



RICKY L. POLSTON

PARTNER

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Ricky Polston is a partner in the Tallahassee office of Shutts & Bowen LLP, where he is the Chair of the Constitutional Law Section and a member of the Appellate, Government Law, Insurance, and Litigation practice groups. A former Florida Supreme Court Justice from 2008-2023, he has more than 14 years of experience and has helped shape Florida jurisprudence for the last two decades. His experience at the Court includes various civil cases, statutory and constitutional validity issues, bond validations, orders of the Public Service Commission on utility rates and services, jurisdictional petitions, habeas corpus, mandamus, prohibition, and all writs petitions, various criminal cases (including those with the death penalty), various attorney disciplinary cases from The Florida Bar, attorney admission cases from The Florida Board of Bar Examiners, judicial discipline cases from the Judicial Qualification Commission, and rules petitions from various Florida Bar and Florida Supreme Court committees.

Ricky served as Chief Justice from 2012 to 2014 and provided leadership to state courts dealing with the foreclosure crisis and the technology move from paper to electronic filings. As chief justice, he was the administrative officer of the judicial branch and of the supreme court, including serving as the primary spokesperson for the judicial branch regarding policies and practices that have statewide impact including, but not limited to, the judicial branch's management, operation, strategic plan, legislative agenda and budget priorities. He also served as Administrative Justice for many terms and was on numerous Florida Bar and Court Committees, including the Florida Courts Technology Commission, District Court of Appeal Budget Commission, Trial Court Budget Commission, Commission on District Court of Appeal Performance and Accountability, Committee on Alternative Dispute Resolution Rules and Policy, Code and Rules of Evidence, and Rules of Judicial Administration.

Prior to his appointment on Florida's highest court, he served as a judge of Florida's First District Court of Appeal for approximately 8 years. The cases he heard at the First DCA included administrative law issues decided by state agencies after Chapter 120 hearings through the Division of Administrative Hearings, workers compensation cases (statewide jurisdiction by statute), constitutional law cases, civil, and criminal law matters. During his tenure as an appellate jurist, he

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handled thousands of cases. Ricky's time with the Florida Supreme Court and First DCA resulted in innumerable published opinions.

Immediately before his appointment to the bench, Ricky practiced law in Tallahassee with private firms for approximately 14 years in state and federal courts, and arbitration proceedings, throughout Florida. He has extensive experience in commercial litigation, various insurance coverage disputes, reinsurance litigation, and property tax issues. Ricky was an adjunct professor at the FSU College of Law for 20 years, teaching various courses including Insurance Law, Florida Constitutional Law, Florida Alternative Dispute Resolution (substantive law on federal and Florida arbitration and mediation), Appellate Practice (clinical), and Accounting for Lawyers. For a brief period before joining Shutts, Ricky was honored to serve as General Counsel and Chief Legal Office for Citizens Property Insurance Corporation, the largest property insurance company in Florida.

Before becoming a lawyer, Ricky practiced as a Certified Public Accountant with a "Big 8" accounting firm in Florida for seven years and was an audit manager. Based from the accounting firm's Tampa office, he worked on the audits and transactions of the firm's largest clients, including initial public stock offerings, public bond offerings, SEC reporting and compliance, various financing activities, and real estate joint ventures. Most of these clients were financial institutions. Although no longer practicing accounting, he has been a CPA for 45 years, and is a member of the Florida Institute of CPA's and the American Institute of CPA's. He also taught accounting at the FSU College of Business and Tallahassee Community College as an adjunct professor.

Recognized as a stalwart for the rule of law and constitution, Ricky's vast experience and prominence among the legal community serves the needs of his clients as they navigate complex issues related to constitutional, appellate, government, insurance, and commercial litigation matters.

Practice Areas

Appellate

Constitutional Law

Government Law

Insurance

Litigation

Industry Focus

Government

Insurance

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Accolades

- Martindale-Hubbell AV® Preeminent™ Rated
- Association of Florida Colleges, LeRoy Collins Distinguished Alumni Lifetime Achievement Award, 2021
- Chipola College 2021 Alumnus of the Year
- Florida State University's Circle of Gold, 2013
- 2012 J. Ben Watkins Award for Excellence in the Legal Profession, Stetson Law
- 2009 Florida State Law Distinguished Alum Award

Education

- Florida State University College of Law, J.D., with *high honors*, 1986
 - Order of the Coif
 - Member, *Florida State University Law Review*
- Florida State University, B.S., *summa cum laude*, 1977
 - Awarded FSU's Most Outstanding Accounting Student
 - Beta Alpha Psi Honorary Accounting Society
- Chipola College, A.A., 1975

Bar Admissions

Florida

Court Admissions

- U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Florida
- U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Florida
- U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Florida
- Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals
- United States Supreme Court

Judicial Involvements

- Judicial Management Council, Member and Former Chair
- Florida Supreme Court Governance Study Group, Chair

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- Florida Conference of DCA Judges, Former Treasurer, 2006-2008
- Florida Bar Appellate Rules Committee, Former Member, 2003-2006
- Appellate Educational Planning Committee, Florida Conference of DCA Judges, Former Member, 2002-2004
- Committee on Civil Rights Complaint Procedure, Florida Conference of DCA Judges, Former Member, 2002

Professional and Civic

- Certified Circuit Court Mediator
- Tallahassee Inn of Court, Alumni and Former Treasurer
- American Arbitration Association Member of Commercial Panel
- Florida Private Judge

Publications

- Florida State Courts Annual Report, Chief Justice Message, 2012-2013

Presentations

Justice Polston has provided presentations, speeches, seminars, conference discussions, and webinars for a multitude of organizations, including:

- Economics Club of Florida
- Florida Bar Annual Convention
- Florida Bar Board of Governors
- Florida Bar Reporters Workshop
- Okaloosa-Walton Bar Association
- Pensacola Rotary Club
- South Broward Bar Association
- Federalist Society
- Tax Watch
- Hillsborough County Bar Association
- Stetson Law Review
- Tallahassee Bar Association

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- Volusia County Bar Association
- Florida Court Clerks & Comptroller's Summer Conference & Exposition
- Construction Law Institute of the Florida Bar
- Florida Bar Appellate Practice Section
- Florida Bar Family Law Section
- Orange County Bar Association
- Dade County Bar Association
- Clay County Bar Association
- Fifth Circuit Professionalism Conference
- Highlands County Bar Association
- Children's Week
- National Adoption Awareness Month Celebrations at various courts
- James Madison Institute
- Florida Judicial College of Advanced Judicial Studies
- Florida Conference of Circuit Judges
- Jacksonville Bar Association's Judicial Symposiums on Professionalism
- Practice and Professionalism Seminars for Offices of Attorney General and Public Defender