

## **Christopher S. Knopik**

Christopher S. Knopik is a founding member of KNOPIK DESKINS LAW GROUP, a small firm of trial lawyers in Tampa, Florida. Mr. Knopik is experienced in personal injury litigation, medical negligence litigation, product liability litigation, commercial litigation, and maritime litigation in state and federal courts. Although Mr. Knopik's current practice is limited to the representation of plaintiffs in litigated matters, he previously served as national trial counsel for one of the world's largest product manufacturers as well as defense trial counsel for three of the state's largest electric utilities.

Mr. Knopik graduated from the University of Virginia Law School and then served as law clerk to the Honorable William Terrell Hodges, then Chief Federal Judge for the Middle District of Florida. He is admitted to the bars of the United States Supreme Court, United States Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit, the United States District Court for the Middle and Southern Districts of Florida and the bar of the State of Florida. He is active in the Hillsborough County Bar Association (Publication Committee 2009- ; Liberty Bell Award Committee 2006-2008; Program Chair 2005-2006; Past Chair, Trial Lawyers Section), The Florida Bar (Member, Trial Lawyers Section Executive Council; Past Chair, Board of Legal Specialization and Education; Past Chair of the Civil Trial Certification Committee), the American Board of Trial Advocates (President Elect); the Tampa Bay Federal Bar Association (Past President), The Academy of Florida Trial Lawyers (EAGLE Benefactor), and numerous other professional associations. The Chief Judge of United States District Court for the Middle District of Florida appointed him to the Merit Selection Panel (2001) regarding the selection of United States Magistrates and to the Grievance Committee for the Tampa/Fort Myers Division (2005 and 2008), and the Chief Judge of Florida's Thirteenth Judicial Circuit appointed him to the Judicial Rotation Committee (2001) regarding the evaluation of policies governing judicial assignments.

Mr. Knopik has been continuously Board Certified in Civil Trial Advocacy by the Florida Bar since 1991 and is also certified in Civil Trial Advocacy by the American Board of Trial Advocates and the National Board of Legal Specialty Certification. Mr. Knopik is recognized in *The Best Lawyers in America* for commercial litigation, medical malpractice, and personal injury. Mr. Knopik was named a "Leading Plaintiff Attorney in America" by Lawdragon.com in January 2007. Mr. Knopik is recognized by Florida Monthly in its selection of Best Legal Eagles in The State. Mr. Knopik has received the highest possible legal and ethical rating ("AV") by Martindale-Hubbell, the nation's leading attorney rating service. He is a master emeritus in the Ferguson-White Inn of the American Inns of Court. Mr. Knopik has been recognized by his peers and Florida Trend Magazine as a member of "Florida's Legal Elite" in 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, and 2009, the only years such recognition has been bestowed on Florida lawyers. Continuously since 2006, Mr. Knopik has been named a "Florida Super Lawyer," an honor received by only 5% of attorneys in Florida and has the added distinction of being ranked by his peers as among the Top 100 "Super Lawyers" in Florida. Mr. Knopik has been recognized as a Top Lawyer by Litigation 2009 – A Supplement to The American Lawyer and Corporate Counsel. Mr. Knopik is a member of the Million Dollar Advocates Forum, an organization whose membership is limited to trial attorneys who have achieved verdicts or settlements in the amount of one million dollars or more. Mr. Knopik is the 2004 recipient of the Hillsborough County Bar Association's Michael A. Fogarty "In the Trenches" Award recognizing excellence and integrity in the practice of civil trial law.

Mr. Knopik was a major contributor to the development and publication of the first edition of the *Handbook of Discovery Practice in the United States District Court for the Middle District of Florida*, a set of discovery guidelines adopted by the Middle District of Florida. He served on the

Editorial Advisory Board for *Florida Pretrial Practice* (James Publishing 2004). Mr. Knopik co-authored the chapter on “Damages in Medical Negligence Cases” for the *Florida Medical Malpractice Handbook* published by the Florida Bar’s Trial Lawyers Section. Mr. Knopik co-authored “No Rest for the Weary: The Trial Lawyer and the Recovery of Appellate Costs” which was published in the Hillsborough County Bar Association Journal in February, 1997. He also wrote “You May Not Know What You've Been Missing” which was published in the Hillsborough County Bar Association Journal in June, 1997. Additionally, he wrote “Another Medical Malpractice Crisis? You Decide,” which was published in the Hillsborough County Bar Association Journal in December, 2002 and “Where Differing “Truths” Collide: The Continuing Medical Malpractice Debate” published in the Hillsborough County Bar Association Journal in February, 2004.

Mr. Knopik has spoken at many seminars, including: “Discovery and Motion Practice in the Middle District of Florida” sponsored by the Hillsborough County Bar Association on March 20, 1989; “Techniques, Tactics and Rules of Discovery” sponsored by the Hillsborough County Bar Association on September 19, 1988; “The Ultimate Trial Notebook Seminar” sponsored by the Academy of Florida Trial Lawyers on September 13, 1991; “An Address to the Admiralty Law Committee” sponsored by the Admiralty Law Committee on June 23, 1994; “Recreational Boating and Environmental Considerations in Admiralty Matters” sponsored by the Florida Bar Continuing Legal Education Committee, Trial Lawyers Section and Admiralty Law Committee on February 9, 1995; “Premises Liability” sponsored by the National Business Institute on March 14 and 15, 1995; “Back to the Future: The Latest Developments in Recurring Issues of Trial Practice” sponsored by the Hillsborough County Bar Association and Trial Lawyers Section on May 9, 1997; “Premises Liability: Preparation and Trial of a Difficult Case in Florida” sponsored by the National Business Institute on December 11 and 12, 1997; “Basic Discovery Practice: Dealing with Expert Witnesses” sponsored by The Florida Bar Continuing Legal Education Committee and the Young Lawyers Division on February 5 and 6,

1998, February 4 and 5, 1999, September 27 and 28, 2000, and September 19 and 20, 2002; “Civil Litigation in the 90's” sponsored by the Hillsborough County Bar Association Continuing Legal Education Committee and the Trial Lawyers Section on May 15, 1998; “Federal Discovery Practice: The Discovery of Experts” sponsored by the Stetson University College of Law on October 2, 1998; “Top Ten Ways to Improve Your Trial Practice” sponsored by the Hillsborough County Bar Association on October 16, 1998; “Effective Closing Arguments” sponsored by The Academy of Florida Trial Lawyers on March 18, 1999; “Direct Examination of Witnesses” at the State Court Trial Seminar sponsored by the Young Lawyers Division of the Hillsborough County Bar Association on June 11, 1999; “Jury Selection in the Commercial Torts Case” sponsored by the Academy of Florida Trial Lawyers on August 26 and 27, 1999; on numerous panels of judges and lawyers addressing the Third and Fourth Annual Bench Bar Conferences sponsored by the Hillsborough County Bar Association in 1999 and 2000; “Preparation for Trial” at the Trial Practice Seminar sponsored by the Florida Bar in October, 2000; “So You Want to be a Medical Malpractice Lawyer?” sponsored by the Hillsborough County Bar Association on September 21, 2000; “Medical Malpractice with a Motive: Proving Financial Motivation for Poor Care” at the annual convention of the Academy of Florida Trial Lawyers on June 27, 2001; “What Lawyers and Mediators Hate About Each Other,” sponsored by the Hillsborough County Bar Association on May 31, 2002; “Developing and Delivering an Opening Statement that Captures the Audience” at the annual convention of the Academy of Florida Trial Lawyers, June 13, 2002; “Federal Civil Litigation: Discovery Abuses and Sanctions,” sponsored by Lorman Education Services, December 11, 2002; “Medical Malpractice Liability Insurance Now a ‘Crisis’?” sponsored by the Hillsborough County Bar Association, January 21, 2003; “Law of Jury Selection” sponsored by the Academy of Florida Trial Lawyers, November 20, 2003; “Pain Assessment: A Legal Perspective” at Tampa General Hospital on July 18, 2003; “Law of Jury Selection” sponsored by the Hillsborough County Bar Association on April 16, 2004; “Opening Statements From the Plaintiff’s Perspective” at

the State Court Trial Seminar sponsored by the Young Lawyers Division of the Hillsborough County Bar Association in June 2004; “The Law of Jury Selection” sponsored by the Young Lawyers Division of The Florida Bar in November 2004; “The Ten Commandments for the Corporate Defendant,” an address from the plaintiff’s lawyer’s perspective at the Southeastern Electrical Exchange Conference in April 2005; “The Discovery of Experts: Dealing With Yours and Theirs” at the Advanced Depositions in Florida seminar sponsored by Lorman Education Services, December 9, 2005; “Effective Advocacy in Jury Trials” at the Effective Advocacy in Civil Litigation seminar sponsored by the Hillsborough County Bar Association, February 15, 2006; “The Effective Taking and Use of Lay and Expert Depositions,” “Expert Depositions,” and “Use of Depositions at Trial” at the Taking and Defending Depositions in Florida seminar sponsored by Lorman Education Services, April 21, 2006; “Examination of Witnesses” at the State Court Trial Seminar sponsored by the Hillsborough County Bar Association, June 9, 2006; “Diffusing and Minimizing the Effect of the Defense Rehabilitation Expert in Cross-Examination, Deposition and at Trial” at the 2007 Workhorse Seminar sponsored by the Florida Justice Association, February 22, 2007; “Planning and Delivering the Powerful Closing Argument” at the State Court Trial Seminar sponsored by the Hillsborough County Bar Association, June 22, 2007; “Effective Expert Depositions” at the Discovery Strategies for Trial Lawyers Seminar sponsored by the Hillsborough County Bar Association, December 6, 2007; “Trial Preparation: Effective Advocacy in Jury Trials” at the State Court Trial Seminar sponsored by the

Hillsborough County Bar Association, June 13, 2008; “Ethical Considerations and Practical Tips for Dealing with Witnesses” at the Federal Bar Association, Tampa Bay Chapter, 2008 Federal Civil Seminar, September 19, 2008; “The Law of Expert Witnesses” at the Stetson University College of Law The Art and Science of Expert Witnessing Seminar, December 10, 2008; “Planning and Delivering the Powerful Closing Argument” at the State Court Trial Seminar sponsored by the Hillsborough County Bar Association, June 12, 2009; “Developing and Delivering An Opening Statement That Captures the Audience” at the Basic Trial Practice Seminar sponsored by The Florida Bar, October 9, 2009; and “The Law on Experts for the State and Federal Practitioner” at the Topics in Evidence 2010 Seminar sponsored by The Florida Bar.

Mr. Knopik is also active in areas outside the practice of law. He is also involved in the community, serving as a member of Leadership Florida (Class XVIII), as the President and founding member of the Board of Directors of the Warrick Dunn Foundation, as a supporting donor of Metropolitan Ministries, as a supporting patron of the Tampa Bay Performing Arts Center, and as a supporting donor of the Academy of The Holy Names. He previously served as a Big Brother in Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Hillsborough County, Florida from 1984 until 1995, as a member of the Operational Oversight Committee of the Metropolitan YMCA of Hillsborough County (2003-2005), and as a member of the YMCA’s Board of Directors (1989-2003). He also provides *pro bono* legal services to those who cannot afford legal counsel.

Mr. Knopik has four fantastic children – Kyle, Rae, Ruby, and Sam – of whom he is very proud.

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*“We consciously keep the firm small and our caseload small so we can provide very personal attention and service. This gives us the luxury to adopt a client’s crusade as our own.”*

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