

## SCOTT G. HAWKINS: A SKILLED AND THOUGHTFUL LEADER

Throughout his life, Scott G. Hawkins has been a thoughtful and effective leader who sees beyond the day-to-day issues and focuses on long-term goals. As president of The Florida Bar in 2011-12, Hawkins guided that institution through a turbulent period when the state Legislature attacked the judicial merit retention principle. And as vice chair of Jones, Foster, Johnston & Stubbs, P.A., in West Palm Beach, Hawkins has helped his law firm develop a robust growth strategy after the long recession.

"I try to put the institution first whenever I'm involved in a leadership effort or policy discussion," says Hawkins. "At the same time I try to adapt my leadership style to the context of the current issues. For example, I've served on several higher education boards, and engaged in brainstorming discussions about the future. In those conversations, I'll bring up the core values that need to be protected as well. After all, the present is just one moment in the evolving history of the institution you serve."

Hawkins brings that same perspective to Jones Foster, a 41-attorney firm that was founded in 1922, making it one of the oldest law firms in the state. "I talk with our chairman, Larry Alexander, about where our firm will be in a decade, and we have regular meetings about long-term planning," Hawkins also understands the importance of reaching an agreement — ideally a shared consensus — in an institutional setting. He says, "Our law firm is filled with bright and accomplished people, and we strive to promote collegiality and a team spirit."

### AN EFFECTIVE LITIGATOR

Since joining Jones Foster in 1985, Hawkins has focused on business litigation, and earned board certification in that specialty. "I spend 100 percent of my time on matters that are in dispute in all the courts of Florida and out of state," he says. "Since a great deal of commercial litigation is eventually settled, I spend much of my time negotiating on behalf of my clients."

In recent years, Hawkins' practice has included disputes regarding intellectual property rights, trade secrets, covenants not to compete, environmental and land use matters, eminent domain, and claims arising under federal retirement plan regulations. His clients include a wide range of information technology

and life science companies, as well as employers, land owners and insurance companies.

"I feel fortunate to be exposed to so many different aspects of life, including technology, labor and employment and real estate issues," he says. "For example, I've recently learned a lot about professional employment organizations (PEOs), which provide a mechanism for smaller businesses to outsource the costly regulatory burdens associated with managing a workforce."

For each matter, Hawkins assembles a team of attorneys and other professionals to handle the case in an effective and cost-efficient manner for the client. He also strives to maintain constructive relationships with his legal adversaries. "I want to be able to have a meaningful dialogue with them and see if we can work out the main issues, while being a strong and persistent advocate for my client," he says.

That carefully considered approach to litigation has won Hawkins the respect of his peers throughout the state. "I have had the good fortune to work with Scott both on Florida Bar matters and in high-stakes commercial litigation," said John A. DeVault, III, a partner at Bedell, Dittmar, DeVault, Pillans & Cox, P.A. in Jacksonville. "He is a skilled and effective trial lawyer judges respect, and a person who instills a sense of trust and confidence in his clients."

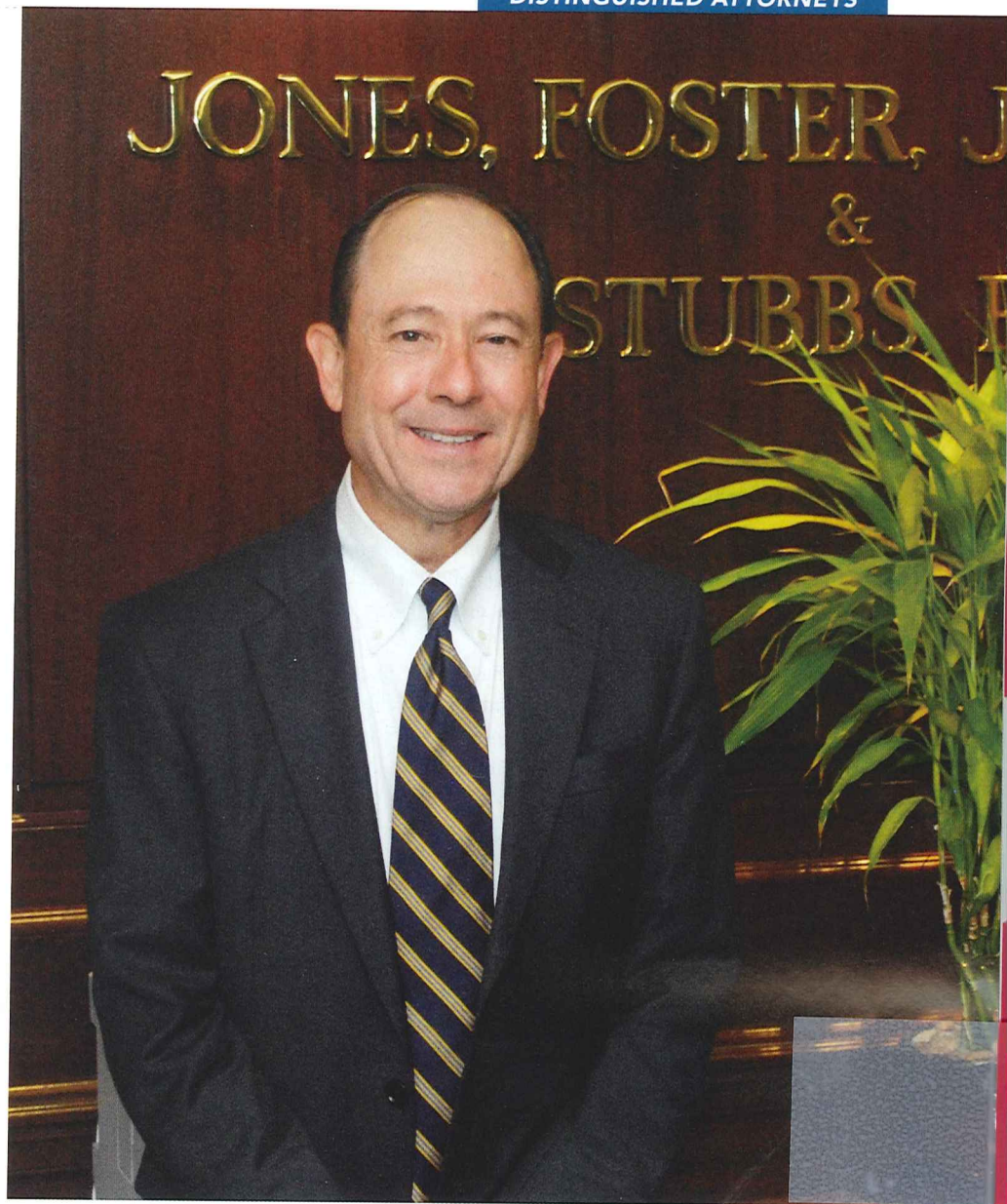
### SERVING THE FLORIDA BAR

One of the highlights of Hawkins' career was serving as president of The Florida Bar during one of the most turbulent years in its history. "There were issues surfacing about misbehavior in foreclosure cases, such as the signing of false documents," he says. "There were also Ponzi schemes coming to light in connection with high-profile lawyers. So there was a lot of discussion about what was going wrong."

As president-elect Hawkins formed a commission of 30 senior attorneys who looked at the Bar's grievance process and how it was managed. "I also felt strongly that we needed to respond to these concerns from the public, and making sure mechanisms were in place to keep people informed about how their cases were progressing in the courts."



# JONES, FOSTER, J & STUBBS



However, the biggest issue facing the Bar that year was countering a well-financed attack on three justices of the Florida Supreme Court through a referendum to overturn the merit retention system. “Since the average Florida voter didn’t understand merit retention, I gave more than 300 educational speeches and wrote several articles about how this system promotes the impartial administration of justice,” he says. One example was a September 2012 article in the *University of Florida Law Review*, “Perspective on Judicial Merit Retention in Florida.”

That November, Florida voters defeated the merit retention referendum. As DeVault, another former president of The Florida Bar, says, “As a Bar leader, Scott was a consensus builder who helped guide us through a period that threatened the very independence of Florida’s judiciary.”

## A NATIVE FLORIDIAN

Hawkins is a native Floridian who grew up in Tampa. His parents, Richard Paul Hawkins and Barbara Wells Hawkins, married in 1956 and moved from Canada to Florida, where his father launched a contracting business. Growing up, Hawkins enjoyed school — especially the social sciences — and played varsity golf at Chamberlain High School, where he was newspaper editor. He also received a dose of foreign culture, spending three months with a Brazilian family on an American Youth Exchange program.

“My parents were members of a downtown Methodist church and I got to know several prominent lawyers in the congregation,” he says. “I also liked reading books about great trial lawyers, so my choice of career was influenced by both people and books.”

At the University of Florida, Hawkins earned an honors degree in economics, and served as president of his fraternity, and was very active in student government and Florida Blue Key. During

his senior year, he also managed George Kirkpatrick’s campaign for the state senate, and helped the Democrat win election in the Reagan landslide year of 1980.

Hawkins went on to earn his law degree, and then worked at the UF College of Law in administration and fundraising. He then spent a year in Scotland as a Rotary International Foundation Scholar, earning an MBA from the University of Edinburgh in 1985.

He and his wife Lisa VanderWerf Hawkins have been married since their student days, and have a daughter Allison, who now works in the University of Florida museum system. Long active in the Palm Beach County community, Hawkins is a former president of the Palm Beach County Bar Association. He was awarded Palm Beach Atlantic University’s American Free Enterprise Day Companion Medal in 2003.

While Hawkins enjoys spending time with his family, reading books and playing sports, particularly his next round of golf, he’s still invigorated by practicing his profession. As he says, “It is a great privilege to be a lawyer.” ●