



**G. Jeffrey Vernis, Esq.**  
*Managing Partner*

Vernis & Bowling of Palm Beach, P.A.  
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North Palm Beach, FL 33408  
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www.National-Law.com  
**Also Serving:** Melbourne, FL

#### VERDICTS AND DISPOSITIONS

*Passarelli v. The Cheesecake Factory*  
*Rivas-Martinez v. Dominguez*  
*Battle v. Ainsworth d/b/a Chick-fil-A*  
*Perez v. Lowe's*  
*Lovett v. Heughins*  
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Cyber Security  
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Errors & Omissions Liability (E&O)  
First and Third Party Property and Casualty Claims  
Garage and Garagekeepers Liability  
Government Law  
Medical Malpractice  
Premises Liability  
Product Liability  
Professional Liability/E & O  
Trucking

#### BAR & COURT ADMISSION



#### Florida Bar Board Certified Civil Trial Lawyer

**AV® Preeminent™ Peer Review Rated** by Martindale-Hubbell  
**Martindale-Hubbell's Bar Registry of Preeminent Lawyers in America**

**Florida's Legal Elite**, by Florida Trend Magazine

**Florida's Super Lawyers** by Super Lawyers Magazine published by Law & Politics

**Florida's Leading Lawyers** by South Florida Business Journal

**Florida's Power Leaders in Law** by South Florida Business Journal

**Florida's Top Lawyers** by South Florida Legal Guide

G. Jeffrey Vernis was born in Coral Gables, Florida. In 1984, he graduated from the University of South Florida with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Criminal Justice and a minor in International Political Science. While at U.S.F., Jeff was a founding member of a social fraternity requiring higher academic standards which later became a national fraternity. He then attended St. Thomas University School of Law, in Miami, Florida. St. Thomas University conferred a Juris Doctorate upon him in 1987. Some of his academic memberships and honors include Dean's list, 1986, 1987; Moot Court Board, 1984, 1985; member of Delta Theta Phi law fraternity.

Since graduating from St. Thomas University in 1987, Jeff began working for Vernis & Bowling, in the Fort Lauderdale, Florida office, handling general insurance defense matters. In 1988, he began working in the Palm Beach County office, located in North Palm Beach, Florida, and became managing attorney in 1990.

Jeff specializes in civil trial and appellate practice and is Board Certified in Civil Trial Law by the Florida Bar Board of Specialization. Certification is the highest level of recognition by the Florida Bar of the competency and experience of attorneys. Jeff is AV® Preeminent™ Peer Review Rated by Martindale-Hubbell, which identifies attorneys with preeminent legal ability and is a reflection of expertise, experience, integrity and overall professional excellence. He is recognized in Martindale-Hubbell's Bar Registry of Preeminent Lawyers in America. Jeff has also been selected as one of Florida's Legal Elite by Florida Trend Magazine

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and one of Florida's Super Lawyers by Super Lawyer Magazine.  
He has also been named one of Florida's Leading Lawyers by the  
South Florida Business Journal. Jeff has been listed as one of  
Florida's Top Lawyers by the South Florida Legal Guide and  
named one of Florida's Power Leaders in Law by South Florida  
Business Journal.

Jeff's areas of practice are insurance defense, commercial  
litigation and employment related practices (including trial and  
appellate practice). His experience includes the handling of  
lawsuits involving assault and battery, automobile liability,  
negligent hiring, supervision and retention, premises liability,  
negligent security, sexual assault, garage liability, construction  
and construction defect litigation, automobile dealership liability,  
consumer law, public law, including State, County and  
municipality, malicious prosecution/false arrest, product liability,  
coverage disputes, wrongful death, environmental law,  
employment related practices including sexual harassment,  
wrongful discharge and Americans with Disabilities Act,  
homeowner's association law, professional malpractice liability,  
constitutional law, and subrogation.

Jeff's experience in handling matters in these areas of practice  
includes the handling of catastrophic injury cases, complex  
litigation matters, multiple party actions and high profile cases.  
He has handled extremely high profile matters including *Morelock  
v. William Lane* (wrongful death), *Kraus v. Smith & Co.* (wrongful  
death), *Saccone v. State of Florida Department of Children and  
Families*, (wrongful death of a child), *Garcia-Bengochea v. State  
of Florida Department of Children and Families* (wrongful  
adoption), *John Daly v. PGA* (personal injury/negligent security)  
and national class action litigation and multi-federal district class  
action litigation before the Multi-District Litigation Panel in  
Washington D.C. Further, this experience has led to Jeff being a  
speaker at numerous seminars and insurance industry  
conventions throughout the country including the National Risk  
and Insurance Management Society annual convention, National  
Restaurant Association Conference, the Florida Retail Federation  
annual conference, the Council on Litigation Management's  
Annual Conference, the Florida RIMS convention, the National  
Society of Professional Insurance Investigators' (NSPII) annual  
conference and many other national conferences. Jeff has also  
been a speaker at numerous in-house seminars for insurance  
companies and self-insureds throughout the United States. He is  
a regular speaker for the Florida Bar, the CEU Institute and the  
Council for Litigation Management.

Jeff is admitted to practice before the United States Supreme  
Court, the Florida Supreme Court (includes all Florida State  
courts) and the U.S. District Courts for the Southern and Middle

Districts of Florida (trial bar). In addition, Jeff is a member of the Defense Research Institute (DRI), the National Restaurant Association, and the Council for Litigation Management (CLM). Jeff also is a charter/founding member of the National Retail and Restaurant Defense Association (NRRDA) and currently serves as its General Counsel.

Jeff has an outstanding trial and appellate record and will provide details upon request. He has successfully handled numerous appeals in Florida. Among others, Jeff was lead counsel of record for the appellate matters of *Kimmins Recycling, Inc. v. Rogers*, 704 So2d 600 (4th DCA 1997) (tort threshold requirements); *Stuart Lincoln Mercury v. Wisk*, 25 F.L.W. D 578 (Fla. 4th DCA 2000)(attorney's fees); *Janashpa, Inc. v. Seitter*, (Fla. 4th DCA 1999) (new trial); *Brownell v. Florida Department of Corrections*, (Fla. 1st DCA 1998)(compensable injury); *Armstrong v. Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.*, (Fla. 4th DCA)(new trial, UM), *Richards v. Luxury Imports, Inc.*, (Fla. 4th DCA 2005) (Fraud/Deceptive Trade Practices), *Samuels v. Luxury Imports, Inc.*, (Fla. 4th DCA 2005) (Deceptive Trade Practices/new trial) and *Verdino v. Pete's Café*, (Fla. 4th DCA 2005) (Liquor Liability), *Green v. Luxury Imports, Inc.*, (Fla. 4th DCA 2006) (Deceptive Trade Practices/fraud/class-action), *Rosenfeld v. Seltzer*, (Fla. 4th DCA 2008) (trial evidence and jury instructions), *Petit-Dos v. School Board of Broward County*, (Fla. 4th DCA 2009) (Fabre defense/intentional tort/comparative negligence) and *Cardany v. Lowes*, Fla. (4th DCA 2009) (trial evidence/new trial).

Jeff is also actively involved in community organizations. He serves as President of the Board of Directors of Jeff Industries, Inc., which offers unique and innovative programs, education and training for troubled children and the mentally ill in Palm Beach County.

Jeff's outside interests include tennis, boating, scuba diving, traveling and martial arts (aikido and iaido). Mr. Vernis holds the rank of sixth degree black belt and a teaching certification (Shidoin) in the Japanese martial art of Aikido, awarded by the Aikido Foundation (Aikido World Headquarters in Japan) and the United States Aikido Federation.



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Len Hackett was born in Fall River, Massachusetts. He majored in Criminal Justice at Stonehill College in Easton, Massachusetts where he graduated with a B.A. in 1986. Thereafter, he enlisted in the United States Army where he earned his commission as a Lieutenant. While in the Army, he participated in and was decorated for his performance during Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm. Following his tour in the Army, he attended Cleveland-Marshall College of Law. During law school, he served on the Cleveland State Law Review and Law Review Editorial Board. He graduated cum laude in May of 1996.

Len's practice areas include employment law, labor law, condominium/homeowner association law, and personal injury litigation that involves catastrophic injury and/or wrongful death. He has extensive experience in defending both public and private employers in all aspects of employment litigation that involve claims of discrimination, harassment, retaliation, wrongful discharge, family and medical leave, equal pay violations, wage-hour, and civil rights. Len also provides guidance and legal advice to employers with regard to problem prevention and employment-related issues. He has represented and defended numerous business owners, commercial and residential property management companies, and homeowners in lawsuits involving serious personal injury and wrongful death arising from liability associated with the ownership and/or control of premises. Len also represents and defends condominium and homeowners' associations in such areas as covenant enforcement litigation, fair housing discrimination claims, service and/or emotional support animal issues, director and officer liability, breach of fiduciary duty claims, and ADA matters.

Mr. Hackett is a Florida Bar Board Certified Labor and Employment Attorney and is currently a member of the Florida and Jacksonville Bar Associations.



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Michelle was born and raised in Quincy, Illinois. In 1996, she graduated, with honors, from the University of Southern Mississippi with a Bachelor of Arts degree in English. She attended Tulane University School of Law and received her *Juris Doctor* degree in 1999. She began her legal career with the Office of the Public Defender, First Judicial Circuit, in Pensacola, Florida, in 1999, where she practiced until joining Vernis & Bowling in 2001. Michelle was awarded an AV® Preeminent™ Peer Review Rated by Martindale-Hubbell, which identifies attorneys with preeminent legal ability and is a reflection of expertise, experience, integrity and overall professional excellence. She is recognized in Martindale-Hubbell's Bar Registry of Preeminent Lawyers in America. Michelle has also been awarded an AV Preeminent Peer Review Rating by the Judiciary.

Michelle is the Managing Attorney for Vernis & Bowling of Northwest, Florida, P.A. She has over two decades of trial experience and handles a variety of cases, including automobile liability, trucking and transportation, hurricane, first and third property claims, premises liability (including negligent security and slip and fall), labor and employment, construction defect, director and officer liability, product liability, and wrongful death. Michelle has tried over 50 jury trials in both federal and state court and has conducted countless depositions and argued a wide range of motions. Michelle's most talked about trial continues to be a lawsuit where she successfully defended Hanes regarding a claim of defective manufacturing of a package of men's briefs. The plaintiff claimed that the briefs gaped open during normal wear and caused personal injury, ruining his dream Hawaiian vacation.

Michelle is a member of the Florida Bar, the Alabama Bar, and the Escambia/Santa Rosa Bar Association. She is admitted to practice in all Florida and Alabama State Courts, the Northern and Middle Districts of Florida, the Southern and Middle Districts of Alabama, and the 11<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court of Appeals.

Outside of the office, Michelle enjoys traveling, boating, scuba

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diving, and snow skiing with her husband of over 30 years.

# VERNIS & BOWLING

ATTORNEYS AT LAW • EST. 1970



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Scott C. Black was born in Nuremberg, Germany in 1973. For the past 35 years he has lived in the Florida Keys. He majored in Criminology/Criminal Justice and minored in Business at Florida State University, where he graduated in 1995. Prior to attending Florida State, Mr. Black earned a scholarship to attend his local Florida Keys Community College. Mr. Black graduated from FKCC in 1993 after making the Deans List and being named to Who's Who Among American Junior Colleges. While attending Florida State University, Mr. Black was on the Deans List and was elected to the Golden Key National Honor Society.

Mr. Black graduated from Stetson University College of Law in December of 1998. During law school he participated in Stetson's legal argument competitions and made the Honor roll. While at Stetson, Mr. Black received his Florida Bar certification and

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worked as a State Prosecutor for St. Petersburg State Attorney's Office. After admission to the Florida Bar, Mr. Black began practicing with Vernis & Bowling of the Florida Keys. While practicing in the Florida Keys, Mr. Black has litigated in Federal, State and County Court. He has tried multiple cases both civil and criminal before the local County and Circuit courts. Mr. Black has also argued before the Third District Court of Appeals on multiple occasions and has argued before the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals. Mr. Black is on the Monroe County School Board legal staff, as well as providing representation for the City of Layton and the Florida Keys Mosquito Control District. Mr. Black is currently a member of the Florida Bar, and the American Bar Association.



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Kenneth E. Amos, Jr. is the managing attorney for the firm's St. Petersburg office. He was born in Canton, Ohio and was raised in a small town south of the Pro Football Hall of Fame city. While spending the first twenty-five years of his life in Southeast Ohio, Mr. Amos enjoyed fishing, 4-wheeling, and country living after working long days as an industrial painter. Mr. Amos married his wife of 30 years in 1995, and shortly thereafter the two relocated to Florida where Mr. Amos earned his law degree from Stetson University College of Law in 2003.

While Mr. Amos was in law school, he clerked with a local plaintiff's attorney for two years and spent his first year of practice in the plaintiff's bar. This experience has prompted Mr. Amos to develop a mentoring program in the St. Petersburg office for law students who are inspiring litigators.

Mr. Amos was first hired as a managing attorney for an insurance defense firm in 2006 where he managed the firm's St. Petersburg operations. Within months, Mr. Amos was invited to be a managing attorney with a second insurance defense firm where he became a partner in 2008.

Mr. Amos joined Vernis & Bowling in 2011. Mr. Amos has years of trial experience and courtroom experience. In addition to the areas of practice outlined herein, Mr. Amos handles a variety of Medicare and other healthcare lien issues. He also specializes in friendly suits throughout the State of Florida.

Mr. Amos was selected by Super Lawyers Magazine as a 2013 and 2014 Florida Rising Star in the practice area of Insurance Coverage for his work defending sinkhole claims throughout Florida.

He is the past President of the Belle Vista Community Association, and he is the current Chairman of Restore St. Pete Beach, a political committee created for the purpose of supporting or opposing political candidates to promote the restoration of his community following Hurricanes Helene and Milton. He enjoys traveling with his family to Ohio where he is a season ticket

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holder for the Cleveland Browns. In his spare time, he enjoys relaxing on the beach and exercising.