

## PREFACE TO THE 2025–2026 EDITION

The fifteen years since this volume was first published have seen some fundamental changes in Florida Family law, with considerable uncertainty about what may be on the horizon. Most significantly, of course, is the recognition of same-sex marriages by the United States Supreme Court. Notably, however, are the numerous undercurrents in laws ranging from abortion to permissible public speech that are only beginning to manifest themselves. Currently, there is little indication that Florida family law will be affected by national political controversies. Historically, family law legislation has been driven by practitioners and technocrats, and the recent changes to the alimony statute<sup>1</sup> are a good example. There was nothing performative about it; just the product of legal craftsmanship melding existing case law with policy choices directed by the legislature.

The legislature enacted a change to the equitable distribution statute in 2024, adding § 61.075(6)(a) 1.f. which provides for distribution of specified interests in closely held businesses. That change appears to codify existing case law. The Supreme Court did not decide any significant family law cases, and indeed among the family law cases decided in the district courts of appeal, the vast majority corrected errors that had previously been identified as such, so no new legal ground was uncovered in the decisions. In this printing, therefore, there is little new to add, leaving resources available to improve other chapters. Moreover, the sections on Dependency are consolidated into three sections, because the law in that field is complex and beyond the scope of this volume.

For some time, a trial court's failure to make detailed findings in support of its conclusions has been the most common reason for trial court orders being reversed. Another frequent reason was ordering relief outside the scope of the pleadings. Cases that reverse a trial court for either of these well-established reasons are not included in this treatise, treated as redundant unless a new proposition of law is contained within.

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<sup>1</sup> The alimony statute, § 61.075, Fla Stat. was amended in 2023 by FL LEGIS 2024-237, 2024 Fla. Sess. Law Serv. Ch. 2024-237 (H.B. 521) (WEST).