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Legal Briefs - 7/8/2005

Legal Briefs

James, Hoyer, Newcomer ensures fair treatment for the powerless'

Lawyers John Yanchunis and Jill Bowman, along with their firm, James, Hoyer, Newcomer & Smiljanich PA, received statewide recognition for their work on behalf of Florida's 40,000 nursing home residents. Scott Solkoff, chair of the Florida Bar's Elder Law Section, called the 2004 case that Yanchunis and Bowman litigated "the most important public benefits case in the state last year," according to a news release. It resulted in an additional \$52 million funding for nursing home residents. The lawyers and their firm were honored at the bar's annual meeting late last month in Orlando.

The class-action complaint, filed on behalf of 86-year-old Sarasota nursing home resident Helen Shumaker, challenged how Florida calculates Medicaid benefits for nursing home residents. Florida was the only state that failed to give the required allowances to those who took out supplemental nursing home coverage.

"This case was a natural outgrowth of the work we do every day on behalf of Florida's elderly and vulnerable citizenry," Yanchunis said in a written statement.

Bowman said the case "summed up what is important ... about being a lawyer."

"It's giving a voice to those who are silent, and ensuring fair treatment for the powerless," Yanchunis said.

Stetson honors alumni at ceremony

St. Petersburg attorney Dannel G. DeBerg and U.S. District Judge James D. Whittemore were among those honored by Stetson University College of Law at the annual Florida Bar meeting last month in Orlando.

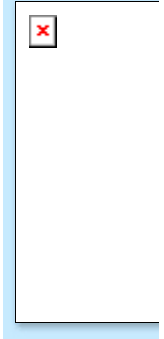
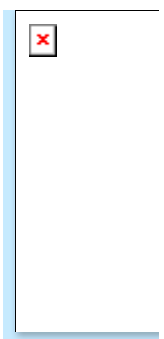
DeBerg, a 1982 Stetson graduate, received the Ben C. Willard Award for distinguished humanitarian achievements. DeBerg works with New Frontiers Health Force, a missionary group that travels around the world helping those in need.

Whittemore, of the class of '77, and Alexander M. Clem, a '90 graduate, received Distinguished Alumnus awards. The judge has overseen cases such as the controversial Terri Schiavo matter. Clem, immediate past president of the Academy of Florida Trial Lawyers, has been involved with legislative and tort reform issues.

Others recognized were John W. Staunton, class of '97, who received the

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Paul M. May Meritorious Service Award for his support of the law college. An elder law attorney, he has supported the college's Center for Excellence in Elder Law.

Robert Biasotti and Robert "Robin" Doyle received Outstanding Alumni Representative awards. Biasotti, a shareholder in the St. Petersburg office of Carlton Fields PA, recently helped the firm create a diversity fellowship program for Stetson students. Doyle, a partner with Quarles and Brady LLP, recently completed a term on Stetson Lawyers Advisory Council, and in the fall he will join the school's board of overseers. Biasotti graduated in '96, Doyle in '75.

Paul A. Turk Jr., a '79 graduate, received the President's Award for his service as president of the Stetson Lawyers Association. And he was elected to the college's board of overseers.

Three others — John Dubrulle, Chief Bankruptcy Judge Emeritus Alexander L. Paskay and Professor Michael I. Swygert — were given Distinguish Service Awards for meritorious and continuing contributions to the college. Dubrulle is director of litigation at Gulfcoast Legal Services, Paskay has worked extensively with Stetson students since 1974 and Swygert retired in May after 25 years with Stetson.

Florida Bar honors Stetson professor

The Florida Bar honored Stetson University College of Law with two professionalism awards at its annual meeting June 23 in Orlando.

"The bar's professionalism awards honor a higher level of conduct that the college is proud to represent," Dean Darby Dickerson said in a written press release.

The Supreme Court Commission on Professionalism and the Florida Bar's Standing Committee on Professionalism selected the award recipients.

Two Stetson law centers — Excellence in Advocacy and Elder Law — received the 2005 Professionalism Award for an elder law ethics video project. Professor Roberta Flowers, director of the advocacy center, received this year's Faculty Award for Professionalism.

Flowers was recently named Stetson's first William Reece Smith Jr.

Distinguished Professor of Law, a position designed to foster professionalism among students. Under Flowers' direction, Stetson's advocacy program tied for first in the nation in the 2006 graduate school rankings from U.S. News & World Report.

The series of 15 educational videos produced by the advocacy and elder law centers encourage professionalism by illustrating how elder law students, attorneys and judges can deal successfully with ethical issues in the real world.

Professor Rebecca Morgan, who holds the Boston Asset Management Faculty Chair in Elder Law and directs the elder law center, received the award in 2003.

Cross joins Phelps Dunbar in Tampa

Alva Cross, a 2004 Stetson University College of Law graduate, joined Phelps Dunbar LLP as an associate in Tampa. The 240-lawyer firm has offices in Louisiana, Texas, London, Mississippi.

Satterfield joins Broad & Cassel

David J. Satterfield, a graduate of the University of Florida law school,

joined Broad and Cassel as an associate in the firm's commercial litigation practices group.

Florida Bar honors 50-year lawyers

More than 100 attorneys from the Sunshine State were honored for half-a-century of dedication to the service of law at a June 24 luncheon during the Florida Bar's annual convention in Orlando.

The bar recognized attorneys in good standing that attained their 50th anniversary as a member of the Florida Bar in 2005.

Honored were Stewart C. Eggert, David H. Hanlon, Lewis Hamilton Hill III, Broaddus Livingston and George O. Wilson III, all of Tampa; Guy L. Kennedy Jr., Clearwater; Alan R. Lupka, Land-O-Lakes; Thomas E. Bissonnette, Odessa; Albert C. Werly, Seminole; and Joseph H. Chumbley, Mark R. McGarry Jr. and Guy N. Perenich, all of St. Petersburg.

FAWL installs president

June McKinney Bartelle was installed as the first black president of the Florida Association for Women Lawyers in mid June. Her term began July 1.

Bartelle, a senior assistant attorney general in Tallahassee, serves as general counsel to the Florida Commission for Independent Education. She's rated AV by Martindale-Hubell, and experienced in administrative law, complex civil and criminal litigation.

Foley & Lardner partner serves as chair

Mark J. Wolfson, a partner in the Tampa office of Foley & Lardner LLP, last month began a term as chair of the Business Law Section of the Florida Bar.

Wolfson, a litigator, will lead the executive council for the section that represents 4,300 Florida attorneys that practice commercial litigation, bankruptcy/UCC law, intellectual property law, antitrust law, computer law and corporate and securities law.

He's a graduate of the University of Florida Law School and the University of Tennessee.

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