

COMMUNICATOR

The Volusia County Bar Association Newsletter | January 2026



A Note from the President

As we move into the new year, I'm reminded—daily—that the practice of law is nothing if not inventive. We solve problems that don't come with instructions, adapt to rules that seem to evolve overnight, and somehow do it all while managing clients, deadlines, and calendars. In other words: we innovate. Constantly.

Which brings me, naturally, to intellectual property. Each year, the U.S. Patent Office grants patents that are brilliant, bizarre, and occasionally even astonishing. Our practice provides a view of innovating and evolving technology, and occasional glimpses of the future. From rotating space station designs that could usher in long-duration orbiting labs to AI systems that try to interpret the emotional lives of our pets, the world of patents reminds us that creativity knows no bounds. If you need a reminder that creativity is alive and well—and legally protectable—it's worth a few minutes looking at Time Magazine's Best Inventions of 2025, check out <https://time.com/collections/best-inventions-2025/>. Innovation is not limited to Silicon Valley; it's happening everywhere, including right here in our community.

That same spirit of creativity is what makes our Volusia County Bar Association work. We are lawyers from different practices, backgrounds, and perspectives, yet we consistently find ways to collaborate, improve, and support each other. Whether it's through CLEs, mentorship, service projects, or simply showing up and engaging, this organization works because its members do.

Thank you for the ideas you bring, the time you give, and the good humor you maintain. I'm looking forward to a year of smart conversations, meaningful connections, and perhaps a few astonishing innovations of our own. Here's wishing you a new year filled with success, fair winds and following seas, and at least a few challenges worthy of elegant solutions.

Warmly,

Lori

Lori Sandman, Esq., *VCBA President, 2025-26*



We Want to Hear From You!

Your feedback helps shape the programs, events, and resources we offer.

Please complete the **Annual VCBA Member Survey** and share your thoughts on how we can better serve you in the year ahead. The survey only takes a few minutes and your input makes a big difference! Survey closes January 15.

[TAKE THE SURVEY HERE](#)

VCBA MEMBER DUES - DUE!!

Dear VCBA Members,

It's that time of year, 2026 VCBA Membership Dues are due. VCBA Member Dues run on calendar year (Jan 1 – Dec 31) and **ARE NOW DUE.**

We continue to use JoinIt for our Membership Management Platform. This allows you to pay your membership dues securely online, update your profile information at your convenience, and access member benefits and resources effortlessly. To ensure uninterrupted access to your VCBA membership, please follow these steps to complete payment:

- [Log in to the JoinIt platform here](#)
- If you have any issues accessing your account, please reach out to us at volusiabar@gmail.com.
- Submit your payment for 2026 membership dues directly through the platform.

If you utilize the **Attorney Search feature** on our website, please note the following update intended to reduce confusion from last year:

- You have now received ONE combined invoice that includes both your 2026 member dues and the Attorney Search fee (which remains \$50 for the first category and \$10 per additional field).
- If you would prefer two separate invoices, you may go ahead and pay your dues, then you will receive the second invoice for the attorney search separately.

If you are part of a large firm and need one invoice for multiple attorneys, please reach out and I will be happy to assist. We are working to reduce physical invoice mailings due to rising costs of printing and mailing.

****Please note: we do still accept check payments! Mail to:**

Volusia County Bar Association
1440 N. Nova Road, Suite 101
Daytona Beach, FL 32117

We appreciate your prompt attention and your continued support. If you have any questions or need assistance, please don't hesitate to contact us at volusiabar@gmail.com.

Warm regards,
Sarah Grover

Executive Director, VCBA

ATTENTION RETIRED OR SOON TO BE MEMBERS!!

We are pleased to introduce a new **Retired Membership** category for the Volusia County Bar Association. For just **\$50 annually**, retired attorneys can remain connected and engaged with the local legal community while continuing to share their valuable experience and expertise through VCBA programs, events, and service opportunities.

The VCBA Board of Directors

VCBA EVENTS

Join us for a **Private Tour of the DeLand Naval Air Space Museum followed by Dinner and CLE by Judge Heidt.**

When: Tues., Jan. 13, 2026

Time: 5:30pm tour starts

Cost: \$25 (includes dinner)

Where: (Start) DeLand Naval Air and Space Museum, 910 Biscayne Blvd, DeLand, FL 32724

Dinner to follow tour (approx. 6:30pm), we'll head next door to the DeLand Airport "Perfect Spot" Restaurant for CLE with Judge Heidt.

Register at www.volusiabar.org



To learn more about the DeLand Naval Air Station Museum visit their [website](#) or download the [brochure](#).



VCBA EVENTS

The Volusia County Bar Association

VCBA MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Feb. 20, 2026

11:30 am - 1:00 pm

"The Daytona"
Autograph Hotel
1870 Victory Cir
Daytona Beach
FL 32114

With CLE "The Sustainable Lawyer:
Systems, Strategies, and Ethics for
Modern Practice"

You will learn how to:

- ✓ Identify ethical risks caused by poor workflow management.
- ✓ Implement systems that protect competence, diligence, and communication.
- ✓ Strengthen professionalism through intentional practice choices.
- ✓ Use sustainable habits to meet obligations to clients, courts, and colleagues.



Paige Greenlee

Register Now

www.volusiabar.org

www.voteforpaige.com

Join us for the Spring **VCBA Membership Meeting** with CLE by Paige Greenlee "*The Sustainable Lawyer: Systems, Strategies, and Ethics for Modern Practice*"

Date: Friday, Feb. 20th, 2026

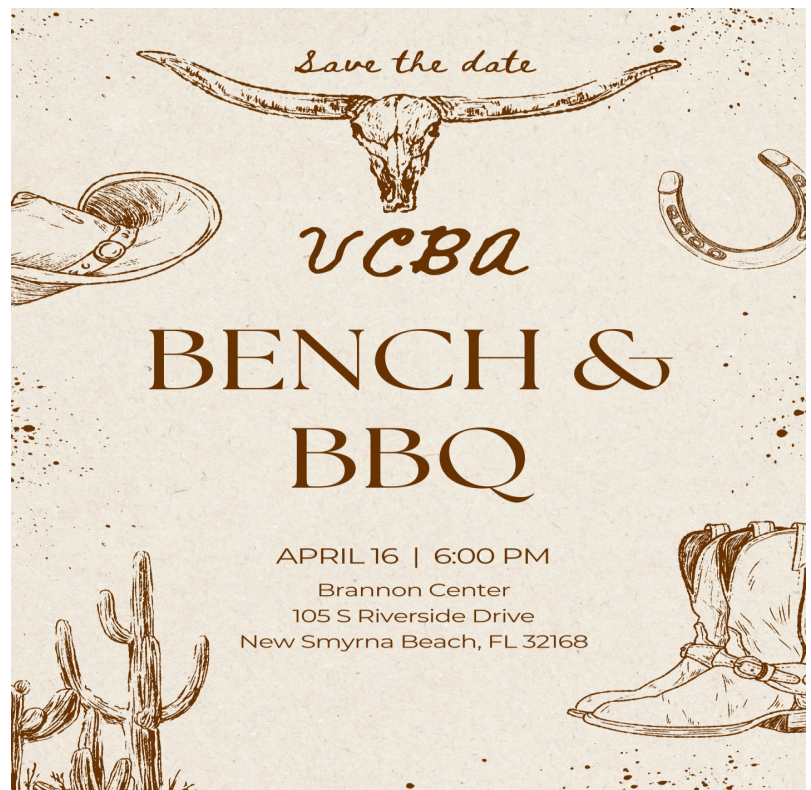
Time: 11:30 am - 1:00 pm

Where: "The Daytona" Autograph Hotel,
1870 Victory Cir, Daytona Beach, FL 32114

Cost: Members \$30, Non-Member \$40

REGISTER NOW!

**SAVE THE DATE!!
BENCH & BBQ
April 16, 2026**



YOUNG LAWYERS DIVISION (YLD)

YLD “CLEAR THE LIST” FOSTER CHILDREN TOY DRIVE

The VCBA Young Lawyers Division recently hosted its annual “Clear the List” Toy Drive, supporting foster children through the **Community Partnership for Children**. Open to all VCBA members, the event showcased the generosity and community spirit of our legal professionals.

This year, members helped clear the wish list for 41 children and contributed over \$500 in additional donations. Thanks to their efforts, each child received gifts for the holiday season, spreading joy to foster children throughout our community.

The Community Partnership for Children expressed heartfelt gratitude for the support, noting that the dedication of volunteers and donors makes it possible to bring holiday cheer to so many deserving kids. The VCBA extends sincere thanks to everyone who participated and contributed, making this year’s toy drive a tremendous success.



YOUNG LAWYERS DIVISION (YLD)

YLD FOOD BRINGS HOPE FRESH MARKET VOLUNTEER EVENT

The VCBA Young Lawyers Division hosted a recent **Food Brings Hope** Community Fresh Market event that was open to and supported by members across the entire VCBA. Through the collective efforts of the volunteers, the Fresh Market served 129 households and distributed nearly 4,000 pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables as well as meats. This outreach directly supported Food Brings Hope's mission of improving the health and wellness of neighbors throughout the community.

Food Brings Hope expressed sincere appreciation for the time and energy contributed by VCBA members, emphasizing that the dedication of the community-minded volunteers makes this work possible. The VCBA extends its thanks to Hunter Morrill, YLD President, and Mary-Catherine Crock, VCBA Philanthropic Chair, for their leadership in organizing the event, as well as to all members who volunteered their time and support.

If you are interested in volunteering, the Food Brings Hope Community Fresh Market takes place every Tuesday from 4:00-6:00 p.m. To get involved, please contact Fay at fay@fbhcommunity.org.



Pictured right:
Hunter Morrill
Debra Kay Cohen
Therese Truelove
Sarah Grover
Kayla Hartmann
Sydney Cichon
Judge Michele Simonsen



IN THE NEWS

[From "Daily Record" Jacksonville](#) by Max Marbut

Anderson, Bonamo re-elected to The Florida Bar board of governors

In elections for The Florida Bar's leadership, 15 incumbent members of the board of governors were re-elected to additional two-year terms without opposition, including Geddes Anderson in the 4th Judicial Circuit and **Philip Bonamo in the 7th Judicial Circuit.**

Board of governors members Paige Greenlee of Tampa and Jeff Rynor of Miami Beach qualified as candidates for Florida Bar president-elect in the Bar's 2026 elections.

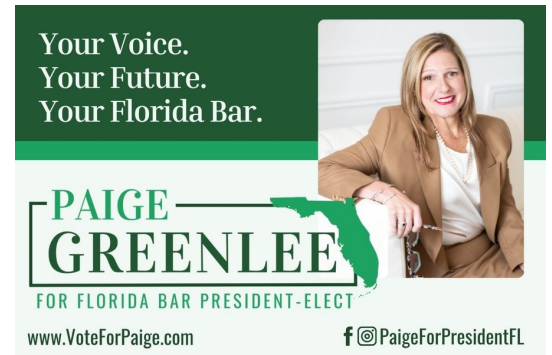
The Florida Bar News will publish platform statements and a Q&A with the candidates, both online and in the February printed edition.

Voting begins March 1, 2026. Ballots must be received before midnight March 15, 2026. Any runoff elections will be conducted in April



Philip Bonamo

Rice Law Firm, Past President VCBA



[From The Florida Bar News](#)

Gov. DeSantis appoints five to the bench

Gov. Ron DeSantis announces five judicial appointments December 22.

Judge Katherine H. Miller of Daytona Beach to serve as judge on the Seventh Judicial Circuit Court

Judge Miller has served as a county court judge for Volusia County since 2023. Previously, she worked at Wright & Casey. She earned her bachelor's degree from Vanderbilt University and her juris doctor from Florida Coastal School of Law. Miller fills a judicial vacancy created by the enactment of Senate Bill 2508.



VCBA “YARD SALE”

Florida Jurisprudence 2d. Free to a good home/office/law library if anyone wants them, contact Rob Doan at Robert.doan@cobbcole.com



FREE DESK & FILE CABINET

FREE Desk and file cabinet!! Currently stored in the VCBA storage unit, temperature controlled. Located in Ormond Beach on Granada, you will need to pick up and help load. Contact Sarah if interested and to schedule a pick up time at volusiabar@gmail.com. Or if you know someone/somewhere in need (e.g., student, church, etc.) please let Sarah know as well.



VOLUSIA COUNTY PARALEGALS ASSOCIATION



PLEASE JOIN US FOR A SPECIAL CLE MEETING & SWEARING IN NEW BOARD

January 13, 2026, at 6:00 P.M.



**1725 W. International Speedway Boulevard
Daytona Beach 32114**

Our presenter will be the Honorable Judge Dawn Nichols. You will receive 1 hour NALA Substantive CLE for the presentation (The Florida Bar recognizes NALA CLEs). We will be swearing in our new board at this meeting. Please join us for a special meeting with a great speaker and lots of networking.

To register for the meeting at the following link: <https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/ticketing/cle-dinner-with-judge-nichols-and-swearing-in-of-the-new-board>. The dinner choices will be listed in the Zeffy link above. Note that all options come non-alcohol beverage i.e., soda, coffee, or tea. Alcoholic beverages are available at cost.

**Bridge to Excellence:
Regional Paralegal Summit**

SAVE THE DATE

Friday, May 1, 2026
Networking Social
Saturday, May 2, 2026
Seminar
with Breakfast and Lunch

Location:
Springhill Suites
New Smyrna Beach, Florida

Speakers include:
Jill Francisco, Linda McGrath-Cruz,
Ann Pearson, Nicholas Gerney, Esq.,
Jessica Roberts, Esq. and Todd C. Richardson, Esq.

Host Associations:
Brevard Paralegal Association, Inc.,
Central Florida Paralegal Association, Inc. and
Volusia County Paralegal Association, Inc.

Please RSVP by January 12, 2026. The link above 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

COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICES

60 Years of Serving You Volusia County



Date: Saturday, January 10, 2026
11AM - 1PM

4Rivers Smokehouse Daytona
1866 Victory Cir. Ste J-100
Daytona Beach, FL 32114
Located in: Shoppes at ONE DAYTONA

Thank you for being part of our story.

Join us for food, family-friendly fun, birthday cake, and celebrate 60 years of impact!

RSVP:

[https://www.greenvelope.com/
event/60th-anniversary-
celebration-volusia](https://www.greenvelope.com/event/60th-anniversary-celebration-volusia)



For more information, email development@clsmf.org
**No legal advice will be given at the event*

NOTICES

See below position for Federal Public Defender for Northern District of Florida.

[NOTICE HERE](#)



**STATE OF FLORIDA
SEVENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT**
Flagler, Putnam, St. Johns & Volusia Counties
Steven C. Henderson Judicial Center
125 E. Orange Ave., # 200
Daytona Beach, Florida 32114

Mark A. Weinberg
Court Administrator

Phone: (386) 257-6097

MEMORANDUM

DATE: December 8, 2025

TO: Circuit and County Judges
Judicial Assistants
Clerks of Court
General Magistrates / Hearing Officers
Mediators
Staff Attorneys
County Bar Associations

FROM: Joshua Griffith, General Counsel

RE: **Interest Rate on Judgments or Decrees Effective January 1, 2026**

Section 55.03(1), Florida Statutes, requires the Chief Financial Officer of the State of Florida to set the interest rate payable on judgments or decrees quarterly.

Please be advised that the interest rate for the quarter beginning January 1, 2026, has been reduced to 8.44% per annum or .0231233 % per day.

Pursuant to section 215.422(13), Florida Statutes, the interest rate for payments to health care providers remains at 1% per month.

For more information, contact the Bureau of Accounting of the Department of Financial Services at (850) 413-5511.

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 ATTORNEY

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.

Requirements:

Must be capable of independent work in basic contract review and drafting, mergers and acquisitions, entity formation and structuring, and general business advice.

COMPENSATION IS COMMENSURATE WITH EXPERIENCE. A BOOK OF BUSINESS IS NOT REQUIRED.

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**NEW CONTACT
INFORMATION**

Email: mikaela@nordmanlaw.com

Phone: (386) 597-3073

(Call or Text)



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Board Certified Specialist in Condominium and Planned Development Law



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

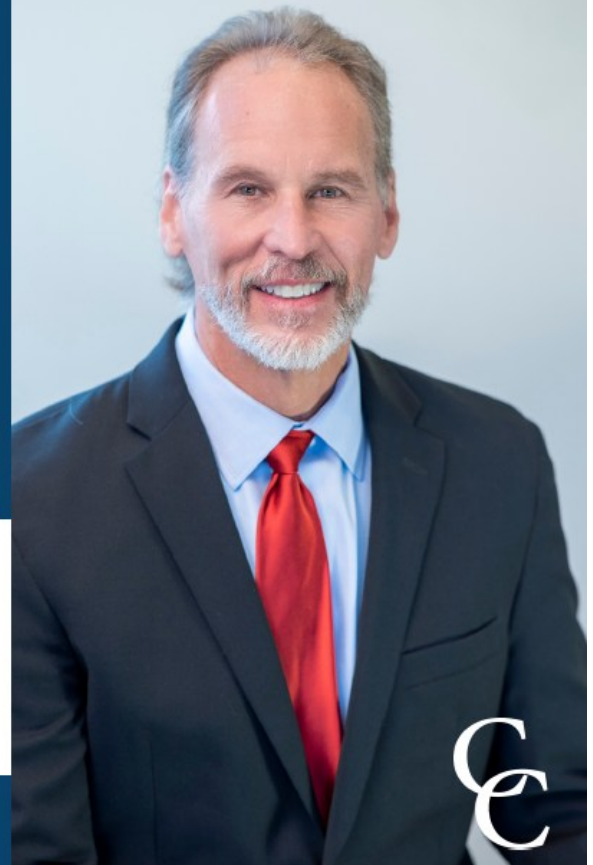
SCOTT W. CICHON CERTIFIED MEDIATOR

Mr. Cichon has been a Certified Circuit Civil Mediator since 1994. He concentrates his mediation practice on commercial, real estate, construction, contract, condominium, and collection disputes.

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- No cancellation fee



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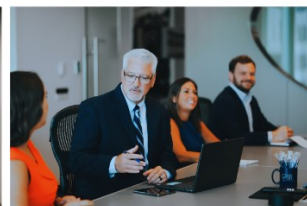
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EDWARD H. THOMPSON CERTIFIED MEDIATOR

Mr. Thompson is a Florida Supreme Court Circuit Civil Mediator. He mediates personal injury, product liability, premises liability, and insurance disputes statewide.

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- No cancellation fees



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Jennifer Barnes
Owner
jennifer@prevailtechconsulting.com



VOLUSIA COUNTY LAW LIBRARY

Volusia County Law Library Law Practice Management & More

The LPM collection exists to serve the legal community in its pursuit of professional growth and expertise.

Attorneys may borrow titles from this collection located in the DeLand Law Library.

All titles may be picked up or returned at either the DeLand or Daytona Beach Law Library.



See a complete list of all Law Practice Management titles available to borrow at:
www.vclawlib.org.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2025-26

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Workers Comp Section - Clay Meek, Chair
Philanthropic Chair - MaryCatherine Crock

VOLUSIA COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION

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