

# STEPHEN W. SESSUMS

## *CURRICULUM VITAE*

**CURRENT  
POSITION:**

Founding Partner

**AREAS OF  
PRACTICE:**

100% of Practice devoted to Marital and Family Law

**BAR  
ADMISSIONS:**

Florida, 1959

**EDUCATION:**

Doctor of Jurisprudence, 1959  
University of Florida Levin College of Law  
Gainesville, Florida  
*with honors*, Class Rank #1  
Editor-in-Chief University of Florida *Law Review*,  
President Florida Blue Key Leadership Fraternity

Bachelor of Arts, 1956  
University of Florida  
Gainesville, Florida

**LEGAL  
EXPERIENCE:**

Sessums Black Caballero Ficarrotta, 1980 – 2007, 2016 – Present

**PROFESSIONAL  
ASSOCIATIONS:**

*The American College of Family Trial Lawyers*  
Diplomat Emeritus, 2013 – Present  
Diplomat, 1993 – 2013

*American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers*  
President, Florida Chapter, 1985 – 1987  
Chair, Bounds of Advocacy Revision Cmte., 1998 – 2001  
National Board of Directors, 1985 – 1988  
Chair, Bounds of Advocacy Committee, 1987 – 1991  
Chair, Client Relations Committee, 1991 – 1994  
Fellow, 1978 – 2013

*Family Law Section of The Florida Bar*  
Chair, Bounds of Advocacy Committee, 2002 – 2004  
Section Chair, 1981 – 1982, 1982 – 1983  
Member, 1973 – 2012, 2016 – Present

*The Florida Bar*

Member, 1959 – Present  
Member, Family Law Rules Committee, 1993 – 1998  
Member, The Florida Bar/Bench Commission, 1990 – 1992  
Chair, Certification for Marital and Family Law, 1987 – 1988

*Supreme Court Commission on Matrimonial Law*

Member, 1982 – 1987  
Chair, Subcommittee on Procedure and Support Enforcement.

*Supreme Court Committee on Rules for Mediation and Arbitration*

Member, 1987 – 1987

*Florida Judicial Council, Family Court Sub-Committee*

Member, 1989 – 1990

*Hillsborough County Bar Association*

President, 1977 – 1978  
Honorary Member, 2008 – Present  
Member, 1961 – 2013

*Hillsborough County Bar Foundation*

Emeritus Trustee, 2017 – Present  
President, 2004-2005  
Trustee, 2002 - 2013

*Bay Area Trial Lawyers Association*

President, 1967

*Stetson University College of Law*

Adjunct Professor of Law, 1984 – 1988

*University of Florida Law School*

Interim Assistant Professor of Law, 1959

**PROFESSIONAL  
RECOGNITIONS:**

2016 – 2019, AV preeminent Rating from Martindale Hubbell

1983 - 2008, Listed in The Best Lawyers in America, Nafier and Smith [1983 was the inaugural publication year]

2008, Herbert G. Goldberg Memorial Award from the Trial Lawyers Section of the Hillsborough County Bar Association for Distinguished legal career

2006, Lifetime Achievement Award, Florida Chapter of the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers

2004 - 2005, Legal Elite in Family Law by Florida Trend Magazine

2004, Service to the Community Award from the Florida Chapter of the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts

2000, National Fellow of the Year by the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers

1993, Received the Board Member of the Year award from the Florida Council for Community Mental Health

1987, Listed as one of 43 of the nation's top divorce lawyers in National Law Journal, Vol. 10, No. 10

**AUTHOR/  
LECTURER:**

“The Bounds of Advocacy – its Beginning and Evolution,” Commentator, Family Law Section, The Florida Bar, Summer 2016.

Author, with Judge John Lenderman, of Chapter 1, Professionalism and Ethics, Dissolution of Marriage Manual, Florida Bar, 2006.

Family Law Superstars, “How Family Law Should be Practiced in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century,” Family Law Section, The Florida Bar, 2000.

“Ethics and Professionalism” American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers, Annual Institute 1999.

"How to Take and Defend Depositions" Pennsylvania Bar Association, Family Law Section Summer Meeting 1996.

"Preparation of Experts and Witnesses for Trial" American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers, Seventh Annual Institute, 1995.

"Ethics, Professionalism and Attorney's Fees", Master Seminar, The Florida Bar, June 1994.

"Adversarial Cooperation: A Concept that Works", 9 Journal of American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers, 1993.

"Organizing the Family Law Practice", Family Law Section, The Nevada Bar, 1992.

"Ethical Considerations for the Matrimonial Law Lawyer", American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers Twelfth Annual Institute and Colorado State Bar, Family Law Section, 1990.

"The Paper Chase: Practical Tips on How to Collect, Control, Organize and Use Financial Documents in Divorce Cases", Florida Academy of Trial Lawyers, 1989.

Case Law Update: Eleventh Annual Institute, American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers, 1989.

"Divorce and Antenuptial Agreements, Drafting and Enforceability", Professional Educational Systems Seminar, 1989.

"Organizing the Family Law Practice", American Journal of Family Law, Vol. II, No. 4, Winter 1988.

"Organizing a Family Law Practice", National Meeting, American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers, 1988.

"Equitable Distribution in Dissolution of Marriage: Consideration of Contingent Tax Liabilities of Assets in Valuation and Distribution.", with Melvyn B. Frumkes, The Florida Bar Journal, April and May, 1987, Vol LX, No. 4 and 5.

"Adversarial Cooperation: A Modern Litigation Necessity", The Florida Bar Journal, May, 1985.

Moderator, "The Skilled Trial Judge's Observations about Matrimonial Litigation", Sixth Annual Institute, American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers, 1984.

"Putting the Spouse Through - A Good or Bad Investment?" (with Laura L. Sessums), The Florida Bar Journal, June, 1984.

"Case Law Update", Fifth Annual Institute, American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers, 1983.

"Equitable Distribution and Its Effect on Property Acquired by Gift or Inheritance.", The Florida Bar Journal, April, 1983.

"Equitable Distribution, As of What Date is Property Included and Valued?", The Florida Bar Journal, March, 1982.

"Dissolution of Marriage Trial: The Bench and Bar's Viewpoint", 1981.

"Family Law Practice Techniques from Seasoned Practitioners", 1981.

**COMMUNITY  
ACTIVITIES:**

*Meals on Wheels of Tampa*

Amy Shimborg Volunteer of the Year Award, 2017  
Volunteer, 2007 – Present

*Hillsborough Educational Association*

Volunteer & Mentor, 2011 – Present  
Chair, Take Stock in Children Committee, 2017 – 2019

*Northside Community Mental Health Center, Inc.*

Founding Director  
President, 1982  
Director, 1975 – 1995

*United Way Suncoast*

Executive Committee, 1974 – 1980  
Vice President for Planning, 1974 – 1976  
Chair, Professional Service Division, 1973 – 1974

*American Red Cross of Tampa Bay*

President, 1970 – 1972  
Disaster Committee Chair, 1966 – 1969  
South Florida Div. Advisory Council Chair, 1971 – 1972  
South Florida Division Advisory Council, 1970 – 1972  
Member, National Resolutions Cmte., 1972 – 1975  
Centennial Celebration, Chair  
Committee on Commemorative Materials  
Subcommittee on Planned Giving, Southeastern Area

*Hillsborough County Public Schools*

Chair, Bi-Racial Committee, 1971 – 1972

*University of South Florida*

Member, Board of Directors of University Chapel  
Fellowship, 1963 – 1975

*Children's Cancer Center*

Member, Board of Directors, 1980 – 1983

*Southwest Florida Blood Bank*

Director, 1979 – 1983

*The Easter Seal Society for Crippled Children and Adults of  
Hillsborough County [Entity dissolved 1991]*

Past Vice President  
Past Member, Board of Directors

**PERSONAL:**

Married to Diana Sessums

Daughter, Laura, is a medical doctor practicing in the field of general internal medicine

Son, Mark, is an attorney and Senior Partner with the Sessums Law Group with offices in Tampa, Lakeland, and Sebring, Florida

Son, Michael, is a Founding Director of IBEX Partners, a Global Consulting, Public Affairs, and Communications Firm in Washington, D.C.