

**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR THE FIFTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT  
OF THE STATE OF FLORIDA**

**ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. A-2023-38**

**ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER APPOINTING THE CHAIR AND  
MEMBERS OF THE FIFTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT LOCAL  
PROFESSIONALISM PANEL**

**WHEREAS**, the Supreme Court of Florida has issued AOSC2023-0884 IN RE: CODE FOR RESOLVING PROFESSIONALISM REFERRALS AND AMENDMENTS TO RULE REGULATING THE FLORIDA BAR (corrected opinion) on July 6, 2023. OSC2023-0884 was issued, *inter alia*, to “clarify and enhance the important role of local professionalism panels, entities independent of the The Florida Bar and established in each circuit for the purpose of informally resolving referrals of claimed unprofessional conduct by lawyers practicing in that circuit;” and

**WHEREAS**, Appendix A of AOSC2023-0884 titled “The Code for Resolving Professionalism Referrals” (“the Code”) outlines the process for addressing unprofessional conduct referrals, including the formation, make-up, and terms of service for members of each LPP formed thereunder; and

**WHEREAS**, the Chief Judge of the Fifth Judicial Circuit has entered administrative order A-2023-37 establishing the Fifth Judicial Circuit Local Professionalism Panel for the purpose or receiving, screening, and acting upon referrals of unprofessional conduct by lawyers practicing in the Circuit, including appellate practice and transactional practice. The LLP shall address those referrals informally, if possible, or refer said referrals to the Florida Bar for investigation; and

**WHEREAS**, the Code mandates the Chief Judge to appoint an LPP Chair, and empowers the Chief, or his or her designee, to select the number and members of the LPP. The members of the LPP must include judges and local attorneys that are in good standing with The

Florida Bar, from diverse areas of practice with varying levels of experience, and who have been eligible to practice law at least 5 years;

It is therefore,

**ORDERED and ADJUDGED as follows:**

1. The Fifth Judicial Circuit Local Professionalism Panel is required by order of the Supreme Court of Florida and this Administrative Order to receive, screen, and act upon referrals of unprofessional conduct by lawyers practicing in the Circuit, including appellate practice and transactional practice, using the Code for Resolving Professionalism Referrals as currently found in Appendix A to AOSC2023-0884 and which may be amended from time to time. Any provision of this Order which may become contravening to the Code is overridden until such time as this Order may be amended.
2. Other than the length of LPP member terms of service as found herein, each LPP member will serve a 3-year term, beginning on July 1<sup>st</sup> of the year they are appointed. LPP member terms are to be equally staggered, to the extent possible, such that no LPP, other than the initial LPP, shall consist of entirely new members, and each year the LPP will consist of approximately one-third new members.
3. Pursuant to the Code an LPP member may be reappointed to serve 1 additional 3-year term, not to exceed 6 consecutive years.
4. The Fifth Judicial Circuit Local Professionalism Panel shall operate under the guidance and supervision of the Chair of the Fifth Judicial Circuit Professionalism Committee, Professionalism Practice Division (hereinafter "Professionalism Practice Chair").
5. Except for the initial LPP members as found herein, LPP members shall be selected by the LPP Chair as designee of the Chief Judge and ratified and approved by the Circuit Professionalism Practice Chair. The Professionalism Practice Chair may also serve as an LPP member or LPP Chair, however, in the event that the LPP

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Chair and Professionalism Practice Chair are held by the same person, the Chair of the Fifth Judicial Circuit Professionalism Committee, Educational Division, shall ratify the selection of LPP members, unless, under the same set of circumstances as found immediately above, the Education Division Chair is a proposed appointee, the Chief Judge shall make the selection.

**6.** The Honorable Ann Melinda Craggs, Circuit Judge, is hereby appointed Chair of the Fifth Judicial Circuit Local Professionalism Panel and shall serve an initial term to begin on the effective date of this Order and to end on June 30, 2026.

**7.** The Honorable Stephen E. Toner, Circuit Judge, is hereby appointed to an initial term to begin on the effective date of this Order and to end on June 30, 2026.

**8.** The Honorable Charles Helm, Citrus County Judge is hereby appointed to an initial term to begin on the effective date of this Order and to end June 30, 2024.

**9.** Timothy McCourt, Esquire, having been found to meet the requirements to serve by the undersigned Chief Judge, is hereby appointed to an initial term to begin on the effective date of this Order and to end on June 30, 2025.

**10.** John Spivey, Esquire, having been found to meet the requirements to serve by the undersigned Chief Judge, is hereby appointed to an initial term to begin on the effective date of this Order and to end on June 30, 2026.

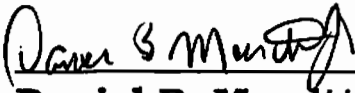
**11.** M. Taylor Tremel, Esquire, having been found to meet the requirements to serve by the undersigned Chief Judge, is hereby appointed to an initial term to begin on the effective date of this Order and to end on June 30, 2025.

**12.** James Wade, III, Esquire, having been found to meet the requirements to serve by the undersigned Chief Judge, is hereby appointed to an initial term to begin on the effective date of this Order and to end on June 30, 2024.

**13.** For the purpose of appointment of the initial panel, the requirement that LPP members must undergo training by experienced lawyers involved in The Florida Bar disciplinary process prior to serving on the panel is waived to the extent that the appointees herein must undergo the training at the earliest date practicable after said training is made available.

**14.** This Order is effective when signed, the date of which is the effective date. The LPP is empaneled on the effective date.

**DONE AND ORDERED** in Chambers, in Brooksville, Hernando County, Florida, this 10<sup>th</sup> day of October 2023.

  
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**Daniel B. Merritt, Jr.**  
**Chief Judge**  
**Fifth Judicial Circuit**