Reporters' Workshop

NOVEMBER 5-7, 2023
Tallahassee, Florida
#TFBRW2023

HOSTED BY
THE FLORIDA
SUPREME COURT

SPONSORED BY
THE FLORIDA BAR MEDIA & COMMUNICATIONS LAW COMMITTEE

floridabar.org/reportersworkshop
The Reporters' Workshop is primarily an educational experience, not a news event. Presentations and comments are for the reporters’ information only and may not be quoted or attributed unless express permission is granted by the speaker. Reporters are welcome to follow up with speakers in an interview that is made on the record.

Reporters can also ask for comments on background, but there must be a clear conversation about the intent to use the information for publication, even if not attributed to a specific person.

Reporters are encouraged to ask questions and be active participants, while being respectful of the presenters and other attendees.
• Elena Barrera – Tallahassee Democrat
• Christian Colon – NBC 6 / WTVJ (Miami-Dade)
• Justin Garcia – Tampa Bay Times
• Alexa Herrera – University of Florida’s Fresh Take Florida (Gainesville)
• Hanna Maglio – The Hernando Sun
• Nichole Manna – The Tributary (Jacksonville)
• James McCool – The Floridian (Tallahassee)
• Sandra McDonald – University of Florida’s Fresh Take Florida (Gainesville)
• Charlie McGee – The Tributary (Jacksonville)
• Silas Morgan – University of Florida’s Fresh Take Florida (Gainesville)
• Isabella Popadiuk – NBC6 South Florida
• Jacqueline Quynh – CBS Miami
• Maria Serrano – Spectrum News 13 (Central Florida)
• Brianna Shaw – WCTV-TV (Tallahassee)
• Austyn Szempruch – The Hernando Sun
• Carolina Tessutto – First Coast News (Jacksonville)
• Maureen Walsh – WFSU/The Florida Channel (Tallahassee)
• Lisa Willis – Daily Business Review/ALM (South Florida)
SUNDAY, NOV. 5

5:00 - 6:00 p.m.
Meet & Greet
Harry’s Seafood Bar & Grill
301 S. Bronough St.

MONDAY, Nov. 6

8:00 a.m.
DoubleTree Hotel Lobby
Bar staff will meet reporters in the lobby to walk to the Florida Supreme Court (optional)

8:15 a.m.
Security Check-in and Group Photo
Florida Supreme Court (Bring photo I.D.)

8:45 a.m.
Introduction to the Florida Supreme Court and Courthouse Tour
- Welcome from Florida Supreme Court Chief Justice Carlos Muñiz
- Q&A with Justice Jorge Labarga
- Florida Supreme Court Building Tour led by Supreme Court Education & Information Administrator Emilie Rietow

continued on next page
10:00 a.m.
Reporters Roundtable: Covering Courts - A Primer from Media Experts
- Moderator, Paul Flemming, PIO Florida Supreme Court
- Trimmel Gomes, GomesMedia
- Romy Ellenbogen, Tampa Bay Times
- Arek Sarkissisan, POLITICO Florida
- Mike Moore, PIO 13th Judicial Circuit

11:30 a.m.
Walk to FSU College of Law, 425 W Jefferson St

12:00 p.m.
Lunch
FSU College of Law Rotunda

1:15 p.m. (Afternoon sessions in Room 210, FSU College of Law)
The Florida Bar and the Attorney Discipline Process
- Elizabeth “Betsy” Brown, Tyson & Mendes, former Grievance Comm. Chair
- Jennifer Krell Davis, Communications Div. Director, The Florida Bar
- Patricia A. Savitz, Lawyer Regulation, The Florida Bar
- Melissa VanSickle, Nelson Mullins, Board Member, The Florida Bar

2:30 p.m.
Hot Topics in Court Public Records
- Moderator, Pat Gleason, Special Counsel for Open Government
- Gary Fineout, Politico
- Dara Kam, News Service of Florida
- Lawrence Mower, Tampa Bay Times
3:30 p.m.  
**Defamation Law Panel**  
- **Moderator, Ed Birk**, Marks Gray, P.A.  
- **Robert “Bobby” Block**, First Amendment Foundation  
- **David M. Snyder**, David M. Snyder, P.A.,

6:00 p.m.  
**Reception and Dinner at the Florida Historical Capitol**  
- **Judge Nina Ashenafi Richardson**, Master of Ceremonies  
- **Justice John Couriel**  
- **President Scott Westheimer**, The Florida Bar  
- **Tom Hall**, Vice Chair, Media and Communications Law Committee

**TUESDAY, NOV. 7**

8:00 a.m.  
**Continental Breakfast**  
Florida Supreme Court Building

8:30 a.m.  
**Access Practicum - Practices, Techniques and Tips for Records**  
- **Moderator, Allison Steele**  
- **Tom Hall**, Vice Chair, Media and Communications Law Committee  
- **Tim Nickens**, Communications and Public Policy Consultant

continued on next page
9:45 a.m.
Break

10:00 a.m.
First Amendment Cases and Updates
- Moderator, David Karp, Carlton Fields
- Justice John D. Couriel, Florida Supreme Court
- Amit Agarwal, Holland & Knight

11:30 a.m.
Break

11:45 a.m.
Lunch

1:00 p.m.
High Profile Case Study
- Rachel Fugate, Shullman Fugate
- Judge Nina Ashenafi Richardson, Leon County Court
- Ken Turkel, Turkel Cuva Barrios

2:30 p.m.
View From the Bench
- Moderator, C. Erica White, General Counsel, Office of State Courts Administrator
- Justice Charles Canady
- Justice John D. Couriel
- Justice Renatha Francis
- Justice Jamie Grosshans
- Justice Jorge Labarga
- Justice Meredith Sasso
MONDAY, NOV. 6

Introduction to the Florida Supreme Court and Courthouse Tour

JUSTICE CARLOS MUÑIZ was appointed to the Florida Supreme Court by Gov. Ron DeSantis on January 22, 2019, becoming the 89th Justice since statehood was granted in 1845. Justice Muñiz was elected by his colleagues to serve as Florida’s 57th Chief Justice beginning July 1, 2022. Prior to joining the court, he served on the staff of Sec. Betsy DeVos as the general counsel of the U.S. Department of Education. In addition to working as an attorney in the federal government and in private practice, Justice Muñiz had an extensive career in Florida state government. He served as the deputy attorney general and chief of staff to Attorney Gen. Pam Bondi; as deputy chief of staff and counsel in the Office of the Speaker of the Florida House of Representatives; as general counsel of the Department of Financial Services; and as deputy general counsel to Gov. Jeb Bush. Justice Muñiz is a graduate of the University of Virginia and of Yale Law School. After law school, he clerked for Judge José A. Cabranes of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit and for Judge Thomas A. Flannery of the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia.

JUSTICE JORGE LABARGA was born in Cuba in 1952. He is married to Zulma R. Labarga, and they have two daughters. He arrived in the United States at the age of 11 where he initially lived with his family in Pahokee, Florida. He graduated from Forest Hill High School in West Palm Beach in 1972 and received both his bachelor’s (1976) and law (1979) degrees from the University of Florida. Justice Labarga began his legal career in 1979 as an Assistant Public Defender with the Public Defender’s Office in West Palm Beach, assigned to the appellate, misdemeanor and felony trial divisions. In 1982 he joined the State Attorney’s Office in West Palm Beach, where he tried cases ranging from theft to homicide. In 1987 he joined the firm of Cone, Wagner, Nugent, Roth, Romano & Ericksen, P.A., and specialized in personal injury trial work. In 1992 Justice Labarga participated in founding the law firm of Roth, Duncan & Labarga, P.A., in West Palm Beach, where he continued to specialize in personal injury litigation and criminal defense. Gov. Lawton Chiles appointed Justice Labarga to the Circuit Court of the 15th Judicial Circuit, in and for Palm Beach County, in 1996. In that capacity he served in the family, civil and criminal divisions. He also served as the administrative judge of the civil division. In December 2008 Justice Labarga was appointed by Gov. Charlie Crist to the Fourth District Court of Appeal. On January 6, 2009, he took office on the Florida Supreme Court after appointment by Gov. Crist. He is the 84th Justice to take office at the Florida Supreme Court since statehood was granted in 1845. On July 1, 2014, he became the 56th Chief Justice of Florida – the first Cuban American to lead the state judicial branch. He held that office for two terms until June 2018, the first chief justice to serve consecutive terms in a century.

continued on next page
EMILIE RIETOW is the education and information administrator at the Florida Supreme Court. Her work in public information office includes instructing thousands of teachers, students and members of the public from throughout the state about Florida’s judicial branch of government and coordinating other civics education programs. Rietow is also responsible for website and social media content management and event planning. Prior to her position at the Court, Rietow spent several years working in The Florida Bar’s public information office and as an elementary classroom teacher in the public school system.

PAUL FLEMMING is the director of the Florida Supreme Court Public Information Office. He moved into that position in March 2022 after working as PIO for the Office of the State Courts Administrator for five years. Previously, he was a reporter and editor for newspapers in Missouri and Florida. He came to Tallahassee in 2004 and worked as bureau chief, leading state coverage for four newspapers and in cooperation with three television stations. Before joining the state courts system, he worked in the Florida Legislature for two years.

TRIMMEL GOMES is a highly regarded broadcaster and communication expert with over two decades of experience, recognized for his exceptional work as an award-winning journalist for prestigious news outlets like NPR and PBS. During his tenure as the news director of Florida Public Radio/WFSU-FM in Tallahassee, he navigated complex public policy issues while overseeing a statewide news team. Gomes is widely acknowledged as a leading authority on Florida politics and is frequently sought after for his insights, making regular appearances on both national and statewide media platforms. He is an alumnus of the College of Journalism and Communications at the University of Florida, where he currently serves as the co-chair of the college advisory council. Additionally, Gomes shares his knowledge as a consultant and an adjunct instructor in the College of Communication & Information at Florida State University. Gomes is the chair of the First Amendment Foundation, where he actively contributes to the organization's vital work. Furthermore, he hosts “The Rotunda,” a weekly public affairs podcast that delves into the people and issues shaping the intricate landscape of Florida politics.

ROMY ELLENBOGEN is the Tallahassee correspondent for the Tampa Bay Times, where she works in the joint bureau with the Miami Herald. In her role, Ellenbogen covers all aspects of state government with a focus special focus on criminal justice and health. This past year, she covered topics including abortion, the death penalty, prisons, guns, opioids, LGBTQ+ issues and more. Prior to becoming the Tallahassee correspondent, Ellenbogen was a local politics reporter, a Pasco County cops and crime reporter and a breaking news/health reporter. She is a lifelong Floridian who grew up in Coral Springs and graduated from the University of Florida, where she worked for The Independent Florida Alligator.

continued on next page
AREK SARKISSIAN reports on Florida health care and cannabis policy for POLITICO in Tallahassee. Sarkissian’s coverage of abortion has been featured on television programs, websites and in news magazines worldwide. Having covered Florida’s medical marijuana industry since its inception, he’s documented tours of elaborate indoor nurseries to pivotal cases heard by the state Supreme Court. Before POLITICO, Sarkissian’s reporting on wasteful spending by Visit Florida prompted the state House to issue subpoenas for records and slash the agency’s budget. He also took part in a trade mission to Colombia with Gov. Rick Scott, and he followed Scott closely on the ground in the first several hours after the mass shooting at the Pulse nightclub in Orlando. Sarkissian has spent many years writing about police and courts. His reporting at The Gainesville Sun about an ambitious annual budget proposed by a small-town police department led to the shutdown of the state’s most notorious trap for speeding tickets. At the Savannah Morning News, his reporting about rough treatment by police as they arrested a teen with Asperger’s Syndrome who was mistakenly accused of being drunk led to the resignation of Tybee Island’s police chief and two officers. Sarkissian was born and raised in the Detroit suburbs. He is a proud graduate of The University of Arizona School of Journalism.

MIKE MOORE has been the public information officer for the 13th Judicial Circuit of Florida since November 2015. Previously, he was the producer/host of Good Business Pinellas, with Pinellas County Economic Development, for nine years. Before that he worked as a news editor and sports producer for WTSP-TV Channel 10. He has experience working on both sides of the camera, shooting and hosting, and editing and coordinating multi-camera productions.

BETSY BROWN BURGESS has been a civil litigator and trial attorney for 18 years since her graduation from FSU law school in 2005. She has represented countless corporations and individuals on both sides of the aisle. She is currently with Tyson & Mendes, a national law firm focusing on personal injury and employment defense. She enjoys reading, live music, college football, and spending time with her family.

JENNIFER KRELL DAVIS, J.D. joined The Florida Bar Public Information Office in 2001, after graduating law school and working as a staff attorney for the Florida House of Representatives. She moved on to the Florida Chamber of Commerce as Communications Director where she led messaging efforts for legislative advocacy, and political and grassroots outreach. From there she became Communications Director for the Florida Department of State, covering the arts, elections, corporations, and historical divisions as well as the 2008 Presidential Election. After that she served as Press Secretary for the Office of the Florida Attorney General and then Vice President of Public Affairs for the Florida Ports Council, the professional association for Florida’s 15 public seaports. She rejoined The Florida Bar staff in 2016 as Deputy Director of Communications - leading internal and external digital communications for the Bar. She became Communications Director in 2021 and Communications Division Director in 2023. Davis received her undergraduate degree in English Literature from Florida State University and her law degree from the University of Florida.
PATRICIA ANN TORO SAVITZ received both her undergraduate degree (B.B.A. 1982) and her law degree (J.D. 1985) from the University of Miami. Savitz is Staff Counsel for the Lawyer Regulation Department of The Florida Bar. She has been with The Florida Bar since 1997 and was Bar Counsel in the Orlando Branch Office for over 20 years. She was an Assistant Public Defender in the 20th Judicial Circuit in Fort Myers and subsequently handled dependency cases with the Department of Children and Families. Savitz is actively involved in voluntary bar associations and civic programs.

MELISSA VANSICLE is a Florida Bar Board Certified real estate lawyer. She represents buyers and sellers in all aspects of the sale and acquisition of commercial property, and she represents developers in commercial and residential projects. VanSickle also provides general counsel services to her clients and regularly represents financial institutions for the drafting and closing of all types of real estate related loans. She is an adjunct professor at The Florida State University College of Law. She was elected as a representative for the Second Judicial Circuit on The Florida Bar Board of Governors in 2016 and is a member of the executive council of the Real Property, Probate & Trust Law Section of The Florida Bar. VanSickle is also the chair of the Second Judicial Circuit Professionalism Panel and a member of the Leadership Tallahassee Board of Governors where she serves as the chair–elect. She was the president of the Tallahassee Bar Association in 2013–2014.

PAT GLEASON serves as special counsel for Open Government for Attorney General Ashley Moody. She has also served as the advocate for the Florida Ethics Commission and chief of the Administrative Law Section in the Attorney General’s Office. She is a graduate of Florida State University College of Law in Tallahassee. She is the editor of the Sunshine Manual and the Public Records Guide for Law Enforcement agencies.

GARY FINEOUT came to POLITICO Florida in February 2019 after spending more than two decades covering Florida politics and government. He spent the previous seven and a half years working in the Tallahassee bureau of The Associated Press. Prior to that, he has worked for The Miami Herald, The New York Times Regional Newspaper Group, Daytona Beach News-Journal and The Tallahassee Democrat. Fineout grew up in Florida and is a graduate of Florida State University.

Hot Topics in Court Public Records

continued on next page
DARA KAM is the senior writer at The News Service of Florida in Tallahassee. She’s been covering state government and politics in Florida for more than 25 years, spanning the 2000 Bush v. Gore recount to the latest legislative and campaign wrangling in advance of the 2024 presidential election. Kam’s keeping very active offering deep insight into and analysis of complex state and federal court litigation, including high-profile legal battles over immigration, gender-affirming care for transgender children and adults, the First Amendment…the list goes on and on. In addition, Kam’s “vice beat” includes coverage of some of the state’s most cut-throat players dominating regulated industries such as marijuana and gaming. Kam, an almost-native of Florida, also has devoted years to covering the state’s prison system. She is recognized as one of Florida’s leading journalists covering the death penalty, serving as an execution witness and delving into numerous changes in the state’s death penalty laws. Kam hosts the Deeper Dive with Dara Kam podcast, where she engages in thought-provoking conversations with state influencers, elected officials and industry experts. Her previous employers include The Palm Beach Post, Gannett Newspapers, The Associated Press and the former New York Times Regional Newspapers.

LAWRENCE MOWER is a reporter in the Tampa Bay Times/Miami Herald’s Tallahassee bureau, where he reports on state government and politics. Previously, he was an investigative reporter at the Palm Beach Post and the Las Vegas Review-Journal, where his work included investigations into police shootings, illegal lottery winnings, voter fraud and the drug treatment industry.

EDWARD L. BIRK is a shareholder with MarksGray, where he represents and defends news media organizations and journalists in all aspects of newsgathering, publishing, and broadcasting, including source development, pre-publication review, compelling access to courts and records, copyright and trademark enforcement, fighting subpoenas for privileged information, and defending against defamation and libel claims. He earned his bachelor’s degree in journalism in 1983 from the University of Massachusetts-Amherst, where he was a staff member of The Massachusetts Daily Collegian newspaper and the news team at WMUA college radio station. Before law school, Birk was an editor and reporter for The Associated Press in Massachusetts and Florida. He earned his law degree with honors in 1995 from Florida State University College of Law, where he was editor-in-chief of the Law Review. Birk has earned Martindale-Hubbell’s highest rating of AV. For the past 10 years he has been named in The Best Lawyers in America and in Super Lawyer magazine. He serves as general counsel for the Florida First Amendment Foundation.
Defamation Law Panel (Contd.)

ROBERT “BOBBY” BLOCK is the First Amendment Foundation’s executive director. Block’s career in journalism and advocacy spans four decades. He served as managing editor of Florida Today and contributed to the Wall Street Journal’s coverage of 9/11, which earned a 2002 Pulitzer Prize for Breaking News. He is co-author of the book “Disaster: Hurricane Katrina and the Failure of Homeland Security” and has also reported on conflicts around the world, including coverage of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda as it happened, as well as the summary executions of more than 8,000 men and boys from the Bosnian village of Srebrenica by Serbian forces in 1995.

DAVID M. SNYDER graduated from the University of South Florida, where he was awarded a B.A. in English. At USF, he was managing editor of The Oracle and won a Distinguished Service Award from the Department of Mass Communications. He received a J.D., summa cum laude, and graduated first in his class from Stetson University, where he was editor-in-chief of the Stetson Law Review. Snyder was a staff writer for the Clearwater Sun (1975) and St. Petersburg Times (1975-79). He also served 34 years in the Naval Reserve as a military journalist and public affairs officer, retiring at the rank of Captain (O-6). Among assignments around the world, he served as U.S. Navy spokesman for Peacekeeping Forces in Beirut, Lebanon, in the months following the terrorist attacks on U.S. forces there. He was a law clerk in The New York Times Co. legal department, an associate of the New York City firm of Cahill Gordon & Reindel, and a partner in Tampa law firms before starting his solo practice in 1995, through which he helps consumers, taxpayers, and the media access information and protects their right to publish it. He is First Amendment counsel to Creative Loafing alternative newspapers, and Tampa/Hillsborough County’s public access television provider, The Tampa Bay Community Network. Snyder teaches/has taught Communications Law at the University of Tampa, Florida Southern College, and USF St. Petersburg. He organized the Florida Bar’s first Reporter’s workshop in 1990, has served many terms on the Florida Bar Media & Communications Law Committee as a member, past chair and vice-chair. He also served on and chaired the Florida Bar Statewide Advertising Grievance Committee and a 13th Circuit grievance committee.

ROBERT “BOBBY” BLOCK

JUDGE NINA ASHENAFI RICHARDSON is known as “Judge Nina,” has served as judge in the Leon County Court system since 2008. She served as chair of the Education and Outreach subcommittee of the Florida Supreme Court’s Judicial Management Council, an advisory body that includes judges, lawyers and nonlawyers. Under Judge Ashenafi Richardson’s leadership, the subcommittee drafted a statewide communications plan that was formally adopted by the Florida Supreme Court, with implementation over a five-year period beginning in January 2016. The plan, “Delivering Our Message,” was developed with input from judges, the media, court public information officers and other court staff from around the state. The plan calls for the use of communication technology and social media to the extent appropriate in judicial settings, emphasizing the importance of improving communication between Florida’s judicial branch and the public at large, as well as court users and other justice partners of the courts. She currently chairs the Second Judicial Circuit’s Communications Committee, which was created to implement the communications plan. Judge Ashenafi Richardson has been recognized with numerous awards for her servant leadership, most recently receiving the Chief Justice’s Distinguished Judicial Service Award for exceptional pro bono service.

JUDGE NINA ASHENAFI RICHARDSON

Reception and Dinner at the Florida Historic Capitol

continued on next page
JUSTICE JOHN D. COURIEL is the 90th Justice of the Florida Supreme Court. Justice Couriel was born in Miami, Florida in 1978. He is married to Rebecca L. Toonkel, M.D. They have two children. Justice Couriel received his bachelor’s degree magna cum laude from Harvard College in 2000 and his law degree from Harvard Law School in 2003. He clerked for the Hon. John D. Bates of the United States District Court for the District of Columbia before joining Davis Polk & Wardwell in New York. His practice there included securities offerings, mergers and acquisitions, bankruptcy matters, and investigations. In 2009, he became an Assistant United States Attorney for the Southern District of Florida. He prosecuted hundreds of federal offenses, including international money laundering, public integrity, healthcare fraud, and human trafficking crimes. In 2013, he joined Kobre & Kim LLP, where he specialized in cross-border disputes and investigations relating to financial products and services, asset recovery, and government enforcement defense, with an emphasis on clients in Latin America. Justice Couriel is a native speaker of Spanish. His parents emigrated from Cuba in the 1960s, his father as one of approximately 14,000 unaccompanied minors welcomed to the United States as part of Operation Pedro Pan. He was appointed to the Florida Supreme Court by Gov. Ron DeSantis on June 1, 2020.

SCOTT WESTHEIMER is the 2023-2024 President of The Florida Bar. He joined Syprett Meshad as an associate in 1996 and became a partner in 2000. In 2019, Westheimer was re-elected to a fourth two-year term on the Florida Bar Board of Governors, 12th Circuit Representative, seat one, representing over 1,800 attorneys in Sarasota, DeSoto and Manatee counties. Westheimer has been honored twice with the President’s Award of Merit. Westheimer’s practice involves primarily the representation of plaintiffs in personal injury matters and various aspects of commercial litigation. He is admitted to practice in the Supreme Court of the U.S.; U. S. District Court, Middle District of Florida; U.S. District Court of Appeals, Fifth Circuit; and Florida state Courts. Westheimer received a Bachelor of Arts degree in History, with high honors, from the University of Florida in 1993, and in 1996, received his Juris Doctorate, with high honors, from the University of Florida Levin College of Law.

TOM HALL is Of Counsel with Bishop & Mills. Bishop & Mills has offices in Jacksonville and Tallahassee, but Tom works primarily from his home in Babcock Ranch, Florida. He practices appellate law exclusively and has appeared in six of Florida’s seven appellate courts. Before returning to private practice, Hall was Clerk of Court of the Florida Supreme Court for 13 years and Chief Staff Attorney at the First District Court Appeal for 10 years. Hall spent a total of 25 years working in Florida’s court system. Hall currently serves on both the Appellate Court Rules Committee and the Rules of General Practice and Judicial Administration Committee of The Florida Bar. He has chaired the Appellate Practice and Government Lawyers Sections of The Florida Bar. Hall is on the Board of Trustees of the Florida First Amendment Foundation and of the Florida Supreme Court Historical Society. Hall is currently a consultant with the Florida Court Clerks and Comptrollers though his firm, TLH Consulting Group LLC. He has had numerous other consulting clients and offers non-legal advice consulting services for entities doing business with the Florida Court System.
ALISON STEELE has been a lawyer since 1987. Her practice concentrates on legal issues affecting publishers of nonfiction, including a variety of authors and publishers working in print, broadcast, digital, audio, film, documentary and social media; officers of homeowners’ associations; university professors and other writers of scholarly works; photographers; and other creators of visual art. Steele handles contract and employment issues, provides prepublication review and advice, and provides representation in trial court litigation and appeals. Current matters include defense of defamation and invasion of privacy claims, protection of copyrights, advice on Fair Use, and license negotiations. Steele also advises on working with sources, helps draft records requests, pursues access to government meetings and proceedings, and protects journalists and others from privilege-invading subpoenas, state and federal. Her experience as an appellate lawyer includes Florida’s courts, the U.S. 11th Circuit Court of Appeals, and the U.S. Supreme Court. A substantial portion of Steele’s law practice is devoted to helping people and small businesses with limited means to pay counsel. These matters include cases of discrimination and retaliation in employment and other circumstances and assisting freelance and affiliated journalists and publishers who don’t have access to a lawyer. Steele has served as an adjunct professor at Stetson College of Law and as visiting faculty at Poynter Institute for Media Studies Inc. A past chair of the Florida Bar’s Media & Communications Law Committee, she chairs the 2023 Reporters’ Workshop. Steele received her B.A. in English from Stetson University, where she was editor in chief of Florida’s oldest collegiate newspaper, The Stetson Reporter. She received her law degree from Stetson College of Law, where she served as Articles & Symposia editor of the Stetson Law Review. She served as a federal court law clerk to U.S. Middle District of Florida Magistrate Judge Thomas G. Wilson.

TIM NICKENS has more than three decades of experience as a journalist in Florida. A graduate of Indiana University, he came to the St. Petersburg Times, now Tampa Bay Times, as a reporter in 1983 and moved to the state capital bureau in 1987. He worked in the Miami Herald’s capital bureau from 1990 to 1995 before returning to St. Petersburg and the Times. He served as the Times’ political editor during the 2000 presidential recount and later oversaw local and state news coverage as assistant managing editor/metro. Nickens was named editor of editorials in 2008, and he and a colleague won the 2013 Pulitzer Prize for editorial writing. He served on the Times Publishing Co. board of directors and the board of trustees for the First Amendment Foundation in Tallahassee. Nickens retired from the Times in 2020 and now works as a communications and public policy consultant for a variety of private companies, nonprofits, government agencies and political candidates.
DAVID KARP brings a decade of experience as a professional writer and editor to his law practice at Carlton Fields, which focuses on appeals and representing content creators in First Amendment and defamation cases. He has handled appeals in federal and state courts on a range of issues: class actions, bad faith insurance cases, real property disputes, personal injury cases, and constitutional challenges to state and local laws. He also represents clients in class actions and complex commercial cases in the trial court, helping frame issues for summary judgment and dismissal, and serving as an integral part of a trial team.

AMIT AGARWAL is co-chair of Holland & Knight's appellate litigation team and a partner in the firm's Tallahassee and Washington, D.C., offices. Agarwal focuses his practice on federal and state appellate litigation, complex and high-stakes issues, and federal, state and internal investigations. Agarwal previously served as Florida's solicitor general within the Office of the Attorney General. In this role, Agarwal was the chief appellate litigator for the state, representing Florida in the U.S. Supreme Court and supervising civil and criminal appeals in all lower courts. As solicitor general, he also served as the Richard W. Ervin Eminent Scholar Chair at the Florida State University College of Law, where he taught a course on the separation of powers. Before that, Agarwal served as deputy chief of the Appellate Division of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Florida.

RACHEL FUGATE is a founding partner of the law firm Shullman Fugate PLLC. Her practice handles all aspects of media law and includes representation of national media companies, local and regional newspapers and television stations, streaming services, book publishers, film producers, reality television programs, artists, and nonprofit corporations. Fugate defends publishers and broadcasters in complex defamation, invasion of privacy, and other content-related claims and prosecutes actions for access to government information. She has argued several media matters in federal and state trial and appellate courts throughout Florida. Fugate’s practice also concentrates on preventive litigation measures. On a daily basis, she provides newsroom counsel services and advice on a variety of content-related issues and publication practices, including newsgathering advice, pre-broadcast and pre-publication review, content clearance, fair use review and analysis, and responses to retraction demands and subpoenas.

KEN TURKEL is a shareholder with Turkel Cuva Barrios and a trial attorney with a national practice focusing on the prosecution and defense of complex business and civil litigation matters, as well as media and privacy rights litigation. Ken also represents clients in the sports and entertainment industries, both in the conventional legal arena and with respect to their licensing and endorsement deals. Turkel represents businesses and individuals in cases that present difficult legal and factual challenges, in which the stakes of the outcome are high, whether it is money damages at issue or someone’s reputation. He has tried numerous cases in state and federal court, representing clients on both the plaintiff and defense sides. His trial experience includes contract and business tort claims, defamation and privacy torts, trade secret and intellectual property disputes, employment and discrimination matters, unfair business practices, and shareholder and corporate disputes. He has represented companies in the conduct of internal investigations and parallel criminal investigations at the state and federal level. He has also served as counsel in numerous class action proceedings.
C. ERICA WHITE received her B.S. and M.B.A. degrees in Business Administration from Florida A & M University in 1993. From 1993 to 1998, White worked for the Executive Office of the Governor as a budget analyst, and for the Florida Sterling Council, until returning to law school at the Florida State University College of Law in the Fall of 1998. After graduating law school in May 2001, White worked as an assistant general counsel/program analyst for the Department of Community Affairs, and as a senior attorney the Department of Children and Families. From 2004 to 2010, she practiced in the private sector primarily in the areas of criminal and family law, and in 2011, White returned to state government. From 2011 to 2019, she worked at the Department of Business and Professional Regulation as chief attorney, and at the Florida Department of Health as the executive director of the Florida Board of Pharmacy. White joined the Office of State Courts Administrator (OSCA) as the general counsel in January 2019, where she is currently responsible for addressing legal issues relating to the administration of the Florida State Courts System, and for providing legal advice to the OSCA and the Florida Supreme Court.

JUSTICE CHARLES T. CANADY was born in Lakeland, Florida, in 1954. He is married to Jennifer Houghton Canady, and they have two children. He received his B.A. from Haverford College in 1976 and his J.D. from the Yale Law School in 1979. Justice Canady practiced law with the firm of Holland and Knight in Lakeland from 1979 through 1982. He practiced with the firm of Lane, Trohn, et al., from 1983 through 1992. From November 1984 to November 1990, Justice Canady served three terms in the Florida House of Representatives, and from January 1993 to January 2001, he served four terms in the United States House of Representatives. Throughout his service in Congress, Justice Canady was a member of the House Judiciary Committee. For three terms, from January 1995 to January 2001, Justice Canady was the Chairman of the House Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution. Upon leaving Congress, Justice Canady became General Counsel to Governor Jeb Bush. He was appointed by Governor Bush to the Second District Court of Appeal for a term beginning November 20, 2002. On August 28, 2008, Justice Canady was appointed to the Florida Supreme Court by Governor Charlie Crist and took office on September 8, 2008. He served as Florida’s 54th Chief Justice from July 2010 through June 2012. He was elected by his colleagues to serve as Chief Justice for a second time starting July 1, 2018, and a third time starting July 1, 2020.

JUSTICE RENATHA FRANCIS is the 92nd Justice of the Florida Supreme Court. On August 5, 2022, Gov. Ron DeSantis appointed Justice Renatha Francis to the Florida Supreme Court. Previously, Gov. DeSantis appointed her to the 15th Judicial Circuit Court in Palm Beach County, where she successfully retained her seat for a six-year term in 2022. Justice Francis also served on the Circuit and County Courts in the 11th Judicial Circuit of Miami-Dade from 2017 to 2019 by appointment to each by then-Gov. Rick Scott. During her tenure on the bench, Justice Francis presided over large dockets, conducted numerous bench trials, and resolved hundreds of cases in family, civil, probate, and criminal law. Justice Francis was raised in Kingston, Jamaica, where she operated small businesses while being a fulltime student. Her second career as a lawyer came after graduating from law school in Jacksonville. She clerked at the First District Court of Appeal for six and a half years. Thereafter, she joined Shutts & Bowen, LLP, Of Counsel, in Miami-Dade, where she was a member of the Mass Litigation and Class Action Practice Group, representing large corporate clients. Justice Francis is the first Jamaican-American to serve on the Florida Supreme Court.
JUSTICE MEREDITH SASO was appointed by Gov. Ron DeSantis on May 23, 2023, as the 93rd justice of the Supreme Court of Florida. Justice Sasso was raised in Tallahassee. She received her undergraduate degree from the University of Florida in 2005 and her law degree from the University of Florida in 2008, where she was a member of the Justice Campbell Thornal Moot Court board. She began her career in private practice, representing clients in large loss general liability, auto negligence, and complex commercial claims in state and federal courts at trial and on appeal. She also served as guardian ad litem, representing abused or neglected children. In August 2016, Justice Sasso joined the Office of the General Counsel to Gov. Rick Scott, serving as chief deputy general counsel. In this role, she represented the governor in litigation before the Florida Supreme Court, the First District Court of Appeal, and state and federal trial courts, among other duties. In January 2019, Gov. Scott appointed her to the Fifth District Court of Appeal. Gov. DeSantis recommissioned her to the newly created Sixth District Court of Appeal on January 1, 2023, where she was elected by her colleagues to serve as its first Chief Judge. She is a member of the American Enterprise Institute Leadership Network and the Federalist Society.

JUSTICE JAMIE R. GROSSHANS was appointed to the Florida Supreme Court on September 14, 2020 by Governor Ron DeSantis. Previously she was appointed to the Fifth District Court of Appeal in 2018 by Governor Rick Scott. Prior to her appointment to the appellate court, she served as an Orange County Court Judge in the Ninth Judicial Circuit of Florida where she presided over criminal and civil matters. Justice Grosshans was raised in Brookhaven, Mississippi and graduated cum laude from the University of Mississippi School of Law. During law school, she clerked for the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice in Washington, D.C., and the United States Attorney’s Office for the Northern District of Mississippi. Following admittance to the Florida Bar, she served as an Assistant State Attorney for the Ninth Circuit of Florida in both the misdemeanor and felony divisions where she tried numerous criminal jury trials.
THE MEDIA & COMMUNICATIONS LAW COMMITTEE OF THE FLORIDA BAR THANKS THE FOLLOWING SPONSORS FOR THEIR GENEROUS SUPPORT OF THE 34TH ANNUAL REPORTERS' WORKSHOP RECEPTIONS

First Amendment Foundation

Grimes Hawkins Gladfelter & Galvano, P.L.
Attorneys at Law | Est. 1922

ALEX HANNA

Alison M. Steele
ATTORNEY AT LAW
Nov. 5-7, 2023
Judicial Meeting Room
Florida Supreme Court
and
Florida State University College of Law
Tallahassee
floridabar.org/reportersworkshop