

## Health & Wellness, Mental Health, Well-being, and Professionalism Educational Seminar in Tampa, Florida

Ita M. Neymotin, Esq., Regional Counsel, Office of Criminal Conflict and Civil Regional Counsel of the Second District Court of Appeal, with Henry Lee Paul, Esq., The Florida Bar Student Education and Admissions Committee, in conjunction with the 13<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit, hosted a *Health & Wellness, Mental Health, Well-being, and Professionalism Educational Seminar* in Tampa, Florida on August 30<sup>th</sup>, 2019, with several wonderful guest speakers. The presentations by the speakers were inspirational and motivating.

Honorable Chief Judge Ronald N. Ficarrotta graciously opened the seminar with welcoming remarks. He reminded everyone how important the work of the criminal justice system professionals is, but only by taking care of ourselves, are we then able to take care of others.

Ita M. Neymotin, Esq., Regional Counsel, spoke about mental health and wellness in the Soviet Union and the United States, and its importance in relation to professionalism and the Florida Bar.

Henry Lee Paul, Esq., spoke about the Florida Bar's focus on attorneys with mental health issues and on getting them treatment. He entertained the crowd with funny videos of what happens when these problems go unresolved.

Rocky Brancato, Esq., Felony Bureau Chief, Office of the Public Defender, 13<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit, filled in for the Honorable Public Defender Julianne Holt. He spoke about the importance of a work/life balance to avoid burnout. He also touched on the importance of dealing with compassion fatigue through self-care, through utilizing the given to us resources, and by looking out for each other.

Gene Gray, USPTA Certified Tennis Professional, talked about the keys to wellness, mental health and social well-being, all of which include setting realistic expectations, being consistent, getting adequate rest, and thinking positively. He explained the importance of sports, as playing sports keeps us busy, and thus leaves no time for bad habits.

John Allen Schifino, Esq., Hillsborough County Bar Association Past President, talked about what the Florida Bar is doing to tackle the serious challenges that attorneys are facing regarding their health and wellness. He reminded everyone that our goal has to be redefining success and finding a mental balance.

Adriannette Williams, Esq., Henry Latimer Center for Professionalism Assistant Director, talked about the cost of success, including the risks, the failures, the sacrifices, etc., and how it all takes a mental toll on us. She talked about the importance of emotional intelligence, and left us with some personal recommendations on how to improve emotional well-being.

Dr. Valerie McClain, Licensed Psychologist, could not appear in person; however, she created a great video on stress management and strategies for relaxation. She talked about the symptoms of burnout, how to prevent burnout, and the importance of having a self-care plan.



*Pictured above (left to right):* Henry Lee Paul, Student Education & Admissions To The Florida Bar Committee; Ita M. Neymotin, Regional Counsel, Second District Court of Appeal; Ronald Ficarrotta, Honorable Chief Judge, 13<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit; Adriannette Williams, Assistant Director, Henry Latimer Center for Professionalism at The Florida Bar; John Allen Schifino, Past President of the Hillsborough County Bar Association; Gene Gray, USPTA Certified Tennis Professional; *Speakers not pictured above:* Dr. Valerie McClain, Licensed Psychologist, and Rocky Brancato, Felony Bureau Chief, Office of the Public Defender, 13<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit



Attendees from the Office of Criminal Conflict and Civil Regional Counsel, 2<sup>nd</sup> District