

**SIXTH DISTRICT COURT OF APPEAL
STATE OF FLORIDA**

Case No. 6D2026-2058
Lower Tribunal No. 2026-CA-000463

ALEXANDER ELLIOTT GONZALEZ, individually, and as Trustee of the ALEXANDER
ELLIOTT GONZALEZ TRUST,

Petitioner,

v.

JOSEPH D. LAGRASSE, THE LAGRASSE LLC, and VALUE STORE IT SELF STORAGE, LLC,

Respondents.

Petition for Writ of Certiorari to the Circuit Court for Osceola County.

August 26, 2026

GANNAM, J.

The Emergency Petition for Writ of Certiorari or, in the Alternative, Emergency Review of Nonfinal Order, docketed August 5, 2026, is signed by Alexander Elliott Gonzalez, pro se, both individually and as Trustee of the Alexander Elliott Gonzalez Trust. The petition seeks review of a nonfinal order denying relief concerning property Gonzalez asserts is owned by the trust. Because Gonzalez is not authorized to represent the trust pro se, we dismiss the petition.

“A natural person may represent himself and present his own case to the court although he is not a licensed attorney.” *Nicholson Supply Co. v. First Fed. Sav. & Loan Ass’n of Hardee Cnty.*, 184 So. 2d 438, 440 (Fla. 2d DCA 1966) (quoting *Paradise v. Nowlin*, 195 P.2d 867, 867 (Cal. Ct. App. 1948)). A trust, however, like a corporation, “is an artificial entity created by law and as such it can neither practice law nor appear or act in person. Out of court it must act in its affairs through its agents and representatives and in matters in court it can act only through licensed attorneys.” *Id.*; see also *J.J. Rissell, Allentown, PA Tr. v. Marchelos*, 976 F.3d 1233, 1235 (11th Cir. 2020) (“A trust, like a corporation, ‘is an artificial entity that can act only through agents, cannot appear *pro se*, and must be represented by counsel.’” (quoting *Palazzo v. Gulf Oil Corp.*, 764 F.2d 1381, 1385 (11th Cir. 1985))).

Because Gonzalez is not an attorney, “he cannot represent the trust because doing so constitutes the unauthorized practice of law.” *Lavine v. JPMorgan Chase Bank*, 226 So. 3d 327, 327 (Fla. 5th DCA 2017); see also *Darst v. W. Coast Grp. Enters., LLC*, 380 So. 3d 510, 511 (Fla. 2d DCA 2024) (“A trustee, *pro se*, may not appear for the trust.”); *EHQF Tr. v. S & A Cap. Partners, Inc.*, 947 So. 2d 606, 606 (Fla. 4th DCA 2007) (“The notice of appeal filed by appellant, a trust, was not signed by an attorney licensed to practice law in Florida. Section 454.23, Florida Statutes (2006), prohibiting the unlicensed practice of law, provides no exception for representation of a trust. . . . [A] trustee cannot appear *pro se* on behalf of the trust,

because the trustee represents the interests of others and would therefore be engaged in the unauthorized practice of law.”).¹

PETITION DISMISSED.

SMITH and PRATT, JJ., concur.

Alexander Elliott Gonzalez, Lakeland, pro se.

No Appearance for Respondents.

NOT FINAL UNTIL TIME EXPIRES TO FILE MOTION FOR REHEARING
AND DISPOSITION THEREOF IF TIMELY FILED

¹ The petition does not identify the lower tribunal judge and is not accompanied by an appendix as required by Florida Rule of Appellate Procedure 9.100(g). According to the petition, however, the lower tribunal likewise denied Gonzalez relief based on Gonzalez’s unauthorized representation of the trust, and did so “without prejudice.” Nothing in this order prevents Gonzalez from engaging licensed Florida counsel to pursue relief on behalf of the trust in the lower tribunal.