



The Florida Bar presents

How She Did It: unCONVENTIONAL Paths to Leadership

Wednesday, June 26, 2019, 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

COURSE CLASSIFICATION: INTERMEDIATE

Course 3215

thill@floridabar.org

OVERVIEW

This high-powered program will consist of eight (8) successful women having candid conversations; exchanging stories of challenges, obstacles, and successes; and providing valuable advice and takeaways on paths to leadership including the essential lessons of what it takes to excel in the legal profession and in life. This will NOT be your traditional panel discussion with a moderator behind a podium and panelists behind a panel table. Think more along the lines of a talk show with eight extremely successful women.

MODERATOR

Michelle Suskauer, President, The Florida Bar

PANELISTS

Justice Barbara Lagoa, Florida Supreme Court
Judge Patricia Seitz, Senior United States District Judge, Southern District
Nicole (Nikki) Fried, Florida Agriculture Commissioner
Katherine Fernandez Rundle, Miami Date State Attorney
Judge Krista Marx, Chief Judge, Fifteenth Judicial Circuit
Amira Fox, State Attorney, Twentieth Judicial Circuit
Judge Nina Ashenafi-Richardson, Leon County Court Judge

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MODERATOR



MICHELLE R. SUSKAUER is the president of The Florida Bar and a criminal defense attorney at Dimond Kaplan & Rothstein, P.A., in West Palm Beach. Suskauer has been practicing in Palm Beach County since 1991, with a focus in criminal law in both state and federal courts. She is AV-rated by Martindale-Hubbell, and has been recognized in the annual Florida Super Lawyers Magazine as one of Florida's top criminal defense attorneys and by Florida Trend Magazine as one of Florida's "Legal Elite" in its annual statewide poll of attorneys. Suskauer is actively involved in the leadership of numerous local and state legal organizations. She has served on The Florida Bar Board of Governors for the 15th Judicial Circuit since 2010. She is past chair of the BOG's Disciplinary Review Committee, the Communications Committee and the 2013 Annual Convention of The Florida Bar Committee. She has served as chair of the Board's Strategic Planning Committee and Executive Committee for the past four years. Suskauer is past-president of the Palm Beach County Bar Association and the Florida Association for Women Lawyers, Palm Beach County Chapter, and she currently is president of the Board of Directors of the Legal Aid Society of Palm Beach County. Professionally, Suskauer is a nationally known legal analyst who regularly appears on CNN, Fox News, MSNBC, NBC and CNBC. She has made hundreds of television appearances, including on such shows as "The O'Reilly Factor," "The Abrams Report," "The Today Show," "Good Morning America," "NBC Nightly News," "Hannity & Colmes," "Nancy Grace," "Anderson Cooper 360" and "The Big Idea with Donny Deutsch." Suskauer is also the legal analyst for Palm Beach County's NBC affiliate, WPTV NewsChannel 5; its Fox affiliate, WFLX 29; and 1290 WJNO and 850 WFTL. Suskauer began her legal career as an assistant public defender in West Palm Beach from 1991-1994. She went into private practice with Schuler, Wilkerson, Halvorson & Williams, P.A. (1994-97) and the Suskauer Law Firm, P.A. (1997-2016) before joining Dimond Kaplan & Rothstein, P.A., a firm that represents clients in securities fraud, complex commercial litigation, personal injury and criminal defense cases with offices in West Palm Beach, Miami, Los Angeles and New York. She has earned numerous awards, including being named in Florida Trend's 500 Most Influential Business Leaders in 2018; 'Fastcase 50' Honoree 2018; 2017 Woman of the Year from the South Palm Beach County Women Lawyers Association; the Daily Business Review 2017 Top 10 Women in Law; the Serving Justice Award from the Legal Aid Society of Palm Beach County; the Justice Barbara Pariente Award from FAWL, Palm Beach County; Leader in the Law from FAWL, Palm Beach County; Woman of Grace Award, 2016; Women in Power Award, National Conference of Jewish Women; and the Character Counts Award from the School District, Palm Beach County. Suskauer is a graduate of Boston University (B.S., communications) and earned her J.D. in 1991 from The American University. She is married to Palm Beach County Circuit Court Judge Scott I. Suskauer, and they have two daughters: Talia, 22, and Rebecca, 19.

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PANELISTS



JUSTICE BARBARA LAGOA was born in Miami. She received her Bachelor of Arts cum laude in 1989 from Florida International University where she majored in English and was a member of the Phi Kappa Phi honor society. Justice Lagoa received her Juris Doctor from Columbia University School of Law in 1992, where she served as an Associate Editor of the Columbia Law Review. She is fluent in English and Spanish. On January 9, 2019, she became the first Hispanic woman and the first Cuban American woman appointed to serve on the Florida Supreme Court. Prior to her appointment by Governor Ron DeSantis to the Florida Supreme Court, Governor Jeb Bush appointed her in June of 2006 to serve on the Third District Court of Appeal. At that court, she became the first Hispanic woman and the first Cuban American woman appointed to serve on the Third District Court of Appeal. On January 1, 2019, she became the first Hispanic female Chief Judge of the Third District Court of Appeal. Prior to joining the bench, Justice Lagoa practiced in both the civil and criminal arenas. Her civil practice at Greenberg Traurig focused on general and complex commercial litigation, particularly the areas of employment discrimination, business torts, securities litigation, construction litigation, and insurance coverage disputes. In 2003, she joined the United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Florida as an Assistant United States Attorney, where she worked in the Civil, Major Crimes and Appellate Sections. As an Assistant United States Attorney, she tried numerous criminal jury trials, including drug conspiracies and Hobbs Act violations. She also handled a significant number of appeals. While a practicing lawyer, Justice Lagoa was admitted to The Florida Bar, the United States District Courts for the Middle and Southern Districts of Florida, and the United States Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit. She was also a member of many local, state, and national professional groups including the Dade County Bar Association, and the Florida Association for Women Lawyers. Justice Lagoa's civic and community activities include service on the Board of Directors for the YWCA of Greater Miami and Dade County, the Film Society of Miami, Kristi House, and the FIU Alumni Association. She was also a member of the Federal Judicial Nominating Commission. She is currently a member of the Eugene P. Spellman and William Hoeveler Chapter of the American Inns of Court. Justice Lagoa is married to Paul C. Huck, Jr., an attorney. They have three daughters.

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NICOLE “NIKKI” FRIED, Florida’s 12th Commissioner of Agriculture and Consumer Services, is a lifelong Floridian, attorney and passionate activist. Born and raised in Miami, Commissioner Fried graduated from the University of Florida, where she received her bachelor’s, master’s and juris doctorate degrees. While in law school, she served as student body president, the first woman to hold the position in nearly two decades. Prior to being elected, Fried worked as an advocate in Tallahassee representing at-risk children, the Broward County School Board, and for the expansion of patient access to medical marijuana. As an attorney, she was head of the Felony Division at the Alachua

County Public Defender’s Office and worked at law firms as a government consultant, advocating on behalf of clients before the Florida Legislature. Working in private practice in South Florida, she defended homeowners against foreclosure during the 2007-2008 housing crisis. Throughout her career she has served with numerous organizations including the Young Lawyers Board of Governors, Broward Days Board of Directors, Legal Needs of Children Bar Committee, LeRoy Collins Institute, Girls Scouts of Southeast Florida, University of Florida Governmental Relations Advisory Committee, University of Florida Board of Trustees, Florida’s Children First, and others. Fried is a member of Florida Blue Key, the oldest and most prestigious leadership honorary in the state of Florida.



PATRICIA SEITZ is a Senior U.S. District Judge for the Southern District of Florida. As a trial judge she hears both criminal and civil cases. Prior to her appointment to the bench, she served as Chief Legal Counsel for the Drug Czar, Gen. Barry McCaffrey in the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP). As a cabinet level member of President Clinton’s administration, Gen. McCaffrey oversaw development of the national drug control policy and coordinated the efforts of 54 federal agencies and 50 states to implement the strategy. Before working with ONDCP, Judge Seitz was a partner in the firm of Steel, Hector & Davis. During her 22 years with the firm, she tried a broad range of commercial and business, libel, copyright and personal

injury cases. When she began, in 1974, she was the firm’s first woman lawyer. Judge Seitz was active in professional and community organizations and as an adjunct professor at the University of Miami School of Law. Active in the Florida Bar, she was its first woman President of the Florida Bar (1993-94) following a statewide campaign among the 54,000 members of the Bar. A History Miami “Legal Legend,” Judge Seitz has been recognized by numerous organizations for her contributions to the legal profession, for advancement of women in the legal profession and promotion of justice. A Georgetown University Law Center graduate, who worked her way through law school covering the US Supreme Court for the *Dallas Times Herald*, Judge Seitz began her legal career as a law clerk for her “father in the law,” the late federal District Court Judge Charles R. Richey of the District of Columbia.

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KATHERINE FERNANDEZ RUNDLE, State Attorney for the Eleventh Judicial Circuit of Florida. Katherine Rundle was appointed State Attorney for Miami-Dade County in 1993. She has subsequently been re-elected seven times to serve as State Attorney. The State Attorney began her successful legal career as an undergraduate student at the University of Miami. She concluded her studies at the University of Cambridge in England wherein she received both a post graduate degree and law degree. State Attorney Fernandez Rundle prides herself in being a career crime fighter. She has dedicated herself to every cause imaginable in her relentless commitment to keep our streets safe. She is recognized as a pioneer in the creation of numerous

programs dealing with issues that affect our community daily such as teen truancy, domestic violence, gun violence, child support, human trafficking, and victim's rights. Katherine is often considered a prosecutorial innovator for her many ground-breaking accomplishments including Florida's first Domestic Violence Unit, Misdemeanor Domestic Violence Court, Dade's nationally recognized "Drug Court" program and Veteran's Treatment Court, protecting the rights of children with her strict Child Support Program, bringing to the community services such as her 'Second Chance' Program to seal criminal records and crime prevention assistance via her Community Outreach Division, and her efforts to pioneer the fight against the sex trafficking of our children. Her Human Trafficking Task Force is a cooperative multi-agency law enforcement effort focusing on the arrest and prosecution of those individuals who prey on our children while creating and finding ways to save and rehabilitate the victimized and traumatized victims. She is an appointee to the Statewide Human Trafficking Council. The State Attorney believes in sharing her time, influence, and resources with her community that she is passionate about. She is a founding member and Vice-President of Women of Tomorrow and is also very active in benevolent organizations such as Amigos for Kids, 5000 Role Models, Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD), and numerous others. She is also a charter member of Prosecutors Against Gun Violence, a national group formed to address the issue of gun violence in the United States.



JUDGE KRISTA MARX is currently the Chief Judge of the 15th Judicial Circuit and was recently re-elected to a second term. Judge Marx was elected to the bench in 1998 and since then has served in nearly all of Palm Beach County's courthouses and divisions. Prior to becoming a judge, she was an Assistant State Attorney in Palm Beach County for thirteen years. Judge Marx was also recently re-elected to serve a second term as the Chair of the Judicial Qualifications Commission (JQC). Only two women have held this position. Judge Marx graduated with a B.A. degree in 1982 from Florida State University. She received her J.D. degree from Florida State University College of Law in 1985. During Judge Marx's judicial career she has served as a member of the Executive Committee for the Florida Conference of Circuit Judges (2009-present); Faculty of the Florida Judicial College (2000-present); Faculty of Florida College of Advanced Judicial Studies (2000-2009); Member of the Governor's Task Force on Citizen Safety (2012); Recipient, Prudential-Davis Productivity Award (2012); Creator of the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit Mental Health Court (2010); Florida Bar Committee, Code and Rules of Evidence

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(2003-2006); and Secretary and Fifteenth Judicial Circuit Representative, Conference of County Court Judges (1999-2003).



AMIRA FOX is the State Attorney for the 20th Judicial Circuit of Florida covering Lee, Collier, Charlotte, Hendry and Glades counties. She graduated from American University in Washington D.C. in 1987 with degrees in International Studies and Economics and received her law degree from The George Washington University in 1990. Ms. Fox began her career as an Assistant State Attorney with the 20th Judicial Circuit in 1990. She worked in the misdemeanor, juvenile and felony divisions of the State Attorney's Office before becoming head of the Hendry and Glades office in 1998. In 1999, she became the first female head of the Collier County office. She entered private practice in 2002, and formed her own practice in 2004, where she specialized in criminal defense and family law and was a Martindale-Hubbell AV Preeminent-rated lawyer. She rejoined the State Attorney's Office in 2012 as Chief of the Homicide and Economic Crime Units and in 2015 she became Chief Assistant State Attorney overseeing the day to day legal and administrative functions of the office, including the operation of grand juries throughout the circuit. In November, 2018, Ms. Fox was elected State Attorney, becoming the third State Attorney, and the first female State Attorney, in the history of the Circuit. She has prosecuted hundreds of cases including numerous first degree murder death penalty cases. Ms. Fox has served as chair of the 20th Judicial Circuit Grievance Committee and recently completed a four year term with the 20th Circuit's Judicial Nominating Commission, having been appointed by Governor Rick Scott in 2014. Ms. Fox is a member of the Fort Myers Rotary Club, serves on the board of the Shelter for Abused Women and Children, has been a Captain and Event Lead for Relay for Life for the past several years and is active in numerous other organizations in the community. Amira's husband Mike served with the Collier County Sheriff's Office for 30 years and they have four children: Matthew, Kaitlin, Alyssa and Drew.



THE HONORABLE NINA ASHENAFI-RICHARDSON, known fondly as "Judge Nina," has served a judge in the Leon County Court system since 2008. She was recently presented by Chief Justice Charles T. Canady with the 2019 Distinguished Judicial Service Award at the Supreme Court of Florida. The purpose of the award is to recognize outstanding and sustained service to the public, especially as it relates to support of pro bono legal services. Judge Ashenafi-Richardson, in the words of one nominator, "not only exemplifies judicial excellence but also personified the ideals that this award seeks to recognize. She has, throughout her career, demonstrated an exceptional commitment to pro bono legal services and the improvement of law and the administration of justice throughout the state." Judge Nina is also the recipient of the *Distinguished Leadership Award from the Conference of County Court Judges; Outstanding Performance and Lasting Contributions as First Elected Ethiopian American Judge in the United States from the Son's and Daughters of Ethiopian Foundation*; and the Conference of County Court Judges, Presidential Service Award, "Off the Bench, County Court Judges Making a Difference in Their Communities"; Park's & Crump, *Thurgood Marshall Award*; Tallahassee Bar

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Association and Tallahassee Women Lawyers Joint Inaugural *Martha Barnett Women Lawyers of Achievement Award; Humanitarian Award*, Martin Luther King Foundation of Florida; *Woman of Distinction*, Girl Scouts of America; *African-Americans in American History and Culture*, Tallahassee Community College. As a young lawyer, Judge Ashenafi-Richardson was recognized as “*Most Outstanding Young Lawyer*” from the Young Lawyers Division of The Florida Bar. In addition to the demands of her court docket, that includes running Felony Drug Court, Ashenafi-Richardson serves on numerous legal or judicial programs, organizations, and committees. She is teaching faculty for AJS, FJC, CCCJ, and DUI Adjudication Lab. She also serves on several state-wide committees including the Judicial Ethics Advisory Committee (JEAC) and the Judicial Management Committee (JMC). Her leadership on the JMC resulted in the adoption of a state-wide Branch Communication Plan that expanded the courts' use of social media. Ashenafi-Richardson, who is the first Ethiopian-born person to serve as a judge in the United States, also was the first African-American elected president of the Tallahassee Women Lawyers, Tallahassee Bar Association and Stafford Inn of Court. She is the immediate past-president of the William H. Stafford American Inn of Court. She also is a member of the Founders of Justice of North Florida Legal Services, helping educate the bench, bar, and community about the importance of access to justice for all. She recently served on a subcommittee of the Florida Commission on Access to Civil Justice. Throughout her professional career, Judge Ashenafi-Richardson has been an active member of the local bar associations. She is known for her ability to build communication bridges and service projects between the bar associations, the bench and the community at large. Ashenafi-Richardson has personally provided hundreds of hours of pro bono legal services prior to her election to the bench. Her efforts were recognized by The Florida Bar as a recipient of The President's Pro Bono Service Award for the 2nd Judicial Circuit; by the Tallahassee Legal Aid Foundation who awarded her an *Exemplary Service Award*; the Tallahassee Chamber's “*Pace Setter Award*”; and by the Tallahassee Democrat who recognized her as #4 out of 33 individuals whose good works positively impacted Tallahassee. Judge Nina enjoys giving back to her community by serving on numerous civic boards including the Tallahassee Symphony Orchestra; Whole Child Leon; Leon County Schools' Foundation; and Goodwood Museum. She was recognized by the *Governor's Commission on Volunteerism*; is a recipient of *Tallahassee Community College's Women Change America*; and the *Tallahassee Chambers Distinguished Leadership Award* recipient, among other recognitions for her community involvement. Ashenafi-Richardson came to the United States from Ethiopia as a young child. Her late father was a professor of ethnomusicology at the F.S.U. School of Music and Director of the Center for African-American Culture at Florida State University, the same university where she would earn her law degree. Judge Nina Ashenafi-Richardson is married to Tallahassee City Commissioner Curtis Richardson, and the mother of two daughters, Carina, who received a Congressional appointment to the U.S. Naval Academy; and Aida, an 8th-grade middle school student.

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CLE Credit

General: 2.5 Hours

