PROFESSIONALISM, MAKING GOOD CHOICES, AND LAWYER WELL-BEING: THE CONNECTIONS

By: Kirsten K. Davis, Chair, Standing Committee on Professionalism

It has been six years since the Florida Supreme Court created an unique, formalized alternative to the Rules Regulating The Florida Bar for dealing with professionalism complaints. In In Re Code for Resolving Professionalism Complaints, 116 So. 3d 280 (2013), the Court both defined the Standards of Professionalism for Florida lawyers and created a system—statewide and local to the judicial circuits—for bringing and resolving Florida professionalism complaints. In that opinion, the Court focused on choices when it explained why Florida needed a structure (complementary to the bar disciplinary structure) to deal with unprofessional lawyer behavior:

...Professionalism involves principles, character, critical and reflective judgment, along with an understanding of ourselves and others working in and under stressful circumstances... Surveys of both lawyers and judges continue to consistently reflect that professionalism is one of the most significant adverse problems that negatively impacts the practice of law in Florida today. [Thus], further integrated, affirmative, practical and active measures are now needed... Over the continued...
years, we have come to understand that professionalism or acceptable professional behavior is not simply a matter of character or principles nor is it simply an issue of rule-following or rule-violating. To the contrary, unacceptable professional conduct and behavior is often a matter of choice or decision-making.

Id. at 281 (emphasis added).

But, what kind of choices? What kind of decision-making? The year after the Court’s opinion establishing the Code for Resolving Professionalism Complaints, the Bar’s Standing Committee on Professionalism drafted the new Professionalism Expectations, a document meant to guide lawyers in making good choices about professionalism in practice. The Expectations were subsequently adopted by The Florida Bar Board of Governors in 2015 and later added to the Code for Resolving Professionalism Complaints by the Florida Supreme Court as a Standard of Professionalism. (The Expectations are one of a number of professionalism guides that the Supreme Court has adopted as part of its Standards.)

Some of Expectations’ guidance mirrors the ethical duties set out in the Rules Regulating The Florida Bar, but other guidance goes beyond ethical duties to establish higher standards than the ethics rules might demand. For example, the Expectations give lawyers guidance in making choices about appropriate email, text, and social media use; scheduling and respecting others’ time; addressing other participants in the judicial process; resolving disagreements without formal process; giving clients advice about alternative dispute resolution; and creating reasonable expectations with clients regarding case results.

What do the choices recommended in the Expectations have to with lawyer well-being? In other words, is there a connection between professionalism in the practice of law and lawyers’ good health?

The American Bar Association thinks so. In 2017, the ABA’s National Task Force on Lawyer Well-Being issued its report, The Path to Lawyer Well-Being: Practical Recommendations for Positive Change. The Report identified a “toxic culture” of incivility in the practice of law that can be corrosive to the good health of lawyers:

Judges, regulators, practicing lawyers, law students, and professors continually interact with each other, clients, opposing parties, staff, and many others. Those interactions can either foment a toxic culture that contributes to poor health or can foster a respectful culture that supports well-being. Chronic incivility is corrosive. It depletes energy and motivation, increases burnout, and inflicts emotional and physiological damages. It diminishes productivity, performance, creativity, and helping behaviors.

Id. at 15 (footnotes omitted).

Accordingly, the Report recommends that, among other things, “bar associations and courts adopt rules of professionalism and civility,” “firms adopt their own professionalism standards,” and leaders in the profession be role models for these standards. Id.

These ABA recommendations convince me that the Expectations and the Code for Resolving Professionalism Complaints were positive moves toward improving lawyer well-being in Florida because they are steps to eliminate the lack of professionalism that contributes to dissatisfaction within the profession, unhappy working conditions, and unhealthy levels of stress. In addition, The Florida Bar, court, and local bar associations, offer many resources that support an improved culture of civility and professionalism. For example, the Florida Young Lawyer’s Division has an exceptional website with links to well-being resources.

But is there more to do? You bet. As the Florida Supreme Court noted when it created the Code, it intended to encourage a “wide range of interventions” to improve professionalism. I read this as a continuing call to action for all stakeholders—lawyers, the Bar, courts, firms, and law schools, for example—to pursue innovative ways of improving both professionalism and well-being within the bar and emphasizing the connection between them.

The Standing Committee on Professionalism and the Henry Latimer Center for Professionalism are working to widen the circle of those interventions with a renewed focus on well-being in its programming:

The Committee is hosting the “Health Is Wealth” Professionalism CLE at Ave Maria School of Law on Friday, September 20, 2019. The CLE is a mental health and wellness CLE that will feature a panel on living well in the profession.

The Henry Latimer Center is rolling out its grant-funded initiative, “How to Become the Lawyer You are Supposed to Be,” at law schools across the state. The panels cover topics including why health and wellness are essential in law school and practice. The goal of the Center is to reach all of Florida’s law schools in the next three years.

I hope you will take advantage of these opportunities. Connecting professionalism and lawyer well-being is one of the best ways to promote not only more professional, but also healthier, choices in our communities of practice. But there is more to do. As the Supreme Court Commission on Professionalism wraps up its work, the Standing Committee on Professionalism, as a partner of the Henry Latimer Center, will be pushing forward to ensure that professionalism remains front and center in conversations in our community. I am proud to lead the Standing Committee on Professionalism this year as we continue to focus on professionalism and well-being and look for more ways to create guidance and support for a healthier bar.

Kirsten K. Davis is a Professor of Law and Director of the Institute for the Advancement of Legal Communication at Stetson University College of Law. She teaches, writes about, and does professional training in the areas of Professional Responsibility, Legal Communication, the First Amendment, and Law and Rhetoric. She is a graduate of The Ohio State University Moritz College of Law and has a Ph.D. in Human Communication from the Arizona State University Hugh Downs School of Human Communication. She is a member of the Board of Directors of the Legal Writing Institute and a past Chair of the American Association of Law Schools Section on Women in Legal Education. She lives in St. Petersburg, Florida, and can be reached at kkdavis@law.stetson.edu.
The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines professionalism as “the conduct, aims, or qualities that characterize or mark a profession or a professional person.” A “profession” is defined as “a calling requiring specialized knowledge and often long and intensive academic preparation.” “Professional,” the adjective, is defined as “characterized by or conforming to the technical or ethical standards of a profession” or “exhibiting a courteous, conscientious, and generally businesslike manner in the workplace.” While these definitions are not inaccurate, to me professionalism is something more personal and less sterile, something more human. To be professional, one must possess the core requirements: specialized knowledge, competency, honesty, and integrity. However, there are other components of being “professional” that are more nebulous but no less essential. My definition of professionalism requires human connection, a commitment to learning, and benevolence.

1. Human Connection.

In June, Michelle Suskauer opened her State of the Bar address stating, “People thrive on genuine connections.” I could not agree more. The fact that our profession is plagued by stress, exhaustion, depression, and substance abuse has been well researched and documented. The solutions may be complex and intertwined, but a necessary component of any solution must be a commitment to professionalism and civility among our members. No one is immune from the physical and emotional strains from advocating, counseling, teaching, serving, balancing personal commitments, and often also running a business. It can be all too easy to treat our clients only as a transaction and our colleagues only as adversaries. A professional is not just someone who performs for his or her clients or opposes his or her adversaries. A professional takes stock of the practical and human needs of clients, uplifts co-workers, shares knowledge, and takes time to listen even when the conversation may only have altruistic value. A professional connects to clients, co-workers, and colleagues in a way that cannot be listed on a resume, scored, or quantified.

2. Commitment to Learning.

The world is always changing. Professional standards from five or ten years ago are not necessarily the same today. The laws and legal precedent that we work with, the social environment we practice in, and the tools we use are constantly evolving. As members of a “learned profession” we must be committed to learning. With that commitment comes an understanding that our job is never done. Achieving professionalism is not a box we can check. It is a process. It is a path. We must remain open minded, interested in the world around us, accepting of the fact that it is fluid, and committed to growing in our professional abilities.


As Robert Ingersoll said, “We rise by lifting others.” Professionalism requires benevolence. Lawyers must make kindness and service an essential component of their professional lives. There is no particular way to do it right, but sharing our knowledge, time, and resources with colleagues, clients and our community is a critical aspect of professionalism. There are countless ways to show generosity and compassion, and all of them help us rise by lifting those around us.

It is a sad coincidence that three consummate professionals who significantly and positively affected the way I practice law and connect to others are no longer with us: Ervin Gonzalez, Alan Ross, and Judge Meenu Sasser. I was, and continue to be, truly saddened by their loss and feel so grateful to have known and learned from each of them. Ervin, Alan, and Judge Sasser served our community and profession in unique yet similarly extraordinary ways. Even in death, their legacy continues to give back and pay it forward. During the eulogies at each of their memorial services, I remembered what each had done for and taught me, I listened to what they had done for and taught others, and I contemplated how I could grow to be more like them and share some of the gifts they shared with me. I could write an entire article about each of them and how they exemplify professionalism, but this space is limited, so I would like to share three lessons I had the privilege to learn from Ervin, Alan, and Judge Sasser.

As a young lawyer, I was fortunate to litigate a difficult case against Ervin Gonzalez – although at the time it did not always feel like my good fortune. He was a formidable adversary. I was less than five years out of law school and trying to juggle more, personally and professionally, than is humanly possible. I was depleted in every way to the extent that I was physically sick, but at the time I did not know that my ailment was self-imposed. I was seeing a different doctor almost every week. I had lost about 15% of my body weight, my glands were so severely swollen that you could see them, and I was exhausted and achy all of the time. This dragged on for almost nine months. About continued...
three months in Ervin called me and asked if I was okay. A lengthy conversation ensued, but the theme was the importance of building a support network and taking time for self-care. At the time we did not know each other well. I had more interaction with his associate than him, and most of my interaction with both of them had been contentious. I do not know how he guessed that I was not okay or what exactly made him call. I do not know how he knew before my doctors or I knew that I had not been inflicted with a physical illness or disorder. As I would realize many months later with the help of an intuitive doctor, I had simply run myself into the ground. Ervin was extraordinarily selfless and I am grateful and humbled that he made time to call that day. The importance and meaning of the call took a while to fully resonate with me, but the lesson will stay with me forever: you cannot care for others until you care for yourself. Ervin seemed to do everything and be everywhere and somehow managed to always be the best, and yet the lesson he taught me that I will remember most has nothing to do with legal strategy or trial skills, but is one of pure humanity.

As professionals and humans, we are pulled in so many directions, but we cannot advocate for our clients, give back to our profession and community, or support our family, colleagues, and friends to the best of our ability if we do not first take the time to care of ourselves. I think of this lesson each time a flight attendant is giving safety instructions and explains what to do if there is a change in cabin pressure and the oxygen masks drop, “If you are traveling with a child or someone who requires assistance, secure your mask on first, and then assist the other person.” I share this story because it is an important piece of wisdom from someone that exemplified professionalism, but more importantly, the fact that he shared this advice perfectly illustrates how the willingness to make human connections and show kindness has the ability to elevate our profession.

Alan Ross and I served on a board together. Early on in my tenure, I became frustrated with a co-board member’s performance. I had repeatedly asked for, but never received, particular information that was solely this person’s responsibility. It was a serious issue and I felt it had the potential to affect all of the board members as fiduciaries. I sent several group emails trying to follow up. I made phone calls. Then, exasperated, I did what many young, zealous lawyers do: I sent a “mean mail,” and copied all of the other board members. I had drafted a detailed account of my concerns, my efforts to resolve them, and the potential consequences of what, in my opinion, had been a critical breach of duty. My mean mail was well written. I was proud of it. It had just the right amount of snark and superiority, but was carefully drafted to be more passive aggressive than aggressive. It was professional. Or so I thought. Of course, my correspondence spawned many conversations, written and verbal, and it achieved its desired intent. The work was done and delivered. Some days later, Alan called me. We started to talk about my email. I considered Alan a friend, though I knew he was closer to the primary recipient of the email. I thought it was necessary to present my “case.” Spoiler alert: it was not necessary. Of course Alan had read my email. Of course he understood exactly what the issues were. My “case” had been thoroughly and well articulated in my email, and he was one of the smartest people I have ever known. Alan heard me out and then said, “It’s more important to be nice than right.” This lesson also took time to marinade in my ambitious and stubborn brain, but I do not have the words to sufficiently express the importance of Alan’s lesson. You see, the recipient of my email was a colleague, a friend, a solo practitioner, a husband, a father, and a business owner. He was stretched thin and, instead of offering my help or compassion, I wanted to be right. While I may have been technically right, there was a more professional option, and it took the counsel of someone wiser, more experienced, and more professional to help me see the light.

I had the privilege of practicing in front of Judge Sasser for almost ten years. What first struck me the most about her was how quickly she spoke. I learned almost immediately that you had to get to the point and you had to do it quickly. At first I felt rushed, but then as I watched her I realized she was not rushing me. She was conserving her scarcest resource: time. I soon realized that when a sensitive or critical issue arose, Judge Sasser slowed down. When it came to professionalism, Judge Sasser slowed down. She had a special ability to assess what could be done quickly and what required a more patient and measured approach. What later struck me the most about Judge Sasser was her effect on the lay people who spent time in her courtroom—litigants, witnesses, and jurors. While jury service is detested by most, jurors routinely sent her thank you notes and cards. Some even tried to send gifts. Judge Sasser believed that, as professionals, litigants and jurists have a special obligation to safeguard and inspire public confidence in our legal system. She advanced our democracy and uplifted our profession one ruling at a time. Even in the midst of a horrible illness, Judge Sasser maintained a schedule that any healthy person would consider grueling. It was as if she always knew she had special gifts to share with the world and not nearly enough time to share them.

We cannot lose sight of the uniqueness of our vocation and its essential public service component. While we naturally tend to focus on one case or one client at a time, there is a much larger picture to see, a higher calling if you will. The actions we take each day will affect, for good or bad, the way the public perceives our legal system and the very principles our country was founded upon. So, if we hope to create a more positive image of lawyers and believe that principles of fairness, justice, and equality are worth preserving, we must not forget our human connections, a commitment to learning, and (most of all) benevolence.

Jaclyn Behar is a 2007 graduate of Florida State University’s School of Law and her areas of practice at BeharBehar in Ft. Lauderdale include all aspects of Federal and State litigation with an emphasis in complex commercial litigation and business disputes. More specifically, her practice areas include cases involving alleged unfair business practices and unfair competition, professional liability defense (attorneys, insurance brokers, title agents and accountants), D&O and E&O liability, trade secret misappropriation, contract interpretation and drafting, insurance insolvency, as well as intellectual property registration, licensing and disputes. Ms. Behar also chairs the Firm’s Appellate Practice group and has successfully argued before various District Courts of Appeal in Florida.
When Diana Kellogg entered Florida State University as a music major, she had no idea how her love of music would connect with her love of the law. Seven years ago, Ms. Kellogg bridged the gap between her passions when she began working at The Florida Bar. Ms. Kellogg currently serves as the Director of Legal Specialization and Education. She credits her alma mater’s strenuous music program with helping her sharpen and develop her skills of drive, discipline, and determination. Ms. Kellogg regularly relies on these skills as she oversees 27 areas of certification and over 5,000 board certified members. She is also the staff liaison for the Board of Legal Specialization & Education (BLSE) and the Board of Governors’ Certification Plan Appeals Committee (CPAC). Ms. Kellogg travels several times throughout the year for meetings.

The BLSE is a sixteen-member committee who oversees the award of board certifications, evaluates and accredits continuing legal education, and ensures all Florida Bar members comply with the educational requirements established by The Supreme Court of Florida. The mission of the BLSE is to improve the practice of law and the delivery of legal services to the public through the enhancement of technical skills and substantial competence united under the highest standards of professionalism and civility.

CPAC is a seven-member committee that hears and rules on appeals “relating to the certification plan, basic skills course requirement (BSCR), and the continuing legal education requirement (CLER).” CPAC’s decisions can be reviewed by the Board of Governors and the Supreme Court of Florida upon request.

It is clear to see that Ms. Kellogg is passionate about the mission of The Florida Bar, the organization she has held in high esteem since childhood. She is the proud daughter of Justice Ricky and Deborah Polston. She credits her father with instilling her first lesson of professionalism: “Take the high road and never burn a bridge.” Ms. Kellogg applies this when dealing with conflict, “Say what you need to say and move forward.” She observes the same high level of professionalism in committee meetings. It is common to hear, “I respectfully disagree,” and the members are still open-minded while having divergent opinions.

Ms. Kellogg believes, “Professionalism is being tactful, poised, effective, courteous, open-minded, knowledgeable, and a good communicator.” Her lessons and ideas of professionalism and leadership were put to the ultimate test recently when her department encountered the unexpected death of an employee.

“It was about dealing with real emotions that could not be checked at the door,” she stated. Ms. Kellogg requested onsite counseling for employees. “When trauma and tragedy occur, people need to process by talking and channeling emotions.”

Kellogg leads through cohesive buy-in although she is not hesitant to make immediate decisions when required. She has an open-door policy for her employees and ensures that subject matter experts are available for technical questions. Ms. Kellogg believes that edification, praise, and recognition of achievement are vital to employee morale. In fact, you can hear hits from the 60s, 70s, and 80s blaring in her department each week during “Monday Morning Pump-Up.” This is just one example of the fun things she does to engage employees.

Ms. Kellogg is a wife and proud parent. She recommends that parents and spouses balance careers and “be truly present in the moment.” She believes in a healthy work-life balance. This includes not feeling guilty about going with her child to school events or vacationing. Her advice is to “do your best to keep work at work, do not bring work home if possible.” She takes time for herself mentally and physically by exercising, eating healthy, and spending time outside. Ms. Kellogg stays centered spiritually by praying, reading her Bible, and listening to motivational podcasts or audiobooks. She has made her own definition of success and pursues her interests with uncompromising enthusiasm.

A fun fact about Ms. Kellogg is that she has not let go of her love of music. She is the lead singer in Top Shelf Band—a local cover band she performs in with her husband. You may see her at a local venue or wedding. Her favorite song is “Don’t Stop Believing” by Journey and her favorite artist is Bruno Mars. She also loves to travel and, although she recently visited London and Paris, her dream vacation is a Mediterranean cruise with stops in Greece and Italy.

**Diana Kellogg** earned a B.A. in Music from Florida State University. She is the current Director of Legal Specialization and Education Department of The Florida Bar. Her past position at The Florida Bar was as a Program Administrator for the Family Law Section; Government Lawyer Section; Health Law Section; Workers’ Compensation Section; and Out of State Division. Ms. Kellogg has been with The Florida Bar since 2012. She is married to her husband Jason and they have three boys (Brock-13; Bronson-11; Seth-1). She loves to read and is the founder of Tallahassee Lassies Book Club.

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At 105, Mr. William Jackson Vaughn is the oldest active member of The Florida Bar. One of my favorite songs is by The Judds. In it, the country duo sweetly croon, “Grandpa, tell me ‘bout the good old days.” That song keeps playing in my head as I reflect on my recent conversation with Mr. Vaughn by telephone at his office, where he still reports to the WJ Vaughn Law Firm in Melbourne several times per week with the assistance of his daughter, Elise Vaughn, who is also an attorney. He has difficulty hearing now and relied heavily on headphones and his daughter during our call. However, he proudly told me that he was able to work full time until he had a stroke two or three years ago.

“I do a lot of sleeping now, at the wrong times. I want to sleep in the daytime and stay awake at night,” he drawled in a Southern accent that reminded me of pecan trees, molasses, and sweet tea. When I asked him why he keeps coming into the office, he said, “That’s all I’ve known for so long, but things are different now.” His daughter told me that he also enjoys an occasional game of Solitaire on his computer.

WJ Vaughn was born in 1914 to William G. Vaughn and his wife Pearl. His family calls him Jackson, which was his mother’s maiden name. He was born in the cotton fields of Dooly County, Georgia. When I told him that I began my teaching career in that area two decades ago, he proclaimed, “You’ve been there!” He went on to explain that he tells most everyone that they have been to his birthplace, because his extended family still owns the 200-year-old farm between Vienna (properly pronounced VIE-enna) and Cordele through which Interstate-75 now runs.

“Right up 75, there’s an old church on the right. That’s where my mama’s family was raised and where I was born.”

Mr. Vaughn moved with his family from Georgia to Florida when he was nine, he suspects because of the economy. They spent a year in Orlando before settling in Melbourne in the early twenties. His father attended Emory College in Atlanta but did not go to law school. Instead, he studied at home and learned the law with the help of local attorneys, including one prominent lawyer, Mr. David Peel. Mr. William G. Vaughn was a charter member of Kiwanis Club and a member of the Melbourne Hunting and Fishing Club. The practice started by his father in 1924 is the same one that Mr. Jackson Vaughn and his family own today, though he pointed out that the building has changed.

Mr. Vaughn is a proud Gator. There is a charming photo of him online from 2017 with University of Florida basketball coach Mike White, both men covered in orange and blue. Mr. Vaughn graduated from UF Law in 1939 and began practicing with his dad, who he says was his mentor. From January 1942 until January 1946, he served in the Navy during World War II. Afterwards, he picked up where he left off with the firm. They did mostly real estate development, mortgages, probate, and served as the city attorneys for 36 years. His father died in 1951, and he continued the family legacy.

In 1946, upon returning from service, Mr. Vaughn met Miss Elaine Waring, the daughter of an old Brevard County family which had been in the area since the Civil War. “The first time I met her, I never made a date again with any other girl.” They married that year and bought a house shortly afterwards. He is still living in that...
same house where they raised their six children, three of whom became attorneys. “Our oldest is deceased, one is an attorney in Texas, and our youngest, Elise, works for me.”

Mrs. Vaughn died in 2011 at 87, just one day short of the couple’s 65th wedding anniversary. An Orlando Sentinel article commemorating her death points out that she was the first female drum major at the Florida/Georgia football game parade in Jacksonville. She also once created a 50-foot-long needlepoint depicting the 12 tribes of Israel for the chapel at Melbourne’s First United Methodist Church.

Mr. Vaughn said that practicing law has been quite pleasant most of the time. He says that attorneys should have high ethics, have pretty high standards, they should be looked up to, and they should be well thought of in the community.

“Back then, when I started, there were a limited number of attorneys in Brevard County, and we helped each other. There was competition, but it was with respect.”

When asked about his definition of professionalism, he stressed that it is important that attorneys are honest and never mislead people. “If you can’t help the client, give the case to someone else.”

The biggest change in the legal profession to him has been the sheer increase in the number of attorneys and the number who go into personal injury law and cases involving big fees.

“There is a lot of competition these days. Build a good reputation for yourself. In the old days, everyone knew everyone else. Now, I don’t get around as much, so I don’t know as many attorneys.”

He stressed again, with a sense of nostalgia, “I knew everybody personally in those days.”

As for his age, Mr. Vaughn said that he is the only one in his family with his type of longevity, with the exception of an aunt who lived to be 99.

The key to his long life?

“The Good Lord, I guess. I never smoked or drank. When I was older and had a heart attack, I began walking every day, and I think that helped.”

For more information on Mr. William Jackson Vaughn’s life and career, the Brevard Historical Commission published a 2017 oral history interview by Bob Gross, which can be accessed on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NX4iJ1uUKfu.

Endnotes:
1 Obituary for William Glover Vaughn. (1951, November 20). The Orlando Sentinel. Retrieved July 31, 2019, from https://www.newspapers.com/image/?clipping_id=8583196&cftoken=eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiIsInR5cCI6IkpXVCJ9.eyJmcmVjdCI6IjoiMjczZjVhZjI0ODg5MDY1MzA0NjBjNzY4ZWI1NjYxNTRhMWYyOTYxIiwiaWF0IjoxNTY0NTAzODgxLCJleHAiOjE1NjQ1OTAyODF9.XWKppCGXsuQ-mi4OXndfakDki3OL-f2ksjiWYeRXw from Newspapers.com

The Florida Bar’s Henry Latimer Center for Professionalism, in partnership with FIU, hosts a comprehensive Professionalism Library Guide offering Professionalism Standards as well as articles, videos, and newsletters.

http://libguides.law.fiu.edu/henrylatimerguide
“Life is way too short to hide in shameful silence over feeling emotions we don’t want others to know we have.” Alison Smela

I cry in public – a lot. I was reminded of that truth (for the umpteenth time) last Sunday night, while having dinner (alone) at the bar of a local Texas Roadhouse. In retrospect, I suppose I should have known better than to use the “space” between virtually inhaling half of the pail of peanuts and the entire basket of piping hot honey-buttered biscuits in front of me and the arrival of my actual dinner to pull up Rachel Macy Stafford’s latest post on my phone. I have certainly read enough of them to know that I seldom make it through the opening paragraph before #RachelTears begin streaming down my face, which is why I generally wait until I am alone and in a quiet place to read them. So, it was little surprise when, less than halfway through “Advice for those Reaching Through Cages” https://tinyurl.com/y3pc5mdp, there was a warm parade of them marching down both of my cheeks. What did surprise me, however, was how I reacted to them, how I tried to hide them from the other patrons at the bar and the servers who had come to recognize me and grown accustomed to a much more cheerful disposition. After all, while a quick glance around the restaurant confirmed the obvious (i.e., that there were not many [okay any] other 57 year-old male patrons at Texas Roadhouse [or female patrons for that matter!] with tears streaming down their face), it was hardly the first time I had ever cried in a restaurant or read something that touched my heart.

Truth is: I have cried in all kinds of places and for all kinds of reasons. I have cried for friends and loved ones who are hurting – and strangers for that matter. I have cried in the dugout of a little league baseball game over a first hit and on the field when one of my players, in tears himself, confided that his mom and dad were getting a divorce. I have cried in a BBQ dive in Iowa after reading words written by a friend who was convinced the world would be a better place if she disappeared from it and in a crowded Starbucks just outside Baltimore at a beautiful young woman’s inability to see the remarkable beauty of her spirit. I have cried over chips and salsa in a Mexican cantina overlooking San Antonio’s Riverwalk and over Caesar salads with chicken at The Clubhouse in Chicago – in conversations I wished would never end, but which could not have ended soon enough for the unfortunate servers who we ultimately “scared” away. I have cried at chorale performances and plays, in horse barns, at golf tournaments, awards ceremonies, conference presentations, book events, movies, concerts – and on too many commercial aircraft to recount. I have even cried in conference rooms and depositions packed with hardened trial attorneys and at the sight of a young couple in an upscale Dallas steakhouse consumed with each other. I have cried over injustices and, more recently, for the little boy in me who it seems never really cried enough, be-cause he was afraid of tears, if not ashamed and embarrassed by them.

For a moment last Sunday night that shy little boy, the one who too often was ridiculed for wearing his heart on his sleeve, reappeared. He wanted to hide. He wanted to run away from his tears. Only this time, I recognized him – immediately – and I smiled to myself. You see, the grown up me is “glad” I cry, in private and in public. Somewhere along the way, I decided that I would much rather feel, even though it sometimes means enduring prolonged periods of sadness, than not feel at all. I decided that I had swallowed my emotions (all of them) long enough, boxed them up and tried to hide them on a shelf, pretended they were not there – hoped that if I just ignored them long enough they would go away. I even thought about numbing them a time or two and, if I am to be honest, on occasion I still do. In the process, however, I denied who I am, why I am here – one of the central gifts I have to offer. I feel Life acutely and intensely. It is a blessing and a curse. But, it is the blessing piece that makes it worthwhile. The ability, borne of a needy heart, to spot a heart in need a mile away and the insatiable desire to offer it comfort. Perhaps Glennon Doyle Melton captured it best in this recent exchange with one of her many admiring followers who asked, “G, why do you cry so often?” To which Glennon responded, “For the same reason I laugh so often. Because I am paying attention!”

Who cries at Texas Roadhouse? I do and it occurs to me there is no shame in that. In fact, I would not have it any other way.

Don Blackwell is a graduate of the University of Virginia School of Law and has been an AV-rated trial lawyer in South Florida for the past 34 years. He currently is Of Counsel at Bowman and Brooke, LLP and is a Fellow in the Litigation Counsel of America. His practice areas include the defense of automotive product liability, construction defect, and toxic tort cases. He also defends class action cases in state and federal court. Don has authored several feature articles for The Florida Bar Journal and is a former recipient of its annual “Excellence in Writing” award.
The Importance of Work Life Balance
By: Jaakan Williams

Practicing Law for 10 Years
Like every other profession, practicing law has its challenges and demands. After having practiced law for 10 years, in both the public and private sector employment, it should not come as a surprise as to why research and legal studies continue to reveal that lawyers, more specifically young lawyers, face an alarmingly high risk of alcohol and substance abuse.

In a recent study conducted by the American Bar Association (“ABA”) in collaboration with the Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation, more than 12,000 licensed and employed attorneys were surveyed regarding their use of alcohol and drug use, symptoms of depression, anxiety, and stress. A majority of the respondents ranged in age from 31 to 40 years of age and, like me, had been in the legal profession for 10 years or less. Unsurprisingly, the results of the study showed, “younger, less experienced male attorneys had more positive screens for substance abuse disorders and mental health complications than the rest of the group.”

Even more enlightening was the fact that, out of the total respondent pool, 43.7 percent of respondents believed that their alcohol or substance use began during the first 15 years after completing law school. Id. While age certainly is not the only factor evident in the study, it appears to be the most important factor relative to how longevity plays an important role in our overall development as we move further along in our legal careers.

Public Sector vs Private Sector
Speaking from personal experience in both the public and private sector; the demands I experienced in the private sector overshadowed those I faced in state government. Having a drink, or two, after work happened occasionally in all of my years in state government. In contrast, when I ventured into private practice in early 2016, one of the first differences that I noticed between the two was the frequency and amount of drinking that took place.

Referring back to the ABA study mentioned above, the author explained how attorneys employed by private firms, bar associations, and junior and associate level attorneys have a higher percentage of substance abuse than those in other settings and other positions. Id.

Unlike the structure that I had grown accustomed to while working in state government, my private experience far exceeded those state government parameters that I was all too familiar with. Some may disagree, but I found that I had much less flexibility for family, volunteering, and recreational activities, etc., during my stint in the private sector than when I worked in state government. I am not saying that it was a bad experience, but due to client demands, high caseloads, and multiple practice areas covered by the firm, there did not seem to be enough hours in the day, and sometimes in a week, to participate in anything outside of work.

It was not uncommon for me to leave the office on a nightly basis after having worked 10 plus hours per day and 60-70 hours a week. It was not uncommon for me to be at the office on weekends grinding out more work that had come through the law firm’s doors. Furthermore, it was not uncommon to get client calls on a Saturday or Sunday evening during dinner with my family asking about their cases. Needless to say, when work gets to a point where it takes over every aspect of our life, it is no wonder why the gateway for escape for those in the legal profession is to self-medicate by misusing/abusing alcohol and/or drugs as a coping mechanism.

Overall, regardless of whether your legal practice is government-based or private sector-based, we are all susceptible to the inherent demands of the legal profession, and we must take responsibility for our mental health, too. The bottom line is that we have to take our mental health just as serious as the work that we do for our employers and clients. The good news is there is help! As part of our membership in The Florida Bar, we have access to Wellbeing Coaches and the eVideo Counselor. Both programs offer a wide range of services ranging from mental health, wellness, behavioral health, smoking cessation, managing anxiety, managing financial wellness, reducing debt, and the list goes on and on. There is a plethora of preventative steps we can take right now through our Florida Bar membership to help us develop and maintain a healthy work life balance. Great tools for success are already in place and are just a phone call or click away, but the choice is yours.

Jaakan Williams is licensed to practice law in both Florida and North Dakota. He juggles his time between working for a family law agency in North Dakota and a civil plaintiff’s firm in Saskatchewan, Canada. Williams enjoys spending time with his family, playing basketball with a men’s league, and he is currently missing the year-round Florida sunshine.

Endnote:
2019 GROUP PROFESSIONALISM AWARD

“ELIMINATING BIAS IN THE COURTS” (5TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT)

On behalf of The Florida Bar’s Standing Committee on Professionalism and the Awards Working Group, it is our pleasure to announce that the recipient of the Group Professionalism Award is the 5th Judicial Circuit’s program, “Eliminating Bias in the Courts.”

This award honors one program instituted and coordinated by a bar association, judicial organization, inn of court, or law school organization aimed at enhancing professionalism among lawyers and law students and that can be implemented by other organizations to promote and encourage professionalism within the legal community.

On April 20, 2018, the “Eliminating Bias in the Courts” program was opened by then-Justice Barbara Pariente and focused on the value of diversity in the legal system. Approximately 250 attorneys and law students explored issues related to the widespread use of disturbing and destructive stereotypes in American culture. In addition to then-Justice Pariente, speakers included Dr. Kate Ratliff, Assistant Professor of Psychology at University of Florida; The Honorable Peter F. Estrada of the 10th Judicial Circuit Court; Arnell Bryant-Willis, Director of Diversity and Inclusion for The Florida Bar; National Women’s Hall of Fame member, Dr. Jean Kilbourne; and Dean Laura A. Rosenbury of the University of Florida Levin College of Law.

Participants were taught the detrimental nature of bias in the court system; were exposed to an Implicit Bias Test in order to understand the neuroscience behind bias, as well as to identify personal biases; discussed the possible impact of racial bias in sentencing; looked at strategies to promote diversity and the various diversity initiatives; analyzed gender bias in media and advertising in order to identify strategies for positive change concerning gender bias; and specifically focused on gender bias in the practice of law.

Participants’ feedback of the program was overwhelmingly positive with almost 100% of evaluations indicating that participants learned and that their own perceptions concerning bias changed as the result of the conference. “Eliminating Bias in the Courts” should be looked to as a shining example of the types of necessary programs to be reproduced throughout the State.

Congratulations to the 5th Judicial Circuit on creating and implementing such an important presentation!
WILLIAM M. HOEVELER JUDICIAL PROFESSIONALISM AWARD

The Honorable Andrea R. Wolfson

Congratulations to The Honorable Andrea R. Wolfson, Eleventh Judicial Circuit, Miami-Dade County, for being named the recipient of the William M. Hoeveler Judicial Professionalism Award. This award is given annually by the Henry Latimer Center for Professionalism and the Standing Committee on Professionalism.

The purpose of this award is to recognize an active judge who best exemplifies strength of character, service, and competence as a jurist, lawyer, and public servant. Judge Wolfson demonstrates the ideals of professionalism and justice while inspiring others to do the same.

Since 2010, she has been a committed member of the judiciary. Judge Wolfson earned her law degree at Chicago-Kent Law School and moved to Miami upon graduation, where she began her career as a prosecutor cross-designated to the office of the United States Attorney. Early in her career she established a reputation as “courteous, professional, well-prepared, respectful, and fair...never compromising her ethics.”

Presently, Judge Wolfson is assigned to criminal court. Her courtroom is a place where “she sets herself apart as particularly attuned to the human side of criminal court. She is courteous to victims and defendants alike. She is patient and calm. She takes time to make sure that all litigants understand court process and procedure.” Additionally, she steps from behind the bench to mentor young attorneys and serve in many capacities in the local and legal community.

Judge Wolfson serves as Co-Chair of the Eleventh Judicial Circuit Professionalism Committee, teaches a mock trial course at the new judges’ college each year, and speaks to voluntary bar associations and various organizations about the mandatory professionalism requirements implemented by The Florida Supreme Court. It is notable that Judge Wolfson was nominated by fellow judges. She is the embodiment of professionalism in the judiciary.

Congratulations once more, Judge Wolfson!
LAW FACULTY/ADMINISTRATOR PROFESSIONALISM AWARD

Nancy Benavides, Associate Dean for Student Advancement
Florida State University College of Law

On behalf of The Florida Bar’s Standing Committee on Professionalism and the Awards Working Group, it is our pleasure to announce that the recipient of the Law Faculty/Administrator Award is Nancy Benavides, Associate Dean for Student Advancement at the Florida State University College of Law.

The purpose of this award is to recognize a faculty member or administrator of one of Florida’s accredited law schools who, through teaching, scholarship, and service to the profession, best supports or exemplifies the mission of the Standing Committee on Professionalism: “To promote the fundamental ideals and values of professionalism within the legal system and to instill those ideals of character, competence, civility, and commitment in all those persons serving and seeking to serve therein.”

Dean Benavides is a quintessential professional and has consistently demonstrated the mission of the Standing Committee on Professionalism throughout her career in legal education. She designed, created, and is directing the new “Raising the Bar” Professionalism Program at FSU Law, which teaches students about Florida Bar applications, bar exam preparation, and wellness topics addressing mental, physical, and financial health. She also created the inaugural professionalism writing competition. Winners of this competition are awarded scholarship money and publication in The Henry Latimer Center’s newsletter, The Professional. In addition, Dean Benavides helped establish the highly successful Summer for Undergraduates Program, which exposes a diverse group of prospective students each summer to the legal system and provides them access to lawyers from a variety of practice areas. The Summer for Undergraduates Program has been recognized by the American Bar Association (ABA) as a national model for diversity enhancement.

Attorney Wayne Hogan lauds her work in designing the law school’s Board of Visitors program. Comprised of major donor alumni, the Board meets on campus annually to interact with students and offer input on ways that the College of Law can better serve its graduates. He points to the success this program has had in creating networking opportunities and ongoing mentoring relationships that are a basis for successful professionalism training.

Dean Benavides has served on a multitude of committees including being a member of the Board of Trustees for the Law School Admissions Council (LSAC); Chair of the LSAC Diversity Committee; The Florida Bar’s Student Education and Admission to the Bar Committee (SEABC); The Florida Bar’s Standing Committee on Professionalism (SCOP); Tallahassee Women Lawyers; and was a past Chair and member of the Association of American Law Schools (AALS) Student Services Section.

Dean Benavides’ efforts have garnered many awards including the Guardian of the Flame Faculty Award; the highly coveted Undergraduate Advising Award; and Student Bar Association’s Outstanding Law School Administrator Award.

Attorney Melanie Griffin eloquently describes Dean Benavides as “a unique, bright star to whom I look as the model for the type of lawyer, leader, and person I want to be. She truly sets the bar for all around her and daily demonstrates the true meaning of professionalism.” The Honorable Stephanie W. Ray of the First District Court of Appeal says that, “Dean B—as students and alums lovingly refer to her—leads the professionalism charge by example. She demonstrates the “four C’s” of professionalism—character, competence, commitment, and civility—in her daily professional life and has proven herself to be an inspiration to those in her path.”

Congratulations again Dean Nancy Benavides!
The Exercise of Learning:
A Primer on Networking

By: The Honorable Gordon Murray & G.C. Murray II, Esq., DPL

The Honorable Gordon Murray:

It was Fall 1978 and, as a freshman at the University of Miami, I was feeling a bit overwhelmed by the college experience. I truly enjoyed being in college and I was giving it my best, but my grades did not reflect my effort. As I left history class one morning, I was stopped by my professor and what he asked me changed my life. He asked me if I knew the “exercise of learning.” I answered that I did not, and he told me to follow him to his office. He explained that there are four basic steps to learning and that by understanding and mastering these steps, I could improve my grades. I listened carefully as he told me the four steps that have become the foundation of my career. They are:

1. Imitation
2. Understanding
3. Practice
4. Achievement

He explained to me that everyone first learns by imitation. You see something that interests you and you imitate what you see; unfortunately, imitation can only take you so far. By way of example, all children fall when they first attempt to ride a bike, because all they understand to do is imitate the peddling that they saw other children doing. And, of course, we learn just peddling the bicycle is not enough; there are other factors that we must also learn. That is where understanding comes into play.

Everyone comes to understand that there are other things to learn about riding a bike—most importantly, balance. Just like we learn there is more to cooking than just turning the stove up on high and watching your food and, hopefully not the entire kitchen, burn. We quickly learn the “hidden” or “not so obvious” factors in getting something accomplished. After that there is practice and finally achievement.

Finally, my professor explained that learning to be a good student is just the same as learning to ride a bike or to cook. I was always in class, paying attention, participating, but with little results. All I was doing was imitating what I saw the other students doing without a real understanding of why. He taught me the most important factor in the “exercise of learning” is understanding why we learn. He taught me that the purpose of learning is so that one can recall information “quickly and accurately” and, if you keep that in mind as you are learning, you will become a better student. I have shared these steps with every young lawyer I have mentored, as well as my own children. Everyone can improve simply by understanding why they learn, and it applies not only in school but in life, as well.

G.C. Murray II, Esq., DPL:

My dad taught me the exercise of learning when I started college. It is a lesson that I use to help with one of the most essential aspects of my professional life: networking. It is said that 80% of a lawyer’s cases comes from his or her network. While that may be a hyperbole, most can agree that most opportunities come from individuals in one’s own network.

When I began law school, I thought that networking was simply attending events and receiving business cards. By the end of the semester I would have a stack of business cards from lawyers that I could not remember and who probably did not remember me. I was talking but not communicating. I was meeting but not connecting. I was simply imitating what I had seen other lawyers do with no real understanding of what I was trying to accomplish.

Flustered with the lack of progress, I conversed with my dad and, in a very fatherly way, he reminded me to use the exercise of learning. I would not know it then, but this conversation would have the most profound impact on my career.

I applied the exercise of learning and began to realize that the reason I failed at networking was because I was imitating what I saw. All I could perceive were lawyers talking and taking business cards and, thus, that is all I did. Having an understanding that I had to listen for more than just a time to respond, revolutionized my ability to connect with people. The more I practiced engaged listening, the more I was able to connect with people. The more I

continued...
The Exercise of Learning
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was able to connect with people, the more I was able to connect people. The more I connected people, the more people wanted to connect.

The more I employed the exercise of learning on networking, the more I realized that networking is never about receiving connections for oneself. Sure, it happens by happenstance but networking, as I have come to understand it, is about an intricate series of connections that one creates through one’s genuine connections to others. If done without desire for credit or pecuniary gain, it is a masterful way to get things accomplished. In this open marketplace of ideas, networking is the commerce of relationships.

Next time you are networking I challenge you to do the following five things:

1. Ask people to tell you how they chose their practice area.
2. Ask people to tell you their favorite karaoke song or their coolest party trick.
3. Ask people to tell you their “believe it or not” moment.
4. Ask people what they care about outside of work.
5. Ask people for the best professional advice they have ever received.

If you can genuinely work these into your conversations, you will see a new depth in your interactions, and you will have a new memory for the details of your meetings. Soon, you will be able to connect these random details with new articles, new projects, and, eventually, new people. The “Exercise of Learning” can be applied to everything from legal studies, to yoga, and, of course, networking.

The Honorable Gordon Murray considers himself a Miami native and graduated with his high school diploma from Carol City High School. He then continued his educational career at the University of Miami earning his undergraduate and graduate degrees in law, finishing up his studies in 1985.

Judge Murray was an attorney in private practice for 32 years. He spent his first three years as a prosecutor in Monroe County, then returned to Miami for four years to work as an assistant state attorney for Janet Reno, the Florida State Attorney during that time. In 2012, he was appointed as a general magistrate in the family division and also worked as a child support hearing officer.

In 2010, Judge Murray was a recipient of The Florida Bar President’s Pro Bono Service Award, an award given by The Florida Bar to lawyers, groups and members of the judiciary who give their time and expertise to make legal services available to the poor. He also serves on The Florida Bar’s family law rules committee.

G.C. Murray is the Deputy General Counsel for the Florida Justice Association. Murray graduated cum laude with a B.A. in Humanities from The Honors College at Florida International University, where he was a Presidential Scholar and Life Member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity. He received his Juris Doctor degree from The Florida State University College of Law, where he was a Mason Ladd Scholar and a Calvin Patterson Scholar. He was bestowed Emeritus status for his work as Chief Justice of the FSU Supreme Court. Murray is a Tallahassee Bar Association board member and the Founder and President of the The Innovative Community Engagement (ICE) Foundation. Recently, he was honored as one of the American Bar Association’s inaugural Top 40 Young Lawyers in the U.S. He is a member of Leadership Florida’s Connect Florida (Class VII) and recently became the first African American lawyer to be elected to represent the Second Judicial Circuit on The Florida Bar Young Lawyers Division Board of Governors.
The Student Education and Admission to the Bar Committee (SEABC) had a wonderful discussion at Annual Convention about creating a handbook for high school and undergraduate students who are interested in law school. In addition, the committee discussed producing informational podcasts about the realities of law school and bar prep to be included on the Center’s website.

A View from the “Speaker Fever” Panel—Rebecca Bandy was honored to serve as a panelist for the “Speaker Fever” CLE held at Annual Convention. Her presentation focused on adult education.
JUDICIAL LUNCHEON

The Center for Professionalism proudly presented the William M. Hoeveler Judicial Professionalism Award to The Honorable Andrea R. Wolfson and the Law Faculty/Administrator Award to Dean Nancy Benavides of FSU College of Law during the Annual Judicial Luncheon featuring keynote speaker Governor Ron DeSantis.

Adriannette Williams, Florida Bar President John Stewart, and Rebecca Bandy

FSU College of Law Dean Erin O’Hara O’Connor with Associate Dean for Student Advancement Nancy Benavides

The Honorable Andrea R. Wolfson (Center) with Judicial Luncheon Guests
The Standing Committee on Professionalism (SCOP) had a productive meeting at Annual Convention. The committee has an upcoming mental health and wellness CLE at Ave Maria on September 20, 2019, featuring the school’s new wellness center. The committee is in the beginning stages of producing a gender bias CLE as well.
BEING A PROFESSIONAL WHEN IT MATTERS MOST

By: Suzanne J. DeCopain

It is always easy to talk about professionalism, whether at conferences, during organization meetings or just among your colleagues. What is not easy is putting professionalism into it to practice. Not only is professionalism required under the Rules of Professional Conduct, but all lawyers should strive to maintain professionalism at all times. Most lawyers have a basic understanding of how to be professional with a client. But what does professionalism look like when you have to have a difficult conversation with a client? For the most part, it looks like this: After reviewing the file and you discover a fact that is not favorable for your client, you rehearse the dreaded conversation where you must tell them there is problem. Or it may look like this: The jury returned a guilty verdict for a second-degree felony and based on your client’s record, he or she will be going to prison. As many times as you rehearse this conversation, you can never truly predict how well it will be received. And why is that important?

The Rules require all lawyers to be competent and require all lawyers to abide by a client’s decision. But it is up to the lawyer to effectively communicate all aspects of their client’s case with the client so that the client can make an informed decision. It is no surprise that the most dissatisfied clients are the ones that believe they did not really understand what was going on with their case and that they were surprised by the outcome. Although you had conversations, especially the difficult ones, with your client, was the conversation meaningful and was it conveyed and received as intended? Many say lawyers like to hear themselves talk. Even if you are that lawyer, difficult conversations with a client requires your complete attention. The conversation is more than just you “telling” your client wants going on. Webster’s dictionary defines conversation as follows: “an oral exchange of sentiments, observations, opinions, or ideas” with an emphasis on exchange.

Courtesy and respect are important characteristics when dealing with clients, especially when having difficult conversations with clients. One might say professionalism is just telling your client how it is, laying out all the facts, giving them your assessment of the law, and the potential outcome of their case. But it is more. The reality is, many people, when they retain an attorney, completely trust them and lean on them for their advice and even direction. Many people place a high expectation, which they should, on their attorney to always look out for their best interest. So, sometimes, just laying out the facts and being frank with your client might not be what your client needs. Although “professional,” your role as their counsel requires much more.

Courtesy is not waiting until 11pm the day before an important hearing to advise your client that there is a problem, when the problem was known earlier in the day. Courtesy is immediately calling your client, so that they have time to process the news and formulate questions so that they can better understand. Courtesy is not walking into court as the judge is calling the case. Courtesy is showing up just a few minutes early to meet the client in the hallway to share greetings and to show that you appreciate the opportunity to work on the case. Lawyers have the tendency to think that they are “needed” and feel that they do not have to be courteous at all times. Countless articles discuss the biggest pet peeve clients have with their lawyer is that they never respond or, if they do, it is far and in between. Respect goes hand-in-hand with courtesy. Respect is listening to your client’s concerns fully, after sharing some difficult news. Respect is not dismissing your client’s point of view, because you believe your approach and direction is better. Although a difficult conversation must take place, it does not necessarily mean there has to be a difficult conclusion or outcome. The beauty of law is that it is so versatile. It is our duty at attorneys to not only be competent but savvy when it comes to representing clients. However, you will not reach the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow if your client is not receptive to the news to begin with. Making the client feel that you are by their side from the beginning to the end, while showing courtesy and respect is professionalism.

An Associate at Butler, Suzanne J. DeCopain practices in our Coverage Defense department. Suzanne has been a member of The Florida Bar since 2009 and is based in our Tampa office. She is admitted to the United State District Court for the Middle District of Florida.

Before joining Butler, Suzanne served as an Assistant State Attorney for the 20th Judicial Circuit for three years. During her time there, she gained significant jury and bench trial experience. Suzanne also has experience in landlord/tenant matters for public housing authorities.

While prosecuting, Suzanne taught as an Adjunct Professor at her undergraduate school, Florida Gulf Coast University. Since moving to Tampa, Suzanne has become active with various bar associations including the George Edgecomb Bar Association holding various leadership positions. She is currently the Learn Your Legal Rights Community Workshop chair.
THE COUNSEL COOKS!

By: Adriannette Williams

CORN CHOWDER WITH LUMP CRAB MEAT

This is one of my favorite recipes, because I use fresh ingredients that are in season, prepare all the ingredients ahead of time, and avoid long periods of heat, because of the relatively fast cooking time of under thirty minutes. This recipe is the result of cooking techniques from my law school professor and searching online over the years. I modified the recipe by adding the crab meat, Old Bay seasoning, and adjusting for the cooking time. Feel free to put your unique touch on this dish. Enjoy!

INGREDIENTS

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1 large onion, cut into 1/4-inch diced
- 3 tablespoons flour
- 5 cups vegetable broth
- 2 russet potatoes, cut into 1/4-inch dice
- 4 cups fresh corn kernels
- 1/2 cup diced (1/4 inch) red bell pepper
- 1/2 cup diced (1/4 inch) green bell pepper
- Salt, to taste
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon of Old Bay Season, for garnish
- 1 cup half-and-half
- 1 cup (8 oz.) of lump crab meat (optional)
- 2 ripe plum tomatoes, seeded and cut into 1/4-inch dice, for garnish
- 1/2 cup thinly slivered fresh basil leaves, for garnish

DETAILS

- Servings: 4
- Preparation time: 10mins
- Cooking time: 30mins

PREPARATION

STEP 1
Place the oil and butter in a pot over low heat. Add the diced onion and wilt for about 10 minutes. Sprinkle the flour over the onion; cook, stirring, for an additional 3 to 5 minutes.

STEP 2
Add the broth and potatoes; bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to medium and cook, partially covered, for 10 minutes or until the potatoes are tender, stirring occasionally.

STEP 3
Add the corn, red and green bell peppers, salt, pepper, and half-and-half; cook over low heat for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add in lump crab meat and cook for 3 minutes.

STEP 4
Ladle 2 cups of soup into each bowl. Before serving, place 1 tablespoon of diced tomatoes in the center of each, top generously with slivered basil, and a small sprinkle of Old Bay Seasoning. Serve immediately.
THE EMOTIONALLY INTELLIGENT LAWYER

Rebecca Bandy recently presented “The Emotionally Intelligent Lawyer” at both the FSU College of Law Summer for Undergraduates Program and the Conference of County Court Judges in Orlando.
Dean Nancy Benevides (middle) invited Assistant Director of Professionalism Adriannette Williams to participate in Florida State University College of Law’s Networking Reception for participants of the 2019 Summer for Undergraduates program.

Assistant Director Adriannette Williams presented “The Price of Law and Leadership: It Costs to Be the Boss” for Tallahassee Women Lawyers at the membership meeting and swearing-in ceremony on June 10, 2019, at FSU College of Law.
Everyone wants to be a great leader, but not everyone understands what it takes to maintain healthy habits to ensure mental health in Voluntary Bar Leadership. We can see this in our own local and state bar’s push to focus on maintaining and ensuring health and wellness. Often times, individuals forget to take care of themselves and sacrifice their mental health in order to achieve success in leadership roles. This can result in people losing themselves and their health along the path to becoming great leaders. Harold S. Geneen once said that “Leadership is practiced not so much in words as in attitude and in actions.” It is just as important to maintain a healthy mindset, healthy habits, and specific actions to ensure mental health during Voluntary Bar Leadership as it is to set set and achieve new goals in your organization.

One common mistake in leadership is some leaders solely attempt to take on all of the tasks in their organization. Most people think being a great leader is how much you can do yourself. A lot of time, the greatest leaders are the individuals that can delegate and help the people they work with see great potential and power in themselves. Theodore Roosevelt once said, “The best leader is the one who has sense enough to pick good men to do what he wants done, and the self-restraint to keep from meddling with them while they do it.” If leaders do not practice self-restraint and delegate, it could lead to increased stress and frustration in the organization. Furthermore, these stressors could easily extend outside the organization and cause trouble at work and with family. Eventually, the lack of delegation could lead to anxiety and psychological issues. It makes life easier and more productive if leaders trust the members and individuals that have been delegated to do a task. Leaders that micromanage and get bogged down with every small issue affecting the organization may find that they do not have time to focus on the bigger issues that have a more substantial effect on the organization.

It is better to empower others in the organization to help the organization succeed. Nelson Mandela once said, “It is better to lead from behind and to put others in front, especially when you celebrate victory when nice things occur. You take in front the line when there is danger. Then people will appreciate your leadership.” Sometimes, leaders have to plant seeds in the organization that may not flourish and bloom during the tenure. Those seeds and their harvest are proof of your legacy and the great leadership bestowed. Delegation not only ensures a better mental capacity for yourself as a leader, but it also gives others the opportunity to learn skills that will ensure future leadership in the organization.

This leads me into another tip to ensure mental health in voluntary bar leadership. Set boundaries! I repeat, SET BOUNDARIES. Being involved with bar service can be challenging and time consuming, but you have to make sure that you continue to do the things that make you happy and pays your bills. It is important to dedicate time to your organization, but it is also equally as important to make sure that your bar service does not interfere or make you neglect your job duties.

Moreover, it is important to make sure that your bar service does not take away your ability to engage in self-care. Self-care is the practice of taking action to preserve and improve one’s own health. Often time, leaders pour so much of themselves into the organizations and its members that there is no time or energy remaining to devote to themselves. You cannot stretch yourself too thin. Remember, you cannot pour from an empty cup. Leaders must care for themselves enough to say “no” to others in the name of self-care. Engaging in self-care will not only make you are more productive and positive as a leader, but actively recharging your internal battery will ensure that you put the needed energy into ensuring the success of your organization.

The last tip that I believe is essential in mental health and bar involvement is the need to maintain a healthy support system. A healthy support system can come in the form of family, a close tribe of friends, a significant other, etc. Whomever they are, it is pivotal to make sure that they are also invested in your success. Depending on your organization, leadership roles may require more time away from family and friends. Even though this may be true, it is important to maintain the friendships and close bonds that have been built over time to ensure a great base of support.

Furthermore, it is important to talk to your support system and make them understand exactly what you are getting yourself into and how it can affect your relationship with them. Your support system is pivotal when things get rough. They will be the people who make you smile when you do not feel like it, and they will also be the people who take your mind off of pressing and stressful organization task.
Your significant other may be the person that takes on more responsibility with chores and your children if you less time to contribute. Talking to your support system about your new responsibilities and making sure they are invested in your success will ensure that you have the foundation to secure your success as a leader.

Peace of mind takes time to achieve, but if not preserved, it can have serious effects on your life. It is important to install and maintain healthy practices to ensure the mental health in Voluntary Bar Leadership. Being a great leader involves helping other people, but more importantly, taking care of yourself.

Brandon Sapp is an Associate Attorney in the Orlando office. Brandon was born and raised in Fort Lauderdale and received both his undergraduate and law degree from the University of Florida. While attending the University of Florida College of Law, he had the pleasure of serving as the President of the Black Law Students Association. Brandon’s interest in campus involvement did not end there, as he later served as President of the Law College Council. After law school, Brandon moved to Orlando and became an attorney at the Law Offices of Robert Wesley, Public Defender of the Ninth Judicial Circuit. While there, he represented indigent clients, litigated cases, and tried over 20 jury trials on a wide range of offenses ranging from misdemeanors to capital felonies. After settling into his position at the Public Defender’s office, Brandon became involved in the legal community. Brandon currently serves as a Board Member of the Young Lawyers Section of the Orange County Bar Association, Co-chair for the Big Bad Wolf Trials for the Orange County Bar Association Law Week program, and President Elect of the Paul C. Perkins Bar Association.

How to Post Your CLE Credits Via The Florida Bar Member Portal:

1. Have your course number and date that you took the course available.
3. Click on “Login.”
4. Click on “I Have Credits to Post” under My CLE. (located on the lower right area of the page)
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6. Click on “I agree” under Member Affirmation.
7. Click “Submit.”
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Phone: 850/561-5747, Fax: 850/561-9428
Email: cfp@floridabar.org
Website: www.floridabar.org/prof/
Director: Rebecca Bandy
Assistant Director: Adriannette Williams
Program Coordinator: Beth Kirkland

Words to the Wise
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<td>“If you surrendered to the air, you could ride it.” – Toni Morrison</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henry Latimer Center for Professionalism @FLBarCFP</td>
<td>15 Aug</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Few men are willing to brave the disapproval of their peers, the censure of their colleagues, the wrath of their society....” – Robert F. Kennedy</td>
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<td>“Integrity is doing the right thing even when no one is watching.” – C.S. Lewis</td>
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</table>