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### ON THE COVER

Justice C. Alan Lawson, newly sworn in as the 86th member of the Florida Supreme Court. Justice Lawson will be our Keynote Speaker at the 2017 Bench & Bar Convention on Friday, October 20th. See page 18 & 19 for more information on Justice C. Alan Lawson and the Bench & Bar Convention.

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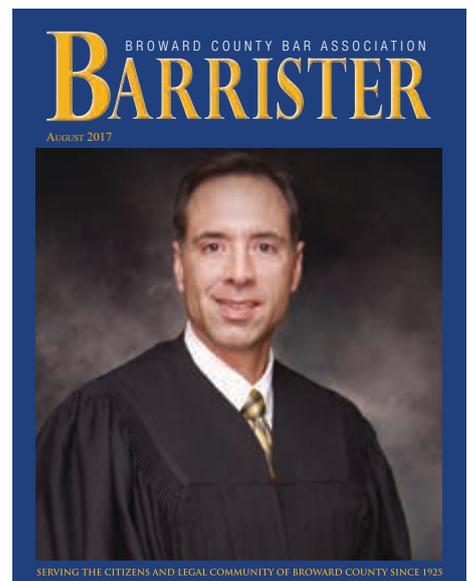
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*Thomas Daniel Oates*

The end of summer is near. Vacations are wrapping up, schools will soon be back in session, temperatures are still blazing, and friends are busy planning their last summer excursions to watch the Great American Total Solar Eclipse (August 21). Meanwhile, South Floridians prepare to be inundated with back-to-school traffic.

This also is a busy time at the Broward County Bar Association. In July, I attend the Florida Bar's 2017 Voluntary Bar Leader's Conference, in Orlando, along with Braulio Rosa (Executive Director), and Winney Kessler (President-Elect). Florida Bar President, Michael Higer, was a featured speaker on the topic of what's on the horizon for The Florida Bar.

This annual gathering of the State's voluntary bar leaders covers timely topics, and provides good networking opportunities. While Broward is always well represented by our many voluntary bar associations, this conference has especially been the inspiration for some of our most successful programs and member benefits. For a second year in a row, our own Braulio Rosa was a featured session speaker on the topic, "To Infinity and Beyond: Technology Options for Membership Management" and hosted a roundtable discussion for executive directors throughout the state to share and discuss current issues facing local voluntary bar associations.

August is traditionally when the Bar's Board of Directors strategically plan the association's programming for the next fiscal year. This year, we welcome several new members to our Board of Directors; Maxine K. Streeter (Central), Jose Leonardo "Leo" Gomez (Northeast), Matthew Fornaro (Northwest), Jessica Marra (West), Valerie B. Barnhart (West), Sara M. Sandler (YLS President), and The Honorable Raag Singhal (Judicial Representative).

Your Board of Directors met at Broward College's Tigertail Lake Recreational Center at the end of July to discuss the focus of the Bar and how we can continue to grow our membership, and provide members with worthwhile programs. We conducted a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) to identify key internal and external factors seen as important in developing, monitoring and achieving our primary objectives.

We also closed our books on fiscal year 2016-2017. By all accounts it was an excellent year. Thanks in large part to the exceptional leadership of immediate Past-President Charles A. Morehead III, we posted better than expected numbers for sponsorships and grew our membership to a new record. Since my first term on the Board eight years ago, the Bar has evolved into a much different animal. We have grown in substantial ways in terms of our long-term vision, performance and retention of members. The Bar is now run like a business. We've developed methods for the implementation of new programs, and their accountability, and created a framework to bring other voluntary bar associations into our Association. We focus on what works, and how to become better at what we do.

Stay tuned for some fishing reports later this year. Perhaps last month's fishing photo gave it away, but I intend to advocate for us lawyers to do what we love to do, when we're not earning a living. With scallop season in full swing, and the start of lobster season (August 6), there is still much to enjoy about summer.

Have a great rest of the summer, and if fishing is your thing, tight lines. **B**

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## letter from the young lawyers' president



*Sara M. Sandler*

If you were at the BCBA Installation Dinner then you know that my father is a Dead Head who didn't give me much of a choice but to grow up to love the Grateful Dead (seriously, Friend of the Devil was his lullaby of choice). One of my favorite Grateful Dead songs is Uncle John's Band, not just because it's insanely catchy and fun to sing along with, but because when you really dig into the lyrics (as a Dead Head's attorney daughter is wont to do), there are truly timeless lessons we can take with us anywhere. While I could spend my entire term writing monthly articles about the lyrics to Uncle John's Band, I'll try to limit myself to just this one and pass along a message that the Grateful Dead provide from the top:

Well the first days are the hardest days, don't you worry any more 'Cause when life looks like Easy Street, there is danger at your door.

Seriously, was Jerry Garcia just a young attorney hiding out in a rock and roll band?\* If not, he certainly had some major insight. I have a feeling most young and new attorneys can relate to this opening line. We spend our first few years of practice putting in long hours, learning the ins and outs of our specific practice area, and developing ourselves, not only as attorneys, but as young adults. We're learning to juggle our careers, our relationships, and our networking groups. We're trying to find ways to impress the partners at our firms, our (future) significant others, and our parents all while attempting to live a fulfilling life outside of our legal practice. Oh yea, we're also trying to find time to do our laundry, go grocery shopping, and walk our dogs. To anyone who doesn't feel the stress that comes with being a new attorney, congratulations on the New York Times bestselling self-help book for new attorneys you are about to publish. To the rest of you who, like me, suffer from a quarterly Jessie Spano meltdown ("There's no time! There's never any time!"), I encourage you to find a way to make time for yourself.

I know. I literally just acknowledged the fact that you have no time. But I promise you that you do. Maybe it's only five minutes a day, but take that five minutes to do something for yourself that makes you happier and healthier – physically or mentally. Meditate. Make a list. Participate in a 30-day ab challenge. Whatever it may be, commit to dedicating that time to you and you alone. As Jerry points out, things aren't meant to be easy. We have found ourselves in a profession where the work never truly ends. That means it's up to you to give yourself a break. It's up to you to take care of your own mental health and wellness. While it is important to stay focused on your career, I cannot stress enough how important it is to be equally focused on your own well-being and happiness. Spend time on a hobby, volunteer, set a weekly or monthly date with your significant other or best friend, make time to exercise. If things really become too overwhelming, don't be afraid to consider talking to a mental health professional. Finding and committing to these outlets will not only make you happier in life, but in your career as well.

I would be remiss not to remind you that YLS offers plenty of ways to take a break for your own well-being. Our sweatworking events, in particular, are a great way to try out different types of exercise. If you find that giving back to the community is the best way for you to relieve stress, we have plenty of volunteer opportunities as well. Check out our calendar of events at [www.browardbar.org](http://www.browardbar.org) to see what might be a good option for you. Above all, remember to take care of yourself.

Until next time, keep truckin'. **B**

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\* Florida Trend magazine July 2017 special report



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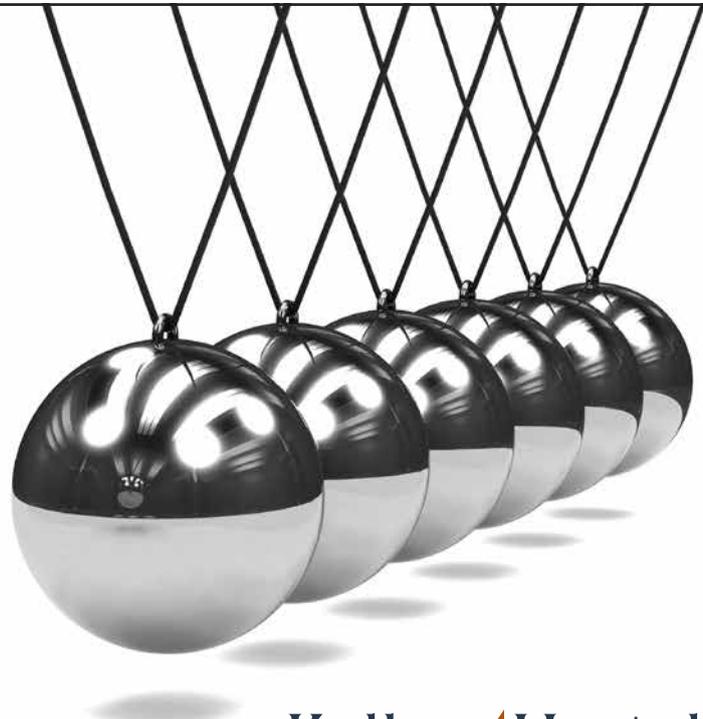
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## 2017 Bench & Bar Convention Keynote Speaker

by Amber R. Stoner

Earlier this year Justice C. Alan Lawson was sworn in as the 86th member of the Florida Supreme Court. Lawson joined the court following the retirement of Justice James Perry in December 2016, marking Governor Rick Scott's first appointment to the state's highest court. In announcing the appointment, Governor Scott praised Lawson, saying, "Throughout his career, Justice Lawson has focused on defending the constitution, strictly adhering to the rule of law and not legislating from the bench."

A Florida native, Justice Lawson has deep roots in the state. He was born in Lakeland and raised in Tallahassee. After graduating from the Florida State University College of Law in 1987, he practiced law in South Florida as an associate and partner at Steel, Hector & Davis. He then moved to Central Florida and worked as an assistant county attorney in Orange County. In 2002, Lawson began his judicial career as a circuit judge in the Ninth Judicial Circuit, covering Orange and Osceola Counties. He was later appointed by Governor Jeb Bush to the Fifth District Court of Appeal in Daytona Beach where he served for ten years, including two years as the Chief Judge.

Prior to joining the bench, Lawson was an active member of both the Tallahassee Bar Association and the Orange County Bar Association. He credits those organizations for providing him the opportunity to perform many hours of pro bono legal work. While practicing in Central Florida, Lawson often handled cases through



the Legal Aid Society of the Orange County Bar Association. Lawson also has a reputation for giving back that extends beyond the legal community. He and his wife, Julie, have spent many years as missionaries in Honduras, providing assistance to the impoverished and medically needy.

Lawson recognizes the important role local bar associations have in modeling and promoting professionalism and civility within the legal profession. He believes that where there is a genuine sense of community among a group of practitioners, the less likely it is that an individual will act unprofessionally toward a colleague. "The cost of being uncivil to someone you have to deal with again and again is really high. You can't be effective as a lawyer if you aren't professional in the ways you deal with people," said Lawson. He also discussed the importance of professionalism to the integrity of our justice system, explaining that unprofessional conduct degrades the public's confidence in the system, causing it to be less effective.

In an interview with the Tallahassee Democrat in April, Lawson described himself as a "textualist" rather than

a conservative or a liberal. He explained, "Legal philosophy doesn't come into play in most cases a judge will see. We are mostly applying facts to the clear law. Usually, that law is not an issue. It's really like an umpire calling balls and strikes. You try to reach a ruling that is fair and impartial." Lawson hopes to use his platform as a member of the Florida Supreme Court to educate the public about the role of judges and to inspire others to get involved in their local legal communities.

Justice C. Alan Lawson will serve as the Keynote Speaker during the 2017 Bench & Bar Convention. The Bench & Bar Convention will take place on October 20th. **B**



*Amber Stoner is an attorney in the Tallahassee office of Shutts & Bowen LLP, where she is a member of the Business Litigation Practice Group. Prior to joining Shutts, Amber served as a staff attorney to Justice Ricky Polston of the Florida Supreme Court and Judge Kent Wetherell of Florida's First District Court of Appeal. With more than fifteen years of experience in Florida government, Amber has also worked in the Executive Office of the Governor, the House of Representatives, the Attorney General's Office, and the Department of State. AmberStoner@shutts.com*

# 2017 BENCH AND BAR CONVENTION OVERVIEW

*Justice Lawson will be the keynote speaker during lunch for the 2017 Bench and Bar Convention.* The Convention will be held on October 20th at The Greater Ft. Lauderdale/Broward County Convention Center. The Bench and Bar Convention is a must-attend event that appeals to attorneys and judges from Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach Counties. The 2017 Convention will attract over 600 participants. Our Convention Co-Chairs Brent M. Reitman and Robert C.L. Vaughan have worked to bring you this extraordinary legal event that will feature, a morning judiciary panel, a premier quality lunch, “breakout” sessions, and an afternoon plenary session. The judiciary panel

discussion will be moderated by 17th Circuit Chief Judge Jack Tuter. The panel will include United States District Court Chief Judge K. Michael Moore, Fourth District Court of Appeals Chief Judge-Elect Spencer D. Levine, and 17th Circuit Administrative Judge Carol-Lisa Phillips. The panel will discuss the current state of their respective courts and will speak to the most recent changes and updates. This year, the breakout sessions will cover various practice sections such as Family Law, Appellate, Malpractice, Probate, ADR, PIP, and Immigration. There are two additional tracks included for the Bench and Bar Convention: Medical Marijuana Industry and its emergence and a Trial Track.

The Medical Marijuana Track will provide updates on current trends and legislation. The Trial Track will be an interactive journey delving into the many different aspects of contemporary trial practice featuring some of the most well know practitioners in the state and will conclude with a two-hour mock trial. The convention will offer intermediate and advanced-level CLE’s as well as CME’s. Attendees will have time throughout the day to visit various exhibitor booths while interacting with firms, companies and attendees. The day concludes with a networking cocktail reception.

*All in One Day and in One Place.* **B**



2015 Bench and Bar Keynote Speaker  
Chief Justice LaBarga addressing convention attendees.



**REGISTRATION IS OPEN!**

## 2017 BENCH & BAR CONVENTION

Friday, October 20, 2017

7:30 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

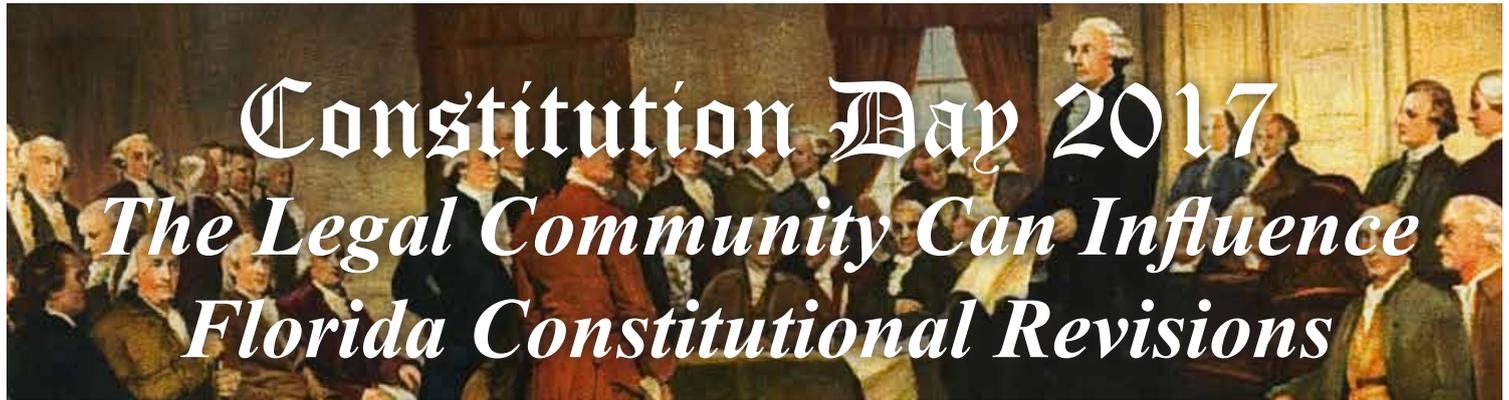
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by Janette M. Smith

This year, for Constitution Day 2017, the Broward County Bar Association (BCBA) is providing a forum with an esteemed panel to educate the legal community on the process and power of the Constitutional Review Commission (CRC).

**Please join BCBA on September 19, 2017, at the Hyatt Pier 66 - Pier Top from 5:30 to 8:00 p.m. The prestigious panel will include CRC Commissioners former Senator Christopher L. Smith, Fred E. Karlinsky, and moderated by Florida Bar Board of Governor Jay Cohen. Thank you to our Title Sponsor Florida Power and Light. Please visit [browardbar.org/calendar](http://browardbar.org/calendar) for more information on the event and sponsorship opportunities.**

### What is the CRC?

The CRC is a committee of thirty-seven (37) appointed members who assemble every twenty years to review and propose changes to our Florida Constitution. The committee's recommended amendments will be submitted to the voters on the November 2018 ballot and will require 60 percent voter approval for passage. As lawyers having the privilege to practice law in Florida, we should avail ourselves to learn about this process and the significance of the decisions made by the CRC.

After holding its organizational meeting on March 2017, the CRC went on

the road with its "Floridians Speak, We Listen" tour conducting public hearings throughout the state. For three months, the CRC encouraged public input, yet it has been reported, of the 2350 community members that attended, 900 proposed changes were submitted. Some of the hot topics discussed include the Florida judicial system, education, medical marijuana, and government home rule. On June 6, 2017, the CRC took its first formal action with the adoption of their governing rules engagement resolution. The goal set forth by this committee to provide an open and transparent process for all citizens. The CRC must consider proposals, formulate its recommended amendments, and present the final report to the Florida Department of State by May 10, 2018.

### Why should you get involved?

During the November 1998 election, eight of the nine amendments presented to the voters by the CRC passed. If we fail to take advantage of this chance to be involved now, we will have to wait until 2037 when the next committee is appointed. According to a recent survey by Florida TaxWatch, less than 77% of Floridians are aware that this committee exists. Do not miss this unique opportunity to become involved in our democratic process.

As a government attorney, Chair of the Legislative Committee of the City,

County and Local Government section of the Florida Bar and a member of the BCBA Legislative Affairs Committee, I assure you that all government entities are paying attention. Additionally, upon reviewing the CRC public hearing transcripts, multiple non-profit agencies, activists, and citizens are vying to influence the CRC.

There is unity and strength in numbers. The legal community has the ability to help shape the future of fundamental rights bestowed in the Florida Constitution. Our collective voice can deliver a roar that the CRC must consider when selecting the amendments to be placed on the ballot for November 2018. **B**



*Janette M. Smith currently serves as Assistant General Counsel for The School Board of Broward County, Florida and maintains a solo law practice. Prior to joining the District, she has practiced local government law for the past ten years at the city, county, and state level. In addition to her legal background and experience, she enjoys implementing and integrating technology and has obtained her designation as a Certified Government Chief Information Officer.*

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# SEO Made Easy: Get Your Firm Listed on Google's First Page

by Natalie Giachos

Gone are the days when a simple listing in the yellow pages and a few billboards would get you the exposure you needed to get the phone ringing.

In today's technology-driven world, it's all about the internet and being listed on a search engine's first page. *About 91% of people do not click past the first page of Google's search results.*

Considering the number of people searching on Google every day, it's clear that to reach potential clients, you need to be working on improving your chances of being listed on Google's first page. After all, the more exposure you get, the higher the chances will be for you to get more clients.

## So how do I get on Google's first page?

In order to appear on the first page of Google's search engine results, you have to understand what Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is and how it works.

## What is SEO

SEO is the practice of driving traffic to your website or content by using organic (non-paid) search engine results. Optimizing website and online content increases the likelihood that search engines award a higher rank in search results, making it easier to be found by potential clients searching for keywords related to your practice.

## How Does SEO Work

SEO involves a variety of factors, but

for ease of understanding, it can be broken down into two broad parts. There's the technical side that includes speed, design, whether it is mobile friendly, title tags, meta descriptions, and back links. Then there is the creative side that includes the content, such as blogs, social media, and videos.

Each of these parts work together so that the search engines can recognize that 1) you exist; 2) you have information that searchers would find relevant and useful; and 3) your website and content can be trusted to be displayed because of its high quality.

If you can consistently meet these criteria, over time, you will be rewarded by appearing on the first page of the search results.

Here are the top 5 things you need to make sure you have in place:

## SEO Tips to Get Your Firm Listed on Google's First Page:

1. **Index your website.** This is how Google will know that you exist. This should also be done for all of the other major search engines (Bing, Yahoo!, etc.)
2. **Use a mobile friendly design.** This is a must! If your website is not mobile friendly, it's time to update. Failure to do so will have a significant negative impact on your SEO.
3. **Use a sitemap for your website.** This helps search engines easily navigate and recognize what information is on your website.
4. **Make sure your website is set up for optimal user experience.**

Your site should be modern looking and visitors should be able to easily find the information they are searching for. Keep in mind that the longer people stay on your site, the better the search engines will rank you.

5. **Use a blog with keywords in your practice area.** This is not where you want to write a dissertation about the latest court rulings. You are writing for prospective clients, not other lawyers. Your blog should answer the most commonly asked questions in your practice area.

You do not have to know everything there is to know about SEO to make sure you are set up for success, but you do need make sure your online marketing plan caters to your prospective clients and delivers quality information on a consistent basis.

SEO does not happen overnight, but implementing these simple strategies on a continuous basis, you will be well on your way to Google's first page and an office full of clients. **E**



Natalie Giachos is the Managing Attorney at The Solution Law Firm, P.A., where she practices Estate Planning and Personal Injury. Natalie has a passion for marketing and helps attorneys and entrepreneurs achieve success through online marketing. Natalie can be reached at [Natalie@solutionlawfirm.com](mailto:Natalie@solutionlawfirm.com)

# How To Combat The 7 Financial Problems Facing Law Firms Today...

*Insights on How To Be More Profitable and Efficient With Technology, While Saving Your Clients' Money at the Same Time.*

by Andy Sokol

This article segment is part three of a recent BCBA Barrister entitled "E-Discovery as an Efficient Tool." This multi-part series focuses on solving specific problems that law firms have by using the latest legal technology.

Over the last several years, the landscape of the legal industry has drastically changed. The traditional business model of the law firm has been challenged from clients that are trying to save costs for legal services in an economy full of turbulence. At the same time, law firms' costs are increasing.

## **PROBLEM #3 - The Demand for High-End Legal Services is Shrinking.**

- 1) Until recently, pricing pressures barely existed for high-end legal services. However, big corporations are facing pricing pressures themselves and have had to reduce legal expenses. Because of this, they are increasingly focused on getting greater value from their outside counsel.
- 2) Clients think that hiring a law firm and paying their billable rate is too expensive for all of their legal work. Large clients are increasingly using in-house legal staff to perform much of the work themselves. They are demanding that routine assignments like document discovery be sent to outsourcing firms and contract lawyers than to more expensive associates.

- 3) Software is getting more powerful and increasingly able to do legal work, such as legal discovery and document review, at a higher quality and in less time. Humans cannot compete with computers in tasks that computers are good at, especially when the software solution is much cheaper.
- 4) The public is taking a Do-It-Yourself approach because of the growing access to a variety of legal services and documents on the internet.

## **THE SOLUTION IS SIMPLE: Embrace Electronic Discovery Technology for Document Review**

Technology is nothing more than a tool to help you provide a better service to your clients. At the end of the day, lawyers want to do high-end legal work, bill by the hour for their time, and meet their client's deadlines. By leveraging the right tools for what they need, lawyers are able to provide a higher work quality in less time. Tools that improve efficiency will reduce their workload and their resultant stress. This will lead to a higher standard of service and generate more referrals. Good lawyers add a significant value to the transactions that they work on, and they are compensated well for this (as they should be).

Many of the tasks that are automated through software are repetitive and not intellectually interesting for lawyers who have to do them. Having software that can take on less complex tasks,

means that lawyers can focus on more stimulating work, get their work done faster and better, thus providing their clients better-value work. Clients that think they are getting better value will be much happier.

Using the latest, easiest and fastest eDiscovery software enables the law firm to increase revenue by taking on and handling more cases and more clients, without having to hire more people or more contract attorneys for review. Because of pricing pressures for legal services, it is cheaper to outsource the technology, and all of the maintenance that goes with it, to a qualified service provider.

Reducing overhead expenses enables a firm to compete with law firms that are dropping their hourly rates to steal their clients. By being efficient, this also creates a higher profit while passing savings along to the client. It's a win-win situation that enables the firm to stay competitive. **B**



*Andy Sokol is the CEO & Founder of CopyScan Technologies, Inc., which has been providing Electronic Discovery Services, Document Copying and Scanning, Custom Trial Graphics and other Litigation Support Services to the South Florida legal community since 1995*



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# GOING FOURTH

Musings By the Fourth District Court of Appeal

## Heads I Win, Tails You Lose

Borrower Not Entitled to Fees Where Bank Lacks Standing to Foreclose

by Alan Bryce Grossman

In a mortgage foreclosure case, a typical defense is that the plaintiff lacks standing to bring the case. Case law is clear that standing must exist at the time the case is filed, and if the plaintiff lacks standing, the case must be dismissed.

With an apparent victory over the bank, the joyous defendant borrower, or more likely the borrower's attorney, sees the dollar signs in his or her mind's eye. The claim for prevailing party attorney's fees is then pursued against the losing plaintiff bank.

Not so fast. In its opinion issued on June 21, 2017, in *Nationstar Mortgage, LLC v. Glass et al.*, the Fourth District quite definitively put the kibosh on the defendant borrower's dreams of a nice payday for winning the foreclosure case. In *Glass*, the trial court dismissed the foreclosure action as a result of the bank's lack of standing. The borrower then proceeded with her claim for attorney's fees based on the standard attorney's fee provision in the mortgage coupled with the mutuality provision of section 57.105(7), *Florida Statutes*.

The mutuality provision of section 57.105(7) is intended to level the playing field where a parties' contract provides for only one side to recover attorney's fees if deemed the prevailing party in litigation. As commonly applied, section 57.105(7) allows the pre-

vailing party to recover attorney's fees based on a contract claim even though that fee provision neglects to provide for fees to the non-indicated contractual party. While this provision does provide a leveling of the respective strengths of the parties' positions in litigating contractual disputes, such leveling has been deemed, most recently in *Glass*, unavailable where the contract claim was dismissed based on lack of standing.

In *Glass*, the Fourth District held that where lack of standing requires dismissal of the foreclosure, lack of standing also indicates that no contract then existed between the parties that would invoke the mutuality provision of section 57.105(7). The *Glass* court distinguished its recent opinion in *Nudel v. Flagstar Bank, FSB*, 60 So. 3d 1163 (Fla. 4th DCA 2011), acknowledging that "the result is different when the plaintiff was also the originating lender." In *Nudel*, Flagstar Bank was the "lender" on the mortgage, and MERS was the "mortgagee". The case in *Nudel* was dismissed because MERS failed to assign the mortgage to Flagstar prior to the case being filed. In *Nudel*, the fee award was upheld by the Fourth District where dismissal occurred due to lack of standing and where the plaintiff (Flagstar Bank) was a party to the mortgage which the court was not allowed to consider due to the lack of a pre-suit assignment of that same document from

MERS to Flagstar.

The reasoning in *Glass* that prevented the borrower's entitlement to attorney's fees related to the fact that Nationstar was not the original lender on the mortgage, and because dismissal was required where no assignment of the mortgage to Nationstar existed when the case was filed. The Fourth District succinctly stated the law that "where a party prevails by arguing that the plaintiff failed to establish it had the right pursuant to the contract to bring the action, the party cannot simultaneously seek to take advantage of a fee provision in the same contract."

This rule of law dictates that, in foreclosure cases, if the bank wins the foreclosure, it wins as to attorney's fees, but if the bank loses the foreclosure (due to lack of standing), the borrower cannot seek attorney's fees. ■



Alan Bryce Grossman is a sole practitioner in Cooper City, practicing in South Florida, and around the state, and elsewhere, for 26 years. His areas of practice include litigation and appeals in commercial, property, and probate matters. He is a graduate of the University of Florida and the University of Baltimore School of Law. He can be reached at alan@abgrossman.com or by calling 954-364-6294

# Eat Healthier and Create a Better “You”

by Deborah Ward

Many of us lead hectic lives both professionally and personally. Too often our schedule negatively influences our health choices, making us detrimental to our own health. Aside from stress and lack of exercise, we need to take a closer look at what affects us the most, our eating habits. Our society is plagued by increasing rates of obesity, heart disease, cancer, diabetes, along with many other illnesses affecting our longevity and quality of life. A healthier diet is essential to improving your physical and mental health, positively affecting relationships, productivity, and happiness.

There are three main ingredients food companies and restaurants use to compel us to consume more of their products: fat, salt, and sugar. Trans fats, which are mostly used in processed foods, can lead to heart disease and stroke. Salt, which is added for flavor and preservation, can worsen high blood pressure causing a sequelae of negative health issues. Refined sugar is known to cause inflammation that leads to many diseases, affects hormones, and decreases our immune system and energy levels.

It is important to note that we need the right fats and sugars to sustain our bodies, those that are derived from whole foods. Whole foods are those which are minimally processed and remain as close to their natural form as possible. They provide us essential nutrients our bodies need. Examples include fruits, vegetables, grains, nuts, seeds, and fresh proteins.

Unfortunately, processed food has become the primary food intake for many. Processed foods are stripped of nutrients and include chemicals that are harmful to our bodies, leading to inflammation and disease. Some of the worst culprits are drinks, snacks, and prepared meals.

So how can we modify our habits to improve our nutrition? Small, simple changes to start. The most important change is to ditch the processed substances and eat more of what our body naturally recognizes, whole food.

We don't pay enough attention to what we drink. Most beverages have little nutritional value. Sodas, coffee beverages, flavored drinks, lemonades, and juices are mostly comprised of sugar and chemicals (including 'diet' drinks). Wine and alcohol when metabolized turn into sugar. Making water your primary source of fluid intake is key and can dramatically improve your weight and health.

Snacks are a favorite for most of us and serve too often as meal replacement. In general, foods that come from a box or package are highly processed. This includes chips, granola bars, crackers, cookies, cereal, candy, and yogurt (except plain Greek). Eating foods derived from plants (fruits, vegetables, nuts, and seeds) are a much better option when 'snacking.'

Prepared meals have become a standard for many households and is a contributing factor of obesity and declining health. Meals that are frozen or made by stores and restaurants are high in fat, salt, and sugar for flavor and preservation. Cooking your own meals is always the best option as you know and control the ingredients you consume. To minimize difficulty of home cooking, plan and prepare meals ahead, use simple recipes, and cook enough to last a couple of days.

Processed foods are in the middle of the grocery store. Shop the perimeter of the store as this is generally where more of your 'whole foods' are located, such as

produce and proteins. Avoid the bakery though.

If you don't understand the ingredients, your body doesn't either. Foods that have less packaging and 'health or nutrition claims' are healthier options. Remember, fruits and vegetables don't have ingredient listings or health claims on them. Use natural sweeteners instead of refined sugar, such as honey, pure maple syrup, or coconut sugar.

Avoid places where you must look up at a menu to order as these places are loaded with the 3 magical ingredients we spoke of earlier. Drink a glass of water prior to going to a restaurant since we are more impulsive about food choices on an empty stomach. When eating out, ask for dressings and sauces on the side. Monitor your portion sizes and use a small plate to serve your meals.

Bring your lunch and snacks to work. Get up every hour while at work and take a moment to walk around your office. Use this time to get a drink of water and say hello to your colleagues and staff.

Eating healthy lends to a more wholesome environment, so make a positive change for "you". Enjoy yourself, but moderation is key. Remember, you are responsible for what your body consumes. Even small changes can make a big difference. **B**



Deborah Ward, MSN, ARNP, LNC is a board-certified nurse practitioner working as a legal nurse consultant. Her nursing expertise and legal nurse consultant services assist attorneys with full case development of a wide range of medical related cases. Deborah can be contacted at [deborah@drwardconsulting.com](mailto:deborah@drwardconsulting.com) or (954) 290-7311.

- 3 Bar at the Bar Legal Jam**  
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**Venue:** Anthony's Runway 84  
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- 10 YLS Happy Hour**  
**Time:** 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.  
**Venue:** Lauderdale Yacht Club

- 23 YLS Town Hall Meeting**  
**Time:** 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.  
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- 24 CLE: Digital evidence – win your case and protect your client**  
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