

COMMUNICATOR

The Volusia County Bar Association Newsletter | August 2025



Colleagues and Friends,

It is my honor and a personal pleasure to serve as President of the Volusia County Bar Association. This year, the VCBA's committees, sections and Board of Directors have stepped up to share their experience; their combined wisdom and professionalism are extraordinary, and will serve us well. Together we are working to create opportunities for you to engage directly with colleagues and professionals in the many practice areas that make up our bar. We are finalizing plans now for meaningful programming in each of the sections.

The VCBA will be offering professional development and training, as well as social activities designed to expand community engagement. Stay tuned for exciting information on the Second Annual VCBA Bench & Bar Retreat, an all-inclusive international experience coming in Spring of 2026!

I hope you will join us and get involved! It is as easy as attending events, mentoring, or simply reaching out to a fellow member. I look forward to what we will accomplish together. Please reach out if you'd like to connect directly, or if you have ideas to share.

Thank you for the privilege of leading this remarkable Association.

Lori Sandman, Esq.

VCBA President, 2025-26



Meet the VCBA Officers 2025-26



**Lori
Sandman**

.....
President
Drink: caramel latte



**Tonya
Cromartie**

.....
President Elect



**Michael
Ciocchetti**

.....
Treasurer
Drink: office coffee
machine makes a mean
s'mores latte



**Melvin
Stack**

.....
Secretary
Drink: large glass of sweet
iced tea

YOUNG LAWYERS DIVISION

Message from the Incoming President – Young Lawyers Division of the VCBA

Dear Colleagues,

I am honored and excited to step into the role of President of the Young Lawyers Division of the Volusia County Bar Association for the upcoming year. As we begin this new chapter together, I want to express my gratitude for the opportunity to serve and for the trust placed in me by this community of emerging legal professionals.

My hope is to build a foundation of connection, support, and service — not only to one another but to the broader legal and local communities. In the year ahead, we will continue to foster opportunities for young lawyers to grow professionally, give back meaningfully, and build lasting relationships within the bar and beyond.

We have an exciting calendar of events in the works, including CLEs, networking socials, community outreach initiatives, and mentorship opportunities. Whether you're newly sworn in or a few years into practice, the YLD is here to be a resource, advocate, and sounding board as you navigate your legal journey.

I encourage each of you to get involved, stay connected, and share your ideas for how we can better serve your needs and make an impact together.

Thank you for your continued support and enthusiasm — I look forward to a great year ahead!

Hunter Morrill

President, Young Lawyers Division of the VCBA

Meet the YLD Officers 2025-26



**Hunter
Morrill**

.....

President

Drink: cold brew



**Sydney
Cichon**

.....

President Elect

Drink: tears of
opposing counsel



**Jeffrey
Bauer**

.....

Treasurer

Drink: Straight
espresso and lots of it!



**Christy
Earls**

.....

Secretary

Drink: Kava, used for
calming without reducing
mental clarity

ANNUAL MEETING & PROFESSIONALISM SYMPOSIUM

Thank you to everyone who showed up and supported the **VCBA Annual Meeting and Professionalism Symposium**! We had a fantastic turnout and are so grateful to our members, presenters, and guests for making the day a success.

A special thank you to our judiciary for your continued support and participation, it means so much to our members and the legal community.

We're also incredibly grateful to our sponsors, **Southern Cross Media** and **Stewart Title Company**, for helping make this event possible. Your partnership is truly appreciated!

Big shoutout to Committee Chair Maria McCorkle and valued team members Erika Barger and Christy Earls, thank you for all your hard work!

Sarah Grover

Executive Director, VCBA



Southern Cross
Media

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MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



Judge F. Rand Wallis

Fifth District Court of Appeal

Judge F. Rand Wallis has served Florida's legal community with distinction for over 30 years. A native of Orlando, he earned his J.D. from Stetson University College of Law in 1992 and began his career as an Assistant State Attorney in the 18th Judicial Circuit, working in Juvenile and County Court in Seminole County.

He later joined private practice, focusing on insurance and products liability defense. At Cabaniss, Burke & Wagner, he represented Fortune 100 clients including Ford Motor Company, Walt Disney World,

Crown Fork Lifts, to name a few. As well as tried cases nationwide, developing litigation skills that would shape his judicial career.

Appointed to the Circuit Court in the Ninth Judicial Circuit in 2008 and elevated to the Fifth District Court of Appeal in 2013, Judge Wallis has remained guided by the values of respect, kindness, and diligence—advice he credits to mentors like retired Judge Richard J. Suarez.

Outside the courtroom, he's a dedicated youth baseball coach (coached and managed over 500 baseball games for his two youngest children as pictured), and proud of the success of his former players. He is also fan of Millie's Restaurant in Daytona Beach Shores. If not on the bench, he imagines he might have been a pediatrician or a stock broker.



Dillon Andreassi

VCBA Director 2025-28

Dillon Andreassi focuses his practice on family and criminal law, combining compassion and advocacy to support clients during some of their most challenging moments. Originally from Westchester, New York, Dillon made Florida home, earning his undergraduate degree from the University of South Florida in 2014 and his law degree from Barry University Dwayne O. Andreas School of Law in 2018.

Dillon credits much of his early success to the guidance of a mentor, which he says was invaluable in helping him develop confidence and proficiency in his practice areas. "As a young lawyer, the benefits of having a mentor are immeasurable," he notes.

Outside of the office, Dillon enjoys dining at Ichi Ni San on Beach Street and has a hands-on side—if he weren't a lawyer, he says he'd likely be a carpenter or mechanic. One surprising fact? He's left-handed!

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Lauren M. Wilmot

YLD Director 2025-28

Lauren M. Wilmot was born in Coral Springs and raised in South Florida before heading to Central Florida for her studies. She earned both her Bachelor's (2013) and Master's (2014) degrees from the University of Central Florida, and later graduated from the University of Florida Levin College of Law in 2021.

Before pursuing law, Lauren worked as a Child Advocacy Manager with the Guardian ad Litem Program. Her time in the dependency system—advocating for vulnerable children—inspired her to attend law school and remains a driving passion behind her work.

Lauren credits several mentors for helping shape her legal career. Julie Ozburn and Michele Simonsen provided early guidance during her law school clerkship, and Nicole Copsidas has been a trusted source of insight and encouragement as Lauren navigates her practice. She's also grateful for the support and investment of her supervising attorneys, John Junod and Scott Cookson, who have played a key role in her development as a commercial real estate attorney.

When she's not practicing law, Lauren dreams of one day owning a coffee shop. Locally, she loves dining at The Garlic in New Smyrna Beach and Deck Down Under in Port Orange.

Jena Conley

YLD Director 2025-28

A Daytona Beach native, Jena Conley stayed close to home for her education—earning her undergraduate degree from the University of Florida in 2020 and her J.D. from Stetson University College of Law in 2023.

Jena credits Attorney Matthew Shapiro, her supervising attorney and partner at Rice Law Firm, as a pivotal mentor who has helped shape her early legal career. Jena states “His mentorship has been invaluable and continues to play a key role in helping me learn, grow, and gain confidence in my legal career.”

Outside of work, Jena enjoys dining at Takeya, and when she's not in the courtroom, she's likely playing the piano or violin—talents she's been honing since the age of five. If she weren't practicing law, she says she might be in the classroom teaching English instead.



VCBA SECTIONS

UPDATE YOUR SECTION(S)

VCBA members can update their section preferences at any time, and you may select as many sections as you wish, **free of charge** to ensure you receive the most relevant communications.

Available sections include:

- Family Law
- Elder Law
- Solo/Small Firm
- State & Local Government
- Workers' Compensation

Stay connected with the topics and events that matter most to you!

Log in to your [VCBA member account via JoinIt here](#).



SOLO/SMALL PRACTICE SECTION

Date/Time: Friday, August 15, 2025 @ 1:00 pm

Location: Asahi Japanese Restaurant, Orange City, FL 32163

The VCBA Solo/Small Firm section is meeting for lunch the third Friday of each month. This month at Asahi, casual attire, cozy atmosphere.

We look forward to meeting you. Please RSVP to Julie E. Herring, Esq., jherringlaw@gmail.com or R. Shawn McBride, Esq. shawn.mcbride@rsmlawpllc.com



HAPPY HOUR

You're Invited!

Volusia County Pro Bono Happy Hour

Join us for an evening of connection, conversation, and camaraderie with fellow attorneys, judges, legal professionals, and friends of Pro Bono! **Proudly sponsored by ServisFirst Bank – supporting Legal Access For All!**

Date: Thursday, August 21, 2025

Time: 5:30-7:30pm

Location: Community Legal Services, 1440 North Nova Rd, Daytona Beach, FL

Enjoy complimentary appetizers, open bar, and the opportunity to unwind and network with colleagues from across the legal field. Whether you're new to the area or a familiar face, all are welcome!

[Kindly RSVP by August 18, 2025 HERE](#)

Hosted with appreciation for our legal community's dedication and service. We look forward to seeing you there!



LEGALLY BLONDE

VCBA Had a great Ladies Night Out seeing Legally Blonde the Musical at Athens Theatre in DeLand!



FLAGLER BAR ASSOCIATION

The Flagler County Bar Association will NOT have a monthly luncheon in July, but we will resume in August. Our August monthly luncheon will be held on **Friday, August 22, 2025** at The Landing Strip in Palm Coast from 11:30-1:00. We have reserved their party room in the back.

You are welcome to come at any time during that time frame, and all attendees will pay for themselves. This is a chance to socialize and have some down time during your busy schedules.

Judges, as always, please feel free to bring your Judicial Assistants and if there is anyone that I may have missed in this email or someone that you know that may be interested in attending, please feel free to forward this email to them.

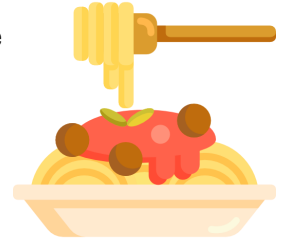
The Flagler County Bar will be having their 2026 Annual Meeting on **Friday, December 12, 2025**. Please save the date and more information will follow.

If there are any questions, please let me know.

Regina Ranier-Sprague, Executive Director

Flagler County Bar Association

flaglerbar@gmail.com



VOLUSIA COUNTY PARALEGAL ASSOCIATION

Mailing Address: 125 N. Ridgewood Ave., Suite 100, Daytona Beach, FL 32114

Email: volusiaparalegals@gmail.com - Website: volusiacountyparalegal.com



1725 W. International Speedway Blvd.,
Daytona Beach 32114

MEMBERSHIP MEETING

August 14, 2025, at 6:00 P.M.

Our presenter will be Daniel Hill, Esq. with Hill & Hill Attorneys at Law PLLC who will present: "Common Title Issues and How to Solve Them". You will receive 1 hour NALA Substantive CLE for the presentation (The Florida Bar recognizes NALA CLEs)

New: To register for the meeting at the following link: <https://www.zeffy.com/ticketing/august-14-2025-membership-meeting>. The dinner choices will be listed in the Zeffy Link. Note that all options come non-alcohol beverage i.e., soda, coffee, or tea. Alcoholic beverages are available at cost. You will be able to pay via credit card now, or you can choose to pay at the door. Please RSVP by August 12, 2025. The Link will allow you to provide us with your choice of meal, and any menu change, so that your meal can be prepared and served shortly after 6:00 p.m. Anyone not showing up at the meeting without cancelling will be responsible for the meal cost.

Note: If you are vegan or have other dietary needs, please let us know and we can help you with options.

- Membership cost with dinner: \$ 23.00
- Membership cost without dinner: \$7.00
- Non membership cost with dinner: \$28.00
- Non membership cost without dinner: \$10.00

SAVE THE DATE

September 25, 2025, Annual Meeting and Student Night; Guest speaker, Michael Ciocchetti, Esq.

October 25, 2025, Morning Seminar Fairfield Inn; Artificial Intelligence; Guest Speaker, Lori Sandman, Esq.

Check out the [Summer 2025 community news-letter](#) for the Office of the State Attorney, Florida's 7th Judicial Circuit.

If you would like to receive our community newsletter, please [sign up](#) or email me.

For more updates, don't forget to follow us on [Twitter](#) (@SAO7FL) and [Facebook](#) (@SAO7FL)!

Haley Harrison

Public Information Officer/
Community Engagement Specialist
Office of State Attorney R.J. Larizza

251 N. Ridgewood Avenue
Daytona Beach, FL 32114
harrisonh@sao7.org
Cell: (386) 481-8751

COMMUNITY EVENTS



September 6, 2025

Join us for the 18th Annual Glitter & Gold Gala on Saturday, September 6, 2025, at the Ocean Center in Daytona Beach. Enjoy an evening of dinner, drinks, entertainment, and auctions—all in support of families facing childhood cancer.

[Buy gala tickets](#)

[View sponsorship packet](#)

Donate an auction item: Contact us at childhoodcancerfoundationinc@gmail.com

No parent should have to choose between keeping the lights on or getting their child to treatment.

St. Johns Association for Women Lawyers is proud to announce it has secured a private, safe, and sanitary space to nurse or pump while at the St. Johns County Courthouse.

Join us for the Ribbon Cutting and official Grand Opening of the Nursing Room on

TUESDAY, AUGUST 12, 2025

11:30 a.m.
Annex Courtroom
Richard O. Watson Judicial Center
4010 Lewis Speedway, St. Augustine, FL
Lunch immediately following ceremony

R.S.V.P. by August 4th

www.stjawl.org
St.JWomenlawyers@gmail.com

ST. JOHNS ASSOCIATION FOR WOMEN LAWYERS



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Wright & Casey, P.A. is pleased to announce that **Barbara C. Reid, Esq.** has achieved board certification in the area of **Condominium and Planned Development Law.**

Attorneys at Wright & Casey, P.A. have represented community associations in Volusia and Flagler Counties for over 40 years in a wide range of legal matters, including covenant amendment and enforcement, statutory compliance, litigation, appeals, and more.

Wright & Casey, P.A.
340 North Causeway, New Smyrna Beach, FL 32169
(386) 428-3311



You are cordially invited to attend the investiture of

The Honorable
Michele S. Simonsen

as

Volusia County Court Judge

of the

Seventh Judicial Circuit
State of Florida

Friday, September 5, 2025
3:30 PM

The Mori Hosseini Center at Daytona State College
1200 West International Speedway Blvd.
Daytona Beach, FL
Reception to follow

JOB POSTINGS

Smith Bigman Brock, P.A. is Hiring | Insurance Defense Associate

Smith Bigman Brock is seeking a dedicated and experienced attorney with 3 – 6 years' experience to join our insurance defense practice group. The ideal candidate will have a strong background in insurance defense. Trial experience is preferred but is not required. We provide our employees with a stellar work environment, excellent compensation, commensurate with experience, and full benefits package including, but not limited to, Health, Dental, Life, AD&D insurance; 401(k) and 401(k) employer matching; Bar Dues and CLE expenses; Professional Development; Generous PTO; Paid, private parking.

Responsibilities

- Represent clients in court or before government agencies
- Prepare and draft legal documents on behalf of clients
- Negotiate settlements for legal disputes
- Comply with all legal standards and regulations
- Perform administrative and management functions related to the practice of law

Qualifications

- Licensed member of the Florida Bar, in good standing
- Previous insurance defense law practice experience
- Strong working knowledge of Florida & Federal civil practice
- Strong analytical and problem-solving skills
- Excellent research, writing and organizational skills
- Familiarity with case management software

Please submit a cover letter, resume, and references via email to dkowalski@daytonalaw.com.

At Smith Bigman Brock we are proud of our commitment to excellence in all that we do! If you have what it takes, don't miss this opportunity to join our team and grow with us.

WE ARE HIRING!



CORPORATE TRANSACTIONS ASSOCIATE

Cobb & Cole, P.A. is seeking a corporate/business law attorney with a minimum of 5 years' experience to support a shareholder with 30+ years' of corporate and business law practice.

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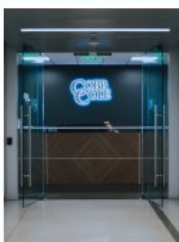
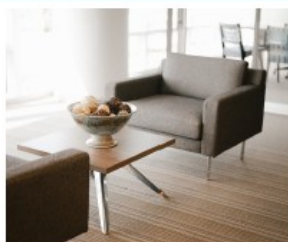
Erum S. Kistemaker
Managing Attorney

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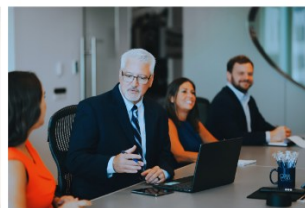
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At Stewart, we are proud supporters of the Volusia County Bar Association. We believe in the power of community and the importance of building strong connections within our industry.

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VOLUSIA COUNTY LAW LIBRARY

Volusia County Law Library

Newsletter

Monthly e-newsletters with featured titles, resource links, library news, and trivia questions.

CLE Courses

Attorneys may rent CLE courses and also borrow titles from the VCLL Law Practice Management Collection.

Book Sales

The Law Library offers discounted used law books for sale. Receive 10% off when you donate any used books.

vclawlib.org

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Workers Comp Section - Clay Meek, Chair

VOLUSIA COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION

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