The Florida Bar Standing Committee on Professionalism (“SCOP”), through its working groups, assists The Florida Bar and The Florida Bar’s Henry Latimer Center for Professionalism (the “Center”) “to promote the fundamental ideals and values of professionalism within the legal systems and instill those ideals of character, competence, commitment, and civility in all those persons serving and seeking to serve therein.” The ideals are practiced by committee members composed of judges and attorneys throughout Florida by the promotion of professionalism events and activities.

This year’s emphasis has been on mentorship, professionalism and civility, education and resources, health and wellness, gender bias, and the recognition of outstanding professionalism through SCOP’s Professionalism Awards.

Jason D. Berger has served as the 2022-2023 Chair of The Florida Bar Standing Committee on Professionalism, Rebecca Bandy has served as the Director of The Florida Bar Henry Latimer Center for Professionalism and Katie Young has served as the Assistant Director of The Florida Bar Henry Latimer Center for Professionalism. As such, the parties were charged with assisting The Florida Bar, The Florida Bar’s Henry Latimer Center for Professionalism and the 44 members of the Committee in leading this year’s efforts in promoting, championing and instilling the ethical and professional practice of law through CLE’s, blogs and other educational resources.

**The Florida Bar President Special Committee on Mentoring:** The Florida Bar President Gary Lesser called upon the Professionalism Committee to assist with the established Florida Bar President’s Special Committee on Mentoring. Katie Young staffed the Florida Bar President’s Special Committee on Mentoring, while Chair Jason Berger served as a Member of the Special Committee. The Committee was charged with creating a statewide mentoring program aimed at Florida lawyers with three or fewer years of experience (and in firms of three or fewer lawyers.) The program will be using a web-based platform (to match perspective mentors and mentees and to administer the program curriculum.) Marketing for the program has commenced. The program is set to launch during the Florida Bar Annual Convention in June.

**Mentoring Initiatives Working Group:** This sub-committee was led by Ita Neymotin, Chair. This year, the working group assisted with the newly established “I Used to Be You” series by marketing, submitting graphics and sharing stories explaining personal mentorship relationships. The Mentoring sub-committee will be holding “Mentoring Makes a Difference III,” a 2-hour statewide CLE using Zoom Webinar. Further, the sub-committee has also addressed the concept of additional mandatory mentoring CLE requirements for new attorneys and additional mandatory mentoring CLE requirements for those sanctioned (including diversion) by the Florida Bar.
Local Professionalism Panels: President Gary Lesser addressed the work that the Special Committee on Professionalism completed last year. He addressed how the recommendations from the Committee are currently with the Supreme Court. He addressed the Local Professionalism Panels, with hopes of making these more uniform across the circuits.

Education and Resource Working Group: The chair of this sub-committee was Shannon Nash. This sub-committee worked diligently in fulfilling their charge of collecting Pro Tip Tuesday professionalism campaign videos, locating and publishing potential professionalism reports, writing and collecting articles for the Center's newsletter and assisting with a data bank of case law on professionalism issues. Further, this sub-committee has also promoted the Florida Bar's Speaker's Bureau by signing up speakers for the topic of Professionalism.

Health and Wellness Working Group: The Chair of this sub-committee was Rachel Curtis. This sub-committee was charged with investigating and reporting on the Bar’s Health and Wellness Initiative. The sub-committee, via Attorney Stephen Lesser, proposed a CLE on the steps attorneys can take to avoid getting into trouble. The idea was to identify the problem, identify steps to avoid the problem, and provide resources to support those members who may be struggling with mental health or substance abuse issues.

Gender Bias Working Group: The Gender Bias working group was led by Chair Abby Spears. The sub-committee’s charge was to assist with development of materials and programming related to gender-bias. The sub-committee assisted Judge Desai with the “Never Contemplated” series. The Committee listened to and shared the episodes with law schools. These podcasts are eligible for CLE credits. The series focuses on various topics, and includes female Judges, Attorneys, and Law School Deans. This season, Judge Desai has focused on women in the state legislature and other high-powered positions. Further, the group has assisted in updating the Gender Bias Toolkit. The sub-committee is also finalizing a CLE on “Why Women Leave the Practice of Law.”

Awards Working Group: Led by the Honorable John Badalamenti, Chair, this sub-committee marketed and solicited nominees from individuals, the Voluntary Bar Associations, all Chief Judges, and all Florida law schools. The sub-committee will recommend this year’s professionalism award recipients, including the recipients of the William M. Hoeveler Judicial Award, the Law Faculty/Administrator Award, and the Group Professionalism Award. This sub-committee was also charged with considering a Mentoring award and, if approved, proceed with its full development and promotion. Review of the nominations and award recommendations will go to the full Committee by March 10, 2023.

Center for Professionalism’s Website and Library: The committee assisted in updating and providing resources for the Center for Professionalism Website. Resources include the Center’s blog, “The Professional,” articles, photographs from events, along with national and statewide professionalism resources. This year the Center produced the
“Your Honor” series hosted by Paul Lipton. The committee assisted in updating and providing resources for the Center for Professionalism’s on-demand Library. The library includes free CLEs for mandatory professionalism credit on mentoring, health and wellness, and the attorney-client relationship, among others.

**The Professionalism Handbook:** This year, the Center for Professionalism updated the Professionalism Handbook. A limited number of handbooks were distributed in hardcopy (and the digital format is located on the Center's webpage). The handbook is an excellent resource as it contains the Professionalism Expectations, The Rules Regulating the Florida Bar, and other professionalism-related resources. The handbook is also of great assistance to law students, as it is designed to help students learn critical ethics and professionalism information.

**Professionalism Seminar:** The Standing Committee on Professionalism submitted a Professionalism Seminar utilizing the Pro Tip Tuesday videos as a model for consideration for the President’s Showcase during the Florida Bar Annual Convention. The Committee plans to present the seminar during the Florida Bar Annual Convention as a separate CLE.

**Gratitude from the Chair:** It has been an absolute honor and pleasure to serve as the Chair of the Florida Bar Standing Committee on Professionalism this year. I would like to extend a heartfelt thank-you to the Florida Bar President Gary Lesser, Director Rebecca Bandy and Assistant Director Katie Young of The Florida Bar Henry Latimer Center for Professionalism, the Center staff, Vice-Chair Chardean Hill, Vice-Chair Magdalina Ozarowski, each of our sub-committee Chairs and each of our 44 members of the 2022-2023 Professionalism Committee.

I would opine that collectively we have “moved the needle” and we have “made a difference.”

Thank you all so very much for the opportunity to serve!

Respectfully submitted,

Jason D. Berger, Chair
The Florida Bar Standing Committee on Professionalism