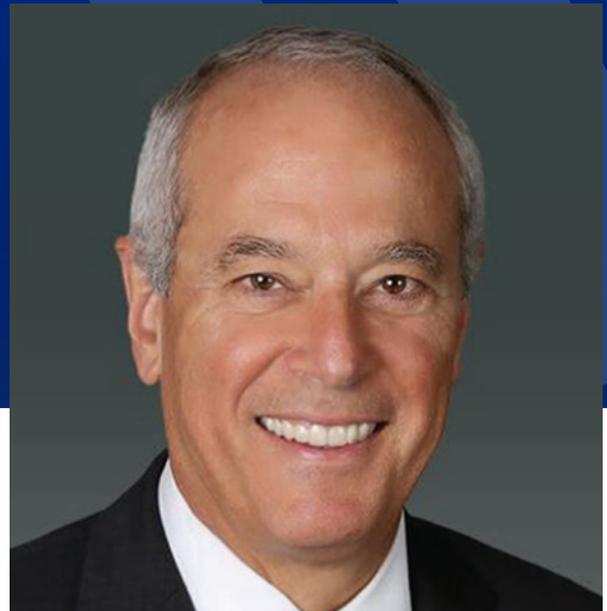


dbr DAILY BUSINESS REVIEW

By Katie Hall

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LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT HONOREE: DAVID BIANCHI, STEWART TILGHMAN FOX BIANCHI & CAIN



The Daily Business Review is recognizing David Bianchi, of Stewart Tilghman Fox Bianchi & Cain, with a 2026 Lifetime Achievement award. Read a Q&A with him below.

Objectively, what key moments or accomplishments have defined your career?

There have been many. Getting hired by Frates Floyd Pearson Stewart Richman and Greer out of law school in 1979 was my first big break and a defining moment that set in motion everything that came thereafter. I made lifelong friends at that firm, and it gave me the opportunity to work with Larry Stewart, Jim Tilghman and Gary Fox who asked me to leave with them four years later to start Stewart Tilghman Fox & Bianchi. That job offer and the firm we formed in 1984 defined the past 40 years for me. It changed my life.

Various verdicts and settlements over the past 45 years have defined my career as well, including *Tietig v. Chris Craft* (a cleat ripped off of a Chris Craft boat and struck the plaintiff in the eyes, permanently blinding him resulting in a very large verdict); *Husbands v. A.H. Robins* (one of the first large Dalkon Shield verdicts in the country that included punitive damages); *Kaplan v. Mercedes* (the first verdict against Mercedes Benz in the country for a defective side airbag); *Meredith v. May and Montgomery* (the largest fraternity hazing verdict in the country); the Danny Santulli case in Missouri (believed to be one of the largest fraternity hazing settlements in the country); the Antonio Tsialas case in New

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT HONOREE

York, the Andrew Coffey case in Tallahassee and the Nicholas Mauricio case in Tallahassee (all of which were important and significant fraternity hazing settlements).

Subjectively, what are your proudest or most personally satisfying achievements?

I am very proud of my work to stop fraternity hazing. I have represented many victims and their families and made substantial recoveries, have written laws in Florida and Missouri that were passed by the legislatures in both states and signed by three different governors which have increased the penalties for hazing, removed certain defenses that those who haze are permitted to raise in defense of hazing charges and incentivized witnesses to call 911 or render aid to the victim while help is on the way. This work was recognized by the Florida chapters of the American Board of Trial Advocates with the organization's 2025 Trial Lawyer of the Year award.

How are the business and profession of law changing, and are Florida lawyers well-positioned for the future?

The law has changed in many ways since I started practicing in 1979, and it is not all good. There is less personal interaction with lawyers on

the other side of your cases. Email has taken the place of most phone calls, Zoom hearings and Zoom depositions have taken the place of meeting opposing counsel in person at the courthouse or at an office for a deposition, etc. That was never possible years ago, and it is not something I like or think has improved the practice of law, but it is the byproduct of our new technologies.

What advice would you give to someone contemplating a career in law, or someone whose career in law has not been satisfying so far?

The practice of law can be a great career, even with the changes that have occurred over the years. But it is not for everyone. For young people who are contemplating spending their life as a lawyer, I tell them to look carefully at what they think they want to do. Speak to some lawyers who practice in the area you are interested in, and see if it is for you. As for the lawyer who is dissatisfied with their legal career, I would tell them to honestly assess whether it is the legal practice generally that they don't like or whether it is they type of law they are practicing. Maybe a transition into some other area of the law would help. There are many ways to utilize your law degree, and if at first you don't succeed or find what you like, keep trying.