

**FOREWORD**

In 1993, the **Executive Council of the Trial Lawyers Section of The Florida Bar** (which represented over 6,000 trial lawyers in Florida) formed a professionalism committee to prepare practical guidelines on professional conduct for trial lawyers. After reviewing the numerous aspirational and model guidelines from Florida and around the country, the professionalism committee determined that, with minor modifications, the guidelines that had been prepared by the **Hillsborough County Bar Association** were the best model for the entire state. Therefore, in 1994, at the request of the professionalism committee, the **Executive Council of the Trial Lawyers Section** unanimously approved the **Guidelines for Professional Conduct**. The **Trial Lawyers Section** then sought the endorsement of the **Guidelines from the Florida Conference of Circuit Court Judges**; at its meeting held in September 1995, the Conference approved the Guidelines. In so doing, the Conference asserted that the Guidelines do not have the force of law and that trial judges still have the right and obligation to consider on a case-by-case basis issues raised by the Guidelines. Since their endorsement by the Conference, the Guidelines have been followed by lawyers throughout the state and have been endorsed by administrative order in many circuits.

Beginning in 1999, the **Trial Lawyers Section** undertook to rewrite the Guidelines to clarify certain provisions, to make certain provisions consistent with current law, and to eliminate certain provisions considered unnecessary because they were redundant of either a rule of civil procedure or a rule of professional conduct, which lawyers are expected to follow as minimum standards of professionalism. The 2001 and 2008 editions of the Guidelines were the result of that effort, and the Section has updated and revised those editions. These revised Guidelines are promulgated by the Trial Lawyers Section of **The Florida Bar**. It is hoped that dissemination of these revised Guidelines will give direction to both lawyers and judges concerning how lawyers should conduct themselves in all phases of trial practice. The adoption of the Guidelines by the Trial Lawyers Section also is intended to express support for trial judges who require that lawyers conduct themselves professionally.

For most lawyers, these Guidelines simply will reflect their current practice. However, it is hoped that the use of these Guidelines will continue to increase the level of professionalism in trial practice in Florida.



This 2017 edition supersedes the previous editions of the Guidelines.

