

COMMUNICATOR

The Volusia County Bar Association Newsletter | June 2026



[INTERESTED IN SERVING ON THE VCBA BOARD?](#)

The Nominating Committee will convene to consider nominations for Director positions on the VCBA board. Directors serve a term of three years and the board meets ~6 times per year to plan membership meetings, CLE seminars, social, networking and service activities.

[INTERESTED IN SERVING ON THE YLD BOARD?](#)

The Young Lawyers Division has open director positions for the 2024-25 Bar year. YLD members must be less than 35 years old and/or in practice 1-5 years to be considered. The board meets 4-5 times a year to plan a variety of YLD events including CLE seminars, community service projects and socials.

Application Information:

The deadline **HAS BEEN EXTENDED** to apply is 5:00pm on Friday, **June 5, 2026**.

The slate of nominees will be voted upon at the August 7, 2026, at the VCBA Annual Meeting.

Applications can be found via the links below and emailed to volusiabar@gmail.com for submission.

- [VCBA Board of Directors Application](#)
- [YLD Board of Directors Application](#)



VCBA Workers' Compensation Section CLE

When: July 24, 2026 from 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm

Speakers: Judge Anderson, Clay Meek, Jesse Rowe, Matt Romanik

Location: Zoom

Cost: FREE

Join the Workers' Compensation Section on July 24, 2026, for a fast-paced and engaging CLE focused on professionalism in workers' compensation practice. This panel will feature Judge Anderson, Clay Meek, Jesse Rowe, and Matt Romanik discussing professionalism in motion practice, depositions, mediation, and final hearings, followed by a Q&A session and future section planning discussion. With concise 10-minute topic segments and multiple presenters, attendees can expect practical insight, real-world perspective, and meaningful discussion.

- *Clay Meek, Workers' Compensation Chair*

[REGISTER HERE](#)

VCBA LEGAL SUMMIT

Join us on August 7, 2026, for the **VCBA Legal Summit** at the Daytona Beach International Airport! This exciting afternoon will feature the VCBA Annual Meeting, engaging Judiciary Panels CLE Sessions, lunch, and networking opportunities capped off with a happy hour to connect with colleagues and members of the legal community.

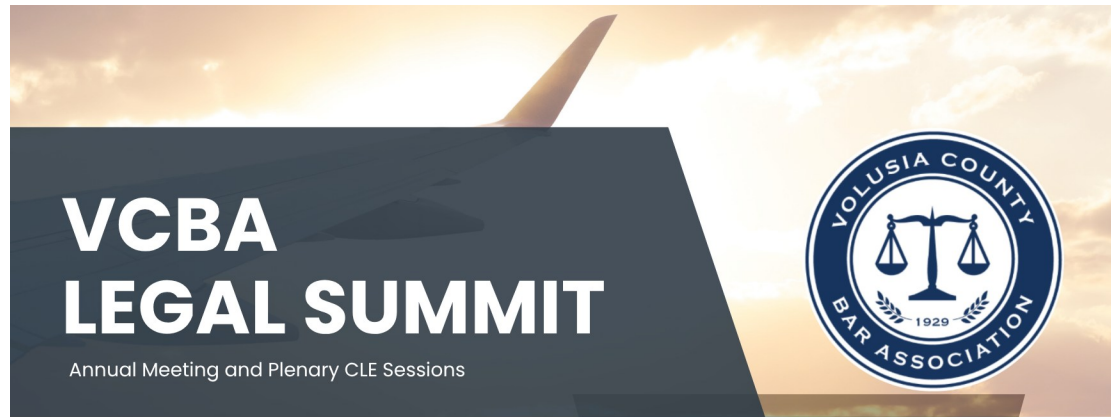
Registration Options:

- Annual Meeting Only (includes lunch):
 - * Members \$40
 - * Non-Members \$50
- Full Legal Summit (Annual Meeting + CLE Sessions)
 - * Members \$70
 - * Non-Members \$100

*Parking is included.

*Pricing increases by \$20 after July 15th so don't delay!

[REGISTER TODAY](#)



SPEAKERS



Lori Sandman



Hunter Morrill



Tonya Cromartie



Sydney Cichon



Judge M. Orfinger



Judge Totten



Judge Blocker



Judge Maltz

AGENDA

- **VCBA Annual Meeting**
12:30pm - 1:30pm
(check-in & lunch at 12:00pm)
- **Motions, Pleadings, and Legal Writing Panel**
1:30pm - 2:30pm (followed by break)
- **Hot Topics in Practice w/ Q&A**
3:00pm - 4:00pm
- **Networking & Happy Hour**
4:00pm - Canned Food Drive! Bring two canned goods for a free drink ticket!

Registration options available:

1. Annual Meeting ONLY (lunch included)
2. Annual Meeting & CLE Sessions (lunch and happy hour included)



August 7, 2026
12:00 pm - 4:00 pm



Daytona Beach
International Airport

[Register Now](#)

Early Bird Discount available until July 15, 2026.

www.volusiabar.org

VCBA MENTAL HEALTH CLE (RECAP)



The VCBA had a wonderful time with VCBA Board Member Tammy Jaques at Clean Goods Co. for our Mental Health CLE “You Can’t Pour From An Empty Cup”! Be sure to check out the store next time you’re downtown DeLand and follow along on socials.



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VCBA vs FCBA TRIVIA (RECAP)

We had a great time trivia battling it out with the Flagler County Bar Association! They may have gotten us this time and won the trophy back, but a great time was had by all. Thank you to [Ormond Brewing Company](#) and [BIG TUNA Entertainment](#) for hosting us!



Mikaela M. Nordman, Esquire

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INFORMATION**

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Phone: (386) 597-3073

(Call or Text)





FEATURE ARTICLE

In a 2% Growth Market, Small Firms Have the Advantage

HOW SMALLER FIRMS ARE GAINING GROUND IN A SLOW-GROWTH LEGAL MARKET

By Stephen Furnari, Corporate Attorney & Owner, Ripple Coworking

The legal industry may be growing, but not by much. “Real demand for legal services grew just 2% last year,” says Shireen Hilal, legal strategist and CEO of Maior, a consultancy that helps boutique and midsize firms increase profitability, build growth strategies and stand out in a crowded market. With AI, automation, and shifting client expectations driving change, smaller firms have a unique opportunity to move faster, adapt, and win higher-value work.

We recently sat down to discuss what Hilal is seeing across the industry and strategies for small firms to consider in the next 12–24 months.

BIG LAW IS EVOLVING—BUT CAUTIOUSLY

According to Hilal, larger firms are evolving, but slowly. “We’re seeing a lot of lateral partner movement, hesitation to invest in junior associates given pushback from the corporate market and tech advances, and increased comfort with, but slower adoption of, AI tools,” Hilal explains.

CONSOLIDATION IS HEATING UP

According to Hilal, the lateral partner market is very hot and that includes entire practice groups or sometimes full firms. With real demand growing only by 2%, the easiest path to growth right now is acquiring more books of business. Consolidation is the dominant growth strategy in today’s market.

THE SMALL FIRM ADVANTAGE

At the same time, clients are demanding more practical and focused legal advice—putting pressure on traditional models. According to Hilal, smaller firms are most poised for growth.

“We’re innovating as a society faster than ever, and the law continues to fall behind, says Hilal. “Businesses need lawyers willing to navigate the gray areas and keep them moving.”

Smaller firms are best positioned to capitalize. They are moving faster, advising in gray areas, and delivering more commercially practical guidance.

In a slow-growth market, firms that specialize, move quickly, and leverage AI have a real opportunity to capture market share. “Firms that succeed in this environment are not the ones copying competitors—they build around their clients’ needs,” says Hilal. “

“Best practices” are a path to mediocrity, warns Hilal. “The most successful firms focus on what their clients actually need—and build around that.”



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Stephen Furnari is a corporate attorney and the owner of Ripple Coworking, a professional workspace community for lawyers and other professional service-based businesses, with locations in Downtown Daytona Beach and Flagler Beach. He works closely with attorneys building more focused, efficient, and growth-oriented practices.

STEPS YOU CAN TAKE NOW TO STAY AHEAD

FOCUS ON CLIENT EXPERIENCE

Clients are looking for more than technical advice—they want insight, connection, and curated experiences. Think smaller, high-touch interactions (salons, roundtables, dinners).

RE-THINK BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Look beyond word-of-mouth referrals and build more intentional business development systems. Create more consistent outreach and focus on long-term growth engines.

COMPETE FOR BUSINESS UP-MARKET

Target higher-value clients by focusing on expertise rather than size. Work on niche positioning, build services around higher-value work and compete on insight, not scale.

KEEP TEAMS LEAN WITH AI

AI adoption is expected to impact smaller firms faster than Big Law, allowing them to streamline work and reduce reliance on junior-level support. Work on streamlining back-office operations and increasing leverage without adding headcount.

“Best practices are a path to mediocrity.”

— SHIREEN HILAL
Legal Strategist

FROM A VOLUSIA ATTORNEY

“As a solo, I don’t have the luxury of competing by being the biggest. I have to compete by being more responsive, more strategic, and more focused on what my clients actually need. For smaller firms, that creates real opportunity if you’re willing to adapt.”

— Matthew Romanik, Esq.
Workers’ Comp Attorney

IN OTHER NEWS

Happy National Historic Preservation Month! Check out the tremendous amount of records preserving history available for viewing for FREE on www.clerk.org!



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CHECK OUT THE DINING DOCKET!

The Dining Docket combines passion for the law with a love for food. A lawyer by day with a big appetite! Follow me as I explore local fare, Florida's greatest eats - and beyond. Stay tuned to find out what's On The Docket this week! Live with Flavor!

By Erika Barger

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FLAGLER COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION

FCBA CLE - June 9, 2026

The Flagler County Bar Association will be hosting a CLE worth 1 general credit hour on June 9, 2026 from 12:00 PM-1:30 PM at the Kim C. Hammond Justice Center, in the first floor jury room.

The subject will be, "Managing And Growing A Small Practice: Delegating and Hiring Smart".

It will be conducted by Karina De La Cruz, CEO and Founder of Horizon Legal Solutions and Horizon Premier Staffing. Please refer to the attached flyer for further details.

The Flagler County Bar will be providing lunch from Dominic's Deli, along with bottles of water during the CLE.

If you are interested in attending, please RSVP to flaglerbar@gmail.com.

Please let me know if you have any questions and we look forward to seeing you there!

Regina Ranier-Sprague

Executive Director

Flagler County Bar Association

Post Office Box 353783

Palm Coast, Florida 32135-4750

Phone: 386-235-2679

flaglerbar@gmail.com

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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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Moot Court

- Advanced to Nationals three years in a row (2023, 2024, 2025)
- Experienced team
- Multiple outstanding orator awards
- *Stetson Today* article (2024):
<https://bit.ly/4uOJvsx>



Qualifications:

- College Graduate, but MA, PhD, or JD preferred
- Multiple years of experience as participant, coach or in related field preferred.
- Mock Trial: willing to meet 2-3 Times a week in-person during the evening. Experience with trial advocacy & educated on the Federal Rules of Evidence. Coaching begins in early Sept.
- Moot Court: willing to Meet 2-3 Times a week either on-person or on-line during the evening. Experience with trial advocacy is preferred but not required. Coaching begins ASAP.
- Willing to travel to at Least 2-3 Competitions a Semester

Interested? Please send your CV plus a paragraph-long expression of interest to Joshua Rust at jrust@stetson.edu. We will begin reviewing the applications late May, 2026.

COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICES

Community Legal Services is looking for family law and bankruptcy attorneys in Volusia county to join our pro bono efforts, whether through brief advice clinics or taking on a case. This is a great opportunity to support your community, earn pro bono credit, and make a meaningful difference. We'd love to have you involved!



Volunteer Attorneys Needed: Family Law and Bankruptcy

We are seeking family law and bankruptcy attorneys in Central Florida for pro bono opportunities.

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<https://forms.office.com/r/CaKu2xiZ5f>

JOB POSTINGS

ASSOCIATE ATTORNEY

Paul, Elkind, Branz & Paul, LLP is seeking an associate attorney. We are looking for a motivated attorney to grow their practice in a well-established Volusia County firm. Applicants should have strong communication and writing skills. This position provides the opportunity to collaborate on dynamic matters as part of a team as well as to work independently. We offer a competitive salary and benefits, with an excellent opportunity for career advancement. The ideal candidate has 2 to 8 years of experience in civil litigation or general civil practice, but we will consider the right candidate regardless of experience.

Please email resumes to dgazy@paulandelkind.com.



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ASST STW PROSECUTOR-SENIOR ATTORNEY

Please see the job description and [information here](#).

Please [apply here](#). Application deadline is 6/26/2026.

Thank you,

Tammy Rutledge

Executive Director

Office of the Statewide Prosecution

Office of the Attorney General James Uthmeier

3507 E. Frontage Road, Suite 350

Tampa, FL 33607-7013

[\(813\) 287-7219](tel:(813)287-7219)

NOTICES

Sent on May 19, 2026:

CONTACT: Joe Jacquot, Chair; jjacquot@gunster.com

Fifth District Court of Appeal Judicial Nominating Commission

TELEPHONE: 904-350-7414

FIFTH DISTRICT COURT OF APPEAL JUDICIAL NOMINATING COMMISSION EXTENDS APPLICATION DEADLINE AND UPDATES INTERVIEW DATE

As a result of the announced retirement of Judge Jordan Pratt, there is a vacancy to be filled on the Fifth District Court of Appeal (DCA). Gov. Ron DeSantis has asked the Fifth DCA Judicial Nominating Commission to provide him with highly qualified nominees for this vacancy.

Complete unredacted and redacted applications (see below for more information) for the vacancy must be received **before 5:00 p.m.** on **Friday, June 5, 2026**, via e-mail to: jjacquot@gunster.com. The commission does not require a paper copy of the application. Applications may be downloaded from the [Florida Bar's website](#) or the [Office of the Governor](#).

Neither incomplete applications nor applications submitted after the deadline will be considered. All applicants must meet the qualifications for judges outlined in Article V, Section 8 of the Florida Constitution.

Personal information not subject to public disclosure should be redacted by the applicant on a separate copy of the application as permitted by Section 119.071 of the Florida Statutes. Please also e-mail a digital photo with the application. To assist the Commission, all questions on the application must be fully and completely answered. Applications must include current contact information (especially direct phone numbers and preferably mobile phone numbers) including e-mail addresses for judges, co-counsel, opposing counsel, and references to facilitate the background investigation that will be conducted by the members of the Commission. To the extent possible, written communication with Commissioners for background investigation purposes should be via e-mail rather than by text message. *Applicants shall not initiate contact with the Commissioners until the nominees are submitted to Governor DeSantis unless questions pertain to the application process only.*

Interviews are expected to be held on **Friday, June 19, 2026**, at the Fifth DCA Courthouse, library room, at 300 South Beach, Daytona Beach, Florida.

All proceedings of this Commission are open to the public except for deliberations. Accordingly, applicants should not expect their unredacted application to be kept confidential. If an applicant is nominated, all materials attached to the application(s) will be submitted to the Office of General Counsel for Governor DeSantis.

If there are any questions about the application process, please contact Joe Jacquot at jjacquot@gunster.com or at (904) 350-7414.

WILLS SEARCH

WILLS SEARCH

The Following Two Wills contact Tara:

Richard A. Roderick

Date of birth: 07/23/1941

Date of death: 04/12/2026

Last known address: 400 E Howry Ave, Apt 116, DeLand, FL 32724

**I have an out of state will from Missouri, dated 11/18/2014. I'm attempting to determine if the will was updated after moving to Florida.

Linda Louise Seabrook aka Linda Louise Huck

Date of birth: 03/29/1948

Date of death: 06/28/2024

Last known address: 509 Riverside Dr, Ormond Beach, FL 32176

**I am aware of a will dated 06/10/2009, deposited in Flagler County. I'm attempting to determine if the will was updated post-divorce.

Contact information:

Tara J. Mason, email: tarajmasonesq@gmail.com, phone: (386) 264-1737



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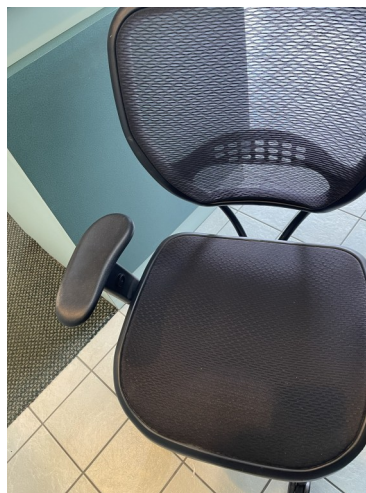
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Board Certified Specialist in Condominium and Planned Development Law



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.

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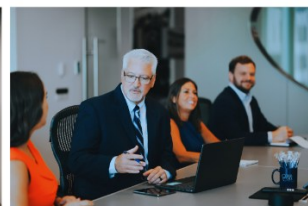
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VCBA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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SECTIONS & COMMITTEES

Solo/Small Firm Section - R. Shawn McBride, Chair
Family Law Section - Sara Glover, Chair
Elder Law Section - Victoria Zinn, Chair
State & Local Government Section - vacant
Workers Comp Section - Clay Meek, Chair
Philanthropic Chair - MaryCatherine Crock

VOLUSIA COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION

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