

# Lady Lawyer Digest



## Celebrating Women in the Law



Women's Section meeting  
April 20, 11:45am-1pm  
Regions Center,  
200 Clinton Ave, 11th Floor

Law Day  
May 5

Do you write poetry, fiction, non-fiction, comedy, or are you an artist or other creative who would like to share your work in this newsletter? Is there a topic you want covered in this newsletter? Do you want to contribute or help with the newsletter? Don't be shy! Contact Tanya at [thendrix@hinsonlaw.com](mailto:thendrix@hinsonlaw.com)

*From the Honorable Karen K. Hall*



Who am I? Why me? What is my purpose? Questions many of us ask ourselves throughout our lives. As way of introduction, I am from Florida; a University of Florida graduate and 1982 University of Florida Hall of Fame; a Cumberland School of Law graduate and national finalist 1985 Trial Team; a former prosecutor; Past President of Leadership Huntsville/Madison

County and the National Children's Advocacy Center; 2010 recipient of the King Solomon Award for Judicial Excellence; a judge since 1996; and a Christian. While I have been truly blessed and honored by activities and awards, nothing is more valuable to me than my family. I have been happily married for 36 years, have three outstanding children, and two beautiful grandchildren.

My husband and I met while we were clerks for the Alabama Court of Civil Appeals and moved to Madison County in 1986 where his family has been for over 200 years. In all candor, finding employment in those days as a woman lawyer who "wasn't from here" was difficult. I'll save those stories for another time but will always be grateful to then District Attorney Bud Cramer who took a chance and hired me.



Each month we will feature a lawyer so we can get to know one another. If you want to be featured or want to nominate someone, please email Tanya at [thendrix@hinsonlaw.com](mailto:thendrix@hinsonlaw.com)

### **Member Spotlight: Teri Mastando**

**Firm:** Mastando & Artrip, LLC

**Practice Area:** Labor & employment law, Title IX (sexual harassment and discrimination in schools), and Civil Rights

**Law School:** Cumberland School of Law

**Family:** Husband, Tony, children: Drew, Nick, Maria

**Pets:** Skye & Minx (spoiled Aussies)

**What do you like most about your practice area?** I really feel like I make a difference in the lives of my clients, most of whom have been mistreated at work, school, or in prison in some way. I have the privilege of helping women, young and older, who have suffered sexual harassment, sometimes assault, in the schools, workplace and prison. They are my heroes, and almost always handle the trials and tribulations of litigation with a sense of purpose and determination that what happened to them should not happen to others. I also am honored to represent minorities who have suffered discrimination

or harassment in the workplace, schools and prisons. Again, these clients also go forward determined to prevent the mistreatment of others in the future. I also love helping people with medical impairments exercise their rights in the workplace to be free of discrimination based on disability.

**What are your hobbies?** I am an avid reader. I love training for triathlons and half marathons, and practicing yoga.

**What are you most proud of in your life (career or personal)?** I am most proud personally of my accomplished children. Professionally, my partners and I had a very high profile case in 2016 that received national attention and was called the "bait rape case." We helped a young lady who was raped by a male student in a middle school bathroom because a faculty member convinced her to meet the young man in the bathroom to "catch them in the act." After 6 years of litigation, we were able to resolve her claim and provide her with some financial support. She is doing well today and we are so proud of her. (cont'd)

*Judge Hall Cont'd*

The growth in our county, bench, bar, and mindsets since the 1980s has opened many doors for women lawyers. By helping one another and treating each other with dignity and respect, we will surely continue to excel. So, while it pains me to even have to say this, when appearing in court or representing our profession please aspire to "dress for success", not for a day at the beach, a yoga class, or a Tik Tok video. If we do not keep professional standards high, who will?

By equating life to a box of chocolates, Forest Gump opened minds to our days on this earth – some are hard, some are cream filled, some are bitter, and some unforgettable. None of us know what tomorrow will hold so shower the people you love with love, apologize, forgive, laugh, be gracious, be kind, be the best you can be each and every day, and from the words of my sorority's symphony strive "to work earnestly, to speak kindly, to act sincerely, and to choose thoughtfully that course which occasion and conscious demand" – XO

*Mastando cont'd*

### **What is the most adventurous or interesting thing you've done?**

My biggest adventure will be this year. Although I have been doing triathlons for over 5 years, I have never completed a half-Ironman distance. I have signed up for and am training to do one this September in Augusta, Georgia. It will take me awhile, but I plan to cross that finish line!



*We have women in this Bar who have side hustles, gigs, creative abilities, & exceptional volunteer work outside of practicing law. If you want to be featured or want to nominate someone to be featured, contact Tanya at [thendrix@hinsonlaw.com](mailto:thendrix@hinsonlaw.com).*

### **More than a Lawyer: Nesha Wright**

**Firm:** Spencer Wright Law Firm, LLC

**Practice Area:** Criminal Defense and Family Law

**What is your side hustle, side gig, or creative side you want to share?** I have two great passions right now, first I love to sew! My second great passion is teaching and working with pre-law students.

**How long have you been sewing & teaching?** I've been sewing since 2015. My law firm's internship program for pre-law students has been in place since 2013.

**Why sewing & teaching?** My grandmother taught me how to sew as a child and I picked it back up a few years ago. As a child I started out making pillows and helping sew curtains.

With patience, a few one-on-one classes with a fashion designer, I've progressed to making my own clothes and suits for court.

As for teaching, I love to see the students excited about the

law and their future careers. I also want to offer classes and experiences to pre-law students that I did not have access to at their age. **How do you get started sewing and teaching?** My husband bought me a sewing machine as a Christmas gift in 2015 after seeing how excited I became watching Project Runway. The day after Christmas, I rushed out and bought several sewing patterns, fabric, notions, and started working on my first dress. Prior to law school, I planned to enter the education field as a Professor of Religious Studies. Starting an internship program at my law firm was a great way to continue my commitment to supporting minority students in their education. When the opportunity to teach in the Pre-law Department at Oakwood University presented itself, it felt like providence.

**Do you sell your creations or teach sewing?** I recently taught a sewing class at a local quilt shop a few months ago. I share all my makes on



Instagram at @sewlegalchick. I do not offer one-on-one sewing classes.

**What most excites you about sewing and teaching?** I love it when I create custom suits and dresses that are uniquely my style and fit perfectly. It gives me an extra boost of confidence that I can accomplish anything. I relish the opportunities I have been afforded to work with students over the years. I am immensely proud of the interns who've worked with my law firm. To see them thrive in their careers as lawyers, social workers, and activists has been a blessing.

Next month: Nora Hickman June ????? any volunteers?

*From the Editor*

Studies show that women tend to thrive when we are connected to other women. We do better when we have an inner circle of women. A study by Professor Brian Uzzi at The Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University, along with his colleagues, and published in the Harvard Business Review in 2019, noted that women benefit professionally when we have an “inner circle of close female contacts.”<sup>1</sup> It went on to say that we “benefit from an inner circle of close female contacts that can share private information about things like an organization’s attitudes toward female leaders, which helps strengthen women’s job search, interviewing, and negotiation strategies.” Further, the research found that “Women who were in the top quartile of centrality and had a female-dominated inner circle of 1-3 women landed leadership positions that were 2.5 times higher in authority and pay than those of their female peers lacking this combination.”

That is why we thought this monthly newsletter was important to do. Featuring different attorneys each month introduces us to women we may not normally meet, learn new things about attorneys we may already know, and build a sense of community and connection we may not otherwise have. I envision someone seeing Teri at a meeting or in court and saying, “I didn’t know you did triathlons! Tell me about your training.” Or maybe you also do triathlons and want to train and do races with her. Maybe you see Nesha and ask her if she made the suit she’s wearing, take a sewing class from her, or you want to get know her better, so you call her up and invite her to lunch.

We recently learned that some bar members were upset that the March newsletter featured both Maia and I, rather than other attorneys. We certainly didn’t intend for the profiles to be self-serving. We, like many of you, work in a bubble, and haven’t really gotten to know many lawyers in the area. We figured since we were trying to bring women together, it would be helpful if you all knew a little more about us. So, we introduced ourselves.

This experiment of bringing women together and growing community will only work with your help. We need you to attend the meeting on April 20 at 11:45am to get involved in the Women’s Section, take leadership positions, help with this newsletter, decide future meeting dates, plan and coordinate meetings and socials, or find other ways to grow this community. This Section isn’t about two women, it’s about all the women lawyers in Madison County. We need all of you so that we can each grow our inner circles, and to encourage and empower one another.

## *Special Events / Happenings from our Members*

Sleep in Heavenly Peace: Bar Association Service Project for Law Day. Roll up your sleeves and volunteer April 15 or donate to the cause.

Movers for Moms: Donation collection for women & children at Downtown Rescue Mission's Owens House

Items Needed (ONLY donate these items, please)

- Diapers Sizes 5/6/7
- Super Tampons
- Deodorant (travel size)
- Body Wash
- Body Lotion (travel size)
- Small Tissue Packs
- Baby Rice or Oatmeal
- Wipes
- Super Maxi Pads
- Disposable Razors
- Lip Balm
- Hair Ties/Headbands
- Bar Soap
- Adult Diapers (full pull ups)

Law firms that are collection sites:

Mastando & Artrip  
Hinson & Hinson, P.C.

Collecting April 1-May 5

Legal Food Frenzy: Kickoff is April 17.  
Collect food for local food bank.

If you  
have a special event  
you want featured  
and/or invite other  
members to  
participate, please  
contact Tanya

<sup>1</sup><https://hbr.org/2019/02/research-men-and-women-need-different-kinds-of-networks-to-succeed>; accessed April 12, 2023.