



# Amicus Curiae

Association of Retired Attorneys of Sarasota, Inc.

[www.retiredattorneyssarasota.org](http://www.retiredattorneyssarasota.org)

February 2023

### Officers

Judith Starr, President  
James Case, Vice President  
Benjamin I. Berman, Treasurer  
Michael Krasnow, Secretary

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Benjamin I. Berman  
Richard Bruning  
James Case  
Milly Collins  
Joel Helmrich  
Michael Krasnow  
Elizabeth Spahn  
Judith Starr  
Stephen Sturm  
Harold M. Zabin

### Newsletter Editor

Milly Collins/Joel Helmrich

### Association Photographer

Diana Lynn

### Administrative Assistant

Frank Sharpe

### Table of Contents

Page

- 1.....President's Message
- 2.....About our Monthly Speaker
- 3.....Amicus Personae  
John M. Alexander
- 4.....Dues and Luncheon Payments
- 5.....Upcoming Meeting Schedule
- 5.....Congratulations Board Members
- 5.....Ideas for Future Programs
- 5.....Newsletter Ideas Welcome

**NEXT MEETING**  
**Friday, February 24**  
**12 Noon**  
**at Marina Jack**

### Welcome New Members

Tom Shults  
Joel Henning  
Kay Kochenderfer

## A Message from the New President

On February 1, the Board elected a new slate of officers for 2023. We are: Judith Starr, President; Jim Case, Vice President; Michael Krasnow, Secretary; and Ben Berman, Treasurer. In addition, Joel Helmrich and Milly Collins have agreed to stay on as editors of the Amicus; Harold Zabin and Jim Case are taking over as Program co-chairs. We will continue to focus on providing strong programs with speakers from both inside and outside ARAS. Our members have fascinating stories to tell and we want to showcase them, as well as bring in local luminaries. Our other priority will be to serve as a clearinghouse for pro bono opportunities for our members. Many thanks to outgoing President Steve Sturm for his many years of service, strong leadership, and, of course, his great sense of humor. Fortunately, he is staying on the Board and will continue to be a valuable resource. I am honored to serve as President of this unique organization and look forward to hearing from all of you as we move forward.

Best regards,

Judith Starr

## **FEBRUARY SPEAKER: Jim Flora**

Topic: Helping Local Children Who Have Been Abused, Abandoned, and Neglected.

The Children's Guardian Fund and the 12th Circuit Guardian ad Litem Program jointly serve 1200+ children in Sarasota, Manatee and Desoto Counties who have been temporarily removed from the care of their biological parents for a wide variety of safety reasons. Most are placed with relatives and foster parents. Over 400 volunteer Guardian ad Litem's who are appointed by a local judge ensure that these children have the necessary support to live as normal and healthy life as is possible. In a short 20-minute presentation, we cover the scope of the problem locally, how Guardian ad Litem's assist the children and caregivers, how interested citizens can become guardians, and an overview of the training provided to volunteers. We also briefly discuss how the non-profit Children's Guardian Fund financially supports this initiative by providing a variety of normalcy needs and tutoring.

About Jim Flora:

Jim Flora began as a Volunteer Guardian ad Litem in the fall of 2019 and has thoroughly enjoyed advocating for multiple families.

Jim and his wife Kathy, the proud grandparents of four, moved to Bradenton full time in 2012.

Jim's executive experience spans the fields of General Management, Strategic Planning, Finance, Manufacturing Operations and Sales and Marketing having retired as the Chief Operating Officer of a pet food company in 2017. Jim graduated with a BA from Michigan State University and completed Dartmouth College's Executive Development Program.

In 2015 Jim completed the Leadership Manatee Program and has assisted numerous local small businesses in their business development since his retirement. He is currently consulting in the food safety industry.

Jim was drawn to the mission of the Guardian ad Litem program by his personal mission to contribute back to our community with a practical focus on advocating for disadvantaged youth.

## **Amicus Personae - John M. Alexander**

### **Member of the Association of Retired Attorneys of Sarasota**

John Alexander grew up in East Cleveland, Ohio, in the 1960's. His parents were very self-motivated people who valued education and hard work. So, at age 12 John had his first job as a self-employed worker in retail distribution in the publishing business . . . also known as a Cleveland Plain Dealer paperboy. He had to get up at 5:00 o'clock every morning to "go do papers", hurry home, change clothes, grab breakfast and books and head off to school. As a result, his personal and professional lives have been based on the lessons learned delivering newspapers no matter how cold the temperature or deep the snow.

Graduating from The Ohio State University in 1967 he headed for Case Western Reserve Law school. To everyone's amazement (including his own) after his first semester's exams John racked up three A's and a B which was surprising because he never got high grades before plus he got married during the Christmas break before cramming for law school exams. At the end his second semester he was still in the top 10% of his class and invited to join the law review staff.

Having Law Review on his resume came in handy in landing his first job as a law clerk for a U.S. District Court Judge, the Hon. Ben C. Green, for the Northern District of Ohio, Eastern Division. Being a law clerk was challenging, especially during the Vietnam War days when the Kent State shootings took place. One of the federal cases that came out of that event was assigned to Judge Green. It was a First Amendment case questioning the right of a state court judge to enjoin any discussion by anyone about the shooting. The injunction was voided by Judge Green; John researched and wrote the Court's opinion which was later affirmed by the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals.

After two years with the District Court John got a job with a couple of small firms in Cleveland, learning the ropes. And, in 1975, with his son in kindergarten and new-born twin daughters at home with his wife, he went out on his own and set up his sole-practitioner general-practice law firm. His areas of practice were from A to Z, from Adoption to Zoning and everything in between. His clients ranged from corporate executives to welfare moms, always keeping one or two pro bono cases representing poor people who were getting pushed around by the system.

In 1999 he retired from practice and moved to Sarasota and got involved in real estate investing and became a Realtor. He's also a published poet, short story writer, composer and singer, having gone in four years from singing with his church choir to singing professionally with The Cleveland Opera.

He's very proud of his three children: son Mat who's a private chef, daughter Bethany a college professor and graphic artist, and daughter Kelly who's a molecular microbiologist with the Cleveland Clinic.

Those Plain Dealer paperboy lessons paid off all the way around. You want it? Work for it. Can't afford it? Save up. Hard work works. Education is the key that opens the golden door.

## It's Time to Pay 2023 Dues

The Board of Directors has been able to maintain the \$55 annual amount for the past 8 years. Please mail your 2023 dues payment and/or your luncheon payment of \$28 payable to the Association of Retired Attorneys of Sarasota, Inc. If choosing to mail your payments, please send to Ben Berman, 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 to Ben 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/or \$55 for 2023 dues using PayPal at

[www.retiredattorneyssarasota.org](http://www.retiredattorneyssarasota.org)

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### 2023 Dues Paid

As of January 31, 2022

Alexander, John M.  
Barthold, Gaele M.  
Bennett, James H.  
Berman, Benjamin I.  
Bruning, Richard  
Bryant, Margaret B.  
Case, James W.  
Chase, Gary  
Coch, Nicholas L.  
Cohen, David Martin  
Cohen, David Michael  
Collins, Mildred S.  
Crowley, Joan C.  
Dawson, Diana  
Dubbs, Thomas A.  
Dugan, Janet R.  
Eliasberg, Jr., Edward D.  
Frigo, Victoria  
Galica, Kathleen  
Gopstein, Israel  
Heckman, Chris  
Helmrich, Joel  
**Henning, Joel F.**  
Herring, William W.  
Humphreys, Philip  
Hurd, Gordon B.  
Jonas, Alan L.  
Katz, Barbara  
Kidd, John E.  
Kline, David  
**Kochenderfer, Kay**  
Krasnow, Michael E.  
Krause, Benjamin D.

Kushen, Allan S.  
Liner, David  
Lundy, Daniel F.  
Lynn, Diana N.  
Malawsky, Donald N.  
Marquette, Michael  
Mason, Karen  
McClure, Ann  
Meade, Richard C.  
Meltzer, Philip  
Moltz, Ira  
Moses, Charles  
Nefussy, Eli M.  
Polelle, Michael  
Prozzi, James A.  
Raimi, Burton L.  
Rice, G. Mark  
Schneider, Tobi L.  
Schnieder, Joan  
Shults, Thomas D.  
Snyder, David S.  
Spahn, Elizabeth  
Starr, Judith R.  
Stulberg, E. Barry  
Sturm, Steve  
Tilles, C. Evans  
Weingarten, Richard L.  
Wolf, Charles R.  
Zabin, Harold

**Please note the following dates for the next six luncheons:**

Friday, March 24  
Friday, April 28  
Monday, May 22  
Friday, June 23  
Friday, September 22  
Friday, October 27

We look forward to seeing you at Marina Jack at noon on the above dates.

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**Congratulations To Our Board Members**

Congratulations to reelected Board members Milly Collins, Joel Helmrich, Michael Krasnow, Judith Starr, Stephen Sturm, Harold Zabin. They were elected by the membership for two year terms. Thanks to all our Board members for ensuring our continued success. We look forward to another year of interesting speakers and valuable pro bono work in and for our wonderful community.

**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 Harold Zabin at [hpzabin@aol.com](mailto:hpzabin@aol.com) or Jim Case at [JamesWCase1968@gmail.com](mailto:JamesWCase1968@gmail.com) .

Any member interested in participating in the Program Committee should contact Harold Zabin or Jim Case at the addresses above.

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**NEWLETTER SUBMISSIONS**

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

Milly Collins at [millyc054@gmail.com](mailto:millyc054@gmail.com) or

Joel Helmrich at [jhelmrich1@gmail.com](mailto:jhelmrich1@gmail.com)