

Florida Trend

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By Cynthia Barnett

Mold Beat

Michael S. Greene of Akerman Senterfitt in Miami has a unique new line to add to his resume. This semester, Greene is teaching the nation's first university-accredited course on mold prevention at Florida Atlantic University's School of Construction Safety and Architectural Engineering. "Construction Phase: Moisture & Mold Prevention" focuses on building science and forensic investigations to identify water intrusion and prevent mold from creeping in during construction. Greene has been on the mold beat since he represented Martin County in the first mold litigation case in the nation: Centex-Rooney Construction Co. vs. Martin County. The Florida District Court of Appeals affirmed a \$14-million-plus judgment against the construction manager of the Martin County Courthouse. The court said the manager's breach of contract produced various problems, the most dramatic of which was proliferation of toxic mold that caused asthma among workers. The county had to evacuate the courthouse and remediate the mold. The case put Greene on the speaker circuit, discussing the "mushrooming mold mania" throughout the Southeast. Greene says controlling water and mold during construction has become a significant focus for the industry since the Gormon case in California, in which a family won a multimillion-dollar settlement from a homebuilder and lumber company after their child suffered severe brain injuries as a result of mold forming on framing studs.