



Gender Bias and Florida Bar Rule 4-8.4(D)

by Rebecca Bandy, Director of the Henry Latimer Center for Professionalism at The Florida Bar

One of my very first court appearances in private practice was in another county. I arrived early and was sitting on one of the benches observing a calendar call when a veteran attorney came over, sat down next to me, and introduced himself. I knew him by reputation and, as we began to converse, he leaned in closer and his hand landed on my knee, touching the bare skin just below my hem line, where it rested for the few seconds before I politely ended the conversation and excused myself.

I have never been a shrinking violet, but the incident made me both nervous and uncertain. Although I was more than prepared for my hearing, I suddenly felt as if I did not belong, like I was not smart enough or experienced enough to be there. I was a former high school teacher accustomed to dressing like a school marm to compensate for my young age; yet, I wondered if the tailored suit that my grandmother would have approved of was, in fact, appropriate for court. I doubted that I would ever be taken seriously, because I suddenly seemed so incredibly small and too blonde.



REBECCA BANDY

As brief as that encounter was, when I reflect on my early career, it always enters my mind, even 15 years later. The confidence I had gained being the first college graduate in my family, finishing law school, and passing the bar exam was at least partially replaced with a sense that I had to somehow balance my natural femininity with my intellectual abilities. Not quite sure how to do this, I did not feel comfortable in my own skin. That is, until the day came when I won a hard-fought hearing positively impacting a small child. My client hugged me

afterwards and tearfully told me that my looks are deceiving. I knew then that I did not have to prove anything to anyone going forward.

Unfortunately, my experience is not uncommon. As of July 1, 2018, there are 106,095 members of The Florida Bar; 38 percent are women¹, two percent more than the national average.² Yet a highly publicized 2015 survey by the Bar's Young Lawyers Division called "Women in the Legal Profession" showed that 43 percent of those who responded have experienced gender bias.³ Seventy-six percent of those responding had been in practice five years or less.⁴ A 2016 follow-up survey of 6,000 male and female members of The Florida Bar showed that, of the 1,350 who responded, one out

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

by Jennifer K. Griffin
2018-2019 Solo & Small Firm Chair

I am happy to report that the Solo & Small Firm Section is expanding opportunities for our section members, which is essential in increasing membership and participation. So far this year, we have completed two audio webcasts - [Microsoft Word Tips & Tricks to Make Microsoft Word Work for You, Not Against You](#) and [Practice Management Software Showcase](#) both provided useful practice information directed at solo and small firm practitioners, as well as paralegals and office managers. Even if you missed the live presentations, both are still available through on demand – just click on the respective links. If you haven't registered yet, the audio webcast, [Preserving Issues for Appeal](#), will be presented on November 27, 2018.

Our first Wednesday Wisdom went very well. Mark your calendars for the fourth Wednesday of every month at 12:00 P.M. The SSF Section will be hosting a free Zoom call/webinar in which our members can network with other members throughout the state, ask questions and get answers on various topics of interest. If you missed the first Wednesday Wisdom, which addressed using a virtual assistant, it is available on our members only [Facebook page](#). All of the Wednesday Wisdom calls will be available on the Facebook page, but I encourage you to participate so that you can ask questions and network with other members from around the state. Our next call will be on November 28, 2018 and will feature Liz McCausland and Renee Thompson, who will be speaking about the use of Apps in the practice of law. Keep an eye out in the QuickLink for registration information. My goal is for the calls to be as interactive as possible so that members can learn from each other – whether sharing a story of success or failure, we can all learn from one another.



JENNIFER K. GRIFFIN

Conference chairs Paige Greenlee and Theresa Jean-Pierre Coy have put together a wonderful line-up of topics for the 2019 [Mind Your Business CLE](#). You will experience everything from the all-time favorite, “50 Tech Tips in 50 Minutes,” to cybersecurity issues to trust accounting to mobilizing your office. The conference will be held on Friday, January 18, 2019 at the DoubleTree by Hilton Orlando at SeaWorld. If you are a member of the Young Lawyers Division, be on the lookout for scholarship opportunities, or you may contact [me](#) directly.

The Executive Council would love to meet you! You can always check

out the [calendar](#) for when we have a meeting in your area and join us at the reception following the meeting or even join us for the meeting. You may contact [myself](#) or [Ricky Libbert](#) for more information. Our next in-person meeting will be at the Hilton Cocoa Beach on February 15, 2019.

As with anything we do, participation is key. I encourage you to get involved with the section so that we can enhance your membership experience. Any member is eligible for our Member Spotlight in the QuickLink. If you'd like to be featured, please contact [Lisa Tipton](#) and she will provide you with further information. If you would like to provide an article for the next Link publication, please contact [Jacina Haston](#) and she will provide you with further information.

I want the Solo & Small Firm Section to serve all of its members. If you have an idea of something else that we can do that would aid solo and small firm practitioners, paralegals or office administrators, please let me know. There is so much already happening but my goal as your chair is to make the section as beneficial as possible. We always welcome your comments and suggestions and hope that you'll get involved in all that we have to offer.





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- January 18, 2019 —
Solo & Small Firm Conference
Minding Your Business – Best Practices for Solos & Small Firms
Audio Webinar
- February 6, 2019 —
Professionalism
- June 27, 2019 —
Florida Law Update 2019

PARALEGAL CORNER

NEWS FOR PARALEGALS TO USE...

By Priscilla Horn Warren, CP, FRP
Solo & Small Firm Section CLA Representative

Welcome to the Paralegal Corner, where you can find breaking news and other useful items (including website link information) pertaining to our profession.

The state chapter, Paralegal Association of Florida, Inc. (www.pafinc.org) produced its Fall Seminar on October 26-28, 2018, at Safety Harbor Resort & Spa, Florida. Nearly 150 persons were in attendance, and the “Superhero Paralegal” theme encouraged the participants to dress up as their favorite superhero (just in time for Halloween!). Each paralegal chapter also designed amazing gift-baskets for door prizes. The seminar speakers were outstanding, and the sponsors and exhibitors at the seminar (including the Solo and Small Firm Section, who also donated a gift-basket) were interesting and very informative. Several photos have been posted on PAF’s Facebook page for your review and enjoyment.

The state chapter also held its 2019 election of officers at the annual meeting, and those PAF officers are:



PRISCILLA HORN WARREN

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MARK THE DATE:

The Solo and Small Firm Section now has its roster of guest speakers for its January 18, 2019, technology workshop in Orlando, and is finalizing the details of registration and exhibitors/sponsors. The technology seminar is being held at the same time as The Florida’s Bar’s Mid-Year meeting. PAF will be an exhibitor at the SSF technology workshop. Technology CLE credits are available; please go to our website, www.FLSoloSmallFirm.org, for more information.

If you have not yet joined the Solo and Small Firm Section, please download the form today and send it in. Affiliate memberships are only \$35 per year. Multiple benefits are available to our members and affiliate members, as detailed in our new website: www.FLSoloSmallFirm.org. Becoming an affiliate member of the SSF Section might be one of the best personal and professional decisions you will make for your career to flourish and prosper.

Also, if you or your employer need more information on NALA, the nationwide paralegal association, and/or wish to obtain your national Certified Paralegal designation, kindly visit the NALA website at www.nala.org for membership requirements and continuing education opportunities that are available online.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns. My direct email is: pris2323@yahoo.com.



The Florida Law Practice LINK is prepared and published by The Florida Bar Solo & Small Firm Section.

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PROTECTING YOUR INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

By Thomas Stanton, Stanton IP Law Firm, P.A.

As a former business owner, the topic of protecting our Intellectual Property (IP) rarely, if ever, came up in conversation. We were too focused on acquiring customers, streamlining processes to provide better service, and managing our employees. Now that I am an attorney, I spend much of my time educating businesses and business owners on the importance of why you need to Protect Your Intellectual Property. **IP** can be broken down into four main groups, Patents, Trademarks, Copyrights, and Trade Secrets.

Patents provide monopolies on inventions for up to 20 years from the date of filing. Patents can create a very unique competitive advantage, however you must be careful to pursue patent protection before bringing a product to market or disclosing it publicly because you run the risk of invalidating your own ability to get a patent.

Trademarks provide protection on your business name or logo and protect your ability to continue to operate under your name and prevent others from entering your space using a similar name. This is vital for branding purposes and can greatly affect the value of your business if your brand is not properly protected. Trademarks have no expiration on them so long as you continue doing business.

Copyrights provide protection on your works of art, including software code and instruction manuals. This could be very important for your business if you spend a lot of time developing



THOMAS STANTON

training programs, writing software code, or creating unique designs for different service and product offerings. Copyrights are typically thought of as only applying to musicians, artists, or film makers, but that is not the case as copyrights are applied to all levels of creativity.

Trade Secrets provide protection to your secret sauce that you do not want anyone outside your organization to gain an understanding of how you do certain things. This becomes important because all of the other IP protections require a public disclosure in order to get the protection. Trade Secrets are unique in that they are secrets and must be treated as such in order to gain the proper protection. They can last forever as long as they are kept a secret.

Now that we have a brief overview of the different kinds of protections, we have to think about this as a two-sided issue. The first is ensuring proper protection which includes

employment agreements that not only ensure proper confidentiality clauses are listed, but also that employees and work for hire contractors are assigning their IP to your company so that there are not ownership issues. Non-disclosure agreements are also very important and need to be used properly. The most important element is to have the conversation about how to protect your Intellectual Property as you are developing it, not after. The second side is enforcement of your IP. Once you have it properly protected, it is up to you to enforce your protections against possible infringers. This also requires a conversation about strategy in order to ensure you do not try to enforce too early or too late. Trying to enforce too early could mean that there are not enough damages to justify the cost of enforcement. Enforcing too late could mean that you have lost your chance to enforce your rights.

In closing, protecting your IP can greatly increase the value of your business and maintain your competitive advantage over your competitors. Having the right strategy is vital and that starts with a conversation internally as well as with your IP attorney about how you can Protect Your Intellectual Property. Often times in business, waiting is a good strategy, when it comes to protecting your IP, waiting is the worst strategy.

You Own It, We protect it!

Thomas Stanton is the President of Stanton IP Law Firm, P.A. which specializes in the area of Intellectual Property and high-tech startups.





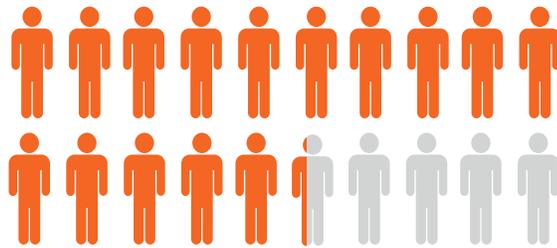
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HEALTH AND WELLNESS

WORK/LIFE BALANCE

By Scott Brook, Brodzki, Jacobs and Associates, P.L.

A common struggle in our lives is the achievement of balance. How do we balance our home lives with our work lives? How do we take care of ourselves enough to take care of others?

I can't promise all of the answers. However, I will share some suggestions that have worked for me over the years. Hopefully, this article will educate you or remind you about something that can help you feel more balance in your life.

Balance requires intention. You must set your mind to have balance in your life. Where do you feel out of balance now? Exercise? That's common. Not enough time for yourself? Very common. Maybe just too much stress at work? In order to achieve greater balance, identify what is out of whack and then work on it. Daily. If not daily, then how about four or five times a week? Let's work on a typical stressor for lawyers. There is just too much stress. Whether it's work-related or home-related or both. Here are some ideas that may help you alleviate your stress and increase your level of satisfaction with your life:

1. Gratitude. Begin and/or end your day with at least five things in your life or day that you are grateful for. This will help you feel some peace.

2. Parameters. Establish boundaries that you adhere to. Only look at email between 9 and 10 and then again between 4 and 5 daily; Be selective about which clients have access to you by cell phone; Do NOT bring work home with you. (Yes, that one takes practice!).

3. Just Say NO. Be direct. Be kind. Say no with a smile. But, say it so that



SCOTT BROOK

it is clear. We cannot say maybe when a client asks us to do something we are not in alignment with or to take an unviable position. If you have a commitment to watch your daughter's play, simply say no to your best client's request or demand for your time which conflicts with your daughter's play. You will feel much more freedom the better you get at saying "no."

4. Exercise. Commit to it. Make it routine. Get a partner or buddy to be accountable to.

5. Meditate, yoga, write in a journal or some other routine that allows you to accept the quiet around you and help you to be quiet without that nagging critical voice in your head gnawing at you.

6. Focus on your commitments and not your complaints. Focus on solutions and not problems. Recently, my youngest daughter realized she could not find her passport on a Thursday for a Friday flight out of the country. While my lovely wife was a little freaked, I explored options. I focused on possible solutions and learned that it was possible to get a passport on the same day. My daughter got her

passport photos at 11:45 pm on Thursday evening and we set out to Miami by 6:10 am on Friday with our fingers crossed. We were polite to everyone we came across. At 8:30 am, we left the office after completing the application and waited to see if the passport could take only three hours to complete and not the four that was most likely. She would miss her flight. One security guard tried keeping us from returning to the passport office at 11:30 am because there was no way our passport would be ready by then. Sammi's flight was at 1:10 pm out of Ft. Lauderdale. We persisted and gained entry, found yet another kind representative and somehow, we were running out of the office at 11:48 am with Sammi's passport in hand. Somehow, my daughter made her flight with about a minute to spare.

7. Be agile. Prepare for unknown obstacles and give yourself the flexibility to move through or around them.

Balance requires intention, practice and the right mindset. We are all out of balance often. You have accomplished great things in your life despite obstacles. Balance is achievable. Just make a new commitment, set your sights and you will achieve the balance you seek.

Mr. Brook is a Partner in the law firm of Brodzki, Jacobs and Brook, P.L. His primary practice area is Family Law. Mr. Brook is a Founder of the Premier Networking Alliance and Project Leadership. He has given numerous lectures on a variety of topics, including stress reduction, balance and conflict resolution. Mr. Brook is the Former Mayor of Coral Springs and serves on the Boards of The Friendship Initiative and Empower The People.



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1st Edition

BY STEVEN F. SAMILOW

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GENDER BIAS

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of every 25 male lawyers experienced gender bias, as well.⁵

In my case, I cannot presume the intent of the attorney in question, nor do I know if he understood the impact that his action had on me. In all fairness, I had numerous cases against him throughout my practice, without further incident. In fact, I grew to respect him and learned a great deal from him about the practice of law. Perhaps, the bias was there, and he just did not know it.

One of the last workshops I attended while teaching was on gender bias in the classroom. I was shocked to realize that I was guilty and did not even realize I was doing it—grouping by sex, calling on one sex more often than the other, assigning classroom roles based on traditional stereotypes. Once aware, I quickly integrated strategies into my lessons which made my classroom a more safe and open space, while allowing me to model tolerance for my students.

Recognizing the problem is the first step in solving it. Psychologists at Harvard, the University of Virginia, and the University of Washington created the popular “Project Implicit,” which develops Implicit Association Tests (IATs) to measure unconscious biases and which are available online for free.⁶ A bias is a tendency to favor one thing over another and can be used by our brains to cope with complex information; however, problems can arise when unconscious biases “influence your behavior and the way you treat others,” according to Tiffany Jana, co-author of, *Overcoming Bias: Building Relationships Across Differences*.⁷ Though the science behind Implicit Association Tests is somewhat controversial, they open the door to self-examination and reflection, which is always a good thing.⁸

The problem is that, all too often, those educating themselves and self-reflecting are individuals who are impacted by negative behavior and not

the actual perpetrators. Therefore, it is essential that law students and legal professionals fully understand the stakes.

Gender bias is unprofessional; and, in Florida, professionalism is an expectation. New attorneys are held to the same standards as veteran members of the Bar. Specifically, Rule 4-8.4(d) states: “A lawyer shall not engage in conduct in connection with the practice of law that is prejudicial to the administration of justice, including to knowingly, or through callous indifference, disparage, humiliate, or discriminate against litigants, jurors, witnesses, court personnel, or other lawyers on any basis, including, but not limited to, on account of race, ethnicity, gender, religion, national origin, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, age, socioeconomic status, employment, or physical characteristic.”

One notable example of how seriously gender bias is taken is *Fla. Bar v. Ratiner*, 177 So.3d 1274 (Fla. 2015), in which the Bar filed a complaint against Mr. Ratiner, an attorney with previous disciplinary history, for calling opposing counsel a “dominatrix” and stating that she “must enjoy dominating people” during a document review session. These statements were made loudly and to the expert witness and were found by the Referee and the Florida Supreme Court to serve no other purpose than to embarrass the female attorney. In the Final Report, Referee Thomas Rebull stated, “I find Mr. Ratiner’s comments disconcerting and highly offensive. Mr. Ratiner simply fails to recognize that not only were his comments inappropriate and unprofessional, but they were also disrespectful, not only to [opposing counsel] but to women in general.”⁹ Mr. Ratiner was suspended for three years and has subsequently been disbarred for continued misconduct. *The Florida Bar v. Ratiner*, 238 So.3d 117 (Fla. 2018).

In addition, in 2016, the American Bar Association’s Model Rules of Professional Conduct was amended to include the new Rule 8.4(g), which states that it is professional misconduct for a

lawyer to: “engage in conduct that the lawyer knows or reasonably should know is harassment or discrimination on the basis of race, sex, religion, national origin, ethnicity, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status or socioeconomic status in conduct related to the practice of law. This paragraph does not limit the ability of a lawyer to accept, decline or withdraw from a representation in accordance with Rule 1.16. This paragraph does not preclude legitimate advice or advocacy consistent with these Rules.”

Comment [4] of the new rule makes it clear that “...Conduct related to the practice of law includes representing clients; interacting with witnesses, co-workers, court personnel, lawyers and others while engaged in the practice of law; operating or managing a law firm or law practice; and participating in bar association, business or social activities in connection with the practice of law.”

The rules exist but the reality is that there are no easy solutions for eliminating gender bias, especially when so much of what we do is outside of the walls of a traditional office setting. Begin initiating social change individually by using gender-neutral words and phrases, using “gender” rather than “sex” to differentiate between men and women in practice, using pronouns and references that include both genders, avoiding the use of “man” or “woman” in job titles, and avoiding describing men by profession and women by physical characteristics.¹⁰

This topic puts people on edge. However, the dialogue has begun and must continue. We are strong advocates for our clients. It is time that we are strong advocates for ourselves and for other professionals. When gender bias happens, we must speak up and fight back, even if it means having uncomfortable conversations with friends, colleagues, supervisors, opposing counsel, and judges.¹¹

In 1983, following the nation’s first full-scale study of sexual bias in its courts, New Jersey Chief Justice

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GENDER BIAS

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Robert Wilentz stated the following, “There’s no room for the funny joke and the not-so-funny joke, there’s no room for conscious, inadvertent, sophisticated, clumsy or any other kind of gender bias, and certainly no room for gender bias that affects substantive rights.”¹²

We are still dealing with these issues thirty-five years later; however, The Florida Bar is committed to eliminating gender bias and instilling the message that it is unprofessional and will not be tolerated. In addition to encouraging women to run for Bar leadership positions, in a recent interview with *Forbes*, Michelle Suskauer, newly-elected President of The Florida Bar, encouraged victims of gender bias to report bad behavior through the Bar’s discipline system. She promised to provide transparency and clarity about existing rules relating to bias and discrimination and assured members that, “We can and will do a better job implementing the rules we already have.”¹³

Rebecca J. Bandy has been named the Director of the Henry Latimer Center for Professionalism. She joined the Center as Assistant Director in March 2017.

Prior to joining The Florida Bar, Ms. Bandy was an associate attorney at the Law Offices of Thomas L. Powell, PA in Tallahassee, where she litigated in the areas of family and criminal law. She most recently taught college level courses at Lawton Chiles High School, where she helped co-found the school’s award winning mock trial team along with The Honorable Mark Walker and attorneys David Frank and David Grimes.

Endnotes

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13 Gowland, Lelia. “How the Florida Bar Is Confronting Gender Bias.” *Forbes.com*, *Forbes*, 9 July 2018, www.forbes.com/sites/leliagowland/2018/07/09/gender-bias-in-law-what-the-florida-bar-is-doing-about-it/#70c5c8b11612. Accessed 10 July 2018.



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