

OPEN NINTH:

CONVERSATIONS BEYOND THE COURTROOM

FORGING A FUTURE FOR FEMALE LAWYERS

A CONVERSATION WITH CFAWL PRESIDENT, JAMIE BILLOTTE MOSES

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HOSTED BY: DONALD A MYERS, JR.

(Music)

NARRATOR: Welcome to another episode of “Open Ninth: Conversations Beyond the Courtroom” in the Ninth Judicial Circuit Court of Florida.

And now here’s your host, Chief Judge Don Myers:

CHIEF JUDGE MYERS: Hello, and welcome to Open Ninth. I’m here today with Jamie Moses, senior counsel with Holland and Knight, and a board certified appellate specialist. She’s been recognized as one of Florida’s Legal Elite and Orlando’s Top Lawyers. And most recently, she was inducted as the president of the Central Florida Association for Women Lawyers. We’re thrilled to have you here today, Jamie. Thanks for joining us.

MS. MOSES: Thank you.

CHIEF JUDGE MYERS: So Jamie, in preparation, of course, for these podcasts, I get a lot of information and I read your bio and it is so impressive. Tell us a little bit about, just kind of an overview of your journey to the place that you find yourself now at Holland and Knight, one of our great local law firms.

MS. MOSES: Well, I started practicing 25 years ago. I went to the University of Notre Dame Law School so when I moved to town here, I knew nobody, and knew that I immediately had to get involved if I wanted to have any friends, if I wanted to network, if I wanted any business. So I literally went to a young lawyer section meeting. I think Glenn Adams was the president or in charge of something and he stood up and said, we’re thinking of awarding our first young lawyer section scholarship. Who wants to work on it? And so I raised my hand and thinking there’d be like a committee and a plethora of people that wanted to do this, and I was the only one that raised my hand. So I suddenly became within 3 months of being here the

young lawyer section scholarship chair and had to draft the scholarship, interview the applicants, award the scholarship and that was sort of the beginning of my involvement.

CHIEF JUDGE MYERS: How long did you work with the young lawyers group?

MS. MOSES: I was president many, many years ago. I can't remember when, so until I aged out and then I was president of the young lawyers division of the Florida Bar in '05 to '06, until I aged out of it. And then you don't get to play with them anymore, unfortunately.

CHIEF JUDGE MYERS: Well, I suspect the case is that both of us don't qualify any longer on an age-basis to be a part of that.

MS. MOSES: Correct.

CHIEF JUDGE MYERS: All right. And so you started out early working together with local bar committees and ended up becoming the president of the Orange County Bar Association.

MS. MOSES: Yes, I did.

CHIEF JUDGE MYERS: Recognized across the country, really, as the very best.

MS. MOSES: The bar association is, not me, yes. Our bar association is. It's a true honor to represent the Orange County Bar because we are the only bar association in the country that has as a part of its membership a requirement that you fulfill your obligation to legal aid, which is either paying a fee or taking two cases a year. And I've attended ABA meetings, state-wide meetings but, especially the ABA meetings, I have been pulled aside by the Chief of the Nebraska Supreme Court and said, and asked, how do you do that? How do – how does the Orange County Bar get its members to do pro bono work as part of their membership? It is – we

are the example across the nation. There's no bar that's doing it, not even – even though we've set the example. And every few years someone suggests we need to do away with that because it might increase membership. Someone on the executive council says, you know what, if we don't have that requirement, we might get a hundred, two hundred more members. And it gets shot down almost immediately.

CHIEF JUDGE MYERS: Right, and that makes sense. I mean, that really is what drives the quality of the programming, the participants, and really everything I think that the Orange County Bar does.

MS. MOSES: Yeah, and I like to say to people, anybody can write a check, anybody can make a meal, anybody can build a house. Only a lawyer can give free legal services, so we have a moral, ethical, professional obligation to do that. And so if you want to play in the Bar, you need to work in the Bar. That's sort of how I look at it.

CHIEF JUDGE MYERS: That's not unreasonable.

MS. MOSES: No, not at all.

CHIEF JUDGE MYERS: No, and really this community I think is the beneficiary in so many ways of the work that the Orange County Bar does. So you wind your way through leadership in the Orange County Bar Association and ultimately to that top position. And yet you still continue to remain heavily involved. Tell us about some of the other things that you do in the Bar?

MS. MOSES: For my type of practice, I have been, oh, gosh, I've chaired the statewide advertising grievance committee. I have chaired the appellate court rules committee for the Florida Bar. I am the current chair of the Florida Bar's appellate board certification committee.

We write the exam and decide who gets to sit for the exam. Locally, I'm about or will be CFAWL president by the time this airs. And that may be it after that, we'll see.

CHIEF JUDGE MYERS: That's still a lengthy list.

MS. MOSES: Crazy.

CHIEF JUDGE MYERS: So let's move – we've talked a little bit about the Orange County Bar Association, but we have a number of other voluntary bar associations in the community.

MS. MOSES: Yes.

CHIEF JUDGE MYERS: CFAWL is one of those.

MS. MOSES: Yes.

CHIEF JUDGE MYERS: Why? If we have this overarching bar association for the entire county, what's the benefit to lawyers and to the community of having these separate voluntary bar associations like CFAWL, like the Hispanic Bar Association?

MS. MOSES: Well, you know, it's funny you say that because I just had my retreat for my incoming board for next year. And they were asked to answer two questions and share it with the rest of the group. And one of them was why CFAWL? So it's uncanny that that's the question you ask. But universally, besides having personal specific reasons, you know, Elizabeth invited me in or my female partner at the firm said, come to a lunch with me. Universally, the response was, it is a safe welcoming, less large so smaller organization to get involved in, especially when you don't know anyone. The Orange County Bar can be incredibly intimidating. It's, you know, all the judges come to the luncheons and who's who in the Bar is

there, and the leadership is, you know, these highly recognizable names. And you walk into a bar luncheon of 400 people and it's scary. When you go to a smaller voluntary bar association where more people might look like you, whether it be Hispanic, or African American, or female or Caribbean, or gay or lesbian, that you automatically feel just a little bit more welcomed. Not that the Orange County Bar is not welcoming because it is, but it's not near as intimidating to walk into a luncheon of a hundred women than it is 400 men and women. And so I always – every time, it seems like every time, a new lawyer comes to town, someone says, go have breakfast with Jamie Moses. So I meet with a lot of people at Einstein's to talk about what they should do. And I always say, join the Orange County Bar, take the legal aid cases, don't pay your way out of it, take the cases and join one voluntary bar association that you're comfortable in, whatever it is and then just give your all to both as best as you can. So that's why CFAWL for me.

CHIEF JUDGE MYERS: And so we know in this community that there have got to be 15 to 20 of those different bar organizations that are smaller and generally have some sort of an infinity factor.

MS. MOSES: Yes.

CHIEF JUDGE MYERS: You're the president or president-elect now of CFAWL? What is CFAWL?

MS. MOSES: Well, CFAWL is the Central Florida Association for Women Lawyers, and we stress the for, it's not of. It doesn't mean it's only women lawyers. It just means that it promotes women lawyers. It promotes issues that women lawyers face, but as you know, as a member, we have plenty of male members. So it's not – it's not just of women, it's for women.

And my personal mission and how I see CFAWL is as a – it plays a role of keeping women practitioners still in the profession. I started this profession -- I can picture twenty young women that, you know, we were going to rule the world in 15 to 20 years. And I practice with six of them. We lose a lot of women in this profession and I feel that CFAWL is one way, and a mission of mine, to keep women still in the profession.

CHIEF JUDGE MYERS: Is that what you see as the primary purpose of CFAWL?

MS. MOSES: Well –

CHIEF JUDGE MYERS: Or is there a mission, an expressed mission?

MS. MOSES: We have a mission which is the promotion of women in the profession and women's issues. Every president takes on a different focus. Some presidents are more political. Some – I mean, it just depends. My focus this year is going to be educating and supporting women on how to do and stay in this job, or stay in this profession. Not necessarily, you don't have to be practicing in a big firm like I am, but do you want to be a legal recruiter, do you want to be a professor, do you want to be a clerk? Whatever you do, use that law degree, use it in a way that makes you happy. And I think CFAWL gives you an opportunity to meet those women who are doing it. And I'm not saying that men don't do it, but talk to another mom who's raising two kids and is dying, and wants to find an alternative work opportunity. Talk to her and figure out what she's doing, maybe you'll think about doing it too.

CHIEF JUDGE MYERS: So you shared a little bit about your personal history that drives into that mission, the fact that you had this group of women that you began practice with and now it's a fairly small group. Are you aware of the causes or reasons that those other women have made decisions to pursue other paths than the law?

MS. MOSES: Well, women traditionally carry the burden of raising children. Period. I don't care how awesome your husband is. The wife normally takes on that responsibility. And sometimes it's just too much. There's societal pressure to stay home. There really is. I fortunately, was a single mom. I didn't have a choice.

CHIEF JUDGE MYERS: You have two children, right?

MS. MOSES: I do.

CHIEF JUDGE MYERS: Yeah.

MS. MOSES: I have a 21 year old and an 18 year old. So I'm on my way out.

CHIEF JUDGE MYERS: Congratulations.

MS. MOSES: Thank you. I'm past the hard part, I really am. But I wasn't for all this time, and I didn't have an option to quit but I'm really grateful because I never got tempted. You know, on those days when I missed another school play or I had to show up with store bought cupcakes instead of homemade because my calendar just didn't allow it. But I didn't have a choice to get frustrated. I just told the kids, you know, this is the best you're going to get from me and hopefully it's enough. But there's that pressure. There's, you know, if you have a highly successful spouse, and you're sitting here going, wow, our nanny is raising the kids. One of us has got to stay home. Society suggests it should be the wife so there's that pressure that way. And then if we're being candid, law firms are not always the best place for women.

CHIEF JUDGE MYERS: Talk about that a little bit.

MS. MOSES: You know, I've been blessed, I really have. I've loved where I've worked. I've only been at three law firms in my whole career and the first one was for nine

months and then I was at another one for 22 years. And now I've been at Holland and Knight for three. But, you know, I still to this day, and I'm not a young woman, and I don't think I look like an inexperienced person, but I still get asked if I'm the court reporter, if I'm the adjuster, if I'm the associate waiting for the partner to get there. There's just – it's hard enough to practice law without constantly being questioned if you're – if you should even be there. And some law firms, and we have great firms in Orlando, but we know there's a big national well-known law firm that's been sued for how women are treated at the law firms. And sometimes it's just too much to take. You're working your backend off, you're trying as hard as you can and then the male associate gets taken to the golf tournament, or the male associate gets the second chair at the trial. That's hard. And then when you start having children, there's all these perceptions that you're not willing to work as hard. Oh, well, we can't ask the female associate because she's got to get home to the kids. I have three partners that their husbands are the stay at home parent. So don't make those assumptions. Ask that associate, are you willing to do it? If she is, she'll make it work no matter what it costs.

CHIEF JUDGE MYERS: And so you have this vision for CFAWL that drives at that sort of – those perception issues and the reality issue that many women are driven out of the practice. On the ground, what does that look like for CFAWL in the coming year? What are the things that you can anticipate CFAWL doing?

MS. MOSES: Well, I particularly, I have lined up some speakers that I think are going to attract attendees at our luncheons. The line-up of speakers are women that I consider set an example of balance, and I don't want to say everyone's name just in case I have to swap someone out, or someone cancels, but you know, hearing from a speaker that I know the rest of the world thinks she has completely got everything together, and she's going to talk about how

she, you know, on top of the water, she looks like a duck just swimming along comfortably, but underneath she's doing this and going crazy. I've got other women who are using their law degrees in other ways because that's what brings them joy. And how to have the guts to do that and things like that. So for me it's in the programming. It's offering programs that someone is going to say that is worth getting a babysitter for me to step away from the kids and hear that program because it's valuable to me. Or that is worth asking my sister to care of our aging parents instead of me on Monday night because I want to be at this event so I hope to do it through programming.

CHIEF JUDGE MYERS: Okay, great. And CFAWL has luncheons how frequently?

MS. MOSES: It's the first, traditionally the first Friday of every month unless there's a type of holiday conflict. So it's the first Friday of every month at the Citrus Club.

CHIEF JUDGE MYERS: And what are some of the other things that CFAWL does? You have committees, you have groups and other activities. Tell me about those.

MS. MOSES: Yeah, we do. So one of the things that our chapter is known for, because CFAWL is a chapter of an umbrella organization called FAWL which is the Florida Association for Women Lawyers, a very vibrant active organization in the Florida Bar. In fact, their president has a seat on the Board of Governors of the Florida Bar, so it's recognized and respected. And our chapter is known for something we do called Tables for Eight. And every month we have one or two Tables for

Eight and traditionally, someone, either by themselves or with a partner throws a dinner party for eight, nine, ten people but we try to keep it intimate. We try not to go past ten because the point is for you to get to know those other attendees intimately. Normally, we are so blessed

with our incredibly active judiciary. There's at least one judge at every Table for Eight. There's at least one senior member of our organization and I define senior as me, someone who's 50 or older that goes. Maybe we have a law student and then we have people in the middle. And that is the best way to meet people, is at these table – Tables for Eight. Sometimes there's a theme. I always do a Cinco De Mayo one. We have an ugly sweater one. This Saturday or maybe it was last Saturday, there's a paddle boarding one. I mean, they're really wonderful, wonderful. We've had judges that throw them. Judge Starr threw one with, oh, I can't remember, but I mean, and that really attracts. I mean, judges, you all think you're normal people.

CHIEF JUDGE MYERS: We try to.

MS. MOSES: You try to. But if you throw something or are at something, it means so much to lawyers. That that Table for Eight quadrupled. I don't even think they intended but I think it ended up being a Table for Twenty because they just couldn't turn people away. We do a bunch of service projects. We do the backpack project which is filling backpacks for students at Rock Lake Elementary. We do an angel tree project which is buying Christmas presents for underprivileged children. And I think we take on 200 children. So that means CFAWL members have to volunteer to buy their Christmas presents for that year.

CHIEF JUDGE MYERS: And how large is the chapter of CFAWL here?

MS. MOSES: We're about 400 members. And depending at a lunch, we have anywhere from eighty to about 110, it just depends. The speakers are always the draw. But we have people that can never make a lunch but are always at our programs. So you need to vary it. You need to offer different things. What else do we have for programs? Oh, we have a judicial reception which we throw every year.

CHIEF JUDGE MYERS: A fabulous event, by the way. No, it is. It's well-attended by the judiciary in large part because it's so well done and there is such a great opportunity for judges to be able to interact with the lawyers that make up CFAWL. I can just tell you on this side of things, it's really very well-respected and enjoyed.

MS. MOSES: Well, good, good. We've already started planning this year's judicial receptions so I'm glad to hear that you're happy with it. And then this year I'm going to add something. 2019-2020 is the 100th year of the 19th Amendment so the women earned the right to vote. It's the 61st year of FAWL and the 40th year of CFAWL. So in March or April, we are going to be throwing a Women of Distinction Gala. And since the bar throws its gala, the OCBA throws its gala every other year, we won't conflict with that. And what – what I envision happening at this gala is honoring women in the law. A lawyer, a judge, a law professor, a law enforcement officer, and maybe a government employee. And recognizing them at this gala.

CHIEF JUDGE MYERS: Fantastic. That's great.

MS. MOSES: We'll see if we can pull it off.

CHIEF JUDGE MYERS: So we've talked a little bit about the interaction of the judiciary at CFAWL. If you were speaking to the judges right now, what would you say is something that you would envision that we could do to assist CFAWL in any way?

MS. MOSES: Oh, man, that's a hard question because truly our judiciary is amazing. I mean, we announce the judges that are at the luncheons and at least ten to fifteen judges are there every Friday. I mean, it's unbelievable. And you come to all of our events. And not everybody comes to everything but there's always someone there and we appreciate that. I would just ask that you continue to come when you can to our functions and I would ask that you encourage

young lawyers, male or female, to consider joining CFAWL. Membership is our life blood, obviously, but as much as it's important to me that we have members, it's more important to me that we have young engaged lawyers in our community. Bad or worse, whatever you say about millennials, I actually think they're fabulous. I'm learning a lot from millennials, but they have to feel like it's worth their time to do something. I think when you and I were coming up from the ranks you had to be a member of the OCBA, you probably had to be in the Trial Lawyers Association. I had to be in the Defense Lawyer's Association. You just joined because that's what you did. Millennials don't do that. If there is not a value to their time and their money, they don't care. And so I hope we're providing value at CFAWL and I hope that that value is then being shared by Judge Myers who says, I really think you need to give CFAWL a chance because I think it's going to be worth your time and effort.

CHIEF JUDGE MYERS: Great. Okay. So one of the other projects that I know that CFAWL is involved in is the facility that we have here in the courthouse, A Place For Children.

MS. MOSES: Yes.

CHIEF JUDGE MYERS: I have been as a judge sitting in a family law division incredibly grateful for the resource that A Place For Children is, and for our listeners it's a temporary daycare type facility available to litigants to come and drop their children off so that the children don't have to move through the courthouse, go to courtrooms, listen to disputes and things that occur inside of courtrooms and it's a wonderful facility. It's incredibly well-equipped. Tell me --

MS. MOSES: We've added a breast feeding room. Not we, they've added a breast feeding room.

CHIEF JUDGE MYERS: Yes, it's got the breast feeding room there for lactating mothers.

MS. MOSES: Yep, yep.

CHIEF JUDGE MYERS: It really is a tremendous resource. Talk to me a little bit about CFAWL's partnership with us in that.

MS. MOSES: Well, I wish – I mean, we should not exaggerate our role in it. I believe this was the brain child, was it Judge Mackinnon or Judge O'Kane, who came up with – one of those two came up with it. Who was it?

CHIEF JUDGE MYERS: Okay. It would have been probably Judge Mackinnon, or that era, yeah. And there's a county commissioner too I think that was heavily involved in that.

MS. MOSES: Yeah, and that was her idea. It just became, a while back when they started having funding issues, someone approached CFAWL as to whether we could help raise funds for them. So we have in the years, some years more successfully than others. We – it's always on our mind that we need to be thinking about A Place For Children, but as anyone who runs an organization is learning, sponsorship dollars are dwindling drastically and so, you know, we will always keep A Place For Children in – you know, in mind. I don't know if we're ever going to be able to support them at the level we have in the past, but I know we'll be thinking about them at all times. And we just, through our Corks for a Cause event, which was just last month, we were able to raise funds that will be going to A Place For Children. I don't know what luncheon we're doing it at but we are pleased that we are going to be able to give them some money.

CHIEF JUDGE MYERS: That's great. Well, thank you and thank CFAWL for your support of that. We've talked a lot about young lawyers and the desire to get them connected and plugged in, CFAWL being one of those voluntary bar associations. Beyond the dinners for eight, or Tables for Eight, the luncheons, is there any other intentional mentoring that goes on through CFAWL for those young lawyers?

MS. MOSES: Well, we – some years we've had a mentoring program and we realized that the Orange County Bar and the Young Lawyer's Section already run exceptional mentoring programs. And we found that we were conflicting with them. For example, I do mentoring in the OCBA so I would get two, I've gotten three mentors a year and then CFAWL would ask me and I'm like, okay, I'll take another one. So we, at least I have recommended that we support the OCBA and the YLS, Young Lawyer's Section, in their mentoring programs rather than conflicting with it. And so on a formal basis we do not have a mentoring program right at this moment. On the other hand, some of our best mentoring is at our luncheons and tables for eight and things like that because I don't know how many times I overhear someone saying, give me your card, I'll call you later, we'll talk about this later. You know, there are just some issues that you don't want to talk about in front of a big group, but you know someone has been experiencing this problem and you would really like to talk to them about it. So we encourage that more.

CHIEF JUDGE MYERS: Great.

MS. MOSES: More one on one interaction with our members.

CHIEF JUDGE MYERS: Well, I know having been at a luncheon recently, a young woman came and said, judge, I need some help. I need some experience in some of these areas

that you've touched on in speaking here and at other places. Would you consider mentoring me? Which I was very grateful for, and I'll partner I think with somebody else to do that mentoring and hopefully be able to make an impact through that. But I think what CFAWL is doing in the community is just so incredibly valuable and Jamie, you know, your leadership is really remarkable.

MS. MOSES: Thank you.

CHIEF JUDGE MYERS: For so many years you've committed yourself to this community, to the legal community but to the community on a bigger scale. And from an outsider's perspective looking in and watching you, I think it would be fair to say you are a driven woman.

MS. MOSES: Well, I was. I'm kidding.

CHIEF JUDGE MYERS: No, you are focused. You are intense. Your sense of humor exceeds all bounds of description and I don't know that we've done a good job of drawing that out of you today, but I have to believe that in other parts of your life, outside of the bar and CFAWL and lawyering that you display some of that same intensity. Tell us a little bit about Jamie Moses personally.

MS. MOSES: Well, you're probably getting that I'm an Iron Man. I do – 18 years ago I went through a really, really bad divorce and my comfort was – I was in a spin class because I had to work out at the YMCA because I needed child care, and I was at a spin class and the instructor was a wonderful woman that I just love and she said, who wants to do an all women triathlon with me? And I said, okay. I tend to volunteer when people ask those dumb questions out loud. And I said, oh, I'll do it. I didn't have a bike. I was a runner. That's how I exercised

but I didn't have a bike. I said I would do it. I was hooked and so for 18 years I have been doing triathlon. I did an Iron Man in '17.

CHIEF JUDGE MYERS: Now, hang on, I'm not a triathlete.

MS. MOSES: Okay, okay.

CHIEF JUDGE MYERS: So what is a triathlon?

MS. MOSES: You swim, and then you bike and then you run all in one race. And the Iron Man is a 2.4 mile swim, 112 mile bike and a 26.2 mile run that you do in one day.

CHIEF JUDGE MYERS: In one day?

MS. MOSES: Yeah.

CHIEF JUDGE MYERS: Not a week?

MS. MOSES: I did it in 13 hours.

CHIEF JUDGE MYERS: Wow.

MS. MOSES: So that's sort of the ultimate goal if you're a triathlete, you want to be an Iron Man. So I used it to get through my horrible divorce. It then became my lifestyle. Then when I met my current and last husband, he thought it was really neat what I did on the weekends and started doing it and now it's just our life. I mean, we travel to races. It's what we do.

CHIEF JUDGE MYERS: So where is the most exotic race that you've participated in?

MS. MOSES: I did --

CHIEF JUDGE MYERS: Or exotic location, I guess.

MS. MOSES: Well, I did a half marathon on the Great Wall of China.

CHIEF JUDGE MYERS: Oh, wow.

MS. MOSES: So that's pretty exotic, I would think.

CHIEF JUDGE MYERS: I would think so. Where did you get to the wall in China?

That's a – I have a daughter adopted from China and so we've traveled through the country and seen the wall in different spots.

MS. MOSES: I don't know. I'm not educated enough to say that. I just know that we had to climb 5,287 steps as part of the marathon. Best thing I've ever done. I love China, absolutely love China. But we've raced in Puerto Rico. We've raced – he's raced in Canada. We've raced in several states in the U.S. We're racing in Michigan later this year. We just – it's our life but what I'm doing now in addition to that, and I have to share it because it brings me so much joy. Wynne McFarlin, a wonderful lawyer in town here that I know you know, she has partnered with a triathlon coach to form and field a triathlon team for the special Olympics in 2022 when it's here in Orlando. And for Special Olympics athletes, they have to race with a unified partner. So you have to do the whole race with the athlete. So I currently now do races with an athlete. We swim together. We bike together and then he runs faster than I do so I follow him running. But it is the greatest joy in my life to do this race with this athlete, who, I mean, you know, society has written many of them off and here he is swimming in a big lake where other people are afraid of gators. And he's off riding his bike as fast as he can and he's swimming like he's a track star. And you know when he gets that medal around his neck, he's the happiest man alive and that has brought me tremendous joy, tremendous joy.

CHIEF JUDGE MYERS: That is incredible. Well, Jamie, that doesn't surprise me. Just what a privilege it's been to spend some time with you today. Thank you for your leadership of CFAWL.

MS. MOSES: Thank you, I appreciate it.

CHIEF JUDGE MYERS: And for your commitment again to the community. We'll look forward to seeing even more great things in the coming year.

MS. MOSES: We'll see.

CHIEF JUDGE MYERS: Thank you.

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