

**2021 – 2022 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE
TRIAL LAWYERS SECTION OF THE FLORIDA BAR**

The Trial Lawyers Section remains committed to professionalism, civility and cooperation among attorneys while promoting efficiencies and discovery in trial practice. The current leadership of The Florida Bar has made the standards and methods of enforcement for professional conduct a primary focus of this term. This Section continues to represent the finest trial lawyers from all areas of litigation practice, and we strive to support the interests of plaintiffs' attorneys, defense lawyers and commercial litigators that try cases in both State and Federal Courts while promoting trial advocacy and professionalism throughout Florida.

In January of this year, the Section hosted the annual *Chester Bedell Mock Trial Competition*, as well as the *Teachers Law Symposium* in Orlando, and more recently presented the annual *Civil Trial Update and Board Certification Review Program* hosted by an "all-star" list of Florida trial attorneys. The Section is proud to be able to again host the in-person *Advanced Trial Advocacy Program* in May of this year at the College of Law at the University of Florida, designed to provide an intense, four-day interactive trial training seminar through lectures, discussions, demonstrations and participatory exercises.

In addition to the publication and distribution of our quarterly newsletter, *The Edge*, and our monthly *Case Law Updates* to our members, and in response to the invitation from the President of The Florida Bar, the Trial Lawyers Section provided written comments on the recommendations contained in the *Final Report of the Special Committee to Improve the Delivery of Legal Services* on issues relating to non-lawyer ownership of law firms and entity regulation, as well as fee-sharing between lawyers and non-lawyers. Moreover, the Section has established a Committee which is presently addressing and providing comment on the *Judicial Management Council's Work Group on Improved Resolution of Civil Cases Report*.

The Section is actively engaged when proposed legislation threatens the public's access to courts, the independence of the judiciary, or the protection of the jury system. Members of our Executive Council travel to the Capitol each Session to meet with our elected officials to discuss issues important to or that may otherwise affect the essential purposes of our Section.

During the final quarter of 2021, the Trial Lawyers Section produced and distributed several webinars/podcasts, including stand-alone CLE courses and our more traditional CLE programs addressing implicit bias, professionalism, technology, and evidence. The webinars/podcasts have been very popular and well-received.

In addition to the foregoing, the Section was honored to again publish the *Florida Handbook on Civil Discovery* which was updated and delivered this term to approximately 1,300 members of the State and Federal judiciary, and all members of the Section may download the *Handbook* from the Section's website and, if desired, have an opportunity to purchase a hard copy, as well.

The Section continued with its effort to secure sponsorships in an effort to fund, at least in part, various initiatives, and the contributions made to sponsorship this year have exceeded those financial commitments made during last year's inaugural effort. We are grateful to all of our sponsors, a full list of which are available on our website.

The Section has successfully transitioned from the social limitations and professional restrictions brought about as a consequence of the pandemic and has largely returned to in-person participation as our members continue to represent our clients as trial lawyers. This year created many unique opportunities to transition from "virtual" participation to the more traditional "live" format that we, as trial lawyers, have enjoyed for centuries. We, as trial lawyers, as well as our clients and the judiciary, continue to be faced with a backlog of cases resulting from the restrictive effects of the pandemic; however, the Section has accepted the responsibility to assist and cooperate in efforts to move cases through discovery, trial and toward resolution.

Respectfully submitted,

Lewis W. Murphy, Jr.
Chair - Trial Lawyers Section of The Florida Bar