

## *Oath of Admission to The Florida Bar*

### **“I do solemnly swear:**

“I will support the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of Florida;

“I will maintain the respect due to courts of justice and judicial officers;

“I will not counsel or maintain any suit or proceedings which shall appear to me to be unjust, nor any defense except such as I believe to be honestly debatable under the law of the land;

“I will employ for the purpose of maintaining the causes confided to me such means only as are consistent with truth and honor, and will never seek to mislead the judge or jury by any artifice or false statement of fact or law;

“I will maintain the confidence and preserve inviolate the secrets of my clients, and will accept no compensation in connection with their business except from them or with their knowledge and approval;

“I will abstain from all offensive personality and advance no fact prejudicial to the honor or reputation of a party or witness, unless required by the justice of the cause with which I am charged;

“I will never reject, from any consideration personal to myself, the cause of the defenseless or oppressed, or delay anyone’s cause for lucre or malice. So help me God.”



By Kimberly Jackson



As attorneys, we are bound to honor the oath of office we took. In this current environment, it is often challenging to explain to the general public that the duty of an attorney exists beyond our daytime commitments. We are bound by our moral code to protect the reputation of all and to take time to provide the utmost care as we provide legal services to our clients.

However, the duty lies far beyond our clients. We have a responsibility to act with professionalism toward our peers, who, regardless of their ideology, share the same goal of upholding our duties as officers of the court.

*“We cannot have perfection. We have few saints.  
But we must have honest men or we die.  
We must have unselfish, far-seeing leadership  
or we fail.”*

W.E.B. Du Bois, 1868-1963

As a student at Stetson University College of Law, I remember coming to my first St. Petersburg Bar Association Meeting. I walked in as a second year student, knowing absolutely no one and honestly not knowing what to expect. Judge Pam Campbell and a few other female attorneys came straight toward me to welcome me. I soon became Judge Campbell’s mentee and friend. There are truly no words to describe what it feels like to have someone personally guide you in your practice and, more importantly, in how to build meaningful, sustainable relationships.

Judge Campbell, from my recollection, made practicing with professionalism her trademark. She left a great impression on me at the time, in short because she understood that, for all of us to succeed, we have



*SPBA Past Presidents  
Gentry Byrnes and Erica Smith*



to practice with civility. She was not the only mentor who taught me the importance of developing strong ties to those you serve and those with whom you interact. David Abbey was my first partner. He has a strong work ethic and treats everyone with dignity within our profession. David taught me that our footprint matters. People, many of whom we do not think are paying attention to us, expect us to maintain our integrity and character. How we interact with each other matters.

We know cordiality is important to our profession, and that extends to helping our fellow young bar members build a healthy and diverse bar. We must set the atmosphere for how we want to be perceived by the public and by each other. I am pleased that our legal community has the resources to advocate for professional courses to guide those interested in our profession: <https://www.floridabar.org/prof/>

I am also grateful that, in St. Petersburg, attorneys care deeply about our current social issues. Recently, I attended the Lawyers for Equal Justice gathering hosted by a group of local attorneys. I have not participated in any crowded gatherings since early March. However, I came out to the event because a couple of my friends and colleagues planned it and, to me, that was enough. Lawyers for Equal Justice was a beautiful reminder that, as attorneys, we know when to come together while respecting each other's differences.

“As a public citizen, a lawyer should seek improvement of the law, access to the legal system, the administration of justice, and the quality of service rendered by the legal profession. As a member of a learned profession, a lawyer should cultivate knowledge of the law beyond its use for clients, employ that knowledge in reform of the law, and work to strengthen legal



SPPD Chief Anthony Halloway, SPBA Past President Lucas Fleming, Mayor Rick Kriseman, Senator Darryl Rouson

education. In addition, a lawyer should further the public's understanding of and confidence in the rule of law and the justice system, because legal institutions in a constitutional democracy depend on popular participation and support to maintain their authority". Chapter 4. Rules of Professional Conduct Preamble: A Lawyer's Responsibilities

Our constant duty as attorneys is to practice law and live with civility towards others.

*Kimberly G. Jackson has her B.A. from Spelman College in Political Science, J.D. from Stetson University College of Law, and MIPP from Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Sciences. Ms. Jackson practiced law locally in St. Petersburg and gained a passion for non-profit advocacy with family-oriented agencies. She transitioned from her legal career to education after her daughter was diagnosed with Asperger's syndrome. Her journey at St. Petersburg College was largely based on her commitment to equity. She held the position of Political Science Chair prior to becoming the Executive Director of the Institute for Strategic Policy Solutions, (ISPS).*