



Palm Beach County Bar Association's Young Lawyers Section
presents

A Deep Dive into Closing Statements

Thursday, November 20th, 2025

Palm Beach County Courthouse

North End of the Cafeteria

205 North Dixie Hwy, West Palm Beach, 33401

11:30 A.M.-1:30 P.M.

Panelists:

15th Circuit Judge James Nutt and 15th Circuit Judge Santo DiGangi
Adriana Lopez, Esq., 15th Circuit Office of the State Attorney, and Jeffrey Martz, Esq., Smith Ball
Baez and Prather

Lunch, Introductions, and Acknowledgements

Deep Dive into Closing Statements

- Summarizing the Evidence
- Telling Your Story Clearly
- Refuting the Other Side
- Highlighting the Burden of Proof
- Appealing to Logic and Emotion

PLAINTIFF/PROSECUTION CLOSING STATEMENT GOALS

- Reinforce the Plaintiff's Narrative
- Summarize Key Evidence
- Show That the Burden of Proof Was Met
- Discredit the Defense's Arguments
- Make a Clear Ask
- Leave a Strong Final Impression

DEFENSE CLOSING STATEMENT GOALS

- Cast Doubt on the Plaintiff's Story
- Emphasize the Burden of Proof
- Reinforce the Defense Narrative
- Challenge Key Evidence
- Create Reasonable Doubt (in Civil Cases, Doubt About Probability)
- Minimize or Deny Damages
- Leave a Strong, Reasonable Impression

What not to do!

- Objections
- Conclusion: Pro Tips

Differences Between Openings/Closings in Bench Trials vs Jury Trials

The Florida Bar has approved this course for 2.0 General Credits. Certification Credits include 1.5 Civil Trial, 0.5 Appellate Practice, and 0.5 Criminal Trial Law.

The cost to attend is \$35.00 for YLS Members, \$15.00 for Government Members, \$45.00 for PBCBA Members who are not YLS Members, and \$65.00 for non-PBCBA Members. Judges are complimentary. Lunch is included.