, restaurants, salons, fitness studios, and others.

The next step will be to add a Member Benefits page to the SCBA website. This page will have all the latest information on the benefits available for our membership, and it will be updated as additional benefits are added. Should you know any local businesses that may want to participate, please let us know.

A big thank you to the Member Benefits Committee: **Jodi Ruberg, Warren Chin, Natasha Selvaraj, Emily Garriott, Bianca Manos, and Adria Jensen**. We enjoyed putting together these benefits, and we encourage you to frequent these local businesses.

HOLIDAY PARTY



It's time to deck the halls!

The Young Lawyers Division cordially invites members of the SCBA to attend the Annual Holiday Party on December 12 at Art Ovation. The festivities begin at 5:30 p.m. and members are encouraged to wear their best winter white or holiday attire.

Again this year, we will be taking donations for a local charity here in our community, Children First. Children First serves nearly

600 children, from birth through age 5, at 13 locations throughout Sarasota County. The children served by Children First come from primarily at-risk, low-income homes. Guests are encouraged to bring a new, unwrapped toy, book, children's clothes or blankets to donate.

So don't be naughty, save the date, and RSVP early to join us for the festivities! Hope to see you there! See enclosed flyer for more details.



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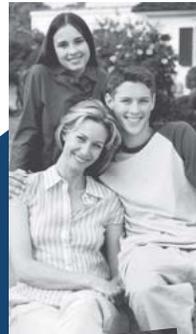
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New England visit inspires thoughts about autumn

“And all at once, summer collapsed into fall.”

— Oscar Wilde

For several years, dear Sarasota friends have been asking me and my wife Kate to visit them at their second home in Hyde Park, Vermont. After repeatedly promising our friends that we would eventually accept their kind offer, we finally did so this year. Thankfully, we scheduled our trip in time for the peak of leaf season.

We left Sarasota in 90-degree temperatures and landed in considerably cooler Boston in the first week of October, saving our drive to Vermont for the next day. The seasonal colors were only beginning in the Boston area, but as we drove into New Hampshire and then Vermont, it was clear that we had gotten very lucky with our timing.

Fall arrived in northern Vermont, with apparently characteristic enthusiasm this year, as the brilliant leaves of autumn painted the panorama in vivid shades of maple red, aspen yellow, and the gold and bronze hues of white oak and beech trees. The crisp, cool air was a welcome change from the humidity we left behind, and I could not help but be struck by the dramatic change in our environment within a few short hours.

It was easy to be transfixed by the magnificent New England landscape and the 50-degree daytime temperature, and to think about the contrast between that and the summer-like climate and foliage of Sarasota where we had been just a day before. As I sat on the back deck of our friends' home, genuinely appreciating the fall foliage bordering the pastoral farm fields in the foreground and the mountains in the distance, the Oscar Wilde quote above came to mind. And, that made me wonder: could Wilde's observation be a metaphor for our careers as lawyers?

In some ways, it seems like it was only yesterday that I was a young lawyer, worried about whether I would ever really learn how to become competent in this profession, let alone find my own clients. But my

SCBA PRESIDENT'S COLUMN



Drew Clayton, Esq.
Icard Merrill

occasionally-stiff back and the silver hair reflected in the mirror each morning is a blunt reality check. It reminds me that I am no longer in the spring or summer of my career. Autumn has arrived. And that's okay.

I have been blessed in my career to have been involved in many interesting and meaningful cases, and to have worked with many fine fellow professionals over the past 32 years. It never occurred to me until a few short years ago that I am actually a “senior” lawyer and that the change in my own “seasons” as an attorney has occurred with surprising suddenness. But I accept that change, abrupt as it seems, because I have been lucky enough to enjoy the type of law I practice. More importantly, I have not allowed myself to be consumed by it. Many interests and

hobbies occupy my mind and my time away from the office, and I am very thankful for it.

Let me respectfully suggest to the younger lawyers who may read this column that, someday, you will likely also experience a seemingly abrupt change in the seasons of your own careers. That change in seasons is a natural progression, and it will be made much easier if you not only strive to become the best lawyers you can be, but if you also take the time to lead full and balanced lives. Spend quality time with your families. Take time off. Find a hobby or two (or three)!

If you do that, when the autumn of your career arrives, you will hopefully look back on your practice of law with great appreciation, much as I did the landscape of northern Vermont this past month.

MEMBERSHIP

Welcome, new members!

The following represents each new member's name, law school, year of admission to The Florida Bar, and law firm association.

- **Ashley Gaillard:** Georgetown University; 2019
- **Robert Garcia:** University of Florida; 2019; *Berlin Patten Ebling PLLC*
- **Robin Orosz:** Stetson University; 1987; *Self-Employed*
- **Robert Rezendes:** Quinnipiac University; 2019; *Self-Employed*
- **Richard Ruhl:** St. Thomas; 2019; *Ruhl Law, P.A.*
- **Justin Schwegel:** Georgetown University; 2019; *Fair Food Standards Council*
- **Patrick Seidensticker:** Stetson University; 2019; *Icard, Merrill, Cullis, Timm, Furen & Ginsburg, P.A.*
- **Christina Strasser:** Florida State University; 2017; *Williams, Parker, Harrison, Dietz & Getzen*
- **Andrew Wilson:** Stetson University; 2013; *Dickinson & Gibbons, P.A.*
- **Leah Zammit:** Stetson University; 1998; *Shutts & Bowen LLP*

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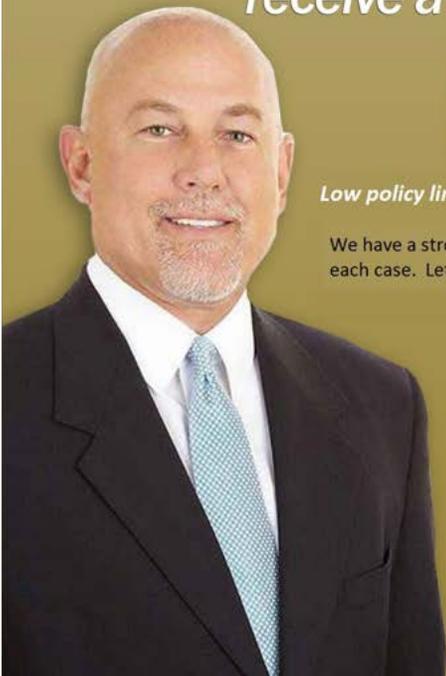
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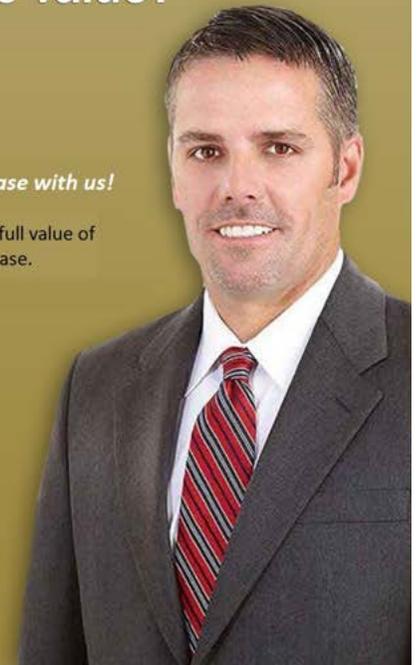
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A lot to be thankful for this Festivus season

In a time-tested *Seinfeld* episode, George Costanza's dad, fed up with the commercial aspects of the holiday season, creates a new holiday—Festivus, a holiday “for the rest of us,” has spawned a life of its own outside of *Seinfeld*, coming to represent an inclusive holiday gathering devoid of materialism. Although quirky and decidedly untraditional, the spirit of Festivus reminds us to avoid getting distracted by tinsel and, instead, focus on what matters.

As Festivus draws near, it's important to reflect on and celebrate the wonderful things in each of our lives. This year, I have more reasons than ever to be thankful! Here are six things—both SCBA-related and not—for which I am incredibly grateful.

I am thankful for rock star YLD committees and board members. This October, the YLD hosted the Quick Chat at Mandeville Beer Garden sponsored by Kerkering Barberio. Thanks to board and committee leaders like **Alisa Heedy** and **Mallory Moretti**, we had a wonderful turnout and excellent

YLD PRESIDENT'S COLUMN



Brian Goodrich, Esq.
Bentley & Bruning, P.A.

time. We continue to see new faces at our YLD events and hope to sustain this level of participation going forward. Our committees and board members excel at planning and hosting events that bar members enjoy and I am fortunate to work with such a talented group.

I am thankful for rewarding YLD charitable opportunities during the holiday season. This November, the YLD is again participating in Tanner's Turkeys—a volunteer event focused on feeding local families in need during Thanksgiving. This year, you can help by donating canned food or grocery gift cards. You can also come help bag meals for families in need. For more information on Tanner's Turkeys, check out **Natasha Selvaraj's** article this month in *The Docket*. This is an incredibly fun, deeply fulfilling event and I hope you all participate in pulling off this Festivus miracle!

I am thankful to be in Sarasota. Seven years ago, as a fresh law school graduate, that was considerably less than a sure thing. Despite having virtually no connection to

Sarasota, a young boutique law firm gave me a shot, and I'm thankful for those people who helped me get here and for the YLD members who showed me the ropes as I was beginning my practice. Today, I am thankful to still be at the same firm, working with people I respect and admire in a community I really love.

I am thankful for YLD social events in November/December, starting with the Morning at the Courthouse on November 6. Come take an organized tour of the courthouse with fellow young lawyers, then grab lunch with the judges across the street at Bavaro's. This popular event is great for getting to know the judiciary in a relaxed social setting. While we will abstain from the Festivus Airing of the Grievances and Feats of Strength, the Morning at the Courthouse will be excellent, nonetheless. Space is limited, so sign up now!

The YLD is also hosting the annual SCBA Holiday Party on December 12 at Art Ovation. Again, breaking with Festivus tradition, we will not restrict decorations to the traditional Festivus aluminum pole. Stay tuned for more details but be sure to sign up early!

I am thankful for wonderful friends and for my growing family. My wife, Sasha, and I are having our first child, a baby boy, due in March. For that I am incomprehensibly grateful! Another Festivus miracle!

Finally, I am thankful for all of the SCBA's wonderful bar members. To express my gratitude this holiday season, I made a donation on behalf of each of you to The Human Fund.

Happy Holidays!

YOUNG LAWYERS DIVISION

Giving back, giving thanks this holiday season

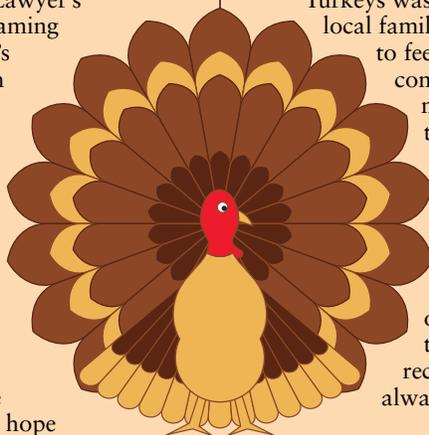
By **NATASHA SELVARAJ, Esq.**
Berlin Patten Ebling, PLLC

Even without the changing leaves or winter temperatures, Sarasota has plenty of activities to get you in the holiday spirit.

This year the Young Lawyer's Division is once again teaming up with Tanner's Turkey's to participate in their 9th Annual Basket Brigade. This event allows all members of the SCBA, along with their families, to help build baskets to be provided to families in need with everything they need to enjoy a nice Thanksgiving dinner. Last year we had an amazing turnout from our members at the basket assembly day and hope

members will consider coming out again this year. The basket assembly will take place at 2 p.m. on Sunday, Nov. 24, at St. Paul Lutheran Church. All members are welcome to participate, and the event is kid friendly! To RSVP please contact the SCBA at scba@sarasotabar.com. Last year Tanner's

Turkeys was able to feed over 200 local families, this year the goal is to feed 250 families in our community. Thanksgiving meals are distributed to the families through local organizations like Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Mothers Helping Mothers, Girls Inc., and Boys & Girls Club. The event is a great opportunity to give back to our community and all recipients of the baskets are always grateful to be able to
See **TURKEYS**, Page 9



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Tis the holiday season: Holiday Party is Dec. 6

First, I would like to thank everyone who came out for the Make a Difference Day service project on October 26. It was great to see and spend time with fellow lawyers in the South County Division. Further, participating in such an event is not only a benefit to the community, but also to our noble profession by showing the community that we like to give back. Lastly, what attorney doesn't mind a little hard labor now and then?

It is hard to believe, but the holiday season is upon us. In only two short months, we will begin the struggle of remembering that it is (already) 2020. In kicking off the holiday season, the South County Division will be hosting its annual Train Station Social. This year the social is on November 1, the same day the Docket is published. In case

SOUTH COUNTY PRESIDENT'S COLUMN



Bryan Kessler, Esq.
Berg and Kessler

I forget, I would like to thank everyone who attended the social. It is a great opportunity to community leaders, local professionals, and attorneys to socialize in an outgoing comfortable setting while enjoying some delicious wine selected by our very own wine connoisseur, **Skip Berg**.

We are also looking forward to our annual Holiday Party at the Courthouse on December 6. Every year lawyers of the South County Division donate money to host a holiday party for the staff at the Courthouse. If you have not yet contributed, please consider doing so. We also have a local charity that we sponsor each year, and this year it will be the Twig. We ask that attendees to the holiday party bring an item to be donated to the Twig. The purpose of the annual Holiday

Party at the Courthouse is to show our appreciation for those at the Courthouse who support the operation of our noble profession, from the bailiffs who provide security, the clerks office, and the judiciary.

Finally, it is vital to consider the importance of the holiday season. It is a time to spend with family, no matter how stressful that may ultimately prove to be, consume lots of tasty food, and gives us an opportunity to reflect on what we accomplished throughout the past year. It is also a time to be grateful for how fortunate we are for everything we have in our lives, the noble profession we chose to pursue and all that it entails, and for the freedoms we enjoy in living in America. On behalf of the South County Division, I want to wish everyone a happy holiday season!

TURKEYS

Continued from Page 7
celebrate the holiday!

If you can't make it out that day, Tanner's Turkeys is also accepting donations of either canned food, boxed potatoes and stuffing, or grocery store gift cards (\$15 or \$20 gift cards are perfect) to be used toward the purchase of a turkey. Please contact **Brian Goodrich** at bgoodrich@bentleyandbruning.com or **Natasha Selvaraj** at nselvaraj@berlin-patten.com for information about drop off locations.

If Thanksgiving isn't your thing, you can support the U.S. Marine Corps Toys for Tots program on December 5 by attending "Holiday Splendor at The Ringling." Admission is free with an unwrapped toy, and the event will take place at The Museum of Art Courtyard, Circus Museum and Ca'd'Zan which will be open for viewing.

If you're looking for ways to support local organizations, there are few ways to make an impact that are simpler than just showing up at community events and spending your time (and dollars) to participate! Whether you stop at a local business for a meal or beverage on the way to a tree lighting or partake in one of the events below or another one of the many events our community has

My personal favorite holiday event of the season is the "Lights in Bloom" at Selby Gardens.

to offer this holiday season, you will be making someone's holiday just a little bit brighter.

Sarasota's annual holiday parade will take place on December 7 along Main Street, so make sure you get out early and claim a spot for a great view of the floats. If you're farther south, the Venice Christmas Board Parade will take place the same evening. Both events are free, but you'll need to plan ahead to make sure you have a good view.

You can also take a break from your holiday shopping at The Mall at UTC and stop by the 11th Annual Gingerbread Festival to take a look at the holiday wonderland created by the Girl Scouts of Gulfcoast Florida. Participants in the festival submit gingerbread houses that are displayed between December 6 and December 15, you can vote for your favorite and even purchase one of the masterpieces if something catches your eye. Admission is free and the display is kid friendly!

Finally, my personal favorite holiday event of the season is the "Lights in Bloom" at Selby Gardens. This year will be the 16th Annual Lights in Bloom celebration, and the life-sized garden themed holiday lights will transform the garden into what I can only describe as a tropical winter wonderland. The event runs from December 14 until January 4. Tickets

are \$25 for adults, \$7 for children between 5 and 12 years old, and free for children under 5. Food and drinks will be available for purchase.

No matter what you choose to do this holiday season, I hope it is filled with friends, family and lots of laughter, and hopefully a chance to give back and give thanks to our community!

AWARDS

Continued from Page 3

Docket editor, **Erin Itts** was recognized for her outstanding service as President of the Young Lawyers Division. **Teresa Bowman**, **Andrew Conaboy**, and **Adria Jensen** also received awards for their leadership as Section Chairs.

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- 1** lawyer celebrated by Super Lawyers as one of the Top 10 Lawyers in Florida, and
1 outstanding law firm highlighted as a "Best Law Firm" by U.S. News & World Report.

“Whatever it takes” — Walt Smith to retire

For twenty-two years Walt Smith has been our circuit’s Trial Court Administrator, but the day before Thanksgiving will be his last official workday before leaping into retirement feet first and with a big smile on his face.

Walt and his wife, Jackie, have been married for 39 years. They have two grown daughters, Bailey and Keely, and are proud grandparents to Keely and John’s first child, Lily. Jackie calls Walt “the baby whisperer,” and we are sure that his retirement will include plenty of Lily time! Here’s an interesting tidbit about Walt’s family: Walt and Jackie were married on Walt’s parents’ 34th wedding anniversary (which was also his grandfather’s birthday). And Keely and John were married on Walt and Jackie’s 34th wedding anniversary.

Walt grew up in Miami, one of seven children. After graduating from the University of Florida, he began his professional career in Madison, Wisconsin, where he helped develop the first sentencing guidelines used in the United States. After that he took a grant-funded position with the Justice Department in Washington, DC. In this position he traveled a lot, spending time in prosecutors’ offices in Phoenix, Peoria and Tucson, to name just a few places. And it was here that he learned that it was okay to do things differently to get the same result.

That position morphed into a job at the Pretrial Justice Institute (now called the Pretrial Resource Center), where he worked on jail overcrowding issues. After spending nearly 14 years there, he accepted a position as the Sarasota Criminal Justice Coordinator. He held that position for about two years and then in 1997 became our Trial Court Administrator.

Under the philosophy that imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, somewhere around 2006-2007, Walt borrowed “Whatever it Takes” from Ruben Carrera (then Trial Court Administrator in the 11th Circuit) and made it the 12th Circuit’s official employee motto. These words embody Walt’s spirit and personality in ways that most people can only dream about, and he encourages that spirit of cooperation to get the job done each and every day. Walt has



Trial Court Administrator Walt Smith

always put family first and encourages all of us to do the same. Unless you’ve been in a work environment that doesn’t embrace this particular mindset, it’s hard to appreciate just how special it is.

Many 12th Circuit judges and employees were eager to provide examples of Walt’s “Whatever it Takes” and family-first

attitude. While he will certainly be missed, his motto and family first attitude will certainly remain here in the 12th Judicial Circuit. These are some of the tales they shared that offer you a glimpse of the Walt that we see every day:

■ When I was working towards my certification, Walt was extremely supportive and encouraging. It really made a difference knowing that I had him on my side and everything he did made a HUGE impact on my performance and helped me succeed. — *Ana*

■ During Hurricane Irma in 2017, Walt and Jackie were traveling in Europe. They considered cutting their trip short and returning home to what was predicted to be a huge storm because they were worried about their children. — *Donna*

■ When I was laid off the first time I worked for the courts, I was an absolute lump of confused devastation, a crying mess of emotions right at Walt’s feet. Literally. (Sorry, Walt!) Anyway, out of the goodness of his heart and compassion for a former employee, he arranged to get me a copy of the very expensive court reporting software I was trained on so that I could begin to work in the freelance world. I will ALWAYS, ALWAYS remember his kind demeanor and acts. When it came time to take the risk to apply again, I knew that if there was a fair chance to be rehired, he would allow it to happen. It did. You have no idea what a blessing being rehired was for me and for my son’s stability here in Sarasota during a super

rough transition. — *Hilda*

■ When my son was diagnosed with brain cancer in 2010, he and I were sitting in his hospital room at All Children’s Hospital one morning just hanging out. All of a sudden, the door to his room opens, and in walks Walt, who never told me he was coming. He engaged my son in conversation right away that had nothing to do with cancer or what he was going through. Then, in a very nonchalant way, he handed him a bag. My son opened it up, and it turned out to be an iPad. I wish I was able to record my son’s reaction but it was pure joy, excitement and gratefulness (and me in tears). You might think that that was such a small gesture, but for a 10-year-old scared to death of what might happen, you have no idea what a difference you made for my little boy that day. I will never forget that! — *Jennifer*

■ Walt has the absolute belief in family first. I experienced that personally between 2008 and 2009. I was assigned in Venice and then rotated back to Sarasota. During that time both of my parents, who lived out of state, became ill and ultimately passed away within 6 months of one another. I made many trips during that time. Walt always told me to stay as long as I needed and to not worry about work because it would be covered. Walt, as well as then Chief Judge Haworth, made sure I had no regrets when it came to being with my parents. I was able to spend quality time with them both before their passing. Additionally, I was told to stay as long as I was needed there with my family. I was very fortunate to be with both parents and my family when they passed. There could have been no greater gift ever given to me than that opportunity at those times. — *Judge Phyllis Galen*

■ In 2009 I was on bed rest for the last 6 weeks of my pregnancy and Walt let me work from home the entire time (I was employed as court counsel). I was so appreciative that he and Judge Haworth (chief judge at the time) allowed me to do that. — *Judge Rene Inman*

■ Several years before I was elected, I received a telephone call from Walt. He had just received a

See **SMITH**, Page 13



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SMITH

Continued from Page 11

telephone call from the Department of Corrections that a certain defendant was being released from prison and he wanted me to warn my dad. I appreciated the call and knew my dad remembered this case. This defendant had been convicted of murder in 1973 for murdering a man near the Skyway Bridge. The jury recommended life in prison but my dad did not agree and sentenced him to death. The Florida Supreme Court reversed my dad and the defendant was sentenced to life in prison. But at that time, life did not mean life, and he would be eligible for parole in twenty five years. So after over 35 years in prison, the defendant was released and was going to take a bus from prison and head north. My dad had retired from serving as a senior judge and moved to Due West, South Carolina, so I called him and told him what Walt said. I will never forget my dad's response. "He will never find Due West, so I am not worried. But you have the same name as me so you are the one who should be on the lookout." Then he laughed and laughed. I called Walt and told him what my dad said. He laughed and said "Well, he is probably right." — *Judge Gilbert Smith*

■ When my daughter was in the hospital last summer Walt was the most kind and understanding supervisor I ever had. My daughter was back and forth to All Children's Hospital for multiple surgeries and every single time he was always trying to make sure that I understand that family came first and that I should not be worry about work. He allowed me to work while at the hospital with my daughter when it was needed. His kindness and support made a huge impact on me and my family. — *Karina*

■ I will always be so grateful for Walt understanding my mom's health issues and allowing me to take her to appointments and just spend time with her. I remember him telling me to take care of your mom, work will be here. — *Kelley*

■ One day my mom and her best friend, Linda, came to my office in Sarasota because they found a dollar bill with 1-800-call for a good time written on it. My mom and Linda thought this was terrible and they wanted to report it to the Sheriff's Dept. Walt happened to be there and

**"Fond farewell
from all your
friends and
colleagues"**

he said "Oh thank you, you found my dollar bill." — *Kelley*

■ In 2005 when my mom was ill, Walt told me to stay at the hospital in NYC with her and not worry about work. He even shipped a laptop to me so I could work from there when I felt like I could. My family was amazed at how accommodating my job was and continued to be. — *Kim*

■ When my son was ill, Walt sat AT MY DESK and entered the Sarasota County Budget FOR ME! For that, I was truly thankful and realized that we have the same core values. Family really does come first around here. — *Linda*

■ Judge Carroll and I were assigned to Sarasota County in January 2018, and not long after my father had a stroke. Walt called me at home and told me to stay with my dad /family and said that I shouldn't worry about my office. I was able to stay with my dad and mom until he was able to get settled back at home. — *Lisa*

■ My son-in-law was due to be deployed for 6 months. My daughter, who is also in the military, works midnights and they have a 1 year old son. Walt was willing to work with me to be able to assist my daughter while her husband was away. It turned out that the deployment was cancelled but knowing that Walt, Court Admin staff, and colleagues were so willing to jump in and assist me was heartwarming and much appreciated. — *Lisa*

■ When we did not receive state-wide funding for the JAAF Conference he offered to cover the cost out of our local budget so that we could attend the conference. It was greatly appreciated. — *Lori*

■ In 2012, Judge Galen and I were in Venice, which is extremely busy. Unbeknownst to anyone, my mom was sick. On Wednesday she was diagnosed with cancer at the ER and in Hospice by that Sunday. I don't know the specifics on how it transpired, but my judge contacted him and he got coverage for the 3 weeks I was out to be with her until she passed and then prepare for her funeral. It was the hardest, most painful time in my life. I don't know how I would've handled that period in my life if I had to worry about work. Once again, thank you Walt. — *Shannon*

■ While crossing the street at the intersection of 301 and Main

Street, I was hit by a truck. I was rushed to the hospital with what turned out to be a crushed clavicle, torn rotator cuff, a broken thumb and lots of bumps & bruises. To be honest, I was very lucky. I don't really remember too much for about 3-4 weeks after. Again, I don't know how the specifics transpired but Judge Galen contacted Walt and he made it happen that there was coverage for two full months. When I returned to work three months later, there was no back log of work to be completed or piles of work that needed to be addressed. He worked his magic again so we didn't have to worry about the work getting done. Thanks for always having our back. — *Shannon*

■ I was flying back from Washington, D.C. with my middle school daughter who was chosen to attend a week-long Leadership Conference in D.C. representing her school. I flew up on Friday and we spent a fun mom-daughter weekend touring the museums and monuments. This was in January and a blizzard came through on Sunday. My daughter and I got stranded in Charlotte and couldn't make it home. I was on the phone with Walt several times on that Sunday night from Charlotte. He got another judge to cover Monday's docket for me. We flew home on Monday and I made it back for my afternoon docket. The whole situation was incredibly stressful, but it was such a relief to have Walt step up and take care of things at the 11th hour, late on a Sunday night. I can't thank him enough! — *Anonymous*

■ We once had an employee who suffered some complications from a medical procedure very shortly after starting with us (about four or five weeks into the job). She was not eligible for FMLA leave, but Walt very quickly approved about two and a half months of leave for her to recover. There was no hemming and hawing about potentially filling the position with someone else and allowing her to return if/when we had a future vacancy. [Unfortunately, this person wasn't able to return to work, but even then, Walt didn't appear to regret holding her job for her recovery; a lot of other employers would have felt like that had been a waste of their time]. — *Anonymous*

■ I've never heard Walt ask

See **SMITH**, Page 19

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Remember to identify, redact confidential information

By **MEGHAN SERRANO, Esq.**
Shumaker, Loop & Kendrick, LLP

Hello, fellow SCBA members! Hope you all had a fantastic summer. I am your Clerk of Court Liaison; should you have any issues or questions regarding the Clerk's Office which you would like to discuss, please do not hesitate to contact me at mserrano@shumaker.com.

I recently met with **Clerk of Court Karen Rushing** to discuss issues of interest to our members. During



Meghan Serrano, Esq.
Shumaker, Loop & Kendrick, LLP

our most recent meeting, Clerk Rushing and I discussed one issue which remains to be problematic for her office and should be of concern to attorneys, which is complying with the requirements regarding confidential and sensitive information in court filings. Unfortunately, many attorneys are not correctly minimizing sensitive information in court filings as required under Rule 2.425 of the Florida Rules of Judicial Administration or identifying confidential information in court filings as required by Rule 2.420 of the Florida Rules of Judicial Administration. According to Clerk Rushing, many of the notices of confidential information with directions to the clerk that are filed do not identify all of the instances of the confidential information within the filing. So, helpful reminder to double-check any filings which could contain such information to ensure that all instances of confidential information are redacted or identified in compliance with the rule.

And if you have checked the docket in any of your cases lately, you may have already noticed another recent development from the Clerk's Office: the addition of

a column on the docket labeled "DIN," which stands for Document Identification Number. The DIN is unique to each filing and is assigned after the Clerk's Office accepts a document for filing. Judge **Hunter W. Carroll** was instrumental in helping bring about this change, and says that he hopes the DIN will assist attorneys, the Clerk's Office and the Court to employ a "common language" to quickly identify filings.

Judge Carroll encourages attorneys to use the DIN references in notices of hearings to specifically identify the motion being heard, and in other filings which refer to earlier filings in the case. Note that currently, the DIN is not assigned until the document is accepted for filing by the Clerk's Office, so let your staff know that they will need to check the docket to determine the DIN once it is assigned.

From this practitioner's perspective, the DIN certainly makes it easier to identify documents on the docket when the title of the document alone may not be sufficient to do so, for example, when there are multiple pending motions to compel. Judge Carroll expects that the judges' rules may be revised to require reference to the DIN in notices filed with the Court, and hopes that the use of the DIN can be expanded and printed on documents downloaded from the docket to assist litigants in having that "common language" to quickly and consistently identify documents from their cases. Judge Carroll expressly acknowledged Clerk Rushing's work in helping to bring about this change: "I would like to thank Clerk Rushing for her leadership on this issue, and I believe it will greatly assist attorneys and the judiciary in this circuit."

That's all for now! Again, should you have any issues or questions regarding the Clerk's Office which you would like to discuss, please do not hesitate to contact me at mserrano@shumaker.com. Thanks so much!

News items? Email your "News of Note" items to scba@sarasotabar.com.

Hurricane preparedness from Clerk's perspective

What happened over the Labor Day weekend? Fortunately, Sarasota avoided a tragedy and did not experience the perils of a Category 4 or 5 hurricane as did the islands below Florida. But it is important to realize that preparing for the storm can't be

put on hold until one is certain the storm will hit. So ... here is what happened in your courthouse.

■ The Clerk, as a member, participates in each briefing of the Sarasota County Emergency Operations Team.

■ The dedicated staff prepare the vulnerable paper records at both the 15,000-sq.-foot record center at North Gate and the 8,000-sq.-foot record center in the Historic Courthouse, by covering thousands of records with tie down coverings to prevent water damage.

■ All Court and Recording systems are backed up and offsite back-up systems are tested.

■ All work spaces with electronics are prepared appropriately for potential electrical surges and water intrusion.

■ Close coordination with the court and the county on closing facilities so that information is communicated with one voice to minimize confusion among the public.

■ Jury management and anyone required to appear during closure must be notified of their new report date.

■ Though we may not be open, many Clerk services can continue in spite of an office closure.

■ The public can still search court and Official Records through the Clerk's website www.sarasotaclerk.com.

■ Documents can be submitted for eRecording using one of many providers set up for e-recording services with the Clerk's office.

■ Payment of fines and fees using our on line payment portal via the Clerk website www.sarasotaclerk.com.

■ Documents can be submitted for eFiling via the Florida Courts eFiling Portal at www.myfloridacourtaccess.com.

■ The Clerk's website also provides access to a wide variety of forms eliminating the need to come to the Clerk's office.

So the next time you hear nothing happened with Hurricane Dorian in Sarasota remember that is only partly correct.

In spite of the work, in preparation of a storm that did not come, we are grateful that Hurricane Dorian by passed our coast.

CLERK'S CORNER



Karen E. Rushing
Clerk of Court and County Comptroller



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Happy Hollandaise: Green Zebra expands downtown

By **ALISA M. HEEDY, Esq.**
Ferguson Skipper, P.A.
and **DAVID B. HEEDY, Esq.,**
Shumaker

Family-owned Green Zebra Café recently opened its second location at 1377 Main Street, between First Watch and Selva Grill. Unlike its first location on St. Armands (which is counter service only), the new Green Zebra on Main is a full-service, casual dining establishment with an expanded menu. Currently in its soft opening hours, Green Zebra on Main is open from 7:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., seven days a week. We learned that dinner and late night hours, as well as beer and wine offerings, are on the immediate horizon—you *heard* it here first!

The space has two floors. The foyer area features hanging orchids and a greenery wall spelling out “Green Zebra.” There are smaller tables, bar seating, and a private room downstairs, traditional seating upstairs, and a forthcoming outdoor courtyard just in time for season.

Like the original St. Armands location, they offer organic cold-pressed juices, smoothies, and acai



Alisa M. Heedy
Ferguson Skipper, P.A.



David B. Heedy
Shumaker

bowls, as well as sandwiches, salads, and exotic “raw” entrees. The Acai Energy Smoothie (\$9) was jam-packed with acai berry, strawberry, blueberry, banana, and chia seeds—perfect for an afternoon energy boost. The Chicken Pesto Sandwich (\$11) is a more filling option and features grilled chicken breast, tomatoes, Muenster cheese, and an over-the-top house-made basil pesto.

We also opted to try some of the new breakfast options paired with the house coffee (\$3.5) with unlimited refills. The Main Benedict (\$12) featured Canadian bacon, cage-free eggs, toasted English muffin, and homemade hollandaise sauce with small green salad. The sauces—house-made basil pesto and rich, decadent hollandaise—were outstanding and set this restaurant apart.

Green Zebra on Main is a great place to order take-out on a busy work day or call ahead for a table with clients (reservations are only available for parties of six or more). If you are looking for a delicious (and healthy) restaurant to try, Green Zebra has earned its *stripes* and should be at the top of your list.





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■ Shumaker, Loop & Kendrick, LLP is pleased to announce that **Jade Davis** has joined the firm's Sarasota office as an associate in the Litigation practice group.

■ **Sierra A. Butler** of Butler Elder Law, P.A. is pleased to announce the opening of the firm's Lakewood Ranch location and the addition of Associate Attorney, Melissa R. Casanueva. Butler Elder Law, P.A. is a member of Ferrari, Butler and Moneymaker, PLLC, an elder law firm that focuses on Medicaid Planning and Guardianship, including both pre-planning and crisis intervention. The Lakewood Ranch office is located at 8784 E. State Road 70, Ste. 102, Bradenton, FL 34202.

Wanted: News items

Have you or a member of your firm achieved professional recognition? Have you hired a new attorney? Any other news of note? If so, we would like to hear about it. Email your "News of Note" items to scba@sarasotabar.com.

■ **Gulfcoast Legal Services (GLS)** has opened a new office at the Lealman Community Campus, making free, civil legal aid more easily accessible to vulnerable, low-income households in Lealman and the surrounding communities. The move was funded by the Juvenile Welfare Board of Pinellas, a long-time supporter of the organization.

■ **Merrill, Cullis, Timm, Furen, and Ginsburg, P.A.**, is pleased to announce that **Patrick Seidensticker** has joined the firm as an associate in our Lakewood Ranch office. His practice is focused in the areas of commercial real estate, land use, and property valuation.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Looking for ways to give back to the community? Check out these opportunities!

November 10, 2019, 11:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m.

Bowls of Hope

<https://www.allfaithsfoodbank.org/bowlsofhope/>
(941) 379-6333

November 16, 2019, 10:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.

Sarasota County's America Recycles Day 2019

<https://www.scgov.net/government/public-utilities-water/keep-sarasota-county-beautiful/america-recycles-day>
(941) 861-5000

November 16, 2019, 8:00a.m.

Walk to End Alzheimer's

https://act.alz.org/site/TR/Walk2019/FL-FloridaGulfCoast?fr_id=12146&pg=entry
(727) 220-4454

December 5, 2019, 11:30 a.m.–1:00 p.m.

Igniting Potential (Big Brothers Big Sisters)

<https://one.bidpal.net/give2019/welcome>
(941) 488-4009

December 13, 2019

Arthritis Foundation 2019 Jingle Bell Run

<https://events.arthritis.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=register.start&eventID=929>
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Part-Time Administrative Assistant - Venice: Long standing small boutique law firm located in Venice, Florida specializing in estate planning, probate and trust administration, Medicaid planning, and special needs planning is seeking a part time administrative assistant. Position may develop into full time employment. Duties will include all receptionist type duties, paralegal duties such as document preparation and executions, assisting in probate and trust administration, Medicaid applications, scheduling appointments, follow up with clients. Good interpersonal skills and computer skills necessary. Submit resume to: matt@hrlaw1314.com

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

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SMITH

Continued from Page 13

about whether someone is eligible for FMLA or insinuate that an employee's extended leave request would be too disruptive to a department; part of that is that I think he trusted the department managers to speak up if that was going to be the case. My experience with Walt is that if he can be accommodating, he will. He quickly and willingly works with employees to go beyond not just the legal accommodations that are required, but beyond even the reasonable accommodations most employers would make. — *Anonymous*

■ One of my first memories of Walt was during the Joseph Smith trial. I used to get to work around 7 a.m. and I remember seeing Walt on Adams Lane one morning, cleaning up the area where all of the news trucks were stationed – I saw him adjusting cones and picking up some pieces of garbage around the area. It was something that, in my mind, he could have easily delegated to someone else (or just ignored completely), but demonstrated that he wouldn't ask someone to do something that he wasn't willing to do himself and that he took very seriously the way others perceived our court. This sticks out in my mind almost fifteen years later. — *Anonymous*

"Fond farewell from all your friends and colleagues"

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Event is free for SCBA members and \$10 per guest

Deadline to RSVP is Monday, December 9, 2019, RSVP to SCBA@SARASOTABAR.COM





**SCBA GENERAL
MEMBERSHIP MEETING**

**STATE OF
THE
FLORIDA
BAR**



**Keynote Speaker: John Stewart
Florida Bar President**

**THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 21
12PM AT MICHAEL'S ON EAST**

Sponsored by:



Register online at
www.sarasotabar.com

Sarasota County Bar Association

SOLO/SMALL FIRM SECTION PRESENTS

DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGIES

Wednesday, November 13th
The HuB (1343 Main St., Ste. 300)

5:00 PM Registration/Networking
6:00 PM Program

\$30/person
Light bites | Beverages

APPROVED FOR 1.0 TECHNOLOGY
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Leann Spofford
Creative Content Connects

Register at www.sarasotabar.com

EPP/FAMILY Joint Section Meeting Presents

Spousal Rights in Probate

Proceedings

Thursday, November 14, 2019

Sarasota Yacht Club

12:00 pm to 1:00 pm

\$31.00/person

CLE APPLIED FOR



Brandon Bellew, Esq.

Johnson Pope Bokor Ruppel & Burns, LLP.

Join our guest speaker, Brandon Bellew, Esq. as he discusses the substantive rights of the surviving spouse, procedures for asserting those rights as well as limitations, deadlines, traps and other considerations.

The SCBA Also Proudly Thanks our EPP Section Sponsors



Register online at www.sarasotabar.com or contact us at scba@sarasotabar.com

Second Thursday

with the SCBA Council for Diversity and
Inclusion

*Learn more about the Council for Diversity and Inclusion including
its mission, upcoming events, and how to get involved.*

All SCBA Members are invited to mix and mingle at



on Thursday, November 14, 2019
from 5:30 – 7:30 PM.

The first 35 attendees will receive a free drink.

Light hors d'oeuvres provided.

Free for SCBA Members.

Reservations are not required.

See www.sarasotabar.com for more details.

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