

**Biography, Reginald (Tony) Moss, II**  
**Managing member, The Tony Moss Firm, LLC**



Reginald Anthony (Tony) Moss, II, resides in Miami, Florida, where, for the past 35 years, he has maintained an active solo law practice, focusing strictly on defending the criminally accused, particularly indigent court-appointed clients, at the trial, appeal, and post-conviction levels. In that time, he has earned statewide and national recognition in the criminal defense community, particularly in the area of *death penalty defense*—by far the most emotionally and intellectually challenging arena in the criminal legal system.

Tony, as he has always been known, was born in Tallahassee, Florida, the firstborn son of Reginald Sr. and Judith Moss, who moved to Tarboro in August 1961, and became longtime fixtures in the W.A. Pattillo community, as a teacher/coach and a librarian, respectively. However, he only attended Pattillo for first grade (1964-65), before transferring to Bridgers Elementary as one of the initial cohort of Black students to integrate that school via the Tarboro City Schools’ “freedom of choice” program. He somehow survived that experience, graduated from Tarboro Senior High in 1976, and went on to secure a Bachelor of Arts degree in history from Hampton Institute (now University) in 1981, and a Juris Doctor degree from Howard University School of Law in 1984.

Eventually Tony’s pathway toward his true calling began: on March 28, 1988, in Miami, his first day as a new attorney with the Dade County Public Defender’s Office. He cut his teeth as an assistant public defender in the Juvenile Division, and after nine months was promoted to the Felony Division, where his skill set as a trial attorney truly began to emerge. But professional restlessness, and an aversion to low pay and office in-fighting, led him to open his own office on New Year’s Day, 1991, working from his studio apartment in South Beach (before it became

fashionable). He has maintained a one-man operation ever since. (Definitely not working from home any more.)

Sometime around 1994, after gaining additional experience in civil and bankruptcy law, Tony decided to devote his full-time attention to defending the criminally accused. Having been appointed to his first death penalty client within three months of hanging out his shingle, he found himself drawn to the unique intellectual and human-interest aspects of this highly specialized area of criminal law; and in it, he also saw an outlet for the spirit of civil rights activism that had first stirred in him as a child growing up in Tarboro during the turbulence of the '60s. With the passage of time, the acquisition of courtroom experience, and his connections with some of the true luminaries of the nation's criminal defense bar, he soon realized that, professionally speaking, he need look no further. He'd found the love of his life.

Beginning with that first capital defendant (whose charges were eventually dropped), Tony Moss has represented innumerable clients in state and federal courts, on charges ranging from financial and healthcare fraud to racketeering to first-degree murder, including over 100 clients who legally qualified for capital prosecution—including ones charged with multiple murders, or particularly heinous ones, or who had extensive criminal histories. Not a single one of those clients has ever seen the inside of Florida's Death Row.

In the mid-2000s, as the popularity of the death penalty waned in Florida and nationwide, and as fundamental and adverse changes came to the statewide indigent defense system, Tony began diversifying his practice by branching into the federal court system. Again, diving into this venture appealed to his curiosity and desire for a new professional challenge. Not only did he quickly find his footing as a trial-level attorney, but he also developed a yen for handling criminal appeals, which tapped deeply into his love for research and writing. He is qualified to practice before the U.S. Supreme Court, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 11<sup>th</sup> Circuit (and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Circuit by the end of 2023), the U.S. District Courts for the Southern and Middle Districts of Florida and the U.S. Virgin Islands, and all Florida state courts.

Tony Moss recognizes the wisdom of the masters on whose shoulders he has stood, and he has "paid it forward" for over 25 years as an instructor and lecturer. He has helped train new and veteran attorneys at death penalty, trial practice, and other defense-related seminars across the country, and is especially proud to have been a founding faculty member of the Clarence Darrow Death Penalty College, which began in May 2000 at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor.

Tony is an active Life Member of the Florida Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, serving on the Board of Directors of the both the statewide and Miami-Dade chapters. In that

role, he brings his voice to the development of policies, programs, and procedures of interest to the criminal defense bar; and as a member of the Media Liaison committees of both chapters, he keeps local and statewide news media advised of upcoming and current issues of importance to the administration of justice and the interest of the public. As a member of the statewide Death Penalty Committee, he brings his input to the organization of the speakers and topics for FACDL's annual *Death Is Different* training program.

Outside of the courthouse, Tony is an active member of Miami's Unity on the Bay, a non-denominational spiritual community affiliated with Unity Worldwide Ministries, which he joined in 2016. He has hosted book discussion groups at his home, currently serves on the congregation's Racial Justice Ministry, and welcomes newcomers to Sunday services as a member of the Ambassador Team.

A longtime jazz enthusiast from his college days, he hosts a two-hour show every Saturday evening from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. ("The Spectrum-T Experience") on a Miami public radio station, WDNA-88.9 FM. The program showcases a wide spectrum of jazz, from traditional New Orleans style to bebop to fusion, and delves into the history of the sound, and of the men and women who made it America's true classical music. He is also a longtime fan and former season ticket holder of the NBA's Miami Heat, an occasional saltwater fisherman, and fancies himself a decent cook as well. An avid traveler, he has visited 46 states (including Alaska and Hawai'i) and five continents, with a sixth (Africa) to be checked off the list this coming spring.

Since April 2021, Tony has been married to Donna Lee Fields, who is a longtime Miami-Dade assistant public defender in the Juvenile Division (and happens to be the same "Donna Lee" who inspired the jazz composition of the same name). A committed "doggie dad," he brought two four-legged children to the marriage: Mojo and Ranger, two shelter rescue mutts who have kept him grounded and gleeful since August 2010. On their behalf, as well as his own, Tony Moss is honored beyond measure to have been recognized as the keynote speaker for the 2023 Fellowship Brunch.