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LAWYERS EARN BOARD CERTIFICATION IN MARITAL AND FAMILY LAW

The Florida Bar Board of Legal Specialization & Education in 2009 approved board certification for 157 lawyers in 18 specialty areas of legal practice, including the following lawyers who earned board certification in marital and family law:

Tina Leah Lewert, Boca Raton
Mark Andrew Ossian, Clearwater
Elizabeth Ann Blackburn, Daytona Beach
Sheryl A. Moore, Fort Lauderdale
Laurence Jay Smith, Fort Myers
Kathryn Marie Welsh, Largo
Maria Teresa Sallato, Miami
Reuben Alexander Doupé, Naples
Alberto Romero Jr., Tampa
Matthew Eugene Thatcher, Tampa
Charles Daniel Jamieson, West Palm Beach

Certified attorneys are the only Florida lawyers allowed to identify or advertise themselves as specialists or experts. Board certification evaluates attorneys' special knowledge, skills and proficiency in various areas of law and professionalism and ethics in practice. Applications are available at FloridaBar.org/certification for marital and family law board certification, and are due each year by Aug. 31.

"The Florida Bar's board certification program sets high standards for lawyers who aspire to further their professionalism credentials," said Florida Bar President Jesse H. Diner. "Attorneys who earn Florida Bar board certification have demonstrated their expertise and commitment to excellence in the practice of law."

Certification is the highest level of evaluation by The Florida Bar of the competency and experience of attorneys in areas of law approved for certification by the Supreme Court of Florida. Florida currently offers 22 specialty areas of practice for which board certification is available, the greatest number of state-approved certification areas in the nation. Two new areas – adoption law and education law – have been approved by The Florida Supreme Court and will be available to lawyers for application later this year.

A lawyer who is a member in good standing of The Florida Bar and who meets the standards prescribed by the state's Supreme Court may become board certified in one or more certification fields. Only 4,300 of Florida's 87,000 lawyers are board certified. Minimum requirements for certification are listed below; each area of certification may contain higher or additional standards.

- A minimum of five years in law practice
- Substantial involvement in the field of law for which certification is sought
- A passing grade on the examination required of all applicants
- Satisfactory peer review assessment of competence in the specialty field as well as character, ethics and professionalism in the practice of law
- Satisfaction of the certification area's continuing legal education requirements

Board certification is valid for five years. The attorney during that time must continue to practice law and attend Florida Bar-approved continuing legal education courses. Recertification requirements are similar to those for initial certification. Not all qualified lawyers are certified, but

those who are board certified have taken the extra steps to have their competence and experience evaluated.

For more information, please visit The Florida Bar Web site at **Floridabar.org/certification** or contact The Florida Bar's Legal Specialization & Education Department at 850/561-5842.