

THE FLORIDA BAR'S 2020 ANNUAL CONVENTION GOES VIRTUAL

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A detailed schedule with confirmed functions to be held via electronic methods will be distributed in the coming weeks



The 2020 Annual Bar Convention will be a virtual only affair this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“A considerable amount of time was spent looking at every conceivable option for Annual Convention including postponing or canceling the convention all together,” President John Stewart said May 8. “In the end, it was determined that the Annual Convention will be held exclusively as a virtual or remote event. There will be no in-person events for the 2020 Florida Bar

Annual Convention.”

Originally slated for June 17–20 in Orlando, the 70th Annual Convention is being re-tooled so that section and committee meetings, CLE seminars, and certain other events can be held virtually or remotely the week of June 15–19.

Stewart said the decision to hold a virtual convention was difficult in many ways, but was easy when measured against the necessity of protecting the health and safety of Florida lawyers and Bar staff.

□ *“In the end, I am optimistic that this will allow us to showcase that The Florida Bar continues to be a leader in the nation and can and will continue important and necessary business utilizing available technologies,” Stewart said. “As is the theme for this year’s convention, we will be Looking Back but Moving Forward.”*

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“We expect there will be many exciting features to this event,” Stewart said.

The Bar's hotel contract for the Annual Convention is being cancelled under the force majeure, impossibility, and cancellation clauses and the Hilton Orlando Bonnet Creek & Waldorf Astoria will cancel all hotel rooms in the Annual Convention room block and send cancellation notices to those who had already made reservations.

Bar staff is working with committee and section chairs and other Bar leaders to develop a schedule using teleconferencing, video conferencing, or other virtual meeting options. The convention week will also include CLE seminars, including President's Showcase events, and the General Assembly with the installation of President-elect Dori Foster-Morales.

Stewart also praised the commitment of section and committee leaders.

"I recognize you are all volunteers, yet you have met your obligations head-on despite dealing with unprecedented personal and professional challenges," Stewart said. "I am grateful for each of you."

Stewart said the Bar will continue to explore ways to help its members as the COVID-19 crisis persists, with particular focus on practical ways to support Florida lawyers in their daily lives and practices.

"We are all in this together; and, together we can recover and restore our legal system and law practices to normal operations as soon as possible," Stewart said.