

Amicus Curiae

Association of Retired Attorneys of Sarasota, Inc.



www.retiredattorneysarasota.org

March 2021

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Next Zoom Meeting:

Friday, March 26 at
12 Noon.

**Zoom meetings have been
extended through June 2021.**

March Speaker: Professor Mary Atkins

TOPIC:

"Who's Really In Charge of Florida's Constitution?"

Professor Atkins will be talking about the Florida Legislature's impact on the implementation of Amendments to the Florida Constitution passed by initiative and by the Constitutional Revision Commission after they are passed in elections.

Mary Adkins is a legal skills professor at the University of Florida. Professor Adkins has researched the history of the 1968 Florida Constitution and its revisions and has presented dozens of times on Florida constitutional history. She has published two books: *Making Modern Florida: How the Spirit of Reform Shaped a New Constitution*, in 2016, and *Chesterfield Smith, America's Lawyer*, in 2020. Her co-authored casebook on Florida Constitutional Law will be published this year. She has also published several articles on Florida constitutional history and constitution revision and has served as an expert witness regarding the history of the Florida Constitution. She has conducted numerous oral history interviews of Florida legal, political and historical figures and is an executive board member of the Florida Supreme Court Historical Society. Prior to joining UF Law Adkins worked in private practice. She earned her B.S.J., M.A., and J.D. from the University of Florida.

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” – Joel Helmrich

Board Member of The Association of Retired Attorneys of Sarasota

Joel Helmrich was raised in Kingston, New York where he attended public school. After graduating high school Joel headed to Ithaca, New York where he spent five years attending Cornell University. Mr. Helmrich obtained a BS in Industrial and Labor Relations in 1975 and an MBA with a concentration in finance in 1976. After Cornell, Mr. Helmrich went to The College of Law at Syracuse University where he obtained his JD in 1979. While at Syracuse Mr. Helmrich was a member of the Law Review and one of the Executive Editors.

Mr. Helmrich originally thought that he would be a labor lawyer, representing management in contract negotiations, grievances and other related matters in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. After Joel received an offer from a Pittsburgh law firm with the opportunity to start his career, he was told that the firm was not going to have the labor work that they had anticipated. Joel was then given 2 options, (a) leave and look for work elsewhere or (b) find something else to do within the firm. The second option seemed to make more sense since the firm represented a large financial institution and Joel could use his MBA.

Rather than negotiate terms and conditions of employment Joel started a career that focused on the negotiation of the terms and conditions of the repayment of debt. This led to a career in the bankruptcy arena where Joel advised clients in Chapter 7, 11 and 13 proceedings and out-of- court workouts. He was involved in many major cases that were filed in Pittsburgh, Chicago, New York, Delaware and West Virginia. The cases involved many different entities such as the Pittsburgh Penguins, Allegheny International, Hecks, Inc. and Youngstown Osteopathic Hospital. In addition to the bankruptcy proceedings where Joel represented clients seeking the re-payment of debt, he was involved in mass tort asbestos cases where he served as counsel to the Future Claims Representative (FCR). The FCR was charged with the responsibility of protecting and pursuing claims that had not yet been calculated.

In addition to actions that focused on getting claims paid Joel helped clients purchase and sell distressed debt. He also served as a Mediator where disputes were amicably resolved.

During his career Joel was recognized and included in the Best Lawyers in America and the Pennsylvania Super Lawyers List. Joel was also active in the Allegheny County Bar Association Bankruptcy Section and the American Bankruptcy Institute.

When he was not practicing law, Joel was active on the Upper St. Clair Planning Commission over an 18-year period. Joel was also active with the Board of Trustees and the Executive Board for the Western Pennsylvania School for Blind Children for more than 20 years.

Joel and his wife, Barbara of 36 years, moved to Sarasota 5 years ago but have kept their home in Pittsburgh. They hope to be full time residents here very soon. Their son, his wife and their daughter live in New York and hopefully will be visiting Sarasota often.

NOTICE OF MEETINGS

The Board of Directors has canceled all in person meetings through the end of June, 2021. Membership meetings will be held via Zoom through the end of June, 2021.

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 Dick Bruning at kayanddick66@gmail.com.

NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS

If you have items of interest to the members, please forward them to Michael Krasnow at mekraz@sbcglobal.net.