

TALLAHASSEE WOMEN LAWYERS



A local chapter of the Florida Association for Women Lawyers



Megan works at the Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation. She can be contacted at president@mytwl.org.

TWL member since 2016

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Written by Megan Kachur

~ Autumn teaches us the beauty of letting go. Growth requires release—it's what the trees do. ~

It's officially Fall! Just like a tree which must shed its leaves and rely on a sturdy root system to survive from one season to the next, no organization can maintain its solid foundation without a little re-invention through guided assistance and replenished resources. New leadership and innovative ideas are critical, so I'm thrilled to welcome new members and new board members, and incredibly grateful for the unwavering support of renewed memberships and returning board members.

Our theme for the year is: *Use Your Resources!* It acknowledges the fact that women still find it challenging to ask for help even though we're keenly aware that people are two times more likely to say yes when asked for help than they are to ask others for help. During this year's July 8th Board Member Retreat and July 20th Board Installation Ceremony, I shared some key initiatives I'd like to focus on and explained how embracing this year's theme will help TWL to successfully fulfill the goals set out for each initiative. Our focus will be geared towards increasing young lawyer memberships, enhancing TWL's mentor program, broadening TWL's impact and social footprint in the community, and creating a lasting resource through a Bar Study Scholarship Program.

We all have the same 86,400 seconds in a day, so must be intentional in how we allocate some of our most valuable resources - how we spend our time, where we direct our energy, and what we give our attention to - greater value is given to those seconds when summarized as 1,440 minutes or a mere 24 hours. Therefore, TWL will lead by example and share our resources through greater presence and active participation in mentorship opportunities, special events, and service throughout the community with our local partners.

Once we fully accept the fact that others are not only willing to, but *want* to, help in creating lasting change, we can feel more confident in using our resources by asking for help without pause or hesitation. Everyone has limited time between work, family, and community obligations, so I appreciate each monthly meeting and special event you attend this year, as it's a conscious decision to use your resources towards helping others and launching women into all the spaces where they belong.

Regardless of each new harsh and uncertain season that comes our way, TWL will remain a thriving organization; our mentees will go to law school, graduate, pass the bar exam, shine as young lawyers, and remain committed to participating in TWL's programming from both near and far. The satisfying development of our organization's strong roots will produce bright and stunning blooms, reflecting true growth and prosperity for years to come. I'm proud to be a part of the long-standing history and commitment to supporting women in the legal profession as well as in the Tallahassee community at large, and I am sincerely honored to serve as your 2023-2024 President.

Megan Kachur
TWL President 2023-2024

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WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS!

- Hannah Murphy
- Annie Leshko
- Saray Ravelo
- Andrea Cox
- Becca McGinn
- Eleanor Sills
- Stephanie Daniel
- Melanie S. Griffin
- Ashley Watson
- Janaye G. Pieczynski
- Michelle Covin
- Sarah Biehl
- Skyy Mewbron
- Chloe Schulte
- Fatou Calixte

UPCOMING EVENTS TO LOOK FORWARD TO

October

19th - TWL Book Club: How to Not Drown in a Glass of Water
@ Ology Midtown at 6:00pm

25th - TWL’s 40th Annual Judicial Reception
@ Tallahassee Garden Club at 6:00pm

November

9th - CLE Lunch and Learn: End of Year Giving with Presentation of the Rose Deeb Kitchen Award
@ the First District Court of Appeal at 12:00pm

December

TBA - Joint Voluntary Bar Organization Holiday Celebration

January

17th - FAWL Lobby Days: Joint Luncheon
@ the Governor’s Club at 12:00pm

A YEAR IN REVIEW

From Immediate Past President Winifred L. Acosta



Greetings to the fabulous Tallahassee Women Lawyers Membership! Let me first express my sincere gratitude to each of you for your continuous support of TWL! It was my esteemed honor to serve as your president last year. Thank you for entrusting me with such an amazing honor!

I wish to congratulate my friend and our new president, Megan Kachur on all the great things she has already planned during her administration. A few months ago, I was elated when I asked her to consider relinquishing her role as treasurer and becoming our president-elect! She had me worried for a little while and then, she acquiesced. I can really appreciate the fact that she carefully evaluated the opportunity and reached the right decision!!! And for that, I say “thank you, Megan!” To the outstanding 2023-2024 board, I also congratulate you and look forward to serving with you!



To the phenomenal outgoing 2022-2023 board, I say, “WE DID IT!!!” Words cannot express my gratitude to you for your unwavering support. As I reflect upon this past year, I strongly believe we proudly carried the torch to carry out TWL’s mission. We worked diligently to keep the membership informed of developments in the legal arena through our CLE-approved presentations, to serve our community at-large, and to promote diversity, inclusion, equality, and equity. We even amended our by-laws to reflect our commitment to diversity.

As you may recall, last year’s board had the honor and privilege to welcome everyone back to in-person gatherings after existing in our virtual reality during the pandemic. We had a combination of lunch and dinner meetings in an effort to accommodate our membership’s demanding schedules. In August, we began our year with a presentation from the Honorable Mark S. Earley, Leon County Supervisor of Elections on changes in Florida’s election laws. Then, in September, we hosted a panel discussion on Florida’s gun control laws with State Attorney Jack Campbell, Public Defender Jessica Yeary, and Dr. Patricia Y. Warren, FSU Professor.

And everyone remembers our exceptional return of the Judicial Reception in October! Who can forget the beautiful view from the 22nd floor of the Capitol building? We didn’t stop there. As we moved on to November, we had a fantastic panel discussion on demystifying the Florida Bar Grievance Process with our dynamic panelists, Attorneys Richard Greenberg, William Hall, Shanel Schuyler, and Larry Sellers. One of our past presidents, Attorney Magie Ozarowski moderated this discussion. We also presented the Rose Deeb Kitchen Award to Attorney Kelly Overstreet Johnson.

And how did we end the calendar year? We had a blast in TWL style with fun and laughter during our infamous Pictionary showdown, along with our delightful holiday dinner! As we moved into 2023, we provided an opportunity in January for everyone to benefit from a virtual technology presentation on the state and federal court filing systems - free to all! In February, we explored alternative career opportunities with three phenomenal, powerhouse leaders in their industries, Attorneys Alyssa Dillon, Pamela Burch Fort, Kat Klepfer, and Amy Thorn. This presentation was moderated by another TWL past president, Attorney Linda Bond Edwards.

In March, we had the honor of partnering with FAWL and hosting our traditional joint luncheon with a presentation from one of our past presidents, the Honorable Rachel Nordby, who shared the new developments in the First DCA and the state appellate system. Additionally, we heard from two young ladies from Pace Center for Girls, who almost brought me to tears in their reflection of the tremendous impact TWL has had on their young, impressionable lives.

April brought us another momentous occasion- at last, we held our Inaugural Founders and Past Presidents Dinner. What an amazing turnout! It reminded me of an extended family reunion. It was an opportunity for the past to engage with the present and to inspire the future endeavors of TWL! We also presented the Catherine Chapman Pro Bono Award to Attorney Jennifer Pettineo. The icing on the cake was our keynote speaker, the Honorable Rhonda Peoples-Water, Duval County Judge, who persevered in her judicial aspirations. She applied around seventeen times and eventually won her seat through the electoral process.

In May, we learned about estate planning and preparing for the inevitable from our esteemed panelists, Attorneys Jami Coleman, Kandace Rudd, and Twyla Sketchley. Our current president-elect, Carly Schrader moderated this panel discussion. Although I was personally exhausted by this time, we ended my term in June with something I hold dear to my heart, our Diversity and Inclusion Dinner. Our keynote speaker was none other than the illustrious 2023 President of the Florida Bar's Young Lawyers Division, Attorney Iris Elijah. We also presented the 2023 Diversity and Inclusion Leadership Award to Bridge to Law School, spearheaded by Attorneys Kelly O'Keefe and Melanie Leitman, Stearns Weaver Miller.

I would like to thank each of our sponsors who contributed to all of our efforts. Sponsorship reached an all-time high!! Thank you, thank you, and thank you to each of our sponsors who supported our endeavors throughout the year. I would also like to recognize some of the many community activities in which we participated (book club, mock trial for the Pace Center, the Law Day debate, to name a few) or the worthy causes we supported (Legal Aid, Brehon's Family Services, and our collection of holiday gift cards and business attire for Pace Center for Girls)! Let's not forget the mentorship we offered to our mentees and our student volunteers who assisted us at our events throughout the year!

As you can see, we were quite busy! And I'd like to believe, we were quite successful! None of this could have happened without our amazing board members, along with two honorary board members, our meetings coordinator assistant, Diana Shumans, and our resident photographer, Stephanie Hayes. I thank each of you for your time, understanding, diligence, support, and your belief and trust in me and my vision for TWL. Thank you all! KUDOS TO OUR 2022-2023 Tallahassee Women Lawyers Board:

Tallahassee Women Lawyers
2022-2023 Board of Directors

Winifred L. Acosta, President
Megan Kachur, President-Elect
Jamie Ito, Secretary
Laura Dennis, Treasurer
Jessica Poarch, Public Relations Officer
Carly Schrader, Programs Director
Linda Bond Edwards, CLE Director
Felicia Kitzmiller, Judicial Reception Director
Tiffany Cruz, Development Director
Karusha Sharpe, Mentoring Director
Elizabeth Stinson, Newsletter Director
Jacqueline Moody, FAWL Representative
Molli McGuire, Immediate Past President
Olivia P. Klein, Historian
Stephanie Morse, Meetings Coordinator
Magie Ozarowski, LSNF Liaison
Kandace Rudd & Brandi Thomas, Awards Co-Chairs
Barbara Walker, Mentoring Chair
Rachel Maxwell & Madelyn Pendarvis, Young Lawyers Co-Chairs
Kirsten Dunton & Katherine Kerwin, Judicial Reception Co-Chairs
Timisha Brooks Black, PACE Mock Trial Chair
Gigi Rollini, WE Network Chair
Elizabeth Ellis, JNC Monitoring Chair
Aimee Lim, Sunshine Chair
Alexandra Akre, Community Service/Special Events Chair
Chante' Jones, Employment Chair
Amanda Neff, Website Chair
Jordann Wilhelm, Technology Chair
Kristen Dobson, Book Club Chair

As I close, I am reminded of the words of Amanda Gorman, "There is always light. If only we're brave enough to see it. If only we're brave enough to be it."

I look forward to joining you in shining the light through many more years of TWL service!!!

MEET THE 2023-2024 BOARD

Headshots photographed by TWL Gold Sponsor Ti Adoro Studios



MEGAN KACHUR

Megan Kachur, President, was introduced to TWL by former TWL President, Magie Ozarowski, in 2016. Instantly, Megan enjoyed the topics of conversations both in presentations and with other TWL members. Megan later served as Treasurer and the Young Lawyers Chair before becoming President. Her piece of advice for young lawyers is to network and attend events. Outside of TWL and working as Deputy Director under the Division of Professions at the Department of Business and Professional Regulation, Megan enjoys gardening and watching seedlings turn into beautiful blooms.

CARLY SCHRADER

President-Elect Carly Schrader is a long-time TWL member. She has served as Judicial Reception Director, CLE Director, Awards Co-Chair, and Programs Director. One of Carly's favorite TWL memories was the opportunity to connect with founding members of TWL at last year's Founders and Past Presidents Dinner, but she also enjoys supporting new lawyers. Aside from working at Nabors, Giblin & Nickerson, P.A., Carly enjoys spending time outdoors.



LAURA DENNIS

Laura Dennis serves as Treasurer. Laura previously served as the Mentoring Co-Chair. She joined TWL to network and interact with other women in the legal profession. Laura's piece of advice to new lawyers is that mentorship can be the most helpful resource in your career. Outside of practicing in Civil Litigation and Administrative Law at the Rady Law Firm, Laura is a marathoner!

FELCIA KITZMILLER

Felicia Kitzmiller joined TWL in 2018 and is the current Secretary. Felicia has served as Meetings Co-coordinator, Public Relations Director, and Judicial Reception Director. Felicia enjoys TWL's Book Club! Her piece of advice for young lawyers is to say yes to every opportunity! Felicia practices in Land Development at Stearns Weaver Miller. Fun fact: Felicia asked for and received a miniature donkey for her 16th birthday. "Mocha Latte" still lives on her mother's farm in Pennsylvania.





JESSICA POARCH

Public Relations Officer, Jessica Poarch, joined TWL in 2016, specifically, to participate in the mentoring program, one of her favorite things about TWL. Since then, Jessica has served as Secretary, CLE Director, Community Service/Special Events Chair, and Mentoring Chair. Jessica is a law clerk at the First District Court of Appeal. In her free time, Jessica likes to garden.

STEPHANIE MORSE

FAWL Representative, Stephanie Morse, has been in TWL for over 10 years. She has served as Meetings Coordinator and Employment Chair. Stephanie works in Complex Litigation at the Florida Office of the Attorney General. Stephanie enjoys the fellowship and learning opportunities TWL provides. Stephanie's advice for new members is to get involved and learn as much as you can from your colleagues- "so many have very interesting stories to tell."



ELIZABETH STINSON

Elizabeth Stinson serves as this year's Judicial Reception Director. Last year, Liz served as the TWL Newsletter Director. Liz works at the Florida Gaming Control Commission and is involved in various organizations, such as the Administrative Law, Government Lawyers, and Young Lawyers Sections of the Florida Bar.

BARBARA WALKER

Barbara Walker serves as this year's Mentoring Director. Last year, Barbara served as Mentoring Co-Chair. Barbara is the Founding Partner of The Walker Firm, PLLC- a firm which focuses in Medical Malpractice, Wrongful Death, and Personal Injury. One fun fact about Barbara is that she also holds a degree in Nursing!



BECCA MCGINN

Becca McGinn joined TWL this year, and we are excited to have her as our CLE Director! Becca works at the Florida Lottery as Deputy General Counsel.

CHRISTIE PETRUZZELLI

Christie Petruzzelli joined TWL in 2022 to connect with other women lawyers and support the Tallahassee community. She is this year's Newsletter Director. Christie was the Internal Vice President of the Women's Law Symposium at FSU Law. Christie works in Employment, Civil Rights, and Education Law at Sniffen & Spellman, P.A. Her favorite activities are spending time outdoors and being with loved ones, including her puppy, Rocco.



TIFFANY CRUZ

Development Director, Tiffany Cruz, joined TWL in 2013 to learn from the amazing women lawyers that came before her. Now, she enjoys giving back to future women lawyers. Tiffany has also served as TWL's Sunshine Director. Tiffany works at Cruz Law Firm, where she primarily represents employees in Employment Law matters. Tiffany looks forward to celebrating the hardworking judiciary every year at the Judicial Reception. One fun fact about Tiffany is that she just completed her first Ironman 70.3!

ANNIE LESHKO

Annie Leshko serves as this year's Program Director. Annie originally joined FAWL as a law student member at Stetson in 2011. Annie, who works at the Florida House of Representatives, joined TWL this year to get involved with the community of women lawyers in Tallahassee and the community at large. She is looking forward to the many service projects TWL will be involved in this year and loves that TWL contributes to free food pantries and little free libraries. Annie's advice: for new lawyers is do not be afraid to try different areas of the law.



WINIFRED ACOSTA

Immediate Past President, Winifred Acosta, joined TWL in 2004. She has served as Secretary, Public Relations Director, CLE Director, and Community Service Co-Chair. Winifred just celebrated her 20th year anniversary with the US Attorney's Office, where she works as an AUSA. Funny enough, her childhood pet horse was named "Prosecutor"! Winifred encourages new lawyers to embrace opportunities to challenge themselves, network early and often, get involved, and to not be afraid to ask a question. Winifred has gained so much from and loves TWL!



JORDANN WILHELM

Jordann Wilhelm joined TWL in 2022 and was recruited by 2022-2023 President, Winifred Acosta, to join the Board. Jordann served and continues to serve as the Technology Chair. She joined TWL to be a part of a community of strong women leaders. Her favorite TWL memory was curating photos from the 1980's for last year's inaugural Founders and Past Presidents Dinner and meeting the women that paved the way for TWL. Jordann works at the Radey Law Firm- Labor & Employment Law, Administrative Law, Corporate Law.

SARAY RAVELO

Saray Ravelo recently moved from Tampa and now serves as the TWL Website Chair. She was Young Lawyers Division Chair in her previous chapters. Saray works in Medical Malpractice Defense at Carlton Fields. Outside of work, Saray and her husband stay busy with a two-year-old toddler! Saray is passionate about making the practice of law better for women, helping women reach their goals, and serving the community. Her fun fact is that she has a Bachelor's in Nursing!



KANDACE RUDD

Kandace Rudd, TWL member since 2017, serves as the Awards Chair. Formerly the 19th Amendment Celebration Committee, Meeting Coordinator Chair and Awards Co-Chair, Kandace joined TWL to engage with women lawyers in the community. Her piece of advice for new members is to put yourself out there and talk to new people at events. Outside of practicing Elder Law at Waldoch & McConaughay, P.A., Kandace likes to rewatch "I Love Lucy."

LIZ DESLOGE ELLIS

Liz Desloge Ellis, JNC Monitoring Chair since 2020, joined TWL in 2016 to develop a network of strong, dynamic women. Liz looks forward to the Judicial Reception every year. Her piece of advice for new lawyers is to join a voluntary bar association to meet new people and grow your network. A 10th generation Tallahasseean, Liz works at Stearns Weaver Miller Weissler Alhadeff & Sitterson, P.A. in civil litigation, with an emphasis on Land Development.





MAGIE OZAROWSKI

Magie Ozarowski is this year's LSNF Liason. Magie served as TWL President in 2019-2020 and previously served as the Technology Chair, Public Relations Director, and Secretary. TWL's mission, especially, promoting women attorneys, is a cause dear to Magie's heart. She looks forward to the Chili Cookoff every year! Magie works at Ausley McMullen in general litigation. Magie's fun fact is that she lived in 5 countries before she was 21 years old!

TIMISHA BROOKS BLACK

Timisha Brooks Black, a bubbly twin, joined the TWL Board last year as PACE Mock Trial Chair and remains as Chair. Outside of working at the Office of Doris Maloy, Leon County Tax Collector, Timisha enjoys working alongside other women lawyers on meaningful projects that uplift and empower the legal community and the community as a whole. Timisha believes empowering women and encouraging their thoughts and ideas is the unspoken solution to most of the world's problems.



RACHEL LAGOS

Rachel Lagos joined TWL in 2022 to meet and learn from other women in the legal community. In her first year in TWL, Rachel served as the Young Lawyers Chair, and she remains in the role this year. Rachel works at the Law Offices of the Public Defender, Jessica J. Yeary. Her piece of advice for new lawyers is to take time to do things for yourself outside of work or the legal field. Fun fact: Rachel is also an excellent hula-hooper.

COLLEEN MULLEN

Mentoring Committee Co-Chair Colleen Mullen joined TWL around 10 years ago to network with women lawyers in the area. Colleen works in Civil Legal Aid at Legal Services of North Florida. Colleen's advice for new members is to get out there and meet people. "You never know who may change your life." A fun fact about Colleen is that she loves obstacle course races!



SKYE ESRY

Skye Esry is this year's Mentoring Co-Chair. Skye works at Dennis, Jackson, Martin & Fontela, P.A., Skye enjoys reading, listening to podcasts, and enjoying time with her adorable pets that she and her partner foster.



AIMEE LIM

Aimee Lim originally joined TWL in 2015 when she was new to Tallahassee and wanted to meet women in her community. She now serves as Sunshine Chair. Aimee works as an Assistant Public Defender. Her piece of advice for new lawyers is to maintain a work-life balance and enjoy things outside of the law. Aimee's fun fact is that she can wiggle her ears without using her hands!

KRISTEN BOND DOBSEN

Kristen Bond Dobsen joined TWL over 5 years ago. Now the Community Services and Special Events Chair, she previously served as Book Club Chair and Young Lawyers Chair. When not practicing in Healthcare Compliance and Reimbursement and Administrative Litigation at Parker Hudson, Kristen enjoys reading and taking trips with her husband on their small sailboat on the Forgotten Coast. Her piece of advice for new members is to take time for your mental health. Fun fact: Kristen was voted "Hardest Hit" on her middle school soccer team.



GIGI ROLLINI

WE Network Chair and Founder, Gigi Rollin, served as TWL President in 2009-2010. She has also served as FAWL Representative, Programs Director, Awards Chair, and helped re-establish the mentoring program. A managing partner at Florida Government Law Partners, PLLC., her advice to new lawyers is meet new people and get involved in things you're passionate about. Gigi will serve as NAWL President in 2025.

HANNAH MURPHY

Hannah Murphy serves as this year's Meetings Coordinator Co-Chair. Hannah joined TWL to build a community of attorneys committed to empowering women and girls. Hannah's favorite memory through TWL is meeting her mentor during her 1L year of law school. Outside of working in civil litigation at Stearns Weaver Miller, Hannah is an Irish Step Dancer!





MICHELLE COVIN

Michelle Covin serves as this year's Meetings Coordinator Co-Chair. A member of Women's Law Symposium at FSU Law, Michelle joined TWL this year for professional development and to get involved in the legal community. Having worked in the Florida Senate for 5 years, Michelle now works at F&I Sentinel in Compliance. The mentoring program is one of her favorite parts of TWL. Before attending law school, Michelle taught English in South Korea. Michelle enjoys hiking, hot yoga, tennis, and spending time with her partner, Parker, and cat, Kimbap.

ASHLEY WATSON

Ashley Watson serves as this year's Meetings Coordinator Co-Chair. Ashley was a member of the Women's Law Symposium at FSU Law. She currently works at Carr Allison in matters involving Transportation, Personal Injury, Premises Liability and Retail & Hospitality.



SKYY MEWBORN

Skyy Mewbron is one of this year's Law Student Liasons. Currently, Skyy works at the Department of Business and Professional Regulation, and is undecided on the area of law she wishes to practice in one day. Skyy joined TWL to get involved in the legal community and really enjoyed last year's Judicial Reception. Outside of work and the classroom, Skyy enjoys baking and trivia! Check out her baking tips on page 23 of the Newsletter!

CHLOE SCHULTE

Chloe Schulte brings the experience of serving as FSU Law Women's Law Symposium President as one of the Law Student Liasons. Chloe joined TWL because she wanted to continue the mission of connecting and uplifting women in the legal community and to learn from others' experience as she begins her legal career. Chloe works as a judicial law clerk at the First District Court of Appeal. Chloe in one word: passionate!





SERVICE SEPTEMBER

Written by Christie Petruzzelli

LITTLE FREE LIBRARIES

Little Free Library is a non-profit organization founded to remove barriers to book access through book-exchange boxes.

As part of this year’s Board’s installation, TWL Board Members were asked to each bring a children’s book that could be donated to Tallahassee’s little free libraries. Members (from left to right) Skyy Mewborn, Kristen Bond Dobsen, and Saray Ravelo delivered the books to book exchange boxes around town- of which, there are many!

Share your favorite stories or find a new great read by checking out the little free libraries near you, by using the app, “The Little Free Library Mobile App.”

FOOD PANTRIES

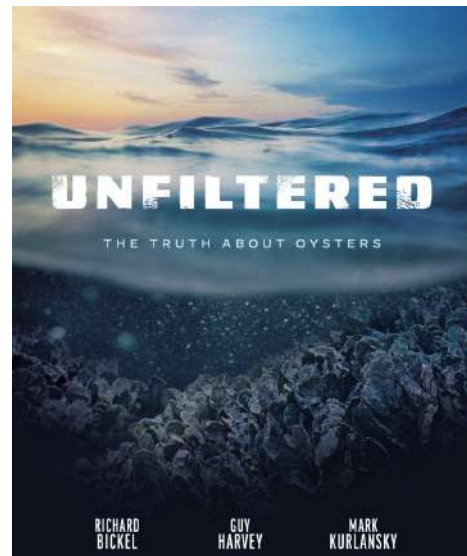
TWL’s Mentoring Committee collaborates with the Women Law Symposium at the Florida State University College of Law in matching local attorneys with law students for the purpose of mentoring.

The matching this year will occur in October, after the law students have settled in for the new school year. In the meantime, TWL’s mentoring committee was hard at work during Service September, donating to food pantries in town.

SUPPORTING WOMEN IN THE ARTS

Written by Megan Kachur

TWL is dedicated to its mission by supporting women in the legal community and community at large; during the August 16th CLE Lunch and Learn, TWL held a charity raffle for a chance to win tickets to the screening of *Unfiltered: The Truth About Oysters* at the 15th Annual Tallahassee Film Festival, on September 3, 2023. Longtime Tallahassee filmmaker, Chucha Barber is highlighted as the film’s writer and producer, Film Festival Update: The film won the Audience Choice Award for Best Documentary Feature!



AUGUST CLE LUNCH AND LEARN HIGHLIGHTS AND SPOTLIGHTS



Presented by Professor Patricia Matthews, Baleigh Brown, and Carol Buckley

TWL hosted a one-hour lunch and learn in Florida State University College of Law's Rotunda in August. The panel included FSU Law Professor Patricia Matthews, FSU Law Student Baleigh Brown, and the founder of Elephant Refuge North America (ERNA) Carol Buckley.

In a follow-up conversation, Professor Matthews explained, "For me, what animal welfare and animal rights have in common is that individual members of both groups all share the goal of seeking ways to improve the quality of life for non-human animals ...Animal welfare laws aim to protect the physical well-being of non-human animals (i.e., the "caring" for them, such as ensuring proper food, water, shelter, veterinary care, etc.). In contrast, animal rights advocacy often aims to get our law to recognize certain fundamental legal rights for certain non-human animals, or at the very least, to get our law to recognize them as something more than personal property."

Professor Matthews grew up loving her family's companion animals, however, it wasn't until her early 20's when she attended a Triangle Vegetarian Society meeting with her sister where the materials and subsequent reading made her question things she had not previously considered. Years later, after acquiring her position as a professor in Legal Writing & Research, she was asked to teach another class and wanted to teach Animal Law.

Non-Human Laws: Animal Rights and Animal Welfare- What's the Difference Between the Two?

"Animal welfare is the physical wellbeing of nonhuman animals. Animal rights is the philosophical belief that animals have worth beyond their utility to people. Within the law, animals are considered as property, and don't have their own interests, thoughts, or feelings taken into consideration.

"

Baleigh Brown

Baleigh Brown is a student in Professor Matthew's Animal Law class this semester. Though a lifelong animal lover, the story of a brutalized and killed Pitbull, known as "Justice for Nala," made Baleigh want to become an animal advocate- and so, she did. Baleigh joined Student-Animal Legal Defense Fund and was given the opportunity to research animal law issues she's passionate about and write an article for the Animal Law Section of the Florida Bar. Baleigh wrote an article for the Paw Review Blog titled, "The Convention on Animal Protection for Public Health, Well-Being, and the Environment." Baleigh also writes to local news outlets about pressing animal law issues, such as the Save America's Forgotten Equines Act (SAFE Act).

Carol Buckley founded ERNA (a project of Elephant Aid International ("EAI")), the second elephant sanctuary she created in the U.S., to create a healthy environment for captive-held elephants to retire, recover, and thrive. Read about her fascinating legal battle in *Buckley v. Elephant Sanctuary in Tennessee, Inc.*, 639 S.W.3d 38 (Tenn. Ct. App. 2021), *appeal denied* (Oct. 14, 2021).

Thanks to the generosity of those who attended the Lunch and Learn, TWL raised \$500 in donations to ERNA.

Interested in learning more? Check out the Animal Law Section of the Florida Bar (ALS), The Animal Legal Defense Fund, Pets Ad Litem (local), the Nonhuman Rights Project, and ERNA.

PRO BONO SPOTLIGHT

COLLEEN MULLEN

*Written by Christie Petruzzelli
with help from Colleen Mullen*

Colleen Mullen, this year’s TWL Mentoring Co-Chair, has a heart for service- in her work and in her every day life.

Colleen knew she wanted to go to law school ever since she was told as a kid that she clearly loved to argue and was good at it. Colleen immediately knew she wanted to use that skill through service to the community. She worked at the Public Defender’s Office, a state agency, and now serves as Director of *Pro Bono* and Volunteer Engagement at Legal Services of North Florida. In that role, Colleen recruits volunteers, manages a helpline, assists in setting up legal clinics, and recognizes outstanding volunteers. She facilitates the partnership between local attorneys who assist *pro bono* and staff attorneys to achieve the best results on cases, while also providing the attorneys involved with the opportunity for mentorship and connection.

Colleen herself participated in Thunderdome Tallahassee- Class 1. This was her first experience in *pro bono* work, and since then, she has taken on expungements *pro bono* and also served as a guardian ad litem. Now, Colleen spends her spare time taking her Therapy Dog, Alfredo, to Tallahassee Memorial Hospital to visit patients.

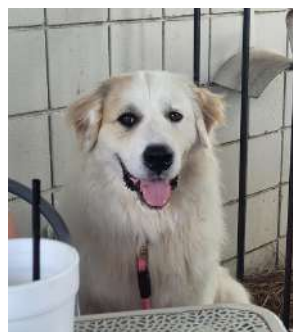
Colleen is passionate about *pro bono* work for many reasons. Aside from a fundamental belief that we were put on this Earth to help one another, she appreciates the value in *pro bono* work for attorneys, such as, learning new areas of the law, working on cases that you may find interesting, and finding mentorship with other attorneys.



If you are interested in contributing some time and experience to the less fortunate, a range of opportunities await you! Legal Services of North Florida offers a helpline, general clinics, one-on-one consultation clinics, full representation, and opportunities to work with co-counsel and law students. The service can be as minimal or expansive as one is able to give. Reach out to Colleen at colleen@lsnf.org for more information, whether over the phone or with a cup of coffee!

COLLEEN’S PUP,
"ALFIE" ALFREDO

Winner of the
Inaugural
Goodest Boy award



If you or someone you know is an inspiring advocate for *pro bono* service, nominate them for the Spring Spotlight by emailing newsletter@mytwl.org by March 1, 2023.

TWL IS ACCEPTING NOMINATIONS FOR THE ROSE DEEB KITCHEN AWARD

Rose Deeb Kitchen became an attorney despite many obstacles, including a culture that did not prioritize education—particularly in women, a divorce, and raising three children as a single parent. This award recognizes women in the Second Judicial Circuit who have overcome obstacles and hardship to become attorneys.

Click [here](#) for more information on how to nominate!

“

“[W]e as lawyers are extremely privileged in our knowledge and ability to work in the system so I feel we have an obligation to give back to those less fortunate.”

”

-Colleen Mullen

COMMUNITY SERVICE AND SPECIAL EVENTS COMMITTEE - CHILI COOK-OFF

Written by Megan Kachur

TWL had a BLAST at the Tallahassee Bar Association's 26th Annual Chili Cook-off on October 4th, to benefit the Legal Aid Foundation of Tallahassee! Our theme was *Chili Cook-off Barbie* – Sweet n Spicy Edition in honor of the first live-action Barbie film that was released this past summer. The film grossed \$1.43 billion, becoming the highest-grossing film by a solo female director. TWL's team consisted of: Saray Ravelo, Skyy Mewbron, Skye Esry, Michelle Covin, Felicia Kitzmiller, Winifred Acosta, Magie Ozarowski, and Megan Kachur. Special thanks to Carlton Fields, P.A. for funds supporting TWL's Special Events and Community Service Committee for this event!

SPECIAL THANKS TO



TWL MEMBER NEWS

Magie Ozarowski – Recently joined Ausley McMullen

Skye Esry – Recently joined Dennis, Jackson, Martin & Fontela

Thomasina Moore – Recently elected Shareholder at Gray Robinson and named Masters of the Bench for the First District Appellate Inn of Court

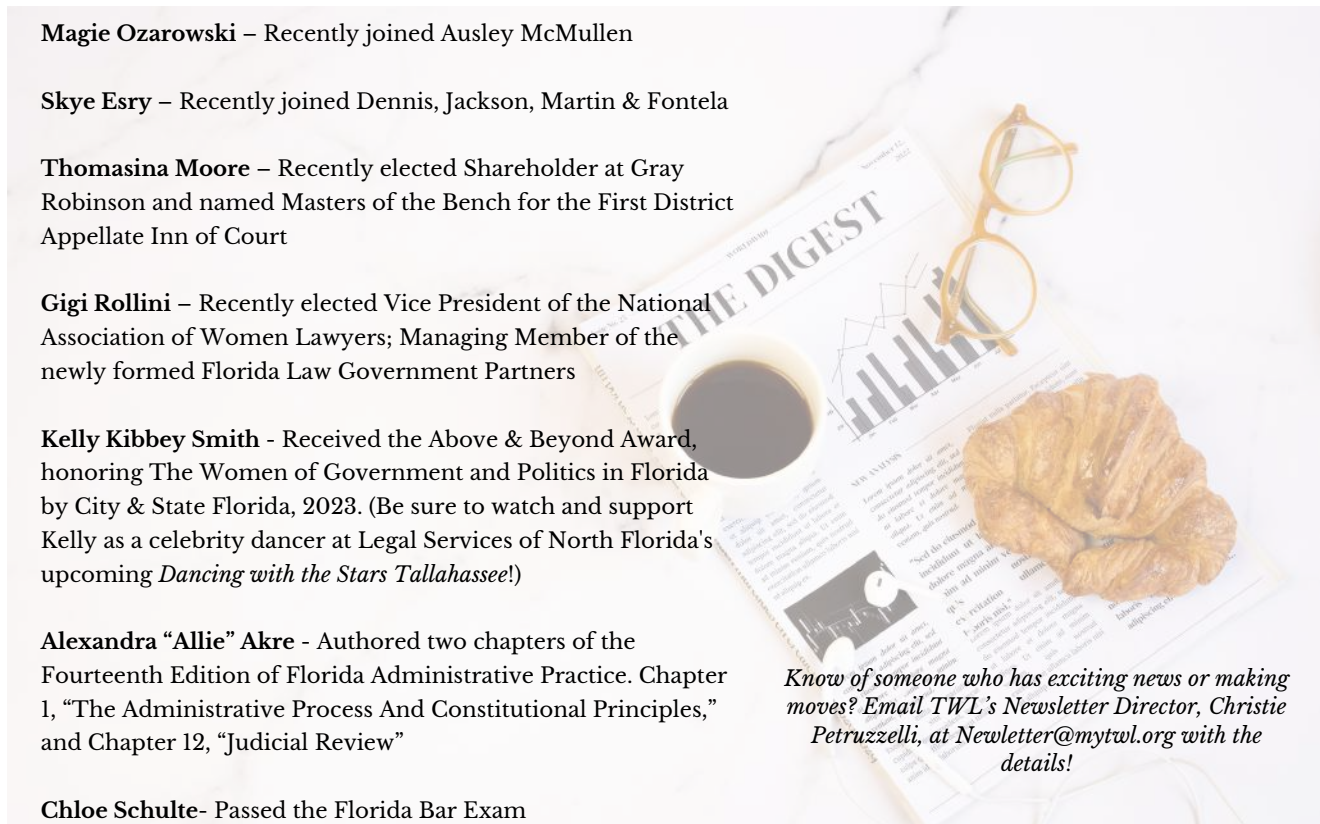
Gigi Rollini – Recently elected Vice President of the National Association of Women Lawyers; Managing Member of the newly formed Florida Law Government Partners

Kelly Kibbey Smith - Received the Above & Beyond Award, honoring The Women of Government and Politics in Florida by City & State Florida, 2023. (Be sure to watch and support Kelly as a celebrity dancer at Legal Services of North Florida's upcoming *Dancing with the Stars Tallahassee!*)

Alexandra "Allie" Akre - Authored two chapters of the Fourteenth Edition of Florida Administrative Practice. Chapter 1, "The Administrative Process And Constitutional Principles," and Chapter 12, "Judicial Review"

Chloe Schulte- Passed the Florida Bar Exam

Know of someone who has exciting news or making moves? Email TWL's Newsletter Director, Christie Petruzzelli, at Newsletter@mytwl.org with the details!





TRAFFIC JAMS ARE NOT ENOUGH: ADMINISTRATIVE STANDING IN PERMITTING CHALLENGES

Written by Susan Stephens, Felicia Kitzmiller, and Fatou Calixte of Stearns Weaver Miller of Tallahassee, Florida (TWL's Executive Platinum Sponsor)

This article was originally published in The Florida Bar Journal

The threshold issue of standing is a linchpin in the efficient and effective operation of the administrative and judicial systems. The test for standing varies slightly at the federal, state, and administrative levels, but in all systems the doctrine of standing ensures that only litigants with a substantial interest in a matter can invoke judicial powers to determine the merits of a case or controversy. In this way, the doctrine of standing operates to reduce court congestion and protect due process rights. The tests for standing have been refined over time in a litany of cases and decisions, but the fundamental purpose of the doctrine — limiting the scope of litigation — has remained constant. But what effect do shifting realities, such as population density and strained public infrastructure, have on this judicially imposed legal construct? Does use of a state road give rise to a proper interest for each of the hundreds of thousands of people who travel the road? What if use of that road was necessary for survival, such as evacuating during a natural disaster or securing emergency transportation? Where is the line of substantial interest drawn? The Second District Court of Appeal grappled with that question in the administrative litigation context in *Wallace v. Florida Department of Transportation*, 356 So. 3d 786 (Fla. 2d DCA 2023).[1]

The Evolution of the Agrico Two-Prong Test

Challenges to actions of an administrative agency are governed by Ch. 120 of the Administrative Procedure Act (APA). Individuals or entities whose substantial interests are adversely impacted by an agency's decision may

petition for an administrative hearing under F.S. §§120.569 and 120.57.[2]

However, the APA does not define “substantial interest,” and challengers must rely on established caselaw to parse the standard associated with this threshold issue. The seminal case defining the meaning of “substantial interest,” and, therefore, standing to challenge administrative decisions, is *Agrico Chemical Company v. Department of Environmental Regulation*, 406 So. 2d 478 (Fla. 2d DCA 1981). Under the *Agrico* substantial interests test, challengers have to establish first, that they “will suffer injury in fact which is of sufficient immediacy;”[3] and second, that the “substantial injury is of a type or nature which the proceeding is designed to protect.” The court went on to explain, “[t]he first aspect of the test deals with the degree of injury. The second deals with the nature of the injury.”[4]

Since *Agrico*, several rulings have provided clarification of the *Agrico* two- prong substantial interest test. Under the degree of injury prong, for example, an injury cannot be “too remote and speculative in nature to qualify under the first prong of the *Agrico* standing test.”[5] Furthermore, “[t]he injury or threat of injury must be both real and immediate, not conjectural or hypothetical.”[6] The second prong has become known as the “zone of interest” test.[7] In the context of permitting, that zone of interest has generally been confined to the statutory permitting criteria.[8]

Testing the Limits

In the recent case of *Wallace*,^[9] the petitioner, Dr. James Wallace III, tested the boundaries of what constitutes a substantial interest entitling him to a hearing under the APA. In December 2020, Wallace, as a resident of Siesta Key in Sarasota County, challenged a Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) permit to connect a 23-acre multi-use development to Stickney Point Road, which was then a part of the state highway system. The multi-use development, called Siesta Promenade, was approved in 2018 by Sarasota County and includes a hotel, retail space, and multi-family residential units. It is located on the mainland of Sarasota County at the intersection of Stickney Point Road and U.S. 41 — a little more than half a mile east of the Stickney Point Bascule Bridge, one of two bridges connecting the mainland to Siesta Key. The FDOT connection permit allowed Siesta Promenade to connect to Stickney Point Road at a point across from an existing road, turning a three-way intersection into a four-way intersection and requiring the addition of a traffic light.

In his petition to challenge the permit, Wallace stated he used the section of Stickney Point Road where the connection would be located “daily and sometimes multiple times per day” and that use was consistent over more than 20 years. He alleged,

[T]he proposed connection, traffic signal and intersection to accommodate the additional traffic from [Siesta Promenade] will cause [him] to become stuck in additional traffic congestion and during the season, maroon petitioner and his family making it more difficult for him to leave and return to Siesta Key to access medical care, goods and services that he needs and utilizes on the mainland.^[10]

Wallace also suggested the connection would delay emergency vehicles and slow hurricane evacuation. After FDOT dismissed his initial petition for lack of standing, Wallace filed an amended petition with substantially the same allegations, which FDOT referred to DOAH solely on the issue of standing.

Siesta 41 Associates, as the owner and developer of Siesta Promenade and the permittee, intervened and contested petitioner’s substantial interest, as defined by *Agrico* and its progeny. The permit, granted under the State Highway System Access Management Act,^[11] provides a reasonable right of access to every owner or property that abuts the State Highway System but Wallace was not an abutting landowner. Siesta 41 argued the act is intended to address the point of connection, not congestion and traffic jams: “There is simply no cognizable interest in being able to travel a certain speed in a certain amount of time upon a roadway.”^[12] Siesta 41 also contended that Wallace’s “broad and indeterminate statements” were not

sufficiently particularized to confer standing because, if they were, “any party who may, at some point, have some type of emergency that may require responders to traverse” Stickney Point Road would have standing.^[13] “This would not serve the long-established purpose of standing, to narrow the scope of permissible challengers to only those who would be genuinely affected by the decision.”^[14]

After receiving written arguments from each party on whether Wallace had standing to challenge the permit, Administrative Law Judge Linzie F. Bogan issued an order closing the file and relinquishing jurisdiction back to FDOT with the recommendation the petition be dismissed for lack of standing, holding that, “[s]imply stated, [Wallace’s] purported injury of being ‘stuck in additional traffic congestion’ is not of the ‘type or nature’ that [Ch.] 335 is designed to address.”^[15] FDOT ultimately agreed in its final order:

Taken as true, Dr. Wallace’s allegations that the traffic signal will cause him ‘to become stuck in additional traffic congestion’ and make access to the mainland and his home ‘more difficult and time consuming’ are the kind of citizens’ general interests that do not establish standing. Further [Wallace] does not suffer a substantial injury of a type or nature which a proceeding under sections 335.18 through 335.188, Florida Statutes, is designed to protect.^[16]

On Appeal

On appeal, Wallace attempted to argue that the legislative policy statements of Ch. 335 generally and the act specifically framed the zone of interest. Relying on the broad, legislative intent language of the act, which states the “State Highway System is necessary to protect the public health, safety, and welfare,”^[17] Wallace argued that any effect on the health, safety, and welfare of drivers on the state highways fell within the zone of interest. If such an argument were accepted, this would expand the zone of interest of the act to encompass all those using state highways who contended an access permit damaged their “welfare.” Wallace also argued that residence on a barrier island made delays due to increased traffic on the island’s main access road sufficiently “particularized” under the injury prong of the *Agrico* test. Under his logic, any one of the approximately 5,000 residents of Siesta Key would have standing to challenge a FDOT connection permit on Stickney Point Road, and any of the more than 800,000 residents of barrier islands in Florida would have standing to challenge connection permits — or, ostensibly, any FDOT decision — that might affect the flow of traffic on roads connecting the barrier island to the mainland.

Court Rejects Attempts to Expand Agrico

Eight days after the conclusion of oral argument in this case, the Second District Court of Appeal issued an opinion of per curiam affirmed, upholding FDOT's decision to dismiss the petition without written opinion, leaving the agency's justification to speak for itself. Wallace sought a written opinion and/or certification of a question of great public importance, but the court quickly denied his motion a week later, again without written opinion.

The case brought to the court to the brink of a radical expansion of standing that threatened to overwhelm DOAH and the courts and all but halt development along state highways on the coast. The ALJ, agency, and district court of appeal refused to interpret the *Agrico* test in the broad way Wallace urged. While increasing traffic in coastal areas of the state may require new approaches going forward, the court may have recognized that interpreting the substantial interest test so broadly would effectively eliminate the word "substantial" in the "substantial interest" test, something the court was not willing to do. Thus, drivers do not have the automatic right to challenge FDOT decisions affecting their daily commute, and residents of barrier islands do not have an automatic particularized interest in the roads that access the island.

[1] *Wallace*, 356 So. 3d at 786, motion for written opinion and/or cert. of question of great public importance den. (Mar. 3, 2023). The authors were counsel to Siesta 41 Associates, LLP, the permittee in this case, throughout all proceedings.

[2] Fla. Stat. §120.52(13)(b).

[3] *Agrico*, 406 So. 2d at 482.

[4] *Id.*

[5] *Int'l Jai-Alai Players Ass'n v. Florida Pari-Mutuel Comm'n*, 561 So. 2d 1224, 1226 (Fla. 3d DCA 1990).

[6] *Vill. Park Mobile Home Ass'n, Inc. v. State, Dep't of Bus. Regul., Div. of Florida Land Sales, Condominiums & Mobile Homes*, 506 So. 2d 426, 433 (Fla. 1st DCA 1987).

[7] *See, i.e., Ward v. Bd. of Trs. of the Internal Imp. Trust Fund*, 651 So. 2d 1236, 1237 (Fla. 4th DCA 1995).

[8] *Vill. of Key Biscayne v. Dep't of Env'tl. Prot.*, 206 So. 3d 788, 791 (Fla. 3d DCA 2016) (citing *Taylor v. Cedar Key Special Water and Sewerage Dist.*, 590 So. 2d 481 (Fla. 1st DCA 1991), for the proposition that "the department is not authorized to deny environmental permits based on alleged noncompliance with local land use restrictions on comprehensive plans," so the allegations are not within the zone of interest of the statute and thus do not provide standing).

[9] *Wallace*, 356 So. 3d at 786; FDOT Case No. 21-001; DOAH Case No. 21-0576.

[10] *Response to Dismissal without Prejudice and Amended Petition for FDOT Decision Reversal or Formal Hearing or Informal Hearing*, p. 7, FDOT Case No. 21-001.

[11] Fla. Stat. §§335.18-335.188 (2020).

[12] *Wallace v. Siesta 41 Assoc.*, DOAH Case No. 21-000576 (Permittee's Amended Motion to Dismiss With Prejudice and Memorandum of Law in Support at 10).

[13] *Wallace*, DOAH Case No. 21-000576 (Siesta 41 Associates LLP's Response to Order to Show Cause at 7).

[14] *Id.*

[15] *Wallace*, DOAH Case No. 21-000576, (Order Closing File and Relinquishing Jurisdiction at 4 (Mar. 26, 2021).

[16] FDOT Case No. 21-001, Agency Final Order at 8 (May 13, 2021).

[17] Fla. Stat. §335.181(1)(b) (2020).

Susan L. Stephens is a shareholder at Stearns Weaver Miller in Tallahassee. She has over 25 years of experience practicing environmental & natural resource and administrative law, including rulemaking practice and procedure and administrative litigation.

Felicia L. Kitzmiller is an associate at Stearns Weaver Miller in Tallahassee. Her practice focuses on all aspects of land development, and helping clients resolve multi-faceted issues through the administrative process, litigation, or legislation.

[**Fatou Calixte** is an associate at Stearns Weaver Miller in Tallahassee. She represents clients in complex commercial litigation, including land use and property rights and administrative law matters.]

Q&A WITH THE AUTHORS

Q: What drove you to write this article after *Wallace*?

A: (Susan Stephens) The petitioner in this case was testing fairly undefined, fluid boundaries of the “degree of harm” and “nature of the injury” prongs of the *Agrico* standing test that, had the appellate court determined the petitioner had standing, would have turned the substantial interest concept on its head.

Q: How does *Wallace* differ from other decisions on standing in the Administrative Law context?

A: (Felicia Kitzmiller) The petitioner’s willingness to continuously appeal and pursue this case created the opportunity for the Second DCA to interpret the tenants of administrative standing in the context of a connection permit. Very few cases of this nature rise to the level of a DCA hearing, so the Court was given an opportunity to probe the bounds concepts such as “particularized injury” and “speculative harm.” A few thousand people use the intersection that was in question in this case every day – viewed that way, it would seem that the petitioner did not

have a particularized injury; but it was particularized in comparison to someone like me, from Tallahassee, who has never used the intersection. So how particularized does an injury have to be to qualify a petitioner for standing?

Q: Did you learn any important lessons from working on the case?

A: (Felicia Kitzmiller) As an associate, I learned an unbelievable amount working on this case. This is the first case I have worked on that went to oral argument. The other appellate cases I’ve participated in were resolved on the briefs. I guess the first thing I learned is, when you get a chance, take it – no matter how small it may seem at the time. When Susan first asked for my assistance with this case I thought it would be a small, short-term project. Instead, it occupied the better part of two years. The second thing I learned is the value of preparation. Susan did an outstanding job in this oral argument and she had a concise response for every question that was raised and every misstatement of law or fact made by opposing counsel, and that was because we spent many hours studying the relevant case law, drafting potential questions and responses, and mooted the argument.

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Tallahassee Women Lawyers is honored and humbled to have Stearns Weaver Miller as our Annual Exclusive Platinum Sponsor. Stearns Weaver Miller Weissler Alhadeff & Sitterson is a Florida-based law firm with more than 150 attorneys and offices in Miami, Coral Gables, Fort Lauderdale, Tampa and Tallahassee. For over 40 years, their multidisciplinary team of attorneys and professionals have worked collaboratively to help clients understand and resolve complex legal issues and disputes.

Tallahassee Women Lawyers is grateful to have so many of the Tallahassee women lawyers at Stearns Weaver serve as leaders and integral parts of our organization.

For more information, visit stearnsweaver.com.



A Family Business in Family Photography

*Written by Christie Petruzzelli with help
from Alena Johnsen*

Ti Adoro Studios is a portrait photography business located in Tallahassee, Florida. They also have a mobile location in Rosemary Beach, Florida. Ti Adoro Studios specializes in creating gorgeous wall art and printed keepsakes (albums, books and fine art prints) created by the best labs all over the world. In Tallahassee, they offer a wide variety of services, from studio branding and headshots to family and pet photography. Along the Forgotten Coast they do on-site photography for family clients, couples, high school seniors, and more.

Alena Johnsen began photography in 2010 photographing gorgeous weddings on 30A and travelling the world for weddings and engagement sessions. She thought that was all she wanted to do forever- until she met her forever, fellow photographer, Michael Johnsen. The two then explored family photography together, where they found a love for being able to capture the true essence of relationships and personalities. "Knowing that these photos will be looked at by the future generations of that family makes it so much more special and a lot of our clients become our friends that trust us with photos of their growing families."

Visit [their website](#) to learn more!

“
*We love seeing tears of joy when our
clients see their loved ones or
themselves on the printed
photographs.*
“



THANK YOU TO OUR GOLD SPONSOR



Tallahassee Women Lawyers is honored and humbled to have Ti Adoro Studios as a Gold Tier Annual Sponsor. You can check out some of their work by visiting [our website](#) where you will see headshots from the Board's installation in July and the Board photograph taken outside the Florida First District Court of Appeal during a beautiful sunset.

NOVEMBER 3, 2023 TI ADORO STUDIOS HOSTS WOMEN FACES OF LAW



In 2022, Ti Adoro Studios started the Women Faces of Law campaign to inspire and empower women attorneys of Tallahassee, particularly the younger generation of the profession. The campaign uplifts and celebrates women, lawyers, and judges. This year's event will be held at Bannerman Crossings November 3, 2023, from 5-7pm.

RSVP [here](#) to attend an evening of champagne toasts, hors d'oeuvres from Blu Halo, wine tasting, desserts, mingling, networking, and celebrating the stories and portraits of the featured women attorneys.



THE TALLAHASSEE WOMEN
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40TH ANNUAL
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6 O'CLOCK PM
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JUDGES RSVP TO
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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION COMING SOON
[HTTP://WWW.MYTWL.ORG/EVENTS-1](http://www.mytwl.org/events-1)

The first TWL Judicial Reception was held at Forest Meadows Racquet Club on April 7, 1983, and four decades later we are ready to celebrate like never before! This year it's official: we will embrace and celebrate being "Over the Hill" as TWL holds its 40th Annual Judicial Reception on Wednesday, October 25, 2023. Each fall, TWL is excited to show its support and appreciation to the individuals who contribute so much to the administration of justice throughout the State.

This year's event brings local judges and members of the Tallahassee legal community together outside the courtroom to enjoy an Autumn Harvest with mingling and laughter amongst a delicious assortment of food, beverages, and desserts. This year, the event will be held at the Tallahassee Garden Club's beautiful and Historic Rutger's House, featuring an outdoor oyster bar! The delicious indoor dessert table is exclusively sponsored by our Platinum Sponsor, Stearns Weaver Miller.

TWL would like to thank the Tallahassee legal community for its support and the Judicial Reception Committee for putting on what will be a beautiful celebration this year. It is hard to believe that TWL has only raised its ticket prices by \$5 total over the span of a decade. How are we able to continue to hold this amazing event year after year for such a low and reasonable ticket price? The generous support of our wonderful sponsors makes this event possible. Join us at this historic event by purchasing a ticket or by becoming a sponsor!

Tickets are available as \$35 for TWL members and \$45 for non-members.
Purchase tickets on TWL's events page or [CLICK HERE](#)

*For information about sponsorship opportunities, please contact Elizabeth Stinson, Judicial Reception Director, at judicialreception@mytwl.org and feel free to scroll through TWL's website on its *Sponsors* page to access the sponsorship form, located [HERE](#).*



BAKING 101

Written by Skyy Mewbron

When I was little, and I saw sticks of butter sitting on our kitchen counter I knew that meant my mom was going to be baking something and that I would be sitting at our breakfast bar to watch her do it. This naturally developed into my own attachment to baking. I bake when I'm happy or sad. I bake when I'm stressed. I bake for all of my friends' birthdays, any social gathering I'm invited to, when I want to impress someone, or just when I need an excuse to drink a glass of wine.

Now I will be sharing that fondness with you. Here are two recipes that I have vetted myself time and time again and have never failed me. I hope that these recipes serve you well and impress everyone who gets to taste what you create. Once you master these recipes, I want to hear from you, so I will be taking requests at smewbron@fsu.edu. Please send in any dessert you want to learn how to make but haven't found a good recipe for. I will be scouring the internet, searching high and low, and participating in lots of trial and (hopefully little) error, so you don't have to. Until then, happy baking!

VANILLA-RICH CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIES

Ingredients

- 3 ¼ cups of flour
- 1 tsp baking soda
- ½ tsp salt
- 1 ½ cups butter (softened)
- 1 ½ cups firmly packed brown sugar
- 2 eggs
- 2 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 pkg of semi-sweet chocolate chips

Directions

- Preheat oven to 350F
- Mix flour, baking soda, and salt then set aside
- In a separate bowl beat butter and sugars until light and fluffy
- Add eggs and vanilla and mix well
- Gradually beat in flour mixture until well blended
- Stir in chocolate chips
- Bake 8-10 minutes



Tips

- Use a combination of mini semi-sweet chocolate chips and the semi-sweet morsels to get a better distribution of chocolate throughout the cookie. This will end up equaling more than one bag of chocolate.
- Larger cookies will require more time in the oven and smaller cookies will require less time. I prefer to pull mine out when the edges just start to darken and remove them from the cookie sheet immediately. You may be worried that the center is not cooked enough but the residual heat will take care of that.
- Placing the cookies on parchment paper instead of directly on the cookie sheet makes for easier removal of the cookies from the sheet and easier cleanup.

PUMKIN CHEESECAKE BARS WITH STREUSEL TOPPING

Ingredients

Crust

- 1 ½ cups cinnamon graham cracker crumbs
- ½ cup white sugar
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar
- 6 tablespoons butter, melted
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon

Cheesecake

- 2 8oz Cream Cheese softened
- ½ cup + 2 tablespoons white sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 large eggs
- ½ cup + 2 tablespoons canned pumpkin
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon pumpkin pie spice

Streusel and topping

- ½ cup brown sugar, packed
- ½ cup AP flour
- ¼ cup quick cooking oats
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon
- ½ cup butter softened (not melted)
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- caramel topping

Directions

- Preheat oven to 350F and line an 8 x 8 baking pan with parchment paper, leaving an overhang of paper
- In a bowl, combine the crust ingredients then press evenly into the lined baking pan.
- In a separate bowl combine the cream cheese, sugar, and vanilla then beat with a hand mixer until completely smooth and creamy. Add in the eggs one at a time and beat until combined.
- Take 1 ½ cups of the mixture and pour on top of the graham cracker crust.
- Add the canned pumpkin, cinnamon, and pumpkin pie spice to the remaining cheesecake mixture and mix completely.
- Pour the pumpkin layer on top of the plain cheesecake layer.
- In the same bowl used for the crust, stir together the brown sugar, flour, quick cooking oats, and cinnamon.
- Add in the butter and vanilla and mix together until combined.
- Sprinkle the streusel layer evenly over the cheesecake layer.
- Place in the oven and bake for 50 - 55 minutes or until the cheesecake has set.
- Allow to cool for an hour then place in the fridge for 1-2 hours.
- Drizzle with caramel topping.



EMPLOYMENT LISTINGS FORUM

TWL is excited to offer a sneak peek into its latest website update for Employment Listings! Become a site contact, read the guidelines, and submit postings that will get published on our Employment Listings Forum. Access to this feature will be open to everyone this year and will become an exclusive member benefit starting next year! Check out TWL's website update [HERE](#).

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