

Tailgate in style with these gadgets  
IN ACCENT



Passion for justice motivates trial lawyer  
IN BUSINESS



Gardens church raises \$4,000 to help member living with ALS  
IN LOCAL

BREAKING NEWS AT PALMBEACHPOST.COM  
WEATHER  
TUESDAY Storms possible 89/78  
WEDNESDAY Storms possible 89/77  
HIGH: 90 LOW: 79

# The Palm Beach Post

Monday, September 1, 2014

REAL NEWS STARTS HERE

First edition | One dollar

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## D | Local Business

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West Palm Beach attorney Nancy La Vista recently served as president of the Florida Chapters of the American Board of Trial Advocates, an advocacy group for the American civil justice system. DAMON HIGGINS / THE PALM BEACH POST

### Lawyer cites passion for justice, jury system

Personal-injury lawyer Nancy La Vista promotes the value of trials by jury.

By Alexandra Clough  
Palm Beach Post Staff Writer

Attorney Nancy La Vista has led a varied career, first starting her work life as a nurse, and now working as a leading trial lawyer in West Palm Beach.

La Vista, a founding partner of the Clark Fountain law firm, recently capped a year as president of the Florida Chapters of the American Board of Trial Advocates. It's been a trying time for trial lawyers. The use of social media is becoming a challenge because it interferes with the jury process.

FLABOTA, as it is called, is part of a national organization dedicated to defending the American civil justice system. Chief among the group's issues is the right to a trial by jury. This is a given right in the United States, but the group frequently travels to other countries to teach leaders about the ways of the U.S. judicial system.

Closer to home, FLABOTA works to educate children about government, including providing teachers with information on civics, such as the importance of the jury system and jury service. "If they don't know how it works and they don't understand it and don't respect it, then they can't protect it," La Vista said.

As a trial lawyer, La Vista natural-

**MONDAY MEETING**  
A Q&A WITH ...

**NANCY LA VISTA**  
Attorney

ly has a vested interest in keeping the public participating in the jury system.

In addition to apathy, social media and Internet use have provided fresh challenges. Increasingly, jurors are caught posting comments on social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter about jury selection or trials, in violation of explicit court instructions not to do so.

Does the ubiquitous nature of social media spell the death knell for juries?

La Vista says no. Concerns about outside distractions are common as technology pushes forward over time. The challenge remains for lawyers and judges to continue to provide clear instructions about the responsibilities required of jurors, she said.

**Name:** Nancy La Vista  
**Age:** 62  
**Hometown:** Juno Beach  
**Education:** Bachelor's in nursing, University of Michigan; Juris Doctorate, University of Miami  
**Family:** Engaged for the last 20

years!

**About your firm:** I am a partner with the personal-injury law firm Clark, Fountain, La Vista, Prather, Keen, Littky-Rubin. I am a board certified civil trial lawyer and board certified in the area of medical malpractice. The firm strives to provide the highest quality legal representation for clients injured by others' negligence. We pride ourselves on our compassion for our clients and our results.

**First paying job and what you learned from it:** My first paying job was telephone sitting (answering the business phone) of my parents' business when I was 5 years old. I learned patience and the value of reading!

**First break in business:** My first break in business was in nursing when, at the age of 25, I became the head nurse of the medical intensive care unit of the local hospital. At that time, it was unheard of for a nurse to attain that position at that age.

**How your business has changed:** Because nursing changed with less patient care being provided as one advanced, less help and sicker patients, I opted to leave nursing and become a lawyer. I originally thought I would practice hospital law but was too much of a patient advocate. As a result, I found myself practicing plaintiff personal injury, concentrating in the area of medical malpractice. To this day I still err and call my clients

La Vista continued on D4

### SPONSORED CONTENT NEWSMAKERS & SHAKERS

#### JOHN VANDER WAGEN

John Vander Wagen is the Chief Information Officer for Rybovich Boat Company, where he is responsible for developing the strategic IT vision necessary to run the world's finest boatyard. John joined Rybovich in 2005 after an 18-year career with Periman-Rocque, where he was IT Director, serving McDonald's restaurants internationally. He currently serves as a Trustee and Board member of the Chamber of Commerce of the Palm Beaches.



#### WHO'S WHO IN LOCAL BUSINESS

##### NEWSMAKERS

###### MEDICAL



Muscat

Bethesda Health has named Susan C. Muscat director of quality improvement and resource management.

In her new role, she will direct hospital quality improvement activities and hospital accreditation as well as utilization and re-entries.

Muscat earned her bachelor's degree in business administration from Davenport University. She earned an associate's degree in nursing science from Henry Ford Community College.

###### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



Walton

The Chamber of Commerce of The Palm Beaches announced the appointment of Jamie Walton as director of special events. She will also be responsible for driving sponsorship revenue.



Gerardi

The Economic Council of Martin County has selected Charles Gerardi as its new chief executive officer and president.

Gerardi has served as vice president of revenue development and general manager for The Palm Beach Post. He also has been director of strategic alliances and retail advertising at The Dallas Morning News.

Gerardi will be responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Economic Council, policy direction and communications. He is also responsible for developing long-term strategies for the council.

#### FOR MORE LOCAL NEWSMAKERS, D3

##### MOVING UP



Kochan

**Name:** Christopher Kochan  
**Distinction:** Executive director for The Tradition of the Palm Beaches  
**City:** West Palm Beach

DETAILS, D2

## La Vista

continued from D1

patients!

**Best business book:** The best business book I read was "Good to Great" by Jim Collins.

**Best piece of business advice you ever received:** From my mother — You can be the owner of a business but respected only if you are willing

to help do any task you ask your staff to do.

**What you tell young people about your business:** I would tell young people that all you have is your reputation, which can be hurt in a breath. So treat others well, be honest, take the high road and stand up straight.

**Many successful people learn from failure. Do you have a failure**

**you can share and what you learned from it?**

You cannot be afraid of failure. Every time I have a jury trial, I face losing; and when I lose, I feel like I failed. But I know I did not shy away from the risk. Life is full of risk. Over time, I learned failure is only in not taking any risk.

**What do you see ahead for Palm Beach**

**County?** Palm Beach County is a wonderful place to live. It is obvious its future rests in becoming an even greater leader in business and especially health research. The schools and recreational environment provide a wonderful place for raising families. I have great concern for the courts however, primarily caused by underfunding and not educating

our society on the importance of an independent judiciary and the right to trial by jury. I fear a weakening of the branch designed to provide a check and balance to the legislative and executive branches of government and a weakening of citizens' rights.

**Power lunch spot:** The firm kitchen for an Isogenix shake! Seriously I do not have many pow-

er lunches. When I do, I enjoy Testa's outside.

**Where we'd find you when you're not at the office:** I am out fishing or horseback riding.

**Favorite smartphone app:** Pandora.

**What is the most important trait you look for when hiring?** Self-confidence.

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