

# SPEAKING OF JUSTICE

NEWS FROM THE FLORIDA BAR FOUNDATION

Volume 12

Issue no. 2



Florida's legal aid programs used technology to shift client intake online, host virtual volunteer trainings and create resources for the public. They also utilized social media to announce social distancing office policies and remote services. (L-R clockwise: Community Justice Project, Dade Legal Aid, Legal Services of Greater Miami, Legal Services of North Florida, Florida Legal Services, IDignity.)

## Legal aid programs prepare, respond in face of COVID-19

As the reality of stay-at-home orders, social distancing and closed businesses set in for Floridians in mid-March, the state's civil legal aid programs and the Foundation came together to prepare for providing legal services during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Foundation and legal aid staff members acted quickly to transition to remote work. In an email to supporters, Bay Area Legal

Services acknowledged that they expect their client base to experience mass layoffs, a potential backlog of eviction notices and an increase in domestic violence resulting from stressed people confined to their homes.

Grantee IDignity disseminated a video with each of their staff members explaining how they would continue to work on securing identification for clients and held a virtual volunteer training.

Community Justice Project worked with the Housing Umbrella Group to create an online tool that shows eviction status by county. Florida's Children First and Florida Youth Shine created digital fliers for reemployment assistance and guidance for professionals working with youth experiencing homelessness during the coronavirus.

The Foundation has also participated in calls with the Florida Civil Legal Aid



*Florida Bar Foundation President Hala A. Sandridge began her term July 1. A co-managing shareholder of the Tampa office of Buchanan Ingersoll & Rooney, she is a member of the firm's board of directors and chair of its appellate practice group. She earned her bachelor's degree from the University of Florida and her law degree from the Florida State University College of Law. In 2018, Sandridge was reappointed to the Florida Supreme Court Judicial Nominating Commission. She is a recipient of the Hillsborough County Bar Association's Jimmy Kynes Pro Bono Award, The Florida Bar President's Pro Bono Service Award and the Distinguished Pro Bono Award from Bay Area Legal Services.*

## Message from the President

I hope this newsletter finds you and your family healthy during this unique and unprecedented time. While there have been and will continue to be many challenges, I am buoyed by the resiliency and hard-working spirit of the organizations the Foundation supports.

In March, as the significance of the coronavirus became clear, the Foundation's board of directors abated action on four grant programs to give staff time to reconsider and revise funding recommendations. This was necessary because we expect a substantial increase in legal needs related to COVID-19 and the resulting economic fallout, and a serious drop in the Federal Reserve's interest rates, which affect IOTA funds.

In April, the board's grants and executive committees reconvened (virtually) and approved the following grants:

- Administration of Justice
  - \$298,913 - Innocence Project of Florida
  - \$250,000 - Florida's Children First
  - \$233,415 - Legal Aid Service of Broward County
- Children's Legal Services
  - \$1,113,075 - See page 5 for details
- Pro Bono Transformation
  - \$100,000 - CABA Pro Bono
  - \$85,000 - Southern Legal Counsel
  - \$83,500 - Community Legal Services of Mid-Florida
- Pro Bono Innovation
  - \$25,000 - Legal Aid Society of Palm Beach County
  - \$25,000 - Jacksonville Area Legal Aid
  - \$25,000 - Catholic Legal Services
  - \$25,000 - Lee County Legal Aid Society
  - \$19,000 - Legal Services of Greater Miami

The Foundation is working hard to provide resources for our grantees and to guide them through this crisis. Our board made the hard but right decision to reduce funding of some grants to divert that money to disaster grants to combat an all but certain increase in housing, domestic violence, reemployment and education cases related to COVID-19.

To close, I'd like to share a few pieces of positive news with you. The Legal Services Corporation, which funds seven of our state's legal aid programs, will receive \$50 million from the federal government to use toward legal aid issues related to the coronavirus.

Additionally, the Foundation received a \$50,000 donation from The Florida Bar Family Law Section and a \$10,000 donation from the Criminal Law Section. Both sections have been consistent supporters for many years, and we thank them for their generosity.

Floridians are fortunate to have a cohesive network of legal aid programs that share resources and work together to cover the entire state. Together, we will continue to provide legal aid and access to justice for everyone.

Hala A. Sandridge, President

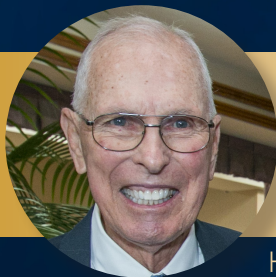




The Florida Bar Foundation

# Medal of Honor Awards

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Foundation will not be hosting its 44<sup>th</sup> Annual Reception and Dinner during The Florida Bar Annual Convention. Instead, an awards ceremony will be scheduled at a later time to honor the award winners below.



MEDAL OF  
HONOR  
FOR A  
LAWYER

HON. PETER T. FAY  
U.S. CIRCUIT COURT OF APPEALS,  
11<sup>TH</sup> CIRCUIT\*



MEDAL OF  
HONOR  
FOR A  
LAWYER

HON. JAMES LAWRENCE KING  
U.S. DISTRICT COURT FOR THE  
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF FLORIDA



MEDAL OF  
HONOR  
FOR A  
NON-LAWYER

DR. MIMI GRAHAM  
FSU CENTER FOR PREVENTION  
AND EARLY INTERVENTION POLICY

PRESIDENT'S AWARD  
FOR EXCELLENCE

HON. TIMOTHY J. CORRIGAN  
HON. ROY B. DALTON JR.  
HON. MARCIA MORALES HOWARD  
HON. WILLIAM G. YOUNG

FOUR-JUDGE PANEL OF THE U.S. DISTRICT  
COURT FOR THE MIDDLE DISTRICT OF FLORIDA

JANE ELIZABETH CURRAN  
DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

KATHY PARA  
RETIRED PRO BONO DIRECTOR,  
JACKSONVILLE AREA LEGAL AID

GOLDSTEIN - VAN NORTWICK  
AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE

FLORIDA LEGAL SERVICES  
WINNER  
FLORIDA HEALTH JUSTICE PROJECT  
FIRST RUNNER-UP  
FLORIDA JUSTICE INSTITUTE  
SECOND RUNNER-UP

## THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

MEDAL OF HONOR PRESENTING SPONSOR



PRESIDENT'S AWARD FOR  
EXCELLENCE SPONSOR



JANE ELIZABETH CURRAN  
DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD SPONSOR



GOLDSTEIN - VAN NORTWICK  
AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE SPONSOR



CEREMONY SPONSORSHIPS AVAILABLE. CONTACT MICHELLE FONSECA, CFRE, AT MFONSECA@FLABARFNDN.ORG OR 407-960-7019.

\*Photo by Ana Rodriguez-Soto

# Spring Board of Directors meeting report

**T**he Florida Bar Foundation Board of Directors met online on March 27. **The major actions of the board and reports received included:**

- **Grants Committee**

► Grant funding recommendations for Administration of Justice grants, Children's Legal Services grants, Pro Bono Innovation and Transformation grants and Summer Fellows awards were temporarily abated pending further review. The Board directed that all pending recommendations for such grants be revisited in light of the onset of the coronavirus, the resulting economic fallout, and the clear indication that there will be a significant increase in demand for civil legal aid in the immediate future.

► The Grants Committee reconvened on April 6, 2020, to consider staff's revised recommendations and make updated funding recommendations. Thereafter, the Grants Committee's recommendations were published to all directors for review and comment. The Executive Committee then met on April 9 and approved the recommendations. (See President's Message, page 2.)

► The Board considered and approved four carry-over requests made by Three Rivers Legal Services, Jacksonville Area Legal Aid, Bay Area Legal Services and Florida Rural Legal Services. These programs requested permission to carry over unspent funds awarded to them in 2019 for their Community Economic Development grants.

- **Loan Repayment Assistance Program**

► Based on staff's review and recommendation as well as the Grants Committee's recommendation, the Board approved forgiveness of 178 loans totaling \$883,438. It also directed staff to seek repayment of \$99,624 on 22 loans and approved rescission of \$115,061.

- **Nominating Committee**

► The Foundation ratified the selection of four board members. Carl Domino, Kevin McCoy, Murray Silverstein and Brian Currie will serve three-year terms beginning July 1, 2020.

- **Medal of Honor Committee**

► The Board unanimously ratified the work of the committee in selecting the Hon. Peter T. Fay and the Hon. James Lawrence King to be honored jointly with the Medal of Honor for a Lawyer. Dr. Mimi Graham is the recipient of the Medal of Honor for a Non-Lawyer, and Kathy Para will receive the Curran Award.

► In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Foundation will not host its annual dinner. Instead, an awards ceremony will be held at a later time.

► The 2020 Goldstein-Van Nortwick Award for Excellence winner is Florida Legal Services. The first runner-up is Florida Health Justice Project, and the second runner-up is Florida Justice Institute.

- **IOTA ad hoc committee formed**

► President Sandridge announced the formation of an ad hoc committee whose

charge is to explore, research, review and, as warranted, recommend to the Board for consideration and implementation reasonable means and methods to enhance and increase the Foundation's receipt of IOTA revenues from existing or new sources. Joseph "Jody" Hudgins will chair the committee.

- **Technology Committee**

► The committee continues its work toward the development of a long-range plan for the Foundation as it relates to the promotion, funding and development of technology and innovation for increased access to justice by self-represented individuals, civil legal aid providers, and Florida lawyers. The draft plan is expected to be available in June.

For a more detailed report, visit [TheFloridaBarFoundation.org](http://TheFloridaBarFoundation.org). **The next board meeting will be on June 18, 2020.**

## 2020-22 Equal Justice Works Fellows named



### Anne Piervil, Catholic Legal Services

Piervil will provide direct legal services through a Medical Legal Partnership with a community health clinic serving Haitian farmworkers in Central Florida to improve work-related social determinants of health. Piervil graduated from Mississippi College School of Law in 2019.



### Brittany Brooks, Coast to Coast Legal Aid

In Broward County, Brooks will provide trauma-informed civil legal services and outreach to assist female veterans reintegrate into civilian life and access resources vital to their financial and medical security. Brooks is expected to graduate from Florida International University College of Law in May.



### Daniela Donoso, Legal Services of North Florida

Donoso will create a community-connected immigration law program to serve immigrants who are low-income and/or victims of crime. She will establish client, case, outreach, and education protocols, procedures & resources for LSNF staff. Donoso is expected to graduate from Florida State University College of Law in May.

Fellows are sponsored by the Foundation. Donoso is jointly sponsored by Greenberg Traurig and The Florida Bar Foundation.

# Guardians ad Litem funded by Foundation change one life at a time

It wouldn't have been a happy story or a success story," says Melissa Whitted, reflecting on what it would have been like for her and her husband to adopt their now seventeen-year-old twins without the help of legal aid.

Whitted, who works as a dispatcher for Lynx Transportation in Orlando, and her husband had raised their own four children, now all adults, when they were confronted with a family emergency in 2018. Her great niece and nephew were the victims of severe physical abuse at the hands of their mother.

"It's one of those things that you can't believe is happening to your family," Whitted says.

After their mother was arrested for aggravated child abuse, the twins, Hope and Quincy, met Ronnie Syme, a guardian ad litem program staff attorney with Legal Aid Society of the Orange County Bar Association. Syme became their guardian ad litem in both their dependency case and Hope's

criminal case against their mother. "She made a very difficult situation a positive situation," Hope says. "One of my favorite things about Ronnie is how understanding she was about the situation. She was never like, 'oh this is normal.' She was always very compassionate."

Syme's work is funded through a Children's Legal Services grant from the Foundation.

As the twins' guardian ad litem, Syme advocated for a Chapter 39 Injunction against their mother's paramour, who had neglected to report the abuse. She helped ensure that services were provided to the Whitteds and the children, and ultimately was successful in advocating for the termination of parental rights which led to the successful adoption of the twins by their great aunt and uncle.

In the criminal case, Syme was able to ensure that both the mother and the paramour were prosecuted for their actions. "They are wonderful and respectful

kids that had been through a lot," Syme says. "I made sure that they felt safe and comfortable throughout the process and was able to help walk them through all aspects of that case. These children have bright futures."

Now seniors in high school, Hope will be attending the University of North Florida in Jacksonville, and Quincy plans to attend the University of West Florida in the fall.

"We were some scared folks, we had no idea what was going on," Quincy says. "Everything was outside of our control. I don't know where we'd be right now, but we would not be as prosperous without Ronnie by our side."



Ronnie Syme



Quincy, Michelle, Hope and Eddie with Judge Patricia A. Doherty, who presided over the adoption hearing.

## How Can I Help?

Your donation to Children's Legal Services ensures access to justice for Florida's children.

[TheFloridaBarFoundation.org](http://TheFloridaBarFoundation.org)

## COVID-19, from p. 1

Association to discuss advocating for a statewide moratorium on evictions and for legal aid to be considered an essential service during the statewide shutdown.

The Foundation has surveyed partners and stakeholders to assess how they are coping and how it can help them manage. In April, the Foundation disseminated information to grantees about the Paycheck Protection Program, which allows them to apply for forgivable loans to pay their employees.

It has also created a page on its website with resources for lawyers and the public, and kicked off a social media campaign to raise awareness that legal aid programs are open and continuing to work on cases.

## Children's Legal Services 2020-21 grants awarded

Children's Legal Services grants fund legal assistance to needy children in critical areas which affect their safety, well being and future development.

Program	Project	Grant
Brevard County Legal Aid	Children in dependency and foster care	\$70,000
CABA Pro Bono Project	Abused, abandoned and neglected children	\$150,000
Catholic Legal Services	Children fleeing violence	\$72,140
Dade County Legal Aid	Foster children at risk and aging out of system	\$75,000
Florida Legal Services	Ending juvenile solitary confinement	\$128,305
FSU Children's Clinic	Human trafficking survivors and disabled kids	\$148,320
Lawyers for Children America	Children with complex legal needs	\$65,000
Legal Aid Society of Orange County Bar	Developmental disabilities and delinquency	\$85,000
Legal Services of Greater Miami	Students in unstable housing; with disabilities	\$86,160
Legal Services of North Florida	Foster, dependent and disabled children	\$122,675
Southern Legal Counsel	Students with health impairments, foster children	\$110,475
		Total: \$1,113,075



# ANNUAL REPORT

## THE FLORIDA BAR FOUNDATION

### 2018-19



## Message from 2018-19 President Juliette E. Lippman

**D**uring my tenure as president, I am grateful for the opportunity to have worked with an incredible group of dedicated board members and staff who are driven to constantly improve and enhance the civil legal aid system in Florida.

The Foundation is in the midst of a “strategic reset” which was adopted by the Foundation’s board of directors on June 22, 2017. We have yet to determine whether it is a success, but, I am excited about what has been accomplished thus far. I took the liberty of writing about this change in policy in my article *Strategic Reset: The Florida Bar Foundation’s Investment In a Better Future For Access To Justice And the Rule of Law*.

During the 2018-19 year, I was particularly proud of the Foundation’s initiative to increase funds by encouraging banks to waive fees and pay basis points over comparable rates on IOTA accounts. The Community Champions program has been wildly successful.

In the first eight months of the program, the Foundation received \$4.7 million more than we had projected by having two of our top 10 IOTA banks agree to increase interest rates on their accounts holding more than \$100,000. We were able to put this extra money into our grant programs.

We restarted a grant reserve, which will provide greater economic stability to the Foundation by instilling a more consistent

and predictable grant process with more transparency. We also increased the amount of money allocated for six grant programs including Children’s Legal Services and Pro Bono grants.

Another huge accomplishment was the launch of the Florida Pro Bono Law School Challenge. This pilot program sought to connect lawyers and law students through a new version of the Florida Pro Bono Matters platform to work on pro bono cases together from local legal aid programs.

There was an overwhelmingly positive response to the program, as evidenced by more than 300 cases being taken. As part of the Foundation’s mission is to promote public service among lawyers by making it an integral part of the law school experience, this program effectively did that on a large scale. It also helped lawyers and students fulfill their pro bono requirements and boosted law school pride.

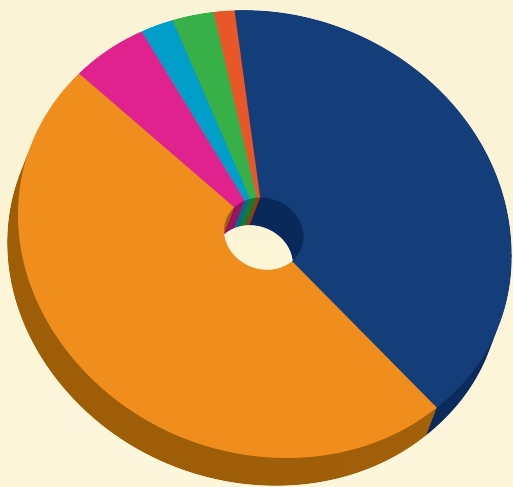
I began my term while the Foundation was in the process of hiring a new executive director. After conducting a nationwide search, I could not have been happier to see a former Foundation president take the reins. Donny MacKenzie, a former partner with Holland and Knight, now leads the Foundation. His skills and abilities are unparalleled, as is his commitment to maximize the availability of legal services to those who need it the most. He inspires me every day to do more for our most vulnerable children and adults.



One of my favorite parts of serving on the Foundation’s board has been hearing from grantees about their programs during our meetings. Their stories are inspiring, and whether they are helping disabled children get the school accommodations to which they are entitled, veterans obtain identification documents, or domestic violence survivors leave their abusers, I am reminded that our work and support is fundamental to ensuring their success.

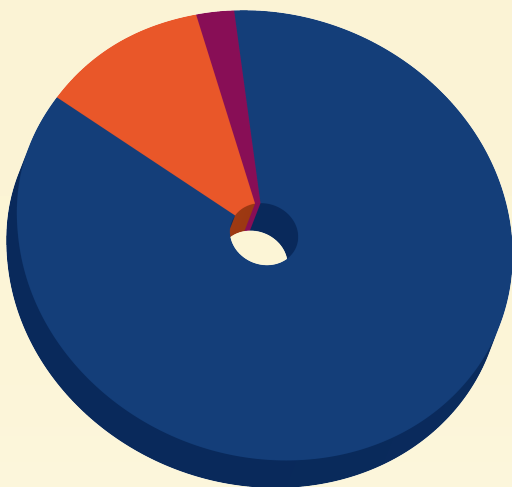
Thank you for being a part of our thriving community to improve access to civil legal aid. My time on the board of directors is coming to a close, but I look forward to hearing about the great impact I am sure the Foundation will continue to have for many years to come.

FUNDING SOURCES FOR 2018-19 GRANTS



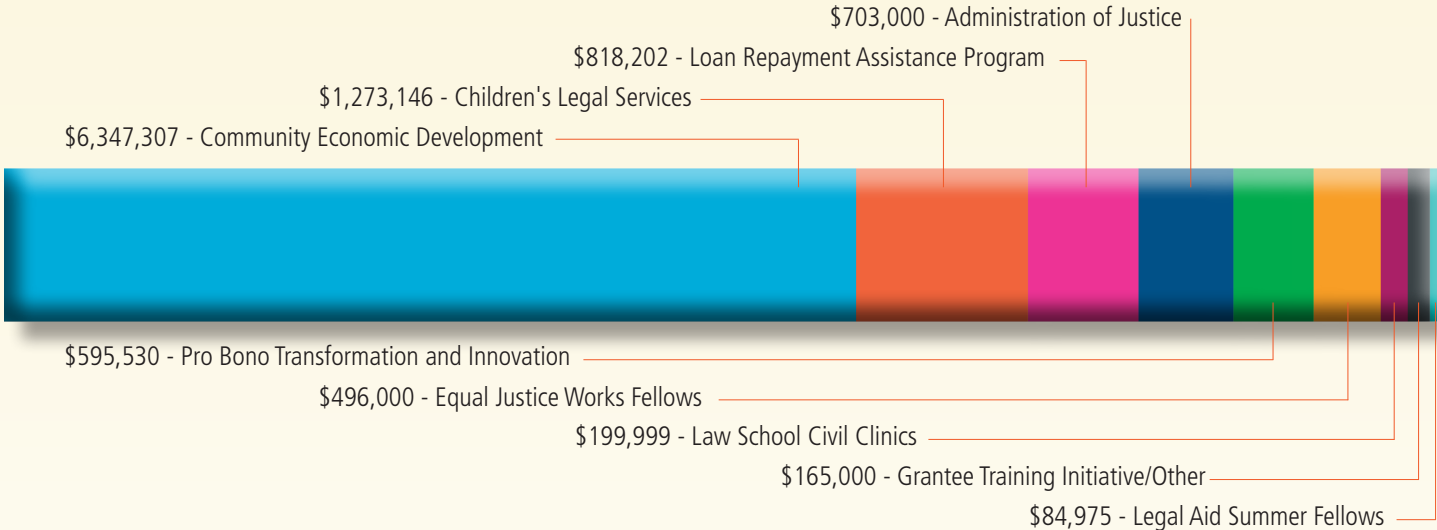
50.3% Bank of America Award  
40.9% IOTA  
5.1% Contributions  
2.4% Cy Pres  
1.0% Net Investment Income  
0.3% Miscellaneous

HOW FUNDS WERE SPENT IN 2018-19



86.2% Charitable Activities (\$11,620,983)  
11.3% Administration (\$1,523,551)  
2.5% Fundraising (\$336,638)

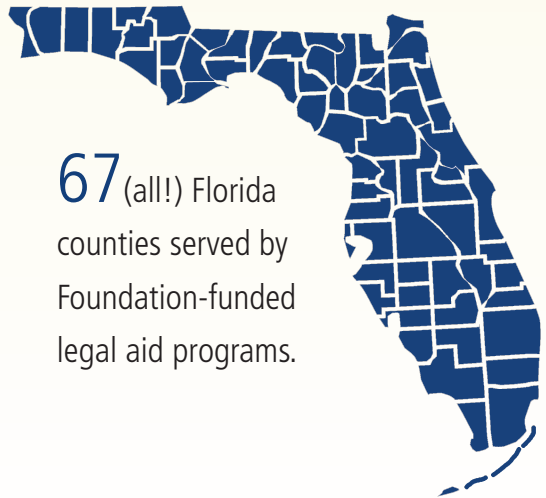
GRANTS AWARDED IN 2018-19



In addition to the grants awarded, the Foundation spent \$966,583 in program support and other charitable activities that provided direct and indirect support to our grantees. Also, \$28,759 in unspent grant funds were returned to the Foundation.



91,117  
Floridians served by  
legal aid programs  
in 2019.



## The Legacy for Justice

The Legacy for Justice recognizes those who have included the Foundation in their estate planning, made a gift or pledge of more than \$10,000, directed a significant cy pres award to the Foundation or facilitated a colleague's major gift. We offer the members of this prestigious group our sincerest gratitude for their deep and abiding commitment to the Foundation. (Through March 12, 2020)

Louie Adcock* **	The Florida Bar Young Lawyers Division	John* and Nora Patterson*
Akerman LLP	Florida Lawyers Legal Insurance Corporation	Roderick N. Petrey*
Anonymous Fund - Central Florida Foundation	Florida Lawyers Mutual Insurance Company	Polaszek, Berman, Hansen
Anonymous Fund - Community Foundation of Sarasota County, Inc.	The Flourish Fund of Gulf Coast Community Foundation	Lou Ann Powell*
Tod Aronovitz*	Brian K. Gart* **	David C. Prather*
The Batchelor Foundation	Deborah P. Goodall*	Ruden McCloskey Smith Schuster & Russell, PA
James L. Bell*	GrayRobinson, PA	William P. Sklar*
Bruce B. Blackwell*	William O.E. Henry* **	Searcy Denney Scarola Barnhart & Shipley, PA
F. Paul Bland, Jr.	Michael J. Higer*	John Woolslair Sheppard*
The BMC Charitable Foundation, Inc.	J. Wayne Hogan*	Geoffrey S. Stahl
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Robert W. Fisher* **	Tom H. Loffredo*	Hon. John D. Wessel* **
Anonymous	Erin Whittemore Lohmiller	Jewel White*
The Florida Bar Appellate Practice Section	Donny* and Monica MacKenzie	Kent G. Whittemore
The Florida Bar Business Law Section	Diana Martin	John Yanchunis*
The Florida Bar Criminal Law Section	Miles A. McGrane, III*	E. Clayton Yates
The Florida Bar Family Law Section	Kathleen S. McLeroy*	Burton Young*
The Florida Bar General Practice, Solo and Small Firm Section	Anonymous	Edward H. Zebersky
The Florida Bar Real Property, Probate & Trust Law Section	Melissa A. Moss*	
The Florida Bar Trial Lawyers Section	Mellon United National Bank	
	Anonymous	
	John* and Pam Noland*	

\* Florida Bar Foundation Fellow

\*\*Deceased

## Lifetime Giving Circles

Lifetime contributions as of April 22, 2020. Does not reflect pledges or in-kind gifts.

<b>Judge's Society</b> <b>(\$500,000-999,999)</b>	The Florida Bar Criminal Law Section	Florida Project Directors' Association	Carl J. Domino*
Anonymous	The Florida Bar Trial Lawyers Section	Maria E. Henderson*	GrayRobinson, P.A.
Anonymous	Florida Lawyers Mutual Insurance Company	John Patterson*	J. Wayne Hogan*
<b>Advocate's Society</b> <b>(\$250,000-499,999)</b>	Ruden McClosky	Searcy Denney Scarola Barnhart & Shipley P.A.	Holland & Knight LLP
The Batchelor Foundation, Inc.	<b>Counselor's Society</b> <b>(\$50,000-99,999)</b>	Larry S. Stewart*	Miles A. McGrane, III*
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The Florida Bar Young Lawyers Division	The Florida Bar Real Property, Probate & Trust Law Section	Bruce B. Blackwell*	John A. Noland*
Anonymous	Florida Lawyers Legal Insurance Corp.	Buchanan Ingersoll & Rooney PC	Stanley M. Rosenblatt*
<b>Barrister's Society</b> <b>(\$100,000-249,999)</b>		Mary E. Cantrell*	Susan Rosenblatt*
The Florida Bar Business Law Section		Carlton Fields, P.A.	Shutts & Bowen LLP
			<b>Gold Society</b> <b>(\$10,000-24,999)</b>
			Akerman LLP



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**Silver Society**  
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 Ohio State Bar Association  
 Oklahoma Bar Foundation  
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 Thomas F. Panza\*  
 Justice Barbara J. Pariente\*  
 Daryl D. Parks\*  
 Parks & Crump, LLC

Justice Peggy A. Quince\*  
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 Foundation  
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**Bronze Society**  
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 Allen, Dyer, Doppelt, Milbrath &  
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 Martha W. Barnett\*  
 Gregory S. Barnett  
 Sally Bartholmey  
 Hilarie Bass\*  
 Mary J. Bass  
 John Battle  
 Dora L. Beatty\*  
 Bedell, Dittmar, Devault, Pillans &  
 Coxe, P.A.  
 Rayanne Beers  
 Stephen F. Beiner\*\*  
 R. Lee Bennett\*  
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 William Berzak  
 Mary-Anne Bestebeurtje\*  
 Kathleen Bickelhaupt  
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 Brian L. Bilzin\*  
 Hon. Deb S. Blechman\*  
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