

Amicus Curiae

Association of Retired Attorneys of Sarasota, Inc.



www.retiredattorneysarasota.org

May 2022

Table of Contents

Page	
1	Monthly Meeting Topic
1	About our Monthly Speaker
2	Amicus Personae Steve Berry
3	Luncheon and Dues Payments
3	Meeting Schedule for 2022
3	2022-2023 Membership Directory
3	Ideas for Future Programs
3	Newsletter Ideas Welcome

Welcome New Members

Ann McClure
Ira Moltz
Gerri Roberts

NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, May 31 at 12 Noon

at Marina Jack

Please note that our next luncheon will be Tuesday, May 31, after the Memorial Day holiday.

Officers

Stephen Sturm,
President
Richard Bruning,
Vice President
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Stephen Sturm
Harold M. Zabin

Newsletter Editor

Millie Collins/Joel Helmrich

Administrative Assistant

Judy Dean

May Speaker: Justin Bloom, Founder of Suncoast Waterkeeper

Topic: The Impact and Significance to Us of the Piney Point Pollution Issues

Justin will discuss his role on behalf of several plaintiffs in the Piney Point case, the anatomy of a case under the Clean Water Act, and concerns about disposing of waste water potentially containing toxic substances through deep injection wells into the lower aquifers in this area. Our drinking water is drawn from underground aquifers and no one really knows how different levels of aquifers interact in the porous substrata of our state. Justin will also discuss successful litigation to require better maintenance of sewage treatment systems in the towns and counties of our area and the measurable improvement in water quality in the entire aquatic environment in estuaries such as Phillippi Creek.

Justin Bloom is the founder and the Board Vice-Chair of Suncoast Waterkeeper. He is an attorney with significant experience developing and directing programs and projects for environmental groups in addition to decades of legal practice focusing on environmental issues. He also serves on the board of Tampa Bay Waterkeeper and Waterkeepers Florida, which represents 14 Waterkeeper organizations throughout Florida. Additionally, he serves on the board of the Florida West Coast Resource Conservation and Development Council and has been a member of the Sarasota Bay Estuary Program's Citizens Advisory Committee for nearly a decade, currently serving as Chair.

Justin graduated from New College of Florida in 1991 with a BA Degree in Environmental Studies. He completed his law degree at Tulane University in 1996. His legal practice over the last 25 years has focused on public interest environmental law, as well as toxic tort and class action pharmaceutical plaintiff's litigation. During that time, he has worked on staff with Hudson Riverkeeper as an investigator, staff attorney and project manager and Waterkeeper Alliance as a Director. Justin lives in Sarasota with his wife and two children.

We invite all members and their guests to join us for another educational and enjoyable gathering of retired attorneys on beautiful Sarasota Bay.

Because of the wealth of talent and interesting lives led by our very diverse membership, we continue our series of stories focusing on the lives of our members. It is our hope to eventually cover every member.

“Amicus Personae” – Steve Berry **Member of The Association of Retired Attorneys of Sarasota**

Steve Berry was born in Lombard, Illinois, a western suburb of Chicago, and then moved to upstate New York near Syracuse. He then moved to Fairfax, Virginia where he completed high school and where his family continued to reside while he attended Hope College in Holland, Michigan.

His academic career through high school and college was far from stellar. He concentrated more on sports than his studies. After college, the realization hit him that there was no market in major league baseball for a Division III pitcher whose fastball topped out at 68 mph, whose curveball wouldn't break, and who had difficulty finding the strike zone. Luckily Steve scored well enough on his LSATs to gain admission to the University of Detroit School of Law.

In law school, for the first time, Steve became turned on by academics. He clerked for a professor during his first year, was invited to join the law review and became an editor of it, clerked for a business law firm during his second and third years, and finished seventh in his class. As a lawyer, he wanted to do the one thing he perceived only lawyers could do: try lawsuits.

Steve began his career with a litigation firm in the Detroit, Michigan area, became a partner in that firm, moved to and opened up the firm's satellite office in western Michigan, and then, in 2010 opened his own practice in a suburb of Grand Rapids, Michigan. He continued to practice there until his wife of 43 years was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. Since her passing Steve continued to work part time for a Grand Rapids litigation firm which assumed a large portion of his caseload when Steve closed his own firm in 2015. His primary role was to take depositions of medical experts throughout the country.

Steve has tried well over 250 jury cases during his career. As a young lawyer he tried slip and fall, auto negligence, and construction accident cases. Since then he has handled and tried employment discrimination, business dispute, environmental, and class-action litigation. For the last two decades of his career, however, his focus has been on medical malpractice cases including wrongful death and birth injury matters. His work has always been primarily on the defense side. One of his most memorable cases, however, was representing the family of a young man who was shot and killed by officers of a local police department. That highly-publicized trial in the Federal District Court housed in Detroit resulted in, at the time, the largest personal injury verdict in the Eastern District of Michigan. The cases Steve has litigated and tried have been in numerous Circuit Courts throughout Michigan, in the Eastern and Western Federal District Courts, and in the Federal District Court for the Northern District of Illinois. He has argued appellate matters in the Michigan Court of Appeals, the Michigan Supreme Court, and the Federal 6th Circuit Court of Appeals.

Out of tragedy comes joy. Steve was blessed to find true love again with his wife Nora, a former court reporter who Steve met at a deposition in 2017. Steve and Nora live in Venice, Florida full time now. Steve's four children, their spouses, and Steve's 10 grandchildren are scattered throughout Michigan and Illinois. When not hosting family, spending time with Nora, reading, doing his daily exercise routines, or attending ARAS meetings, you can find Steve on the golf course!

HOW TO PAY FOR LUNCHEONS AND 2022 DUES

Please mail your dues payment of \$55 and/or your luncheon payment of \$28 payable to the Association of Retired Attorneys of Sarasota, Inc. (ARAS) to Benjamin Berman, Esq., 4223 MacKay Falls Terrace, Sarasota, Florida 34243. We are pleased to accept your payment by check or through our online payment option. Please get your luncheon payment in to Ben Berman prior to Wednesday of the luncheon week. After that Wednesday, no refunds can be given since the venue will have been notified of your intention to attend.

Make payments on our website: \$28 for lunch and \$55 dues using PayPal or your credit/debit card at www.retiredattorneysarasota.org

Please note the following luncheon dates for the remainder of 2022:

Tuesday, May 31
Friday, June 24
Friday, September 30
Friday, October 28
Monday November 14
Monday, December 12

We look forward to seeing you at Marina Jack at noon on the above dates, subject, of course, to Covid data.

2022-2023 Membership Directory

At some point during the next few weeks, we will be emailing all members a draft of the 2022-2023 Membership Directory. Please proofread the information about yourself and send any corrections, updates or additions to our Administrative Assistant, Judy Dean, by simply pressing the "reply" button. We encourage you to add additional information since much of the information in the Membership Directory is limited to what you put in your membership application. If there are no corrections, updates or additions, you do not have to respond. Once all the new information is collected, we will print new 2022-2023 Directories and mail them directly to your address in the Directory.

Ideas for Future Programs?

The Program Committee is always receptive to ideas for future programs. If any member has a topic or a speaker to suggest, please contact Judith Starr at jrstarr@tampabay.rr.com. Any member interested in participating in the Program Committee should notify Judith Starr, Chair of the committee. Her contact information is in our Directory.

NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS

If you have items of interest to the members, please forward them to

Millie Collins at milly4747@live.com or

Joel Helmrich at jhelmrich1@gmail.com