

GIOVANNA ABREU O'CONNOR

Partner

305-982-4012
goconnor@bergersingerman.com

1450 Brickell Avenue
Suite 1900
Miami, FL 33131

Giovanna Abreu O'Connor is a partner on the firm's Dispute Resolution Team and resides in its Miami office. Gia's practice focuses on representing beneficiaries, creditors, and fiduciaries in contested and uncontested trust and estate proceedings. Gia represents fiduciaries, families, and other interested parties in guardianship litigation and administration matters. Gia has represented hospitals in incapacity and guardianship proceedings involving patients. She has also handled elder exploitation litigation and has written and presented regarding the expansion of Florida's "Slayer Statute" to penalize exploitation and abuse of elderly and disabled persons.

Gia began cultivating her skills as a probate litigator in law school when she interned with the Honorable Arthur Rothenberg in the Probate Division of the Eleventh Judicial Circuit Court. Through that internship, she found her calling in estate, trust, and guardianship law. For Gia, it is a privilege to be able to help her clients navigate the difficult circumstances they often encounter in estate, trust and guardianship matters.

Gia also has meaningful experience in handling commercial and business disputes, real estate transactions and disputes, and appeals. Gia works closely with clients, resolving cases with efficiency, innovation and a focus on obtaining advantageous outcomes.

Education

J.D., Florida International University College of Law
B.A. in International Relations, Florida International University

Bar Admissions

Florida (2012)
United States District Court for the Middle District of Florida (2013)
United States District Court for the Southern District of Florida (2013)

Practice Teams

Dispute Resolution

Practice Areas

Wealth Preservation & Estate Planning
Trust & Probate Litigation
Complex Commercial Litigation

Foreign Languages

- Spanish

Representative Matters

- Obtained final order enforcing Post Marital Agreement and recovering estate assets from surviving spouse who had relinquished their rights to the assets and all spousal rights in decedent's estate.
- Obtained dismissal with prejudice and affirmance on appeal on behalf of annuitant in lawsuit filed by siblings who sought a portion of a wrongful death settlement annuity they were not legally entitled to.
- Obtained declaratory judgment in favor surviving spouse against the co-trustees of Decedent's trust and Decedent's children from prior marriage interpreting and enforcing prior settlement agreements between the parties intended to resolve past trust litigation.
- Represented hospital as petitioner in incapacity and guardianship proceedings and successfully appointed public guardians for patients whose next of kin were unable or unwilling to care for and make decisions on patients' behalf.
- Obtained favorable settlement for surviving spouse in litigation to invalidate will and trusts based on undue influence against decedent's children from prior marriage.
- Represented hospital in proceedings to enforce living will after patient's child concealed its existence and kept patient on life support against patient's express wishes.
- Favorably resolved creditor's claim filed on behalf of creditor in decedent's estate for past due medical bills.
- Favorably resolved trust contentious trust contest between siblings involving allegations of undue influence, lack of capacity, breach of trust.
- Favorably resolved dispute with decedent's spouse involving disinheritance of the decedent's only child.
- Favorably resolved potential litigation involving alleged elder exploitation on behalf of will beneficiary.
- Obtained jury verdict for plaintiff in negligent security case against nightclub and bouncer who punched plaintiff outside of nightclub.

Awards & Honors

- *The Best Lawyers in America*®, "Ones to Watch", 2024
- *Florida Association of Women Lawyers*, Leader in the Law, 2023
- *Florida Super Lawyers* "Rising Star", 2023

Community Activities / Associations

- Fall 2018- Adjunct Professor- Legal Skills and Values III, FIU College of Law
- 2017-2018- Courtesy Instructor/Supervising Attorney, FIU College of Law Wills Project
- 2017-2019- Community Outreach Committee Chair, FIU College of Law Alumni Board
- 2017-2019- Table for Eight Committee Co- Chair, Miami-Dade Florida Association for Women Lawyers

- 2020-Present- Co-Chair, 11th Judicial Circuit Screening Committee for Court Appointments in Mental Health Proceedings, Extraordinary Guardianship Issues, and Other Matters Via Registry (JAC)
- 2021-2022- Director and Law School Liaison Committee Co-Chair, Miami-Dade Florida Association for Women Lawyers
- 2022-2023- Director, Miami-Dade Florida Association for Women Lawyers
- 2022- Present- Miami 1 Group Leader, ProVisors
- 2022 - Chapman Partnership NextGen Emerging Leaders Program
- 2022- Present - Chapman Partnership NextGen, Council Member
- 2023- Present- Director and Women's Initiatives Committee Co-Chair, Miami-Dade Florida Association for Women Lawyers
- 2023- Present - Coral Gables Estate Planning Council, Director at Large
- Board of Directors, MDFAWL

Publications

Daily Business Review "Florida Expands 'Slayer Statute' to Protect Elderly and Disabled Adults"
October 28, 2021

Events & Speaking Engagements

Gia Abreu O'Connor, Presenter, Hillsborough Bar Association Real Property, Probate, and Trust Law Section, "Inheritance Issues and Spousal Rights in Blended Families"
January 18, 2023

Gia Abreu O'Connor, Presenter, "An Introduction to Probate for Legal Aid Lawyers"
September 14, 2022

Gia Abreu O'Connor, Presenter, BNY Mellon's Probate & Pumpernickle, "Inheritance Issues & Spousal Rights in Blended Families,"
September 12, 2022

Gia Abreu O'Connor, Guest, The Practice Podcast, Family Feud - Life As a Probate Litigator
August 29, 2022

Gia Abreu O'Connor, Presenter, West LegalEdcenter, Slayer Statute CLE
July 20, 2022

Gia Abreu O'Connor, Panelist, FAWL St. Thomas University Chapter, RBG & Her Legacy
2021

Gia Abreu O'Connor, Presenter, West LegalEdcenter, "Trustees' Use of Funds: Dos, Don'ts, and Maybes"
October 14, 2021

Gia Abreu O'Connor, Panelist, FIU College of Law, Women in the Legal Profession
June 21, 2021

Prior Affiliations

- RMO LLP
- Wicker Smith O'Hara McCoy & Ford, P.A.
- Marko & Magolnick, P.A.
- Jones & Adams, P.A.
- Archer Bay, P.A.

- Quesada Law
- Golden & Cowan, P.A.