

2017-2018 SCOP Annual Report

The purpose of The Florida Bar's Standing Committee on Professionalism (SCOP) is to assist the Florida Supreme Court Commission on Professionalism and Civility, The Florida Bar, and The Florida Bar's Henry Latimer Center for Professionalism (the Center) in implementing programs, events, and activities to promote professionalism throughout the state. SCOP is divided into several working groups that change from year to year based on the specific tasks SCOP is directed to undertake. To streamline and to better "market" its goals and message, SCOP unanimously voted to adopt the following mission statement:

Advancing professionalism and civility in the practice of law.

SCOP had some transition with the early Fall 2017 departure and relocation to Clearwater of Jacina Haston, who had led the Center and worked as a liaison for SCOP. The Center and SCOP were fortunate that the exceptionally skilled Assistant Director, Rebecca Bandy, was offered and accepted the position of Executive Director in January 2018. Ms. Bandy continues to work with SCOP to achieve the goals set out this past year and to advance the #MentoringMatters initiative which SCOP's chair identified as a target source to improve professionalism in the beginning of a young lawyer's career. The Center's new Assistant Director is Adriannette Williams. Ms. Williams has experience in civil litigation and in adult education.

- *Awards Working Group* — Led by Matthew Feeley, Chair, and Ita Neymotin, Co-chair, this group oversaw the entire process leading up to the selection of all three significant professionalism award recipients, including the William M. Hoeveler Judicial Award, the Law Faculty/Administrator Award, and the Group Professionalism Award. Additionally, the working group developed a strategy to promote and educate members of the Bar about the awards, reviewed nominations, and made recommendations to the full standing committee regarding selected recipients. These awards will be announced at Annual Convention.

- *Circuit Professionalism Working Group* — Chaired by United States Magistrate Judge Patricia Barksdale, this working group was responsible for helping collect and compile circuit professionalism reports from Florida's twenty judicial circuits. The reports were submitted to Florida Supreme Court Justice R. Fred Lewis, Chair of the Florida Supreme Court Commission on Professionalism and Civility. Group members were assigned to circuits to ensure that the reports were timely collected and summarized for use by The Florida Bar's Henry Latimer Center for Professionalism. Designed to measuring the effectiveness of professionalism programs and efforts around the state, the report serves as an invaluable resource for the Bench and the Bar. To avoid duplicative efforts by the Center and best utilize the time and talents of committee members, Judge Barksdale recommended, and the committee approved, that the working group fold into the Education and Resources Working Group.

- *Education and Resources Working Group* — This working group, led by Chair Kirsten Davis and Co-Chair Judge Suzanne Van Wyk, provided the Center with articles and personal submissions for use in *The Professional*, the Center's tri-annual newsletter, and on the Henry Latimer Professionalism Library Guide. This year, the use of a theme for each newsletter produced more

article submissions and subscribers. Kirsten Davis is also presently working with the Center to make the Professionalism Handbooks more law student-friendly in a transition to a new electronic format.

Mentoring Initiatives Working Group – This working group, Chaired by Starling Hendriks and Co-Chaired by the Miami-Dade Circuit Court Judge Sarah Zabel, reviewed the mentoring initiatives of other state bars and compiled a report to use as they begin updating SCOP’s Mentoring Toolbox which can be found on the Center for Professionalism’s website. Members of this working group have been promoting mentoring initiatives across the state and have provided personal and inspirational stories for publication in *The Professional*. This working group has also contributed articles and resources on mentoring for The Bar’s social media and for inclusion on the Center’s Library Guide.

Marketing and Public Relations Working Group – Both co-chairs, Whitney Untiedt and Cherine Smith Valbrun, have worked closely with the Center staff to develop outward-facing materials to promote the work of SCOP and professionalism throughout the legal community. These targets for professionalism pockets have included social media strategies and development of a mission statement for the Committee. Working Group members researched successful branding and publicity campaigns and created a mission statement to clearly and concisely reflect the Committee’s goals. During the Bar’s Winter Meeting, the Standing Committee on Professionalism unanimously voted to adopt the proposed mission statement: *Advancing professionalism and civility in the practice of law.*

- *Stakeholders Workshop Committee* — This group was formed by immediate Past SCOP Chair Tim Chinaris to address professionalism issues among Florida law school students and recent graduates. The vision of the committee is to conduct a workshop as an informal gathering of persons who work directly with law students in helping them develop, understand, or apply professionalism as it relates to law students who will seek admission to the bar. The workshop is slated for fall 2018. Invited participants include Florida Supreme Court justices, Florida Bar officers, deans of Florida law schools, law faculty who work directly with law students who face professionalism issues, and lawyers who represent applicants in bar admission proceedings. The primary goal of the Workshop is to build relationships among the various stakeholders who have key roles in encouraging and evaluating the professionalism of tomorrow’s lawyers. An additional goal is to share information and help develop “best practices” to meet the growing challenge of helping law students develop a positive professional identity.

I personally express my heartfelt gratitude to all members of our Standing Committee on Professionalism and the Center’s staff members for their hard work this past year. Not only did each member bring his or her enthusiasm to our meetings, each one served as an “ambassador of professionalism” in their legal communities. It was a privilege to work with you to enhance Professionalism among our members. As the issue of Professionalism continues to be a significant emphasis in all of Florida’s courts, the efforts of our hardworking committee members have and will continue to achieve great strides in advancing and protecting the legal profession.

Kara Berard Rockenbach, *Chair*