

**CELESTE S. HIGGINS, ESQ.**  
chigginslaw@law.miamil.edu

**FELLOW, AMERICAN COLLEGE OF TRIAL LAWYERS**

**2018**

**EMPLOYMENT:**

**OFFICE OF THE FEDERAL PUBLIC DEFENDER,  
Southern District of Florida**  
*Assistant Federal Public Defender*

2012-2018

**LAW OFFICE CELESTE S. HIGGINS, Private Practice**  
*Attorney at Law/Consultant*

2010-2012

**OFFICE OF THE FEDERAL PUBLIC DEFENDER,  
Southern District of Florida**

*Assistant Federal Public Defender* 1991-2010  
*Supervisory Federal Public Defender* 2002-2010

Responsibilities and duties include:

- Maintain a full case load defending individuals charged with international terrorism, fraud (including bank, Medicare, insurance, consumer, securities, mail, and wire fraud), slavery, bank robbery, gun statute violations, drug offenses, immigration offenses, child pornography, and rape on the high seas.
- Over 80 federal cases to trial.
- Responsible for supervising five trial attorneys of various degrees of experience during all stages of litigation of Federal criminal cases. Also responsible for overseeing time and attendance, file review and performance review.
- Responsible for supervising new attorneys, some with virtually no trial experience, in order to develop skills that will allow them to litigate cases, negotiate cases and ultimately take cases to trial without supervision.
- Managerial responsibilities include policy development and implementation, development of training seminars for the assistant federal public defenders in the office, planning and conducting training seminars for Federal Public Defenders and attorneys who are members of the Criminal Justice Act panel.
- Member of planning and implementation team for the National

Federal Defender Conference in Miami. In that position, I recruited speakers, participated in topic generation, topic selection and coordinated speakers' presentations.

- Speaker at the Annual Criminal Justice Act seminars for Federal Public Defenders and Criminal Justice Act panel members. I have spoken in the areas including recurring trial issues, effective and correct service of process of law enforcement officers in various law enforcement departments and agencies, and effective use of discovery tools in international context and litigation in criminal cases.
- Conducted extensive motion practice in federal court including motions to suppress, motions to dismiss, post-trial motions, and sentencing memorandum.
- Significant Appellate Practice.

## HONORABLE FEDERICO A. MORENO

U.S. District Court Judge, Southern District of Florida      1990-1991  
*Federal Law Clerk*

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE:

THE UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI SCHOOL OF LAW

Coral Gables, Florida 1999-Present  
*Adjunct Faculty*, Litigation Skills Program  
Teaching 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year students all aspects of trial skills

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF TRIAL ADVOCACY

San Diego, CA

*Faculty Member*, week long teacher-training program. Selected by NITA to train and prepare Spanish speaking trial attorneys how to teach basic trial skills for international programs. The attorneys are trained to how teach attorney=s with no oral advocacy skills basic trial skills.

# ANNUAL FEDERAL DEFENDER AND CJA TRIAL SKILLS ACADEMY / CALIFORNIA WESTERN SCHOOL OF LAW

San Diego, CA

*Faculty Member*, invited to lecture and train Assistant Federal Public Defenders and Criminal Justice Act qualified attorneys advanced trial skills. The students are attorneys with limited trial experience and the program provides the students with an opportunity to practice trial skills. The work included presentations regarding elements of trial skills; demonstrations of those skills; and hands-on training with attorneys in small workshops.

**NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF TRIAL ADVOCACY AT NOVA  
SOUTHEASTERN SCHOOL OF LAW**

Ft. Lauderdale, Florida

*Instructor*

**RULE OF LAW INITIATIVE PROGRAMS:**

**AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION/RULE OF LAW INITIATIVE**

*Faculty Member*, United States trial attorneys fluent in Spanish selected to explain and teach to participating judges, civil and criminal practitioners, as well as law enforcement officers, tenets of an adversarial trial system in their native language. The work included presentations regarding basic oral advocacy and trial skills; demonstrations of those skills; and hands-on training with attorneys in small workshops. Although these presentations were adaptations of pedagogic exercises used in U.S. law schools, uniquely adapted to account for changes in the specific country's laws. Work includes teaching in Colombia, Ecuador, Panama, Guatemala, and Mexico.

**CONFERENCE OF WESTERN ATTORNEY-S GENERAL**

California, Mexico, Utah, Idaho, Indianapolis, New Mexico

*Faculty Member*, selected to teach participating Mexican prosecutors and judges basic oral advocacy skills. The work included presentations regarding basic oral advocacy and trial skills; demonstrations of those skills; and hands-on training with attorneys in small workshops. These presentations were uniquely adapted to account for changes in the Mexican Criminal Procedure Code and Mexican Criminal Evidence Code. Some basic familiarity with both codes was required

**USAID/NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF TRIAL ADVOCACY**

Mexico

*Faculty Member*, selected to explain and teach participating Mexican civil and criminal practitioners, judges and law professors, basic oral advocacy skills and trial skills in Mexico. The students are attorneys with no experience in either an oral advocacy system or adversarial system. The work included presentations regarding basic oral advocacy and trial skills; demonstrations of those skills; and hands-on training with attorneys in small workshops. Although these presentations were adaptations of pedagogic exercises used in U.S. law schools, they were uniquely adapted to account for changes in the Mexican Criminal Procedure Code and Mexican Criminal Evidence Code. Some basic familiarity with both codes was required.

## **USAID/CHECCHI AND COMPANY**

Colombia, El Salvador

*Faculty member/Consultant/Instructor*, selected by the Checchi and Company as the only United States trial attorney to participate in a joint program with USAID assigned to explain and teach participating Colombian civil and criminal practitioners, judges and law professors, basic oral advocacy skills and trial skills in Colombia.

## **AMERICAN UNIVERSITY WASHINGTON COLLEGE OF LAW, INTERNATIONAL LAW PROGRAM**

Venezuela, Washington D.C. and Miami

*Part I - Faculty member*, one of three trial attorneys selected to teach and train Venezuelan attorneys in preparation for the establishment of a public defender system in that government following the revision to the Venezuelan Constitution which for the first time allowed oral advocacy *and* the confrontation of witnesses. The class included one week of intensive lecturing, demonstrations, and small group training. These attorneys were selected to be the first batch of Public Defenders in a system which, heretofore, relied completely upon *pro bono* representation of accused indigent citizens.

*Part II - Trainer*, hosted and trained Venezuelan attorney=s on how to establish and run a public defender office. Training consisted of several lectures in Washington D.C. with the students followed by a ten day @hands-on@ instruction with the students in select cities. The goal was to demonstrate how public defender offices operate internally, how they function as law firms and how they interact with other services in their communities.

## **EDUCATION:**

### **UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI SCHOOL OF LAW**

Coral Gables, Florida

1990

Juris Doctorate

-Articles and Comments Editor, Entertainment and Sports Law Review

-Member, Moot Court Board

-Member, State Mock Trial Team

-Member, National Trial Team

-Selected Member Bar and Gavel Society

-Recipient, Florida Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers Scholarship

**UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI**

Coral Gables, FL

1984

Bachelor of Business Administration

Major, Finance

**OTHER AFFILIATIONS:**

*-Federal Bar Association, Southern District of Florida*

-President

-Board of Directors

*Ad Hoc Committee on Attorney Admissions, Peer Review and Attorney Grievance for the United States District Court, Southern District of Florida*  
Member

*Ad Hoc Committee on Rules and Procedure for the United States District Court, Southern District of Florida*

Member

*Florida Bar Grievance Committee*

-Member

-Chairman

*Florida Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers*

-Board of Directors

-Secretary

*National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers,*  
Attended

*Peter T. Fay American Inns of Court*  
Member

**PUBLICATIONS:**

*It's Not Who You Are But Who You Work For: Limitations on the Work Made For Hire Doctrine of the Copyright Act.* ENT. & SPORTS L.REV.

**FLUENT IN SPANISH****OTHER INTERESTS**

Played in a Blues and Jazz band for 15 years, performance in community theater, Amateur Competitive Sports.

**RECOMMENDATIONS UPON REQUEST**