



THE FLORIDA BAR  
**TRIAL**  
LAWYERS SECTION

**Trial Lawyers Section Annual Report**

**CHAIR:**

J. Wiley Hicks  
J. Wiley Hicks, LLC  
5730 SW 74<sup>th</sup> St., Ste. 400  
Miami, FL 33143-5300  
(305) 661-6688  
wileyhicks@outlook.com

**CHAIR-ELECT:**

Lewis W. "Wil" Murphy, Jr.  
Murphy & Walker, P.L.  
2001 US Highway 1  
Vero Beach, FL 32960-5493  
(772) 231-1900  
wmurphy@murphywalker.com

**SECRETARY/TREASURER:**

Weston F. Smith  
699 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue North  
St. Petersburg, FL 33701-3601  
(727) 896-3641  
wsmith@mastersonlaw.com

**IMMEDIATE PAST CHAIR:**

Clifford W. Sanborn III  
Barron & Redding, P.A.  
PO Box 2467  
Panama City, FL 32402-2467  
(850) 785-7454  
csanborn@barronredding.com

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**BOARD LIAISON:**

Jeremy C. Branning  
Clark Partington  
P.O. Box 13010  
Pensacola, FL 32591-3010  
(850) 434-9200  
jbranning@clarkpartington.com

**JUDICIAL LIAISON:**

Hon. Nicholas P. Mizell  
U.S. District Court  
2110 First Street  
Fort Myers, FL 33901-3000

Hon. Jeffrey Levenson

Broward County Courthouse  
201 SE 6<sup>th</sup> St.  
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301-3303

**SECTION ADMINISTRATOR:**

Jennifer Dorminy  
The Florida Bar  
651 E. Jefferson St.  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-2300  
(850) 561-5619  
jdorminy@floridabar.org

The 2020-2021 year has been a challenge in many respects. Despite those challenges, the TLS has successfully conducted three of its annual meetings of the Executive Council both in person and virtually. Additionally, adapting to the times, the Chester Bedell Memorial Mock Trial Competition was conducted virtually for the first time ever and was a great success, with 7 Florida law schools competing over a three day period. Likewise, our other flagship program, the Teachers' Law Symposium, was modified and presented to Florida's middle and high school civics and social studies teachers in a videotaped format with our five most compelling speakers making presentations on our system of government and the importance of an independent judiciary.

Most of our CLE efforts have been virtual, although the Advanced Trial Advocacy program will be conducted in Orlando in May and will be a live, multi-day event. Many of our Executive Council members, along with other active members of the section, have provided and continue to provide compelling and timely content for our CLE offerings. We are also proud to have prepared and presented an important CLE presentation on *Understanding Implicit Bias*. The program and its two CLE credits can be accessed for free on both our website and the Florida Bar's website.

For the first time ever, TLS began seeking sponsorships to help support and fund our various initiatives. While it is a fledgling project, we have been very fortunate to have had a great response from both law firms and litigation support companies. We especially want to thank our Signature Sponsor (Searcy Denney Scarola Barnhardt & Shipley, P.A.), along with our Gold, Silver, and Bronze sponsors. A full list of our sponsors is available on our website and is contained in our quarterly newsletter, The Edge.

Lastly, we undertook to amend our bylaws this year in order to express the purposes of the TLS explicitly, rather than having those purposes expressed anecdotally. The revisions were approved by the Board of Governors and can be found in Article I, Section 2, of the TLS Bylaws on our website at [floridatls.org](http://floridatls.org).

Sincerely,

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J. Wiley Hicks