

RPPTL WORKS TO BOOST THE NUMBER OF MINORITY LAWYERS DOING ESTATE PLANNING WORK

📅 May 12, 2021 👤 By Gary Blankenship ▶ Senior Editor 📁 Top Stories



A May 8 Real Property, Probate and Trust Law Section seminar to encourage minority and diverse lawyers to include estate planning in their practices drew more than 100 participants.

The free, all-day, and online seminar followed up on a similar in-person event held in January 2020 (and an earlier one in 2008) and was sponsored by the section's Membership and Inclusion Committee and supported by Nova Southeastern University

Shepard Broad College of Law, Florida International College of Law, the Elder Law Section, and a variety of voluntary bar associations.

"It was great, it was thorough, it laid out steps in a cohesive, understandable way," said Ashley Gantt, president of the T.J. Reddick Bar Association and who attended the seminar. "I am actually in the process of opening my own firm; it was very on time."

Gantt particularly liked that materials were available to participants ahead of time though being downloaded from Dropbox.

"Having the resources and being able to refer to the resources as the speakers were going through their presentation was great. I'm a visual learner," she added. "You're telling me how, you're telling me what, and you're giving me the forms."

"It was a carry forward from our prior seminars," said former section Chair Rohan Kelley, who helped organize and presented at the event. "We are attempting to attract minority lawyers to the practice of wills, trusts, and estates and equip them with the basic tools they can use to make that transition."

Annabella Barboza, co-chair of the section's Membership and Inclusion Committee, said around 15 minority bar associations participated in the seminar.

"We thought that the seminar was very successful in 2020 and was something we would like to continue doing to promote diversity within the section," she said, adding the committee has gotten comments from probate judges about the lack of diversity

among lawyers appearing before them.

Part of the challenge this year was converting last year's in-person event to an online seminar. Gantt noted the T.J. Reddick Bar helped with the 2020 course and this year passed along contact information for other minority bar associations.

Barboza said the Membership and Inclusion Committee is looking at additional seminars in other areas under the section's purview, including guardianship.

Presenters at this year's seminar included Duane Pinnock, who is certified in Wills, Trust and Estates; 17th Circuit Probate Judge Kenneth Gillespie; retired 17th Circuit probate Judge Mark Speiser; Kelley; and his daughter, Tae Kelley Bronner, who does probate and trust litigation and wills, trusts, and estate work.

Topics included ethics; transition to an estate planning or fiduciary litigation practice; incorporating homesteads in estate planning; interviewing clients; using and maintaining a bank of forms; drafting documents including forms; the particular issues for executing wills and trusts; and a perspective from probate judges.

Besides the T.J. Reddick Bar Association, other participating local bars include the Tampa Hispanic Bar Association, the Asian Pacific American Bar Association of South Florida, the F. Malcolm Cunningham, Sr., Bar Association, the South Asian Bar Association of Florida, the Greater Orlando Asian American Bar Association, the Broward County Hispanic Bar Association, the Fred G. Minnis, Sr., Bar Association, the George Edgecomb Bar Association, the Virgil Hawkins Florida Chapter of the National Bar Association, the Haitian Lawyers Association, the Gwen S. Cherry Black Women Lawyers Association, the Hispanic Bar Association of Central Florida, the Caribbean Bar Association, the Paul C. Perkins Bar Association, the Cuban American Bar Association, and the Palm Beach County Hispanic Bar Association.