

## **Federal Bar Association South Florida Chapter Conducts Virtual Civics Programs For Students With Help From Stearns Weaver Miller Attorney Stephanie Turk**

**MIAMI, FL** — August 10, 2020 — Stearns Weaver Miller announced that Labor & Employment attorney Stephanie Turk and the Federal Bar Association (“FBA”) South Florida Chapter have been planning and conducting virtual civics programs for students amid the pandemic.

Stephanie was instrumental in establishing the Civil Discourse and Difficult Decisions Program (“CD3”) in Miami. Before the pandemic, the program brought high school students into federal courthouses to practice civil discourse skills and evidence-based decision making while dealing with teen-relevant issues in realistic courtroom simulations. The students participated as lawyers or juror members in a mock trial and jury deliberation using a fictional scenario based on a United States Supreme Court case. The arguments and deliberations were guided by civil discourse principles. Federal judges preside over the program and volunteer attorneys coach the students. The program aims to teach civil discourse skills as the foundation of effective dispute resolution in the law and in life, and shed light on the legal consequences of everyday actions.

Anticipating that schools will maintain distance learning in the fall, the planning committee constructed a virtual 90-minute CD3 program. The modified program was recently tested with about 40 United States District Court, Southern District of Florida interns. The program, presented through the Zoom platform, was successful and will be implemented across high schools in Miami, Broward, and Palm Beach counties in the fall. The hope is that the distance learning format will reach more students and schools without the hassle of transportation and other logistics, and will encourage more judge and attorney involvement. More information about the pilot, virtual CD3 program can be found [here](#).

Since its inception three years ago, the CD3 program has grown from a local event to a nationwide initiative, reaching hundreds of students. In 2019, the Miami program received a grant from the FBA Foundation through the Chapter Community Outreach Grant Program. For more information about the Civil Discourse and Difficult Decisions Program, please visit the United States District Court, Southern District of Florida [website](#).

In addition to CD3, Stephanie, along with U.S. District Judge Beth Bloom and FBA South Florida Chapter President Alaina Fotiu-Wojtowicz, helped coordinate the May 19<sup>th</sup> Law Day event. Due to courthouse and school closures, the annual event took place virtually to 53 students and faculty at Hialeah Gardens Senior High School’s Law Academy. More information on the Law Day event can be found [here](#).

Stephanie Turk is an attorney in Stearns Weaver Miller’s Labor & Employment Department. She has experience in both Employment Litigation and Employment Counseling. Stephanie has served on the FBA South Florida Chapter Board of Directors since 2017, including as current Co-Chair of the Civics and Community Outreach and Law Day Committee and the Civics Liaison.

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