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2023 Awards Winners • OBA Communities

THE OKLAHOMA BAR Journal

Volume 94 — No. 8 — October 2023

Access to Justice

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HIM BE THE SERVANT OF THE PUBLIC
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FRIDAY,
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2023 BANKING AND COMMERCIAL LAW UPDATE

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Anthony Hendricks, Partner, Crowe Dunlevy, P.C.

Proposed Amendments to the UCC
Professor Stephen Sepinuck, Special UCC Advisor, Paul Hastings, LLP

Artificial Intelligence Risk and Regulation
Joshua Snavelly, Of Counsel, McAfee Taft, P.C.

Banking Law Updates
Matt Mowdy, Legal Counsel, Oklahoma Banking Department

Can I Take It? Lenders' Setoff and Recoupment Rights in Bankruptcies
Jason Sansone, Attorney, Phillips Murrah P.C.

DOJ Financial Crimes: Trends and Priorities
Jessica Perry, Deputy Criminal Chief, U.S. Department of Justice

CFPB Updates for the Banking/Commercial Lawyer
Eric Johnson, Partner, Hudson Cook, LLP

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THE OKLAHOMA BAR Journal

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Editor: Evan Taylor

On the cover: Built in 1937 in the art deco/art modern styles, the Oklahoma County Courthouse was a Public Works Administration project designed by the Oklahoma architectural firm Layton & Forsyth. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Photo by Lauren Rimmer.

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Courtesy of Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries

Pictured: Ada Lois Sipuel Fisher

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Access To Justice: How Can Anyone Afford Justice Anymore?

By Brian Hermanson

ONE WAY SOCIETY CAN DETERMINE WHETHER it meets the needs of its people is to look at whether citizens have access to justice. Not only criminal justice but also access to the courts in ways that address the availability of those day-to-day rights that enable us to navigate today's challenges. A question we must ask is whether the public in our country can gain entrance into a legal system that has become increasingly complicated and expensive.

The World Justice Project has stated: "An estimated 5 billion people have unmet justice needs globally, including people who cannot obtain justice for everyday problems, people who are excluded from the opportunity the law provides, and people who live in extreme conditions of injustice."



A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. Hermanson'.

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One may ask what types of access to justice concerns do Oklahomans face. Of course, most of us are aware of the difficulties in the criminal justice system related to retaining defense counsel for those charged with a crime. If you go to any courthouse in this state, you will discover the vast majority of those accused of crime being represented by public defenders. It is virtually impossible for most people in those circumstances to come up with the money necessary to hire an attorney to represent them.

But it doesn't take much digging to find that those dealing with family law issues or many other areas of the law also have great difficulty finding legal representation they can afford.

During this past year, I have been able to travel to many locations across this state and talk to rural lawyers about their practices. I was surprised to learn there are many smaller towns where it seems almost impossible to entice young lawyers to come to their communities to hang a shingles. Members of those smaller communities often find it difficult to locate local lawyers who have the time or interest to take their cases. The already overburdened lawyers in those small towns are simply unable to take on additional clients.

How do we deal with all these problems? We know there are groups, committees and task forces across this country studying these problems and trying to get a grip on finding solutions that can offer some relief. The OBA has an active Access to Justice Committee that meets regularly to discuss and develop solutions to these problems.

What a difficult task they are facing. But in spite of the daunting task before them, every month I hear from new attorneys who want to be part of the solution and are volunteering to serve on these committees. Attorneys want to ensure that every person is able to have access to our system of justice. They are willing to put in their time and effort to develop solutions.

How about you? Do you care? Do you think you might have time to fix the problem? There is no better time to get started than now. Now is when all good intentions must be placed in motion to help.

We have a huge stake in getting this right. Are you up to help?

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The Theory and Practice of Access to Justice

By Brian Candelaria

“ACCESS TO JUSTICE.” We all have an idea of what that phrase means. But what does it mean in practice? The answer may be different for each person.

PLAIN LANGUAGE

For me, access to justice means taking the adequate steps needed to make justice a reality for all. For example, legal institutions and practitioners should make legal concepts easier for those not acquainted with the law. This can be done by drafting documents and providing legal advice using “plain language.” As noted on www.plainlanguage.gov, “Plain language is communication your audience can understand the first time they read or hear it.” The website further notes that plain language was even codified in 2010 with the passage of the Plain Writing Act of 2010. Additionally, the website named various techniques to achieve the goal of plain writing. Some examples that are cited are:

- Reader-centered organization
- “You” and other pronouns
- Active voice, not passive
- Short sentences and paragraphs
- Common, everyday words
- Easy-to-follow design features¹

The website also provides templates, checklists and guidelines.

Why is it important? It is important because, as any attorney can attest, words matter. This is especially true in a world where contracts bind a person to certain obligations and duties. A particularly important category of contracts is those dealing with the assumption of debt. A recent study conducted by the Oklahoma Access to Justice Foundation demonstrates the importance of “plain language and user-friendly forms” when dealing with the issue of debt collection lawsuits (page vi). The report, “The Downward Debt Spiral: A Study of Oklahoma’s Judicial Debt Collection System,” can be found at <https://bit.ly/3EJdZUx>. It is a sobering report.

Another important category of “everyday” contracts is lease/rental agreements signed by prospective tenants and prospective renters. This is because the majority of us have either signed a lease or rental agreement. Whether it involves an apartment or an

automobile, it is likely that even the most seasoned attorney has signed such a contract without fully reading the language. For example, the terms of agreements are important when involving damage received during the course of a natural disaster. In fact, during the tornados and severe weather events of this past spring, there were some reports of storage facilities where damage occurred. Undoubtedly, renters at those damaged facilities were forced to look back at the contracts they had signed weeks, months or even years ago. In addition to plain language, I believe legal systems can move toward access to justice by: 1) utilizing technology, especially in rural locations, and 2) encouraging the use of standardized forms.

TECHNOLOGY IN THE COURT

It cannot be denied that technology played an important role in keeping the courts open during the depths of the COVID-19 pandemic. The use of virtual options was important for keeping cases moving through the system. This was

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Another important step taken toward accessible justice for all is the use of standardized forms. As some legal practitioners can attest, there are some legal subjects and issues that can be addressed through the simple filing of important pleadings or paperwork.

particularly important in rural communities. Good examples of the integration of technology in the delivery of legal services can be found in tribal and rural county courts. For example, the Sac and Fox Nation, the Comanche Nation and other tribal nation courts made extensive use of telephonic and/or electronic virtual resources to connect with parties and keep cases moving. In fact, during the upcoming Oklahoma Access to Justice Summit on Oct. 20, there will be a panel addressing the use of technology in the courtroom. The panel will be called “Rural and Indigenous Solutions to the Technology Justice Gap.” The panel will even include a discussion of nontraditional uses of technology, like using vans and other vehicles to get out to clients and their communities to serve their legal needs.

STANDARDIZED AND UNIFORM FORMS

Another important step taken toward accessible justice for all is the use of standardized forms.

As some legal practitioners can attest, there are some legal subjects and issues that can be addressed through the simple filing of important pleadings or paperwork. A good example is the transfer of a person’s residence through a “transfer on death deed.” It takes true expertise and “know-how” to understand what subjects and issues can be best addressed by well-drafted pleadings and forms. This is where bar associations and bar association law sections come in.

For example, some tribal courts have many forms available online for all to use. The forms are often approved by the tribe’s bar association, like those used by the Quapaw Nation² or the Citizen Potawatomi Nation.³ The various tribal bar association members utilize their expertise and familiarity with the tribal codes. They also understand and appreciate how each tribe’s codes are reflections of that tribe’s unique history and exercise of tribal sovereignty.

Another important example is the hard work the OBA sections put into drafting forms and handbooks. The Estate Planning, Probate and Trust (EPPT) Section and the Family Law Section have each recently completed or updated handbooks and forms to help people understand these particular areas of law.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Whether it is the use of plain language, the use of technology or the use of standardized forms, these tools are only useful if they are competently used. Events like OBA Law Day and its corresponding annual Ask A Lawyer event, the OBA Solo & Small Firm Conference, the OBA Annual Meeting, the Oklahoma Access to Justice Summit along with various law section CLE meetings and seminars all provide us with opportunities to learn to use various tools and grow as legal practitioners. In the end, it is up to us to provide access to justice to all.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Brian Candelaria chairs the OBA Access to Justice Committee. He has been a staff attorney with Oklahoma Indian Legal Services (OILS) since he graduated in 2019. Before going to law school, he was a legal assistant for nine years and he also earned an LL.M. in Indigenous Peoples law from the OU College of Law.

ENDNOTES

1. www.plainlanguage.gov/about/definitions (last accessed Sept. 9, 2023).
2. www.quapawnation.com/591/Forms.
3. <https://bit.ly/44RKVVy>.



OKLAHOMA ACCESS TO JUSTICE SUMMIT

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AGENDA

Welcome and Opening Plenary

Student Loan Forgiveness: Where Are We Now? *(Panel Discussion)*

Accessible Legal Forms: Automation and Plain Language *(Panel Discussion)*

Rural and Indigenous Solutions to the Technology Justice Gap *(Panel Discussion)*

Emotional Intelligence and Trauma-Informed Practice *(Panel Discussion)*

Legislative Highlight Hour

Summer Pro Bono Challenge Awards

Effective Legal Information *(Panel Discussion)*

Innovative Use of Technology in the Courts *(Panel Discussion)*

Building a Justice-Conscious Practice *(Panel Discussion)*

Language Access: Removing Barriers to Justice *(Panel Discussion)*

Closing Plenary - Innovative Technology Solutions for Justice

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Legal Aid Services of Oklahoma: They Can't Do It All...

By Ana Reynolds

OKLAHOMA'S POPULATION, BOTH RURAL AND URBAN, is underserved by the level of currently available legal services. This statement is even more true for low-income households. One in five Oklahomans are eligible for income-based legal services.¹ Unfortunately, it is impossible for low-income legal services providers to meet this need. Nationally, "53% of low-income Americans do not know if they would be able to find a lawyer that they could afford if they needed help with a serious civil legal problem."² Organizations like Legal Aid Services of Oklahoma Inc. (LASO) were created with the purpose of providing pro bono legal services, but they can't do it all.

WHAT IS LEGAL AID SERVICES OF OKLAHOMA INC.?

"Legal Aid Services of Oklahoma, Inc. is a non-profit, 501(c)(3) organization that provides civil legal assistance to low-income persons throughout Oklahoma."³ It is the largest law firm in Oklahoma, made up of 18 offices across the state. Each of the offices is responsible for certain counties. For example, the Oklahoma City office covers Oklahoma and Canadian counties. Each office is made up of different areas of expertise, but the common thread among all the offices is that everyone wants to help people.

LASO is a Legal Services Corp. (LSC) grantee and is, therefore, subject to LSC regulations and limitations. LSC was originally created in 1974 to "support legal

aid organizations who assist with civil matters."⁴ It helps "these organizations serve thousands of low-income individuals, children, families, seniors, and veterans in every congressional district."⁵

Apart from the limitations on income and assets, LASO does not accept certain types of cases. LASO is a civil law firm, but it does not accept medical malpractice, personal injury or cases that are "fee-generating," meaning a private bar attorney could take the case on a contingent basis.

WHO DOES LASO SERVE?

LASO serves "low-income individuals, children, families, seniors, and veterans."⁶ This list has some restrictions. Generally, LASO can assist individuals with "annual

incomes at or below 125% of the federal poverty guidelines."⁷ The guidelines are calculated using a mathematical formula with the income of the household and the number of people in the household. LASO can also serve individuals up to 200% of the federal poverty limit if they have certain other eligibility factors.

Applications for service can be completed online at <https://bit.ly/46fSE13>. Applicants can also call 1-888-534-5243 or 918-428-4357 to apply by phone. Calls are answered Monday through Thursday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. The intake specialist will ask questions about their income, the number of people in their household and their legal issues. After receiving all the

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information needed, LASO can decide whether to take the applicant's case. A list of areas of law that LASO may assist with is also available online.

WHY ARE PRO BONO ATTORNEYS NEEDED?

In 2022, LASO's Oklahoma City office opened and closed more than 5,000 cases; out of those, only 232 cases were handled by private bar attorneys. The rest of the cases were handled by in-office attorneys, but this statistic doesn't represent the cases LASO was unable to take.

The reality is that there is no way for LASO to take every case that comes through its doors. Every week during staffing, no matter the team, there are always a handful of cases the team cannot accept. While LASO always attempts to provide additional resources or advice to all applicants, it cannot provide full representation to every applicant. Often, LASO attorneys do not have the ability to take a case at that time.

There are many practical solutions to this ever-increasing problem. Some of those solutions include, but are not limited to, court-based self-help centers,

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online resources, pro se legal information, community navigators, investment in legal services programs and, of course, pro bono attorneys. Pro bono resources often include clinics for specific types of cases such as divorce, wills and estates. Other limited-scope opportunities include Law Day activities such as the OBA's Ask A Lawyer and Lawyers in the Library. Many of these clinics are run by volunteer attorneys themselves and/or by legal services providers. These clinics are constantly evolving, and new volunteers are always needed.

LASO and other low-income legal service providers always need pro bono attorneys willing to take individual cases. As a volunteer attorney who works with LASO, volunteers have a choice of the level and scope of involvement, from advice-only clinics to full representation. Each client who is assisted by a pro bono attorney is still a LASO client. The work taken by pro bono attorneys is no less important or worthy than cases taken in-house; the need is just too great for LASO to help everyone who comes through the doors.

LASO is required to have a pro bono program, but it is also a need in the community. Without pro bono attorneys taking cases, many more people would go without legal representation. In our office, there is a process for finding cases the staff thinks would be a good fit for a pro bono case. Often, these are cases the staff attorneys would take in-house if they had the capacity to do so.

DO PRO BONO ATTORNEYS MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

Having an attorney in any legal matter can change an individual's life. For some people, it is as simple as completing their estate

plan, but for others, it can be a difference of life and death. That is the story of Ms. Martin. Her name has been changed to protect the individuals involved, but she has allowed her story to be shared.

Ms. Martin came to LASO in 2020. At the time, she had a four-year-old child and was separated from her husband. Up to this point, there was no legal agreement in place for visitation, but both of them had come up with a schedule until the separation became final. One day, Ms. Martin went to pick up her child around 8 p.m. The child was hiding and eating a donut. Ms. Martin found out that this donut was the only thing they had received to eat that day. To figure out what was going on, Ms. Martin brought the issue up with the child's father. He became angry and pulled a gun on Ms. Martin and her child. He then began making threats, saying she wasn't allowed to leave – now or ever.

He eventually moved far enough away from the door that Ms. Martin and her child were able to escape, and then she contacted the police. She went to the

courthouse to file an emergency victim protective order (VPO). While at the courthouse, they referred her to LASO for assistance. She completed an application, which she said was a straightforward process. She was contacted by a staff attorney who gave some advice; however, they told her they were unable to handle her case in-house, but they would look for a pro bono attorney.

LASO was able to find her an attorney to help with a protective order and a divorce. Ms. Martin wanted to know why the attorney had taken her case with no pay. The attorney said she believed Ms. Martin was a hardworking mother who was trying hard to survive in a dire situation. At the time, Ms. Martin didn't have a support system; it was just her and her child. With LASO and the pro bono attorney, she had someone she could turn to with questions. In her words, "Lawyers are expensive, but that's my child," and she wanted to do everything she could for herself and her child.

The pro bono attorney was able to finalize a divorce with a step-up visitation plan, along

LEGAL AID SERVICES OF OKLAHOMA, INC.



Legal Aid Services of Oklahoma is always in need of attorneys to assist with cases on a pro bono basis. Interested in volunteering? Visit www.legalaidok.org/volunteers to learn more or visit www.probono.net/ok/signup to sign up.



It is an unfortunate truth that Oklahoma does not have enough legal services attorneys to provide the needed services to low-income persons to ensure access to justice for all Oklahomans.

with assisting Ms. Martin with a protective order. Now, more than a year after the cases were finished, Ms. Martin is an employee at LASO. She returned wanting to help people in the way she was helped. Ms. Martin is a hardworking employee, mother and member of her community, and LASO is grateful it was able to connect her with help in a frightful situation.

While Ms. Martin's case is a success story for LASO and its pro bono program, the reality is that there are many cases where LASO is unable to find a pro bono attorney within a reasonable amount of time. LASO knows that time spent doing pro bono is time spent without payment, but many attorneys, me included, entered this field to help people.

Aside from helping the community, there are other benefits to volunteering with LASO. There are opportunities to expand practice areas, mentor law students and new attorneys, get experience in new areas of law and many more benefits, including:

- Malpractice insurance coverage by LASO on LASO-referred cases

- LASO staff attorneys available for consultation and/or training
- Access to LASO's online support website, www.ProBono.Net/OK, which offers forms, training videos and research
- Assistance with litigation costs (must be preapproved)
- Up to a \$75 discount on many OBA CLEs for 20 hours or more of pro bono service completed during a 12-month period
- Free LASO seminars supplying required annual CLE hours
- Interview rooms available for meetings with your client

From the material benefit of a discount on OBA CLEs to the career growth opportunities possible with free training and CLEs available, attorneys should certainly consider making a commitment to pro bono work. LASO is grateful for the pro bono attorneys who have volunteered with us in the past, and we look forward to collaborating with new attorneys. It is an unfortunate truth that Oklahoma does not have enough

legal services attorneys to provide the needed services to low-income persons to ensure access to justice for all Oklahomans. Within the profession, it is recognized that it is imperative that Oklahoma attorneys provide competent and zealous advocacy for their clients. That is merely the first step on the path to creating a more just legal system for all. Each of us can play a role in filling the gap in available legal services for those who cannot afford an attorney.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Ana Reynolds is the pro bono coordinator for the Oklahoma City office of Legal Aid Services of Oklahoma, where she works to expand the pro bono program. Originally from New Mexico, Ms. Reynolds relocated to Oklahoma and received her J.D. from the OCU School of Law in 2022.

ENDNOTES

1. <https://bit.ly/3PhqXPv>.
2. Legal Services Corp. 2022. *The Justice Gap: The Unmet Civil Legal Needs of Low-income Americans*. Prepared by Mary C. Slosar, Slosar Research LLC.
3. www.legalaidok.org/about-us.
4. www.lsc.gov.
5. *Id.*
6. *Id.*
7. *Id.*

SELF-REFERRAL OF A PRO BONO CASE

Do you have a current client who may be income-eligible for Legal Aid? Are you representing them pro bono? If so, it would benefit you to contact LASO to register your case.

Many attorneys regularly provide pro bono representation for those who cannot otherwise afford to retain an attorney. While most attorneys think of pro bono referrals as those that originate through LASO, another lesser-known type of pro bono referral originates from the pro bono attorney's office. Self-referrals occur when an attorney agrees to provide representation to a low-income client who contacts the attorney directly.

A prospective client may come to your office who you determine is low income and cannot afford your services. If you wish to represent the client pro bono, you can register the client with LASO. What if you initially represented a client on a "for fee" basis, but the client lost a source of income? Can it count as a pro bono self-referral? The answer is "yes" – if the client qualifies financially, and you agree to complete the case on a pro bono basis. Of course, there is no prohibition in any pro bono case against collecting attorney fees from the other side, as long as the money does not come from the client or from money the client would have been entitled to receive.

Why should you self-refer pro bono cases? Self-referrals are a great way for attorneys to provide pro bono services. The attorney is able to choose which pro bono case to take, and the client receives representation from an attorney of their choice without having to wait for the normal referral process. Benefits for self-referring pro bono cases are the same as any other LASO referral, including professional liability insurance coverage on pro bono cases, free LASO CLEs, OBA discounts on CLEs, access to a free advocate website that offers forms, research, news, featured volunteers, etc., along with many other benefits.

Clearly, self-referring pro bono cases provides benefits to the pro bono attorney and client, but it also benefits LASO by allowing us to expand our services to eligible clients without requiring additional staff. Self-referrals are also very important to LASO in that a certain level of pro bono participation is a grant requirement from our largest funder.

How do you self-refer cases? It's as easy as a phone call, fax or email. LASO staff can contact your client and complete an intake, or you can provide the information to LASO. LASO staff will send a referral agreement for your client to sign. You may get requests from LASO staff for case updates on a quarterly basis until the case is closed unless LASO staff can determine the status of the case online. When the case is closed, LASO staff will need to know the case outcome and the number of pro bono hours. LASO will then send you a letter that you can present to the bar association for CLE discounts.

If you have an ongoing pro bono case or a prospective case that you would like to self-refer or if you have questions, contact:

Ana Reynolds
Legal Aid Services of Oklahoma Inc.
2915 N. Classen Blvd., Ste. 200
Oklahoma City, OK 73106
405-449-4430
Ana.Reynolds@laok.org

OKLAHOMA FREE LEGAL ANSWERS

WE NEED ATTORNEY VOLUNTEERS

Oklahoma Free Legal Answers is a national program developed by the American Bar Association that connects clients in need of brief legal advice with volunteer attorneys. Qualifying clients can post civil legal questions on the website and receive basic information and advice from approved volunteer attorneys. The Oklahoma site serves residents of Oklahoma through a cooperative effort of the ABA and the Oklahoma Bar Association.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How do I volunteer?

Visit oklahoma.freelegalanswers.org and click "Volunteer Attorney Registration" to sign up. After the Oklahoma Bar verifies your membership, you will be contacted about participating.

Who can receive assistance through the website?

- Not incarcerated
- Household income below 250% of federal poverty line
- At least 18 years old
- Less than \$5,000 in total assets

Can I choose which questions to answer?

Yes, after signing up and getting approved, volunteers can review open questions and select those in areas they have knowledge and experience in. Volunteers will not be assigned questions unless they agree to it.

What are the types of questions frequently asked by clients on the site?

Most of the questions on the site are family law and landlord tenant questions. For example, a family law question recently asked: "I filed my divorce with a company that I guess is no longer available. I don't understand why my divorce keeps getting denied when I've submitted all the proper paperwork. I live in Tulsa Oklahoma can you help me"? Another example of a landlord tenant question: "It has been over 45 days since I requested my security deposit refunded, and the management office called and said they mailed the check, however, have received nothing and cannot get anyone to call us back regarding the check not being received. What would I need to file in small claims to get them to comply?"

Do volunteer attorneys remain anonymous?

Yes. While volunteers can choose to identify themselves, neither the system nor administrators will provide their identity.

Do I need liability insurance to participate?

No, volunteers are covered by an ABA professional liability plan for assistance provided through the Oklahoma site. This does not cover additional representation outside the system.

If I volunteer, is there a minimum number of questions I have to answer?

No. While we encourage volunteers to answer at least a few questions each month, we understand that your monthly workload may vary. As a result, the program is designed to allow volunteers to answer more questions when your workload is heavy. In fact, in order to ensure that the workload is more evenly distributed amongst volunteers, volunteer attorneys are restricted from having more than five questions open at any particular time.

Even answering a few questions per month can make a meaningful difference for low-income Oklahomans needing legal help.

Contact Julie Bays at julieb@okbar.org for additional questions.

When Geography Determines Justice

Examining Legal Deserts in Oklahoma

By Katie Dilks

THE GOLD STANDARD FOR MEANINGFUL ACCESS TO JUSTICE is high-quality legal representation. Unfortunately for too many Oklahomans, that goal is quite literally out of reach. Oklahoma's attorneys are increasingly concentrated in just a handful of counties, putting rural Oklahomans in the challenging situation of trying to navigate the legal system alone.

This isn't a new challenge, and it's only getting worse. Examining OBA data on where Oklahoma-licensed attorneys practice from 2018 and 2023 shows an increase in the number of counties with 10 or fewer licensed attorneys (from 20 to 23) and an increase in the number of counties with five or fewer attorneys (from 10 to 13).¹ At the same time, the percentage of attorneys practicing in just three counties (Oklahoma, Tulsa and Cleveland) rose from 74% to 76%, despite those counties only accounting for 45% of the state's population.

The American Bar Association defines a legal desert as a county with less than one licensed attorney for every 1,000 residents. By that metric, 20 Oklahoma counties are legal deserts, with a combined population of over 350,000 residents. Another 29 counties have fewer than 1.5 attorneys per 1,000

residents, meaning over half our state has insufficient legal resources to meet basic needs in family law, probate, guardianship and much more.

As seasoned attorneys with small-town practices retire, too few young attorneys are looking to build a practice in those communities. This is a complicated challenge with multiple contributing factors including culture and community, law school debt and lack of training and support for solo practitioners. Other states have sought to address this challenge with incentives and loan repayment programs, most notably North Dakota² and South Dakota.³ While these programs have been successful at bringing small numbers of lawyers to underserved rural areas, the scope of this challenge cannot be meaningfully tackled with just a handful of new attorneys. We must

take an all-of-the-above approach to ensuring rural justice.

Nebraska has a new rural pipeline program recruiting students from rural areas while they're still in college and supporting them financially and academically through law school.⁴ While the program does not have a requirement that participants return to their hometowns, they are optimistic that many will choose to at some point in their practice. Exposure to the impact attorneys can have in rural areas is also key to swaying law students to consider practice outside the large cities. The Equal Justice Works Rural Summer Legal Corps places law students in paid internships across the country,⁵ including with Oklahoma Indian Legal Services and Legal Aid Services of Oklahoma. These experiences often have a direct impact on the

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career choices and trajectories of those law students.

Many states are experimenting with other ways to bring justice to people. South Carolina, Tennessee, Minnesota and others have “justice buses” – functionally traveling legal aid or law school clinics that can visit communities for pop-up legal services access. However, these clinical programs are not a permanent presence and are often limited in how they can help with complicated or ongoing matters.

The reality is that many litigants, in both rural and urban areas, must access our courts

without legal representation – because they cannot afford it or it simply isn’t available. It is incumbent on all of us to build a legal system that is navigable and usable by pro se Oklahomans. Creating legal information on common topics in plain and understandable language is a critical first step toward that. The Oklahoma Access to Justice Foundation has tackled this challenge in partnership with the Oklahoma Department of Libraries, creating colorful and easy-to-understand infographics on eight common issues, along with training materials

and guidance for library staff to help people connect with additional information they need.

Investing in technology can help leverage the resources we do have and give urban attorneys ways to serve clients several hours away without the long drive. Minnesota has created several hundred justice kiosks to connect people with legal information and provide a secure site for people to access virtual hearings or connect with a legal aid attorney. Imagine if an attorney in Oklahoma City could meet with a client in Atoka to review an uncontested divorce

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Legal deserts didn't appear overnight, and they cannot be tackled with a single, immediate silver bullet.

petition without leaving their office. By strategically using the tools of limited scope representation⁶ and investing in rural broadband and technology access, this could easily be in Oklahoma's future.

Technology investments can also be maximized if we commit to standardizing court forms and processes across the state. Many states have created optional statewide forms (including Iowa, Colorado, Washington, Illinois and others). When standard forms are available, tools such as A2J Author can be used to create guided interviews to ensure people can fill out these forms accurately and increase judicial efficiency when courts are receiving the correct forms, correctly completed. Oklahoma has a couple of great examples of these forms, namely guardianship and victim protective orders, but we have a long way to go to meet the standards set by these other states.

Legal deserts didn't appear overnight, and they cannot be tackled with a single, immediate silver bullet. But by creatively exploring solutions including incentivizing rural practice, connecting law students and young lawyers with rural mentors, investing in technology, standardizing court processes and ensuring accurate,

understandable legal information is available to everyone, we can move toward a future where all Oklahomans, regardless of their address, can meaningfully participate in the legal system.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Katie Dilks is the executive director of the Oklahoma Access to Justice Foundation, which strives to increase meaningful participation in a fair and accessible civil justice system. Ms. Dilks received her J.D. and master's degree in public policy from Georgetown University.

ENDNOTES

1. OBA data available upon request. Cotton, Greer, Dewey, Okfuskee, Love, Johnston, Ellis, Harper, Harmon and Cimarron counties all have fewer than five attorneys, while Nowata, Jefferson, Roger Mills, Beaver, Latimer, Kiowa, Tillman, Coal, Grant, Washita, Pushmataha, Blaine and Alfalfa counties have between five and nine attorneys.
2. <https://bit.ly/3L1nx0M> (last accessed Aug. 28, 2023).
3. <https://bit.ly/3qQlwN6> (last accessed Aug. 28, 2023).
4. <https://law.unl.edu/RLOP/> (last accessed Aug. 28, 2023).
5. <https://bit.ly/45siKxv> (last accessed Aug. 28, 2023).
6. For more information on limited scope representation, the OBA Management Assistance Program offers a wealth of resources: www.okbar.org/map/lss.

This is a
**GOOD
CASE!**

*Better
call
Ted!*

Strengths

- ① Fatality
 - ② Trucker blew stop sign
 - ③ no drug/alcohol test
 - ④ Trucker using cell phone
 - ⑤ survivors include wife + minor kids
- ↳ Lots of insurance

Weaknesses

More Mediators. More Experience. More Results.

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Eric Eissenstat
Joe Farris
Chad Moody
M. David Riggs
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David Russell
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Pro Se Waiver Divorce Clinic

By Ana Reynolds



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LEGAL CLINICS CAN COME IN MANY FORMS, but there are generally three common goals when creating a clinic: assisting to prevent errors, advising so individuals can navigate court on their own and fixing problems that halt the legal process.

PRO SE WAIVER DIVORCE CLINIC

The Pro Se Waiver Divorce Clinic was created out of a need seen by Legal Aid Services of Oklahoma Inc. (LASO), district court judges of Oklahoma County, OCU School of Law and members of the private bar. This is a LASO clinic; therefore, there are restrictions on the provision of legal assistance. Due to funding and other ethical obligations, there are limits that restrict us from assisting everyone who comes in. Applicants must meet LASO's qualifications, which include income, asset and conflict qualifiers. If they don't meet the requirements, they may be assisted by a private bar attorney if one is available on that day. It is at the discretion of the private bar attorney to set the scope of their services.

Cindy Goble, a clinic co-founder and current director of pro bono services for LASO, described the creation of the clinic:

The idea to start the Pro Se Waiver Docket [clinic] began early in 2010. Gail Stricklin, private practice attorney, Laurie

For more information about the Pro Se Waiver Divorce Clinic, please contact Ana Reynolds at ana.reynolds@laok.org or Cindy Goble at cindy.goble@laok.org. To volunteer with Legal Aid Services of Oklahoma, visit www.probono.net/ok/signup.



Jones, professor at OCU School of Law, and myself, Pro Bono Coordinator for Legal Aid (at the time) met with the Family judges who identified the Pro Se Waiver Docket as an area of great need. Planning began with drafting of forms and recruiting law students and volunteer attorneys. Travis Pickens, who was at that time the OBA Ethics Counsel, helped with review of the forms and procedures and in March 2010, the clinic was started. (This was unintentional

because we only planned to watch how things worked prior to starting the clinic, but when the judge saw us there, we were handed our first case.)

HOW DOES IT WORK?

The waiver docket is every Monday, Wednesday and Thursday at 1:30 p.m.; the clinic is held every Wednesday afternoon. The party must have their file pulled by the court clerk's office before 12:30 p.m. to be heard on that day's docket. The waiver docket rotates monthly in accordance with the chief domestic judge. Before an applicant can be considered for clinic assistance, the parties go before the judge. The judge reviews their paperwork for issues that bar them from granting the divorce, either in the paperwork or from the testimony. If there is an issue, the judge will fill out a "blue sheet." This sheet is, well, blue, and it has a list of common issues. The judge indicates the applicable issues/defects. This can be done on any day of the waiver dockets. The judge gives the parties the blue sheet and either instructs them on when

to return for the clinic or, if it is a Wednesday, sends them directly up to the law library. If the Oklahoma Department of Human Services is necessary or the agency needs to approve paperwork, an attorney from Child Support Services is present only on the first and third Wednesdays of the month to review and assist as necessary.

The clinic has fillable templates for volunteers to use. Although, many of the edits can be completed directly on the applicant's documents. If the attorney completes the judge's list, there are no other requirements (*i.e.*, a waiting period), and if the judge allows it, the applicant will be sent back to the judge to *hopefully* get divorced.

THE CLIENTS

The number of individuals who come to the clinic varies every year. In 2020, through the pandemic with restrictions and closures for over six months, the clinic still helped 92 individuals. In the last two years, an average of 130 individuals were assisted each year. Around 30% of individuals we've helped received a finalized divorce the same day they visited the clinic. The clinic was able to help finalize divorces for approximately 90% of the people referred.

In 2020, approximately 75% of the individuals referred qualified for services. That means they were either low-income individuals, seniors or were experiencing or had experienced domestic violence. In 2020, 30% of the individuals we assisted qualified for our services because they experienced domestic violence. For many of the individuals, the abuser was the former spouse. Having this clinic allowed these individuals an opportunity to legally separate. When an individual who experiences domestic violence comes to the clinic, they are given more information about some of the other community resources available to them.

CAN IT BE REPLICATED?

This clinic is a joint operation between many different organizations, but it would not be possible without the willingness of the judges to host the pro se waiver docket. The judges put time aside for the docket, specifically for people who are pro se. There was an infrastructure put in place to assist pro se clients and a willingness to allow LASO to come in and assist. Ultimately, the willingness and need of the court got LASO in the door and has kept us involved. LASO's Oklahoma City office is

limited in the number of staff we can supply due to funding; however, we understand the need in the community, which is why we continue to assist. It is also why the private bar is so important – because we can't do it all.

Other LASO offices currently have or have had their own version of this clinic. Norman had a clinic, but funding was lost, and the clinic was discontinued. Stillwater currently has one, but they are not in person every week. They are called in by the judge if people need assistance.

WHY YOU SHOULD HELP

This clinic cannot run without volunteers. The Pro Se Waiver Divorce Clinic needs volunteers, and we would love for you to help!

If you are a private bar attorney who wants to volunteer but are limited on time, the clinic is only once a week, a maximum of four hours, and you pick the weeks you attend. This can help you get pro bono hours, but it is also an opportunity to get out of the office and help people solve their problems, usually on the same day. If you are a solo attorney, it is also an opportunity to build relationships with other attorneys and the judges and discuss common issues.

This clinic cannot run without volunteers. The Pro Se Waiver Divorce Clinic needs volunteers, and we would love for you to help.

For law student volunteers, this clinic is a crash course in family law. Students are exposed to magic words like “best interest of the child,” and they can see the divorce process from start to finish. This is helpful for all students, not just those who want to practice in this area, as family law is currently tested on the bar exam. Also, students get face-to-face interaction with attorneys, clients and judges. Ms. Goble explained, “The clinic is a great experience for law students who are allowed to sit in front of the bar during the docket call.”

For anyone who was in school starting in 2020 or later, many face-to-face opportunities were, and continue to be, limited. As an individual who just graduated and passed the July 2022 bar exam, my experience at the clinic after graduation was invaluable in sharpening my strengths for job searches and now in my day-to-day work. For example, many people who come to the clinic had to take off work and find childcare only to be told they didn’t do something right. The attorneys who work at the clinic week to week are professional and caring in the way they deal with the frustration. It’s a great learning experience to see how to handle client interactions and what to do when you have an upset client.

COMMUNITY COOPERATION

The clinic started as an attempt to fix a problem, but the reality is it wouldn’t exist without the cooperation of the judges, the private bar and the OCU School of Law. LASO has attorneys with a passion for helping as many people as they can, but without cooperation and volunteers, the clinic is unable to reach its full potential. The work that Gail Stricklin, Laurie Jones

and Cindy Goble did through their organizations and spheres of influence in creating the clinic is something the legal community should strive for: problem-solving together. In reflection on the project, Ms. Jones wrote:

[The clinic] was such a collaborative effort and each “player” in the process had equal input. We listened to each other, and supported each other, which resulted in excellent representation for the clients and a level of satisfaction for all that was unlike anything I have experienced in my professional career.

We hope the clinic continues to grow and expand in its capacity and influence. To all the individuals who have lent a hand as volunteers, students or even judges, we thank you for helping this clinic function for more than a decade.

For more information about the clinic or volunteering, please contact Ana Reynolds at ana.reynolds@laok.org.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Ana Reynolds is the pro bono coordinator for the Oklahoma City office of Legal Aid Services of Oklahoma, where she

works to expand the pro bono program. Originally from New Mexico, Ms. Reynolds relocated to Oklahoma and received her J.D. from the OCU School of Law in 2022.

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The Cost of Access to the Courts

Considering Court Fees, Costs and Other Financial Barriers to the Courts in the Context of Article II, Section 6

By Melanie Wilson Rughani

ACCESS TO JUSTICE IS NOT JUST A LOFTY IDEAL. In Oklahoma, at least, it is a constitutional imperative. Article II, Section 6 of the Constitution provides:

The courts of justice of the State shall be open to every person, and speedy and certain remedy afforded for every wrong and for every injury to person, property, or reputation; and right and justice shall be administered without sale, denial, delay, or prejudice.

While Oklahoma courts are “open to every person” at least in *theory*, there is much work to be done to ensure that this is a *practical* reality as well. From a lack of accessibility for individuals with disabilities, to language barriers, to a dearth of lawyers in rural and underserved areas, to under-resourced courts and crowded dockets, Oklahomans can face many different barriers to accessing the courts.

For most Oklahomans, the greatest barrier is the extraordinary cost of litigation. Other articles in this issue of the *Oklahoma Bar Journal* discuss various measures being taken to ensure that those who cannot afford a lawyer nevertheless have access to legal representation. This article will focus on the cost of civil¹ litigation itself – primarily, fees and costs.

CONSTITUTIONAL LIMITS ON FEES AND COSTS

Although courts are to be open to every person and justice must be “administered without sale,” the court has held that a reasonable judicial filing fee does not violate Article II, Section 6. As the Oklahoma Supreme Court has explained, the right of litigants to access the courts does not mean they are entitled to access those courts *at no cost*.² Thus, users of the court system can be required to pay reasonable fees to help fund the maintenance and support of that court system.

Judicial filing fees that are used for *other* purposes, however, have been held to present an unconstitutional burden on access to the courts.³ Thus, judicial filing fees imposed to fund laudable but merely court-*adjacent* executive

branch services – such as an adoption registry, a program to coordinate between agencies on cases involving child abuse and neglect or the Office of the Attorney General Victim Services Unit – have been held to violate Article II, Section 6. “While litigants should certainly have to bear a portion of the costs of operating the courts, they should not bear the burden of funding unrelated state programs.”⁴

Judicial filing fees must also be *reasonable*. In *Barzellone v. Presley*,⁵ the court addressed a claim that a \$349 jury fee was prohibitive and, thus, violated Article II, Section 6. After a lengthy analysis, the court ultimately found this fee to be permissible. It was careful to make clear, however, that there were limits, and a \$349 fee was awfully close:

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This opinion should not be read as a rubber stamp for any decision the Legislature might make on the amount of fees levied in association with jury trials. The Oklahoma Constitution does not anticipate that litigants will be burdened with the entire bill for maintenance of the court system. ... The constitutional right to a jury trial is a personal right, which the Legislature cannot waive through creating a fiscal barrier so unreasonable as to eliminate the right itself. When comparing the jury fee charge with a jury proceeding utilizing 6 jurors, it would appear that the \$349.00 fee charge approaches

the barrier beyond which the charge could not survive constitutional scrutiny.⁶

Along with ensuring the reasonableness of filing fees, the Legislature must refrain from creating other artificial financial barriers to access the courts as well. In *Zeier v. Zimmer, Inc.*,⁷ the court addressed a provision in a sweeping tort reform bill, passed in 2003, that required plaintiffs wishing to pursue a claim of medical negligence to first engage a qualified medical expert, obtain a written opinion that the plaintiff's claim had merit and then file an "affidavit of merit" as a prerequisite to

filing a lawsuit. This requirement was not a "fee" per se. But the plaintiff provided evidence that the cost to obtain a professional's opinion to support such an affidavit could range from \$500 to \$5,000 – an amount well above the \$349 jury fee the court had said was "approach[ing] the barrier" of an unreasonable financial burden in *Barzellone*. The court in *Zeier* thus held that the costly "affidavit of merit" requirement crossed the line and violated Article II, Section 6.⁸

Similarly, Article II, Section 6's constitutional requirements limit the use of costs and fee awards as a means of barring access to the courts. Accordingly, litigants cannot

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be required to pay outstanding legal fee awards before being allowed to proceed in another case.⁹ And fee-shifting provisions must be construed narrowly to ensure that the threat of an attorney fee award does not chill or impede access to the courts.¹⁰

INDIGENCY EXCEPTIONS

Most legislative efforts to ensure that judicial fees and costs do not create unconstitutional barriers to access focus on *exceptions* for litigants who can show they are indigent. Thus, several indigency exceptions are scattered throughout the Oklahoma statutes.¹¹

The most important of these is the *in forma pauperis* statute. This statute allows litigants who are unable to afford fees and costs in civil actions to proceed in district court without payment. A litigant seeking to make use of this procedure must complete and file a pauper's affidavit. (Sample forms for

this affidavit are available through Legal Aid Services of Oklahoma and may also be available from the particular court or tribunal at issue.¹²) If the opposing party challenges the assertion of the pauper's status with their own affidavit, the court will then hold a hearing to determine eligibility to proceed without payment of fees or costs.¹³

The *in forma pauperis* provision provides important and necessary relief for individuals with "no means" and who are thus "unable to pay the fees and costs provided for in this section and is financially unable to employ counsel."^{14 15} It is important to note, however, that this procedure applies only in limited circumstances. A litigant must be determined to have "no means" of affording the costs of pursuing litigation.¹⁶ While this provision does not require a party to demonstrate "absolute destitution" and courts have some discretion both in determining whether pauper

status is appropriate and in requiring partial fees,¹⁷ the process is not designed to assist the many Oklahomans with some, but limited, means. Further, incarcerated individuals are governed by a different statutory scheme aimed at regulating prisoner lawsuits,¹⁸ and the "privilege" of proceeding *in forma pauperis* can be lost if a litigant demonstrates a pattern of excessive, frivolous or abusive filings.¹⁹

Accordingly, while exceptions for indigent litigants are necessary, they are not always sufficient. As discussed

above, filing fees must be reasonable in all cases – for indigent and nonindigent litigants alike. As the Supreme Court put it:

The Oklahoma Constitution does not anticipate that litigants will be burdened with the entire bill for maintenance of the court system. The Oklahoma courts were never intended to be self-funded, and the increasing degree to which they have become so is disturbing. ... The Okla. Const. art. 2, § 6, guarantees the right of individuals to access the courts, and while litigation does not have to be free and entirely at the public expense, at the very least the provision means that justice cannot be for sale. The idea that money cannot be used as a bar to deny justice ... is one of the fundamental values of our legal system.²⁰

Further, where the Legislature imposes financial barriers to entry to the courts, it cannot always solve the problem by creating indigency exceptions. Indeed, the Legislature attempted to resurrect its "affidavit of merit" requirement this way twice, without success.²¹ The second time, the Legislature added a provision that allowed an indigent plaintiff to forego the affidavit of merit if they requested an exemption from the court clerk. But the court held that this provision failed "to fully remedy the [] ills" it had identified in *Zeier* because, among other things, such an exemption still required a nonrefundable application fee of \$40, and "\$40.00 is still a hurdle to the indigent."²² And even when this \$40 fee was removed in a third iteration and, thus, an indigent could proceed thereunder without any additional cost, the affidavit requirement remained for



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everyone else “a costly, meaningless and arbitrary barrier to court access” and was held unconstitutional. The court admonished the Legislature: “To be clear: whether in the context of a medical liability, professional liability, or – as in this case – expert liability, court access cannot be conditioned upon a plaintiff’s ability or inability to pay ‘some liability or conditioned coercive collection devices.’”²³

OTHER MEASURES TO REDUCE THE COST OF LITIGATION

The Oklahoma Legislature has taken some steps outside the indigency context to reduce the cost of litigation, at least in some areas. For example, the Protection from Domestic Abuse Act, 22 O.S. §60 *et seq.*, enacted a number of measures to facilitate access to the courts for victims of domestic violence. It requires the Administrative Office of the Courts to prepare a standard form petition for a protective order, it requires that pre-printed petitions be available in the court clerk’s office, and it requires the clerk or a victim-witness coordinator to assist in the completion of the petition.²⁴ It also prohibits the imposition of filing fees, service of process fees and attorney fee awards upon the plaintiff unless the court finds that the petition was “filed frivolously.”²⁵

The Legislature has also enacted some larger structural changes designed to reduce the cost of litigation. For example, the Small Claims Procedure Act provides for lower fees and streamlined court procedures for certain types of actions, including cases where the amount in controversy does not exceed \$10,000.²⁶ And recent changes to the Oklahoma Discovery Code, such as the imposition of a

“proportionality” requirement, have attempted to reduce the cost of discovery for civil litigants.²⁷

Nevertheless, the cost of litigation in Oklahoma remains, in many cases, prohibitively expensive. When considering proposals for judicial reform, we must all keep in mind the dictates of Article II, Section 6 of the Oklahoma Constitution: “The courts of justice of the State shall be open to every person,” and “right and justice shall be administered without sale, denial, delay, or prejudice.”

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Melanie Wilson Rughani is a shareholder and director at Crowe & Dunlevy PC, where she serves as co-chair of both

the Appellate and Initiative Petitions practice groups. She regularly handles appeals and original actions in the Oklahoma Supreme Court.

ENDNOTES

1. There are, of course, innumerable barriers to access justice in criminal proceedings as well. Because the rights of criminal defendants are governed primarily by other constitutional provisions and statutes unique to the criminal context, such issues are outside the scope of this article.

2. *Barzellone v. Presley*, 2005 OK 86, 126 P.3d 588.

3. *Fent v. State ex rel. Dep’t of Hum. Servs.*, 2010 OK 2, ¶¶16-17, 23-25, 236 P.3d 61, 68.

4. *Id.* ¶25.

5. *Barzellone v. Presley*, 2005 OK 86, 126 P.3d 588.

6. *Barzellone*, 2005 OK 86, ¶39 (internal citations omitted).

7. *Zeier v. Zimmer, Inc.*, 2006 OK 98, ¶19, 152 P.3d 861.

8. *Id.* The court also concluded that this affidavit of merit requirement, applicable only to medical negligence claims, constituted an impermissible special law.

9. See *Moses v. Hoebel*, 1982 OK 26, ¶¶1-2, 10-11, 646 P.2d 601, 602 (“The judge’s attempted use of the unsatisfied obligation adjudicated in the dismissed case to prevent Moses from pursuing his claim in the refiled case plainly contravenes both the Open-Court-of-Justice Clause of our own constitution as well as the federal and state minimum standards of due process. ... The state’s power cannot hence be invoked to exact from Moses a tribute in one case in order to pursue his claim in the refiled cause.”).

10. See *Head v. McCracken*, 2004 OK 84, ¶14, 102 P.3d 670, 680.

11. See, e.g., 21 O.S. §1109 (directing the appointment of counsel in deprived child or termination of parental rights cases if parent or guardian is indigent); 10 O.S. §7503-2.4 (directing appointment of counsel in adoption cases where parent or guardian is indigent); Oklahoma Rule of Professional Conduct 1.8(e) (allowing counsel to pay fees and costs for indigent clients).

12. Legal Aid Services of Oklahoma helpfully provides a sample pauper’s affidavit form on its website, which may be used in district court. See <https://bit.ly/3R5kulX>. Some tribunals provide their own forms for these affidavits. See, e.g., <https://bit.ly/3R9fBi7> (Oklahoma Supreme Court); <https://bit.ly/3RgHqEW> (Workers’ Compensation Commission). Last accessed Sept. 6, 2023.

13. 28 O.S. §152(H).

14. *Id.*

15. The fact that a petitioner is represented by counsel “does not in and of itself foreclose his right to proceed *in forma pauperis*.” *Regan v. Gurich*, 1995 OK 110, ¶2, 905 P.2d 796, 796. It is highly unlikely, however, that a party who is paying their counsel will be deemed to have “no means” and thus entitled to proceed under this statute.

16. 28 O.S. §152(H).

17. See, e.g., *Foust v. Pearman*, 1992 OK 135, ¶¶11-13, 850 P.2d 1047, 1048-50; *Smith v. Moore*, 2002 OK 49, ¶¶5-8, 50 P.3d 215, 217-18.

18. See 57 O.S. §§564-566.4.

19. See, e.g., 57 O.S. §566.2 (prohibiting an incarcerated individual who “has, on three or more prior occasions, while incarcerated or detained in any facility, or while on probation or parole, brought an action or appeal in a court of this state or a court of the United States that has been dismissed on the grounds that the case was frivolous, or malicious, or failed to state a claim upon which relief could be granted, may not proceed in a matter arising out of a civil case, or upon an original action or on appeal without prepayment of all fees required by law, unless the prisoner is under immediate danger of serious physical injury”); *Mehdipour v. State ex rel. Dep’t of Corr.*, 2004 OK 19, ¶1, 14-16, 90 P.3d 546, 547 (upholding the constitutionality of such statutes under Article II, Section 6, and noting that “[w]hile fee waivers are required in criminal cases, in the civil context the United States Supreme Court has only required a waiver of fees in a narrow category of cases where the litigant has a fundamental interest at stake,” and thus in most cases, proceeding in *forma pauperis* is a privilege, not a right).

20. *Wall v. Marouk*, 2013 OK 36, ¶24, 302 P.3d 775, 784–87.

21. See *Wall v. Marouk*, 2013 OK 36, 302 P.3d 775 (striking down the second iteration as an impermissible special law as well as a violation of Article II, Section 6); *John v. Saint Francis Hosp.*, 2017 OK 81, 405 P.3d 681 (holding that the third iteration, too, constituted an impermissible special law and was a “costly, meaningless and arbitrary barrier to court access”).

22. *Wall*, 2013 OK 36, ¶23.

23. *John*, 2017 OK 81, ¶18.

24. See 22 O.S. 60.2.

25. *Id.*; see also *Alford v. Garzone*, 1998 OK CIV APP 105, ¶¶14-15, 964 P.2d 944, 948.

26. See 12 O.S. §1751 *et seq.*

27. See 12 O.S. §3226(B)(1)(a).

Pro Bono Expungement Clinics: Creating Second Chances

By Melissa Brooks and Shenice Huff

WHAT IS EXPUNGEMENT?

Expungement is a mechanism provided by the Legislature that is designed to help those with criminal records who have completed their sentences by clearing said records. Record clearing is an important tool for providing some relief from the obstacles created by having a prior criminal history.

Expungement or criminal record cleaning by petition is governed by 22 O.S. §§18-19. Currently, there are 16 statutory grounds upon which an arrest, charge or conviction can be removed from the person's record.¹

WHY IS EXPUNGEMENT IMPORTANT?

Having a criminal record is often a major obstacle to everyday living. Obstacles include but are not limited to discrimination in hiring and housing, lack of access to the right to vote during the sentence (even if not incarcerated) and a lifelong struggle to fully rejoin society. These obstacles are felt far and wide, in and outside of Oklahoma. There are an estimated 70 million to 100 million people nationwide with criminal records.²

Oklahoma is one of 24 states in the U.S. with a record-clearing statute and one of 20 states where some criminal records may be

cleared without a petition.³ An estimated 94% of people eligible for expungement have not been able to access the service, according to Oklahomans for Criminal Justice Reform.

In addition to the relief granted by Section 18, Oklahoma has enacted a form of clean slate legislation, which is gaining momentum around the country.⁴ This 2022 law directs the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation to compile a list of clean slate eligible cases each month and send said list to the prosecuting agency and the arresting agency. If neither agency objects to the removal of the record, the record is to be cleared within 45 days of the date the notice is sent by OSBI. This process will be effective November 2025.⁵

WHY DO WE NEED PRO BONO EXPUNGEMENT CLINICS?

The truth is that Oklahomans facing issues based on their prior

criminal history often cannot afford to hire an attorney. A 2022 study by the Bureau of Labor Statistics showed that people released from federal prison faced alarming rates of joblessness, with more than 60% finding themselves unemployed at any given time during a four-year period. Even more alarming is that the rate of joblessness increased the longer they were out of prison.⁶

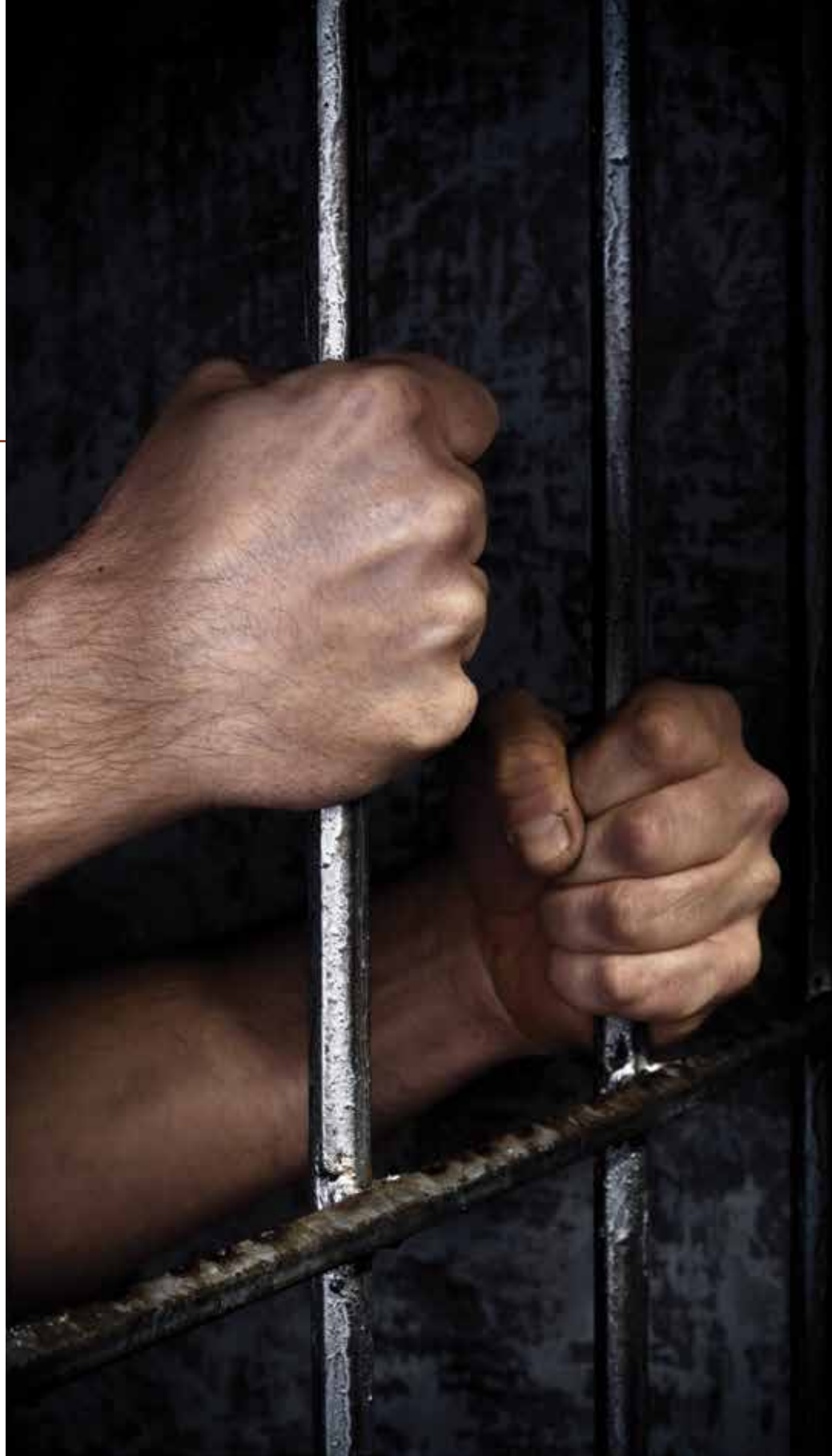
Given these truths, one may ask if it is possible to do an expungement pro se. Like many statutes that are written with the intent to help low-income and otherwise underserved Oklahomans, Section 18 expungement is simply too complicated to be done pro se. Even if they could afford an attorney or were able to complete the process on their own, the average cost of an expungement for just one county is between \$300 and \$500. Therefore, a pro bono resource like a clinic is necessary for many seeking expungements.

Statements or opinions expressed in the Oklahoma Bar Journal are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Oklahoma Bar Association, its officers, Board of Governors, Board of Editors or staff.

THE CLINIC MODEL: FROM APPLICATION TO SIGNATURE

The Urban League of Greater Oklahoma City Inc. holds its annual Expungement Expo every June, during which applicants can apply for services for the coming year. Each applicant submits an application along with their OSBI report. Each application will be reviewed for completeness and then given to the lead volunteer attorneys. The lead volunteer attorneys screen the received application and the OSBI report for expungement eligibility. If the attorneys determine the applicant is ineligible for expungement, they will receive an email or phone call with an explanation and, when applicable, a possible solution for becoming eligible. Ineligibility could be based on one of three factors: criminal record eligibility including but not limited to existing costs and fines owed, pending cases, outstanding warrants or having too many felony convictions. Additionally, each applicant must meet grant requirements.

If they are eligible, the applicant's file (OSBI report and application) will be reviewed, and a screening report will be completed, which includes pertinent case information and specific



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Expungement is just one tool of access to justice. Access to justice seeks to address systemic inequalities.

grounds for each entry. Once reviewed, a volunteer attorney drafts the petition and order. Many are drafted by volunteer attorneys at a drafting party hosted at a local law firm. Each drafted pleading will be reviewed for substantive accuracy, grammar and formatting.

After filing, a certified copy of the petition and a copy of the order are sent to all necessary parties for signatures. If there are no objections, the order is given to the assigned judge for signature. Finally, a certified copy of the final order is sent to all necessary parties, along with any owed fees. Agencies that require a fee include but are not limited to the OSBI and various police departments.

Finally, those who have received an expungement are honored at a ceremony held by the Urban League.

THE RESULTS

The Urban League's Community Convening and Social Justice Department has coordinated an Expungement Expo for the past three years. The expo provided information or services to more than 1,800 clients in 2022 alone. In 2021, the Urban League provided expungements to 19 Oklahoma County residents and 143 expungements in 2022 at no cost to the clients. The Urban League is in

the process of reviewing the 300 applications and OSBI reports from individuals who sought services from the 2023 expo.

Our goal is to help clients, who are predominantly Black, move beyond the challenges of having criminal records by educating them on how to seal their records and offering assistance with expungement if they are eligible. It is vital to help justice-involved individuals understand current and new policies to assist them in this process.

RECREATING THE MODEL IN YOUR COMMUNITY

If you are interested in recreating this incredible resource in your community, we suggest partnering with a local social services organization or workforce organization with ties to the community and a local bar association for volunteer attorneys. The other major consideration is to secure funding for the filing fees and record fees required by OSBI and other agencies, as the fees are often a barrier to exercising this right.

CONCLUSION

Expungement is just one tool of access to justice. Access to justice seeks to address systemic inequalities. Creating second

chances and restoring people to their full potential is essential to the survival of our democracy and the positive growth of all Oklahomans.

Volunteer opportunities are available to assist with reviewing cases or drafting petitions and orders. For more information about how you can volunteer in any capacity, please contact Shenice Huff at shuff@urbanleagueok.org or call 405-409-1876.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Melissa Brooks is the director of legal information and engagement at the Oklahoma Access to Justice Foundation, where she supports and expands pro bono efforts across Oklahoma and builds public legal information. Ms. Brooks earned her J.D. at the OCU School of Law with a certificate in estate planning.



Shenice Huff is an advocate for education and social/criminal justice reform with a passion for helping others. She has more than 17 years of experience in reentry, employment and advocacy. Ms. Huff has worked on a variety of projects, including expungement and work readiness training as well as creating and facilitating empowerment programs.

ENDNOTES

1. HB 3024 added two nonviolent deferred expungements. HB 3316 added automatic record clearing beginning in 2025.
2. <https://bit.ly/45vxz2q>.
3. See a "50-State Comparison" of existing record clearing laws. <https://bit.ly/3qWyV7h>.
4. See 22 O.S. 19(b).
5. See *Interim Study Report: Expungement Reform Interim Study*, page 2 at <https://bit.ly/3r8eUem>.
6. <https://bit.ly/3soXJoU>.



The G. William Rice Memorial Scholarship

Sponsored by the Oklahoma Bar Association
Indian Law Section

Seven* scholarships will be awarded to deserving 2nd or 3rd year law school students who intend to practice Indian Law in Oklahoma.

*Awards range from \$2,000.00 up to \$5,000.00.

Applications must include:

1. Cover Letter describing commitment to practice Indian Law in Oklahoma;
2. Resume describing Indian Law related activities;
3. Law school transcript; and
4. Academic professional reference letter of support for your application.

G. William "Bill" Rice was an attorney, University of Tulsa Law School professor, widely hailed expert on American Indian legal matters, and beloved mentor, colleague, and friend to many. A citizen of the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians, Bill dedicated his life to furthering the rights of Indigenous peoples worldwide. This scholarship is granted in his name and is intended to help law students with the costs of the bar exam.

Submit applications to:

Debra Gee
PO Box 1548
Ada, Oklahoma 74821

Or by email to:
debra.gee@chickasaw.net

Application Period: August 25 – October 13, 2023

Awards will be announced in November during the
OBA Annual Meeting- Indian Law Section



2023 OBA ANNUAL MEETING

NOV. 1-3 | THE SKIRVIN HILTON | OKLAHOMA CITY

I hope you are making plans to attend this year's OBA Annual Meeting Nov. 1-3 at the historic Skirvin Hilton Hotel in downtown Oklahoma City. The theme of the meeting, "Aspire & Inspire," is reflective of who we are as lawyers, continually striving for the betterment of ourselves and our profession and inspiring others to do the same.

The Annual Meeting is an excellent opportunity for networking, learning and fun, but more importantly, it is also a time for us to come together as colleagues and professionals. The last few years of the pandemic have brought a noticeable shift in the ways we interact with each other. Some of those changes have made us more efficient and productive. Some of the changes in the ways we relate to each other have not been as positive. Sometimes, we are so focused on our daily tasks that it is all too easy to forget that we are talking to real human beings on the other side of a computer screen. I would invite you to help us make this year's Annual Meeting a "homecoming" of sorts. Let's get together and talk to each other. Let's remind ourselves that we are all worthy of empathy, respect and kindness.

All are welcome at our Wednesday night open reception, which I have the honor of hosting. We will also offer CLE focused on topics of concern to every lawyer in Oklahoma. You will have the opportunity to get all your MCLE credits for the year, including two hours of ethics, during this three-day event. We will also continue our tradition of honoring our 2023 OBA Awards winners during Thursday's Annual Luncheon and our Ada Lois Sipuel Fisher Diversity Awards winners during the Thursday night Diversity Awards Dinner. As always, we will finish our gathering with the Friday morning Delegates Breakfast, General Assembly and House of Delegates meetings.

Registration is now open at www.okbar.org/annualmeeting. I look forward to coming home and connecting with you in November!

Brian T. Hermanson, Oklahoma Bar Association President



REGISTER NOW! WWW.OKBAR.ORG/ANNUALMEETING



2023 ANNUAL MEETING EVENTS

THE THEME OF THIS YEAR'S MEETING, "Aspire & Inspire," is reflective of who we are as lawyers – continually striving for the betterment of ourselves and our profession and inspiring others to do the same. The Annual Meeting is an excellent opportunity for networking, learning and fun, but more importantly, it is also a time for us to come together as colleagues and professionals.

All events will be held Nov. 1–3 at the historic Skirvin Hilton Hotel in downtown Oklahoma City unless otherwise specified. Register at www.okbar.org/AnnualMeeting. Submit meeting room and hospitality suite requests to OBA Administration Director Chris Brumit at chrisb@okbar.org.

EVENTS & HIGHLIGHTS

CLE For Everyone | Wednesday Morning and Afternoon

Join OBA CLE Wednesday, Nov. 1, for this full day of CLE, featuring six speakers on a variety of topics of interest to every lawyer. When combined with Thursday's CLE offerings, attendees can earn their MCLE credit for the full year in two days! This year's CLE will feature topics such as:

- "A Conversation with Justice Tom Colbert," where he will discuss his new book *Fifty Years from the Basement to the Second Floor*. Books will be available for purchase throughout the Annual Meeting.
- Core Concepts in Nonprofit Law, where we will hear from speaker Jeri Holmes with the Nonprofit Solutions law firm.
- Challenges related to serving deployed military clients. Judge David Guten of Tulsa and co-presenter Scott B. Goode of the Military Law Group will cover issues such as benefits and protections available to those currently serving our nation including the Servicemembers' Civil Relief Act (SCRA).

Cost: \$150

Law School Luncheons | Wednesday Midday

Connect with your fellow law school alumni during the OU College of Law, OCU School of Law or TU College of Law luncheons. The luncheons include featured speakers and recognition of outstanding senior law students. *Law school luncheons are separately ticketed events; see the Annual Meeting registration form online for more information.*

Welcome Reception Hosted by President Brian Hermanson | Wednesday Evening

All Annual Meeting attendees are invited to join us at the Welcome Reception hosted by OBA President Hermanson. Complimentary heavy hors d'oeuvres and drink tickets will be provided. *This event is included with Annual Meeting registration.*

Plenary Session | Thursday Morning

This year's Plenary Session focuses on mediation and methods for resolving disputes. Join author and speaker Megan Hunter, MBA, co-founder of the High Conflict Institute. Ms. Hunter developed the concept of the institute after 13 years in policy, legislation and judicial training with the Arizona Supreme Court and five years with the Dawes County Attorney's Office in Nebraska.



Megan Hunter, MBA, co-founder of the High Conflict Institute

She has trained businesses, workplaces, government, public service, legal, mental health, leadership groups, nonprofits, universities and other professionals across much of the U.S. and seven other countries. Session attendees will earn 3 hours of MCLE credit, including 1 hour of ethics. Co-sponsored by the OBA Alternative Dispute Resolution Section. *This event is included with Annual Meeting registration.*

Annual Luncheon | Thursday Midday



Retired Justice Steven W. Taylor

An Annual Meeting tradition! Several of the 2023 OBA award recipients will be honored, plus hear from Retired Justice Steven W. Taylor who will serve as keynote speaker. Justice Taylor, a native of McAlester, served on the Oklahoma Supreme Court from 2004 until his retirement in 2016. He served a term as chief justice from January 2011 until January 2013. He is currently serving a nine-year term as a regent for the Oklahoma State

Regents for Higher Education that began in 2019. *This is a separately ticketed event; tickets are \$75.*

Wellness Matters CLE | Thursday Afternoon

Join Lawyers Helping Lawyers for this Thursday afternoon workshop focused on mental health and well-being in the legal profession. Jon Krop, founder and CEO of Flourish Legal Well-Being, will serve as facilitator for this event. Mr. Krop is a Harvard Law School alum and pro bono attorney who has turned his career focus to teaching his fellow lawyers mindfulness and deep meditation practice. He has taught at Harvard, New York University, the University of Pennsylvania, Stanford, Yale, the Pentagon, more than 60 top law firms, Fortune 100 companies, public defenders' offices and state courts. Session attendees will earn 3 hours of MCLE, including 3 hours of ethics. Co-sponsored by the Lawyers Helping Lawyers Assistance Program Committee. *This event is included with Annual Meeting registration.*



Jon Krop, founder and CEO of Flourish Legal Well-Being

Hug A Pup | Thursday Afternoon and Evening

NEW! Mental and physical health experts agree – dogs are good for the heart! Give your heart a break and meet some special visitors we've invited to the 2023 Annual Meeting: adoptable dogs and puppies brought to you by the Oklahoma Humane Society Snuggle Service. Stop by and pet, hug or just say hello to four-legged friends; adoption specialists will be on hand to answer your questions if you happen to meet that certain someone. Co-sponsored by the OBA Animal Law Section. *This event is included with Annual Meeting registration.*

Oklahoma Bar Foundation Reception | Thursday Evening

Join fellow bar members for a reception celebrating the Oklahoma Bar Foundation and its progress toward ensuring justice through community partnerships. *This event is included with Annual Meeting registration.*

Ice Cream Social & Movie | Thursday Evening

NEW! Treat yourself to an ice cream sundae; you deserve it! Make your perfect dessert with your favorite flavor and toppings while you enjoy the company of your fellow bar members. Plus relax with friends and enjoy a movie on a big screen! *This is a separately ticketed event; tickets are \$30.*

Diversity Awards Dinner | Thursday Evening



Professor Carla D. Pratt

The Ada Lois Sipuel Fisher Diversity Awards are presented to Oklahoma businesses, groups or organizations that promote or develop diversity initiatives advancing justice, fairness and inclusivity. Awards are also pre-

sented to lawyers and members of the Oklahoma judiciary who have demonstrated dedication to raising issues of diversity and protecting civil human rights. This year's event speaker will be Professor Carla D. Pratt, who currently serves at the OU College of Law as the inaugural Ada Lois Sipuel Fisher Chair in Civil Rights, Race and Justice in Law. Professor Pratt's work focusing on the equal protection clause and balancing civil rights and civil liberties has been published in law journals and other media outlets, including *The New York Times*. *This is a separately ticketed event; tickets are \$90.*

Delegates Breakfast | Friday Morning

This year's Delegates Breakfast will feature Mike Beckham, co-founder and CEO of Simple Modern, an Oklahoma-based producer of premium drinkware and lifestyle products. Mr. Beckham will discuss leadership along with the importance of generosity and culture in the workplace. Under Mr. Beckham's leadership, Simple Modern has grown into a category leader for Amazon, Target, Walmart and Sam's Club. Prior to founding the company, Mr. Beckham spent over a decade working with non-profits. Since switching to the business sector, he has helped found and operate several e-commerce businesses, which cumulatively generated more than \$1 billion in revenue. *This event is free for delegates; the cost is \$40 for nondelegates and alternates.*

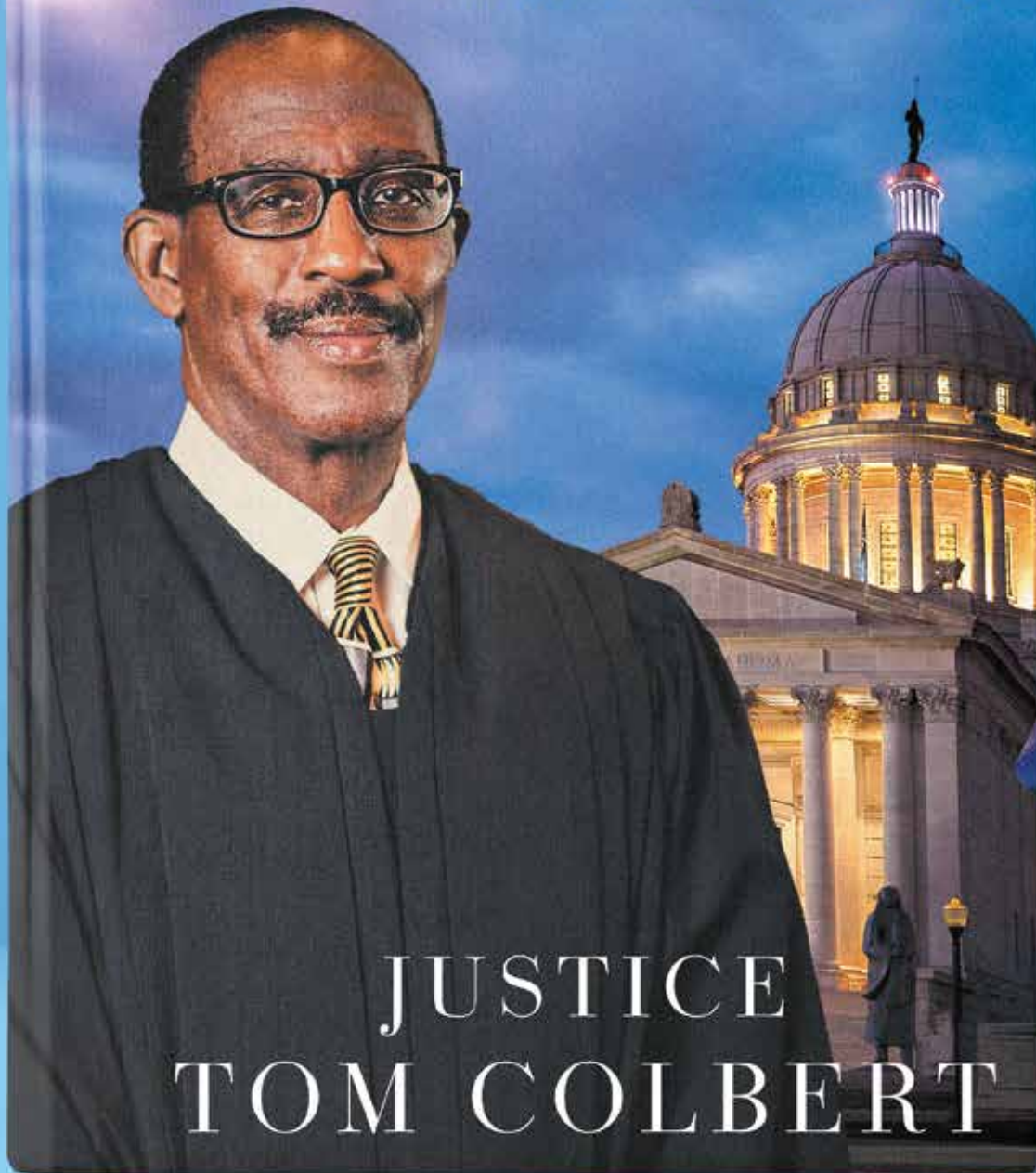


Mike Beckham,
co-founder and CEO
of Simple Modern

General Assembly and House of Delegates | Friday Morning

The most important association business of the year takes place Friday morning – OBA award presentations, updates from judicial and OBA leaders, elections and consideration of resolutions.

FIFTY YEARS FROM *the*
BASEMENT *to the* SECOND FLOOR



READ THE NEW BOOK BY JUSTICE TOM COLBERT!

Hardcover and softcover editions will be available for purchase during the
2023 OBA Annual Meeting: Nov. 1-3 | Skirvin Hilton | Oklahoma City

Justice Colbert will be participating in a Fireside Chat
with Dr. Bob Blackburn on Nov. 1 at 10 a.m.

Available on Amazon Oct. 16



ANNUAL LUNCHEON

THE OKLAHOMA BAR

Association welcomes Justice Steven W. Taylor as our 2023 Annual Luncheon speaker. Justice Taylor, a native of McAlester, served on the Oklahoma Supreme Court from 2004 until his retirement in 2016. He served a term as chief justice from January 2011 until January 2013. He is currently serving a nine-year term as a regent for the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education that began in 2019.

From 1984 to 1994, he served as associate district judge in the 18th Judicial District. In 1991, he was the first associate district judge ever to be elected president of the Oklahoma Judicial Conference. From 1994 to 2004, he served as chief judge of the 18th Judicial District, which encompasses Pittsburg and McIntosh counties.

In more than 20 years as a trial judge, he presided over more than 500 jury trials, including numerous murder trials. He notably presided over the state trial of the Oklahoma City bombing case. That historic trial of 161 counts of first-degree murder was conducted in McAlester after a change of venue from Oklahoma City.

Justice Taylor was born in Henryetta. During his high school years at McAlester High School, he served as the student body



Justice Steven W. Taylor will serve as keynote speaker during the Annual Luncheon on Thursday, Nov. 2.

president and as a member of the speech and debate team as well as the state and national honor societies. He earned a bachelor's degree in political science from OSU and a J.D. from the OU College of Law. While a student at OSU, he was actively involved in student government and honor society, and he was a member of the Kappa Sigma fraternity.

From 1970 to 1978, Justice Taylor served in the United States Marine Corps. During his military career, after his training as an infantry platoon commander, he served as a prosecutor, defense

counsel and ultimately as a special court-martial judge. He became the youngest judge in the U.S. armed forces at the age of 28 and was later promoted to the rank of major.

Following a two-year stint on the McAlester City Council, he served as the city's youngest mayor from 1982 to 1984. In 1985, the city of McAlester named its new industrial park the "Steven W. Taylor Industrial Park" in recognition of his economic development efforts as mayor. In recent years, Justice Taylor has also been recognized as "Citizen of the Year" in McAlester.

After his retirement from the bench and in recognition of his long public service, the Pittsburg County court buildings in McAlester were named "The Justice Steven W. Taylor Courthouse Complex."

Justice Taylor remains active in several civic and professional organizations. He is a board member of the Oklahoma Hall of Fame and also serves on the Board of Directors of the Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation. He currently serves as chairman of the Puterbaugh Foundation in McAlester and is past chairman of the Oklahoma City National Memorial. He served for several years on the Board of Visitors of the OU College of Law. He is the co-author of *University of Oklahoma College of Law: A*

Centennial History, a book published in 2009 detailing the 100-year history of the law school.

In recognition of his public service and significant contributions to Oklahoma, Justice Taylor has been the recipient of numerous awards and honors. In 1983, he was named one of the “Three Outstanding Young Oklahomans.” The OBA granted him the “Award of Judicial Excellence” in 2003. OSU recognized him as a “Leadership Legacy” in 2002 and a “Distinguished Alumnus” in 2003, and he was inducted into the OSU Hall of Fame in 2007. Additionally, OU presented him with its Regents Alumni Award in 2009, and with this award, he

became the only person ever to receive the highest alumni recognition from both OSU and OU. During the 2007 Oklahoma Centennial year, *Oklahoma Magazine* named him as one of the “100 Who Shaped Us” – a list of living and past Oklahomans who influenced the first 100 years of our state. In 2009, Justice Taylor was inducted into the Oklahoma Hall of Fame, the highest honor an Oklahoman can receive from the state. In 2017, Justice Taylor was inducted into the OU College of Law Hall of Fame.

He married his wife, Mary E.B. Taylor, a retired public school teacher, in 1978. They have one son, Wilson.

Justice Steven W. Taylor will present the keynote address during the Annual Luncheon on Thursday, Nov. 2, at noon as part of the OBA Annual Meeting. The topic for his keynote address will be “Professionalism.”

This year’s Annual Luncheon will be held in the Grand Ballroom at the Skirvin Hilton Hotel. During the event, the 2023 OBA Award winners will also be honored. Tickets for the event may be purchased for \$75, for the luncheon only or in addition to your Annual Meeting registration. Register now at www.okbar.org/annualmeeting.



ONE ASSOCIATION MANY OPPORTUNITIES

JOIN AN OBA COMMITTEE TODAY!

Get more involved in the OBA, network with colleagues and work together for the betterment of our profession and our communities. More than 20 active committees offer you the chance to serve in a way that is meaningful for you.

Now is your opportunity to join other volunteer lawyers in making our association the best of its kind!





2023 OBA AWARDS

AWARD OF JUDICIAL EXCELLENCE



**Judge Daman
Cantrell,
Owasso**

Judge Daman Cantrell is the recipient of the Award of Judicial Excellence for his charac-

ter and commitment to service, including his leadership within the Oklahoma High School Mock Trial Program. The mock trial program allows high school students to model the roles of attorneys, plaintiffs and defendants who present their cases under the supervision of teacher coaches and attorney advisors. For approximately 36 years, Judge Cantrell has devoted extensive amounts of time to mentoring multiple teams.

In 2003, he created a mock trial team for the children in Lakeside Home, a home for children adjudicated as delinquent and in need of supervision. During the first three years of the program, Judge Cantrell camped out at Lakeside Home on weekends and evenings for months at a time. During this time, he also coordinated scrimmages and spent evenings working with students. The program

blossomed, advancing through competitions. Judge Cantrell's participation also helped garner additional volunteers and clothing donations for Lakeside Home from the Tulsa County Bar Association. In 2007-2008, Judge Cantrell began coordinating the Lakeside Mock Trial Team and the Owasso High School Mock Trial Team, both of which still regularly excel in competitions.

He also often serves as the Law Day chair for Tulsa County, during which he recruits legal scholars to address the community and brings high school students to the Tulsa County Bar Association's Law Day Luncheon. He has served as a judge in Tulsa County for more than 20 years, initially as special judge and then district judge.

LIBERTY BELL AWARD



**Phil Fraim,
Edmond**

Since 1993, Phil Fraim has served as the president and CEO of the Oklahoma Attorneys Mutual

Insurance Company (OAMIC). Mr. Fraim regularly attends numerous OBA events such as the Annual Meeting, the Solo &

Small Firm Conference and other OBA and county bar association events where he connects with bar members on a face-to-face basis. Under Mr. Fraim's leadership, OAMIC has sponsored numerous bar-related events, the *Oklahoma Bar Journal* and several OBA committees. The company is the main financial contributor to the OBA Lawyers Helping Lawyers Assistance Program Committee.

Additionally, Mr. Fraim regularly presents CLE on the area of legal malpractice and has written articles on insurance coverage and legal malpractice for the *Oklahoma Bar Journal* and other publications. He is the past president and secretary of the National Association of Bar Related Insurance Companies, secretary of the Bar Plan Surety & Fidelity Company, a board member of the National Association of Mutual Insurance Companies and a member of the Professional Liability Underwriting Society.

JOE STAMPER DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD



Waldo Talmage Oden Jr., Altus

Waldo Talmage “Tal” Oden Jr. is a retired attorney who continues to serve

his community and contribute to the legal profession. He was a leader in reforming the judicial selection process in Oklahoma. Over the past 70 years, he has been a voice for the underserved and senior citizens in his area. He graduated from OU with a bachelor’s degree in political economics and a doctorate in law. Mr. Oden became a member of the OBA in 1952. Additionally, he earned his J.D. in 1970 and an honorary J.D. from the OCU School of Law in 1999. He has been admitted to practice before the 10th Circuit of the U.S. Court of Appeals and the U.S. District Court of Western Oklahoma. He was admitted to the United States Supreme Court in 1960.

After his admission to the OBA, Mr. Oden moved his family back to southwestern Oklahoma to improve and give back to the community that shaped him. With every major change in the community, he had an intricate role. For example, he united the Warren and Friendship school districts to form Navajo Public Schools, which allowed for the improvement of education for rural communities. He also purchased the “river farm” in 1970, and in the 1990s, he invited the Cub Scouts to use the land for day camps that ultimately became overnight camps. This year, “Camp Oden” became official upon his recognition by the Boy

Scouts of America. In the early 1980s, he fought for affordable legal assistance for the southwestern Oklahoma community during the farm crisis.

Mr. Oden has also been a valued pro bono attorney for the Legal Aid Services of Western Oklahoma and Legal Aid Services of Oklahoma. He was honored with the OBA Award for Outstanding Pro Bono Service in 1998 and 1999. His work has been highly valued by many, earning him the Silver Beaver Award, which stands for unselfish and effective service to the community. Mr. Oden also is a lifetime board member of the Executive Board of the Boy Scouts of America, Last Frontier Council. Even after retirement, he has remained active in many local nonprofit boards: the Salvation Army, the Senior Volunteer Program for Southwest Oklahoma Community Action Program, which he donates his former law office for use, and the Southwest Oklahoma Development Agency Council on Aging, which he serves as the president of. He is still quick to provide advice and plays an instrumental role in bringing agencies together for the benefit of his community.

ALMA WILSON AWARD



Bartlett A. Bouse, Woodward

Bartlett A. “Bart” Bouse has been an advocate for juveniles and at-risk children for the past

30 years. After law school, Mr. Bouse began working as an assistant district attorney at the Woodward County District Attorney’s Office, where he handled juvenile cases, delinquent and deprived. It was here that he

learned juvenile justice was not always considered a high priority and witnessed many oversights and mistakes taking place within the system, which affected how children were handled. Troubled by the oversights, Mr. Bouse learned that his supervisor, the district attorney and an associate district judge also saw the importance of reducing recidivism rates of juvenile offenders and stopping the revolving door of deprived families by early intervention.

This realization led to his lifelong work and dedication to serving children, including volunteering with Western Plains Youth & Family Services for 25 years. WPYFS is one of the largest non profit youth service organizations in Oklahoma that serves children and provides education, preventative, counseling, shelter and mobile crisis services in northwest Oklahoma. Mr. Bouse has provided pro bono legal representation for the organization and played a significant role in its development. He also served as the president twice and on the organization’s Board of Directors. His other current or past clients include The Children’s Center and Wesleyan Youth Inc.

Mr. Bouse has held various leadership positions to further his service to children in need. For four years, he served as chairman of Promoting Safe and Stable Families, a community collaborative comprised of four counties in northwest Oklahoma that distributed federal grant monies through DHS to programs filling gaps in services to children. He was appointed as commissioner of the Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth (OCCY) by Gov. Keating in 1998 and later reappointed by Gov. Keating, Gov. Henry and Gov. Fallin. As a commissioner, he oversaw the juvenile system in Oklahoma,

appointed members to various state boards and collaborated services for children by state agencies. He served as acting chair in 2001 and 2002 and as chairman of OCCY from 2003 to 2013. Since 2003, he has served on the Woodward County Post Adjudication Review Board, which reviews and monitors juvenile deprived cases in Woodward County District Court and makes recommendations to the Department of Human Services and courts. Mr. Bouse was also appointed as a board member of the Oklahoma Office of Juvenile Affairs by Speaker of the House of Representatives Charles A. McCall in August 2021 and continues to serve in that position. As a member, he is involved in planning and coordinating statewide juvenile justice and delinquency prevention services. He is a member of the OBA and the ABA and has maintained his practice at Bouse Law Firm in Woodward since 1999. Throughout his life, Mr. Bouse has fought for a strong juvenile justice system and to better the lives of children and continues to do so.

**NEIL E. BOGAN
PROFESSIONALISM AWARD**



**Guy Palmer Clark,
Ponca City**

Guy Palmer Clark was a humble and polite lawyer who epitomized honesty and integrity

in his work. He graduated with a bachelor's degree in science and received his J.D. from the OU College of Law in 1965. Mr. Clark spent his career practicing law and believing in its role in making positive changes. After law school, he attended Officer Candidate

School Training, where he graduated at the top of his class, and Naval Justice School. He served as captain of the U.S. Marines from 1966 to 1970 and was stationed in Marine Corps Air Station at Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii, as a judge advocate. Mr. Clark and his wife moved to Ponca City, where he worked in the legal department for the Continental Oil Company. In 1972, he opened his own law practice, Clark & Hron, and eventually merged with the Northcutt Law Firm in 1977. He practiced litigation in the areas of business, commercial, construction and probate law.

One of his proudest honors was serving on the OBA Board of Governors from 2000 to 2002 and the OBF Board of Trustees from 2010 to 2015. He also served on OBA committees focused on rules and ethics. Mr. Clark was also selected as a Fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers. Taking responsibility for doing good for the world, he served as an advisor to many and participated in various civic and charitable organizations. He served as president and director of the Ponca City Chamber of Commerce and the YMCA of Ponca City as well as on the Board of Directors for the University Center at Ponca City, the Ponca City Country Club and Rural Water District 3.

Mr. Clark was a proud member of the OBA and Kay County Bar Association for over 50 years. He was a fierce advocate for his clients, yet professional and polite to all, an honest and trusted professional mentor to many and an example of professionalism and civility in the legal profession.

He passed away in January 2023, and the award is being presented posthumously.

**JOHN E. SHIPP AWARD
FOR ETHICS**



**Jon R. Ford,
Enid**

Jon R. Ford has dedicated his career to improving the practice of family law in Oklahoma. He received his

J.D. from the OU College of Law in 1969. Following law school, he served as a first lieutenant in the U.S. Army from 1969 to 1971. He practices in the areas of family law, estate planning and probate and civil litigation. He previously served as the president of the Garfield County Bar Association, the Oklahoma commissioner of agriculture, an Oklahoma State University regent and the chairman of the Oklahoma Ethics Commission, among other roles. He is a member of both the OBA and the ABA Family Law Section. Throughout nearly 50 years of practice, Mr. Ford has illustrated for others what holding yourself to the highest ethical standards and leading by example is.

He has shown continued leadership in the OBA Family Law Section and always encouraged inclusion, along with the development of new leaders. Mr. Ford even closed his practice for more than two years to write a practice manual for family law. When national publishers approached him to purchase it, he donated it to the OBA Family Law Section, making it the *Oklahoma Bar Association Family Law Section Practice Manual*, as well as donated the proceeds from subscriptions to the book. These donations enabled the OBA Family Law Section to develop and put on the only state-produced Trial Advocacy Institute in the nation. Mr. Ford is a founding member and

instructor of the OBA Family Law Section Trial Advocacy Institute. In addition to his contributions to the OBA Family Law Section, Mr. Ford mentors fellow members of the bar and regularly guides lawyers dealing with issues through the Rules of Professional Conduct.

OUTSTANDING COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION AWARD



Oklahoma County Bar Association, **Cody J. Cooper, President**

Members of the Oklahoma County Bar Association tirelessly promote efforts to improve the quality of life in Oklahoma County and raise awareness of the legal community's involvement in promoting justice for all. The 2,500-member association has 12 committees, three sections and one division with high levels of participation and activity.

The Oklahoma County Bar Association's committee activity and involvement in the community have made an impact. Across various committees, the county bar association has donated \$20,000 to the Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma, provided winter clothing items to children in Head Start, completed at least one service project every month and read and supplied school supplies and books to children in elementary schools and Head Start. Other committee work included honoring members' outstanding work and milestone anniversaries with the OBA, providing *Briefcase*,

a monthly newspaper of current events and educational information, as well as behind-the-scenes work from the Fee Grievance & Ethics Committee, the Law Day Committee and the Law-Related Education Committee. This county bar association has taken the initiative to serve its community through different avenues and promote the rule of law.

EARL SNEED CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION AWARD



Mark S. Darrah, Tulsa

Mark S. Darrah has served a large role in furthering the mission of the OBA with his dedication to

providing CLE. He has presented multiple CLE programs throughout the past year, including at the OBA Solo & Small Firm Conference, in a manner that is easy to understand and meaningful to members. Following programs, he takes feedback to improve and refine his presentations, and he consistently helps brainstorm with staff for new presentation ideas. Mr. Darrah's suggestion of training for attorneys working with clients experiencing grief initiated the Community Grief Program, which is presented by a local nonprofit to give attorneys the tools to better serve clients in grief. His enthusiasm and eagerness are invaluable to the OBA and its membership.

HICKS EPTON LAW DAY AWARD



Katheryn Bell, Oklahoma City

The Hicks Epton Law Day Award honors an individual or organization for noteworthy Law Day activities.

Katheryn Bell has taken leadership of the email portion of Ask A Lawyer on and after Law Day. This includes sorting emails for volunteers to answer questions in their area of practice, providing guidance to volunteers and giving thoughtful and kind replies to questions. Additionally, she spends the week after Law Day identifying volunteers for challenging questions in niche areas of practice and ensuring the OBA provides a response to every question.

Ms. Bell was especially essential to the success of Ask A Lawyer at the beginning of the pandemic. Within a month and a half, the Law Day Committee had to transition from phone banks to email – which meant more than 100 volunteers were answering questions by email. Ms. Bell's management of the emails, volunteers and technical issues allowed the event to go off without a hitch. More than 500 participants were able to access vital information and free legal answers, which was a record for the Ask A Lawyer emails. For Law Day in 2023, she managed the emails again, resulting in more than 450 participants getting their questions answered. She has not only provided guidance and careful responses to the public's questions but also made it possible for the Law Day volunteers to manage and fulfill such large requests. Ms. Bell has greatly improved the Ask A Lawyer experience for both

the public and the volunteers and has demonstrated what it means to be a servant leader.

GOLDEN GAVEL AWARD



OBA Lawyers Helping Lawyers Assistance Program Committee, Scott B. Goode, Chair
The Golden Gavel Award

honors OBA committees and sections performing with a high degree of excellence. The Lawyers Helping Lawyers Assistance Program Committee, led by Chair Scott B. Goode and 2022 Vice Chair Sheila Naifeh, has helped lawyers navigate mental health and substance abuse issues. Members of the committee help lawyers through difficult and troubling times when they need someone the most. Several lawyers have been longtime members of the committee and consistent volunteers, spending countless hours providing support and safe places for fellow bar members to share their history, successes and failures. The committee provides education at CLE programs, directs and organizes access to treatment with the OBA's mental health partner, A Chance to Change, and makes efforts to support members – not only in Oklahoma and Tulsa counties but throughout the state. The Lawyers Helping Lawyers Assistance Program Committee has supported countless members of the bar association.

OUTSTANDING YOUNG LAWYER AWARD



Dylan D. Erwin, Oklahoma City

Mr. Erwin is an attorney in Oklahoma City. He joined the law firm of Holladay & Chilton in 2018,

which became Holladay, Chilton & Erwin in January 2022. Prior to entering private practice, Mr. Erwin was an assistant district attorney in his hometown of Lawton for Comanche and Cotton counties.

Throughout the past seven years as a member of the OBA Young Lawyers Division, Mr. Erwin has served in every possible leadership role within the division, including District 9 director, District 3 director, community service chair, secretary, treasurer, chair-elect, chair and immediate past chair. During his nine years as a member of the Oklahoma bar, he has served on multiple OBA committees and boards, such as the Access to Justice Committee, and assisted with the organization of various community service projects including the reinstatement of the Wills for Heroes program, which provides pro bono estate planning for veterans and first responders. He has hosted numerous YLD events for new members and currently serves on the Oklahoma Bar Foundation Board of Trustees and the OU College of Law Young Alumni Board. Mr. Erwin has enthusiastically devoted time and efforts to the benefit of the Young Lawyers Division. Mr. Erwin believes his approach to leadership is best summarized by the immortal words of Shirley Chisholm: "Service is the rent we pay for the privilege of living on this earth."

Mr. Erwin dedicates this award to his daughter.

OUTSTANDING SERVICE TO THE PUBLIC AWARD



J. Michael Miller, McAlester

J. Michael Miller has taken the initiative to make a huge impact on his community. Alongside

his family and other volunteers, he organized the J. Michael Miller Backpack Giveaway. Without any income guidelines, any child in need is provided with a free backpack full of school supplies. In the past five years, tens of thousands of backpacks have been given away. In 2016, Mr. Miller and his family also organized a Christmas toy giveaway for children, a tradition that has continued. He even dresses up as Santa Claus and allows the children to pick out their gifts. The J. Michael Miller Christmas Toy Giveaway has grown in success, with the past year's goal at 10,000 toys. At the end of summer and during the Christmas season, Mr. Miller ensures that children don't have to go without. His commitment to service has had a lasting impact on his community and set an example for others.

AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING PRO BONO SERVICE



Grant E. Kincannon, Altus

Grant E. Kincannon received his J.D. from the OCU School of Law in 2014 and returned

to his hometown of Altus. Upon his return, he has shown his dedication to serving his community by

helping with pro bono cases, legal clinics and legal education programs. Additionally, Mr. Kincannon also self-refers pro bono cases for clients who request his help but cannot afford to pay a fee. He is quick to offer help to Legal Aid Services of Oklahoma and confer about cases outside of their area of practice. When Legal Aid Services held a will clinic for local low-income senior citizens on short notice, Mr. Kincannon made himself available and stepped up to the plate. He advised and executed five durable designations of attorneys, four wills and one advanced directive. His assistance gave these local senior citizens peace of mind.

Mr. Kincannon has made pro bono service a priority, and many have gotten help they couldn't have otherwise due to his generosity. He additionally serves on the leadership council of the OSU Alumni Association and as the treasurer of the Jackson/Harmon County Chapter of the organization. He is a reliable and generous pillar in his community.

**MAURICE MERRILL
GOLDEN QUILL AWARD**



John D. Russell, Andrew J. Hofland and Justin A. Lollman

John D. Russell, Andrew J. Hofland and Justin A. Lollman collaborated on the article “The New Second Amendment Frontier: Litigating the Constitutionality of Firearm Offenses Under *Bruen’s* Text-and-History Standard,” which was published in the March issue of the *Oklahoma Bar Journal*.

Mr. Russell is co-chair of the White Collar Criminal Defense & Corporate Investigations group at GableGotwals. He has more than 30 years’ experience practicing criminal and civil litigation, including service as an assistant U.S. attorney for the Northern District of Oklahoma and a trial attorney for the U.S. Department of Justice, Tax Division.

Mr. Hofland is a trial lawyer at GableGotwals who practices in the areas of white-collar criminal defense, administrative law and commercial litigation. He previously served as an assistant U.S. attorney for the Northern District of Oklahoma and a Navy judge advocate. He graduated from Notre Dame Law School in 2009.

Mr. Lollman is a shareholder at GableGotwals, where his practice focuses on appeals, complex commercial litigation and white-collar criminal defense. Before entering private practice, Mr. Lollman clerked on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 7th Circuit and the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Oklahoma.

**MAURICE MERRILL
GOLDEN QUILL AWARD**



Michael J. Davis

Michael J. Davis authored the article, “*Skinner v. Oklahoma: How Two McAlester Lawyers*

Derailed Criminal Sterilization in America and the U.S. Supreme Court Invented ‘Strict Scrutiny’ as a Result,” which was published in the May issue of the *Oklahoma Bar Journal*. He is an assistant professor of criminal justice at Southeastern Oklahoma State University, where he also serves as special assistant to the president for Compliance. Mr. Davis recently completed a three-year term on the OBA Board of Governors (2020-2022) and currently serves on the MCLE Commission.

**OUTSTANDING SENIOR LAW
SCHOOL STUDENT AWARD**



TU College of Law, Logan Roehm

Logan Roehm is a native of Wichita, Kansas. She is ranked first in her class

of 152 and is the recipient of numerous CALI Excellence for the Future Awards including Civil Procedure I & II, Criminal Law & Admin, Constitutional Law I, Contracts, Property, Evidence and Copyright in the Digital Age. She currently serves as articles selection editor for the *Tulsa Law Review* and as treasurer for the Women’s Law Caucus. She is also the head campus representative for BARBRI. In her second year,

she was an associate editor for the *Tulsa Law Review*, coordinator for the Women in Recovery Book Club and treasurer for the Student Bar Association. She was a 1L delegate to the Student Bar Association and a member of the Federal Bar Association in her first year. She is a licensed legal intern for the Sanders & Associates law firm, and she has accepted a position to join Frederic Dorwart Lawyers upon graduation and passage of the bar exam.

She earned a Bachelor of Science in chemistry with an emphasis in biochemistry from Wichita State University in 2016. She also earned minors in Spanish, philosophy and political science.

She and her husband, Isaac, have two children: three-year-old Theo and eight-month-old Piper. In her spare time, she enjoys reading mystery novels, crafting, watching legal TV, trying new restaurants and spending time with her family.



OCU School of Law, Caleb Evans

Caleb Evans is a Hatton W. Sumners Scholar at the OCU School of Law. He has been

on the Dean's List and Faculty Honor Roll each semester and has been awarded 11 CALI Awards. He is a member of the *Oklahoma City University Law Review*, the president of the Native American Law Student Association and an academic fellow. Mr. Evans is a member of the William J. Holloway Jr. American Inn of Court and has served on the OCU Strategic Planning Committee as the law student representative. He earned a bachelor's degree

in political science from OCU, graduating *magna cum laude*. He was a pitcher on the OCU baseball team, where he was an NAIA Scholar, the team's recipient of the Jim Wade Award and the Campus Leadership Student Athlete of the Year. He was also active in student government, serving first as the senator for athletics, and then as the secretary of policies and initiatives, where he launched initiatives addressing period poverty, mental health and revenge pornography. In the classroom, he was named Robert S. Kerr Political Science Student of the Year. Following graduation, he and his wife, Anna, look forward to remaining in the Oklahoma City metro, where he will serve as a federal term law clerk to Judge David L. Russell in the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Oklahoma.



OU College of Law, Stephanie R. Hayes

Stephanie Hayes is a third-year student at the OU College of Law. She cur-

rently serves as an articles editor for the *Oklahoma Law Review* and a problem writing director for the Board of Advocates.

Ms. Hayes is also a member of Phi Delta Phi and the Organization for the Advancement of Women in Law. Throughout law school, Ms. Hayes has earned seven American Jurisprudence Awards and has made the Dean's Honor Roll every semester. Ms. Hayes was the recipient of the Dean's Leader Scholarship and the William T. Comfort Scholarship.

Ms. Hayes has actively participated in appellate advocacy

competitions while at OU. She was awarded Best Speaker for the OU College of Law's 1L Moot Court Competition and participated in the New York City Bar's National Moot Court Competition, where her team finished as a finalist in the regional round and a quarterfinalist in the national round. Her team was also awarded Best Brief for the 2023 National Moot Court Competition. As a 2L, she also served as a mentor and a judge for the OU College of Law's 1L Moot Court Competition. She was a recipient of the Judge Wayne Alley Advocacy Writing Award and the David Swank Professionalism Award.

Ms. Hayes received her bachelor's degree in psychology from the University of Missouri – Kansas City in 2017. Prior to deciding to go to law school, she taught English to children in China virtually while staying home with her son.

Ms. Hayes has interned at the United States Attorney's Office for the Western District of Oklahoma, Crowe & Dunlevy and GableGotwals. After graduation, Ms. Hayes will serve as a term law clerk for Judge Patrick Wyrick in the Western District of Oklahoma and will then join Crowe & Dunlevy as an associate attorney.



2023 HOUSE OF DELEGATES

Delegate certification should be sent to OBA Executive Director Janet Johnson. The list below was up to date as of the time of press.

COUNTY	DELEGATE	ALTERNATE
Adair Co.	Ralph F. Keen II	Carrie Griffith
Alfalfa Co.		
Atoka Co.		
Beaver Co.	Christopher Todd Trippet	Cole Jordan Trippet
Beckham Co.	Avery Alvin Eeds Jr.	
Blaine Co.		
Bryan Co.	David Allen Burrage.....	Heather Hillburn Burrage
Caddo Co.		
Canadian Co.	Kristy Ellen Loyall	Austin Chase Walters
	Judge Khristan K. Strubhar.....	Rene'e Diann Little
	Magdalena Anna Way	Alex G. Handley
	Jana Lee Knott	Stephanie Ann Younge
	Mary Ruth McCann	John Albert Alberts
Carter Co.		
Cherokee Co.		
Choctaw Co.	J. Frank Wolf III.....	Jon Ed Brown
Cimarron Co.	Judge Christine Marie Larson	Judge Ronald L. Kincannon
Cleveland Co.	Joshua David Simpson	Jama Haywood Pecore
	Jillian Tess Ramick	Emily Marie Virgin
	Jonathan Michael Irwin	Rickey Joe Knighton II
	Peggy Stockwell.....	Julia Catherine Mills Mettry
	(Ret.) Judge Rodney David Ring	Judge Gregory Ben Dixon
	Rebekah Chisholm Taylor	Holly Kay Jorgenson Lantagne
	Jeanne Meacham Snider	John Hunt Sparks
	Gary Alan Rife	Dave Stockwell
	Alissa Dawn Preble Hutter	Donnie G. Pope
	Lucas Michael West	Christopher Carl Lind
	Jan Meadows	Betsy Ann Brown
	Judge Jeffrey Blake Virgin.....	Gerald Blake Virgin Jr.
	Judge Lori McKinney Walkley	Elizabeth Stevens
	Judge Thad Haven Balkman	Casey Anne Hudiburg
	Richard Joseph Vreeland	Kelly Lucile Bergin
	Benjamin Houston Odom.....	Edward William Wunch IV
	Amelia Sue Pepper.....	Kristi Michelle Gundy
	Micheal Charles Salem.....	Cindy Loree' Allen
	Holly Rachelle Iker.....	Tina Jean Peot

COUNTY

DELEGATE

ALTERNATE

	Bridget M. Childers	Tyson Thomas Stanek
	Donna Marie Compton	Evan Andrew Taylor
	Kristina Lee Bell.....	Riley William Mulinix
Coal Co.		
Comanche Co.		
Cotton Co.		
Craig Co.	Kent Ryals	Leonard Marion Logan IV
Creek Co.		
Custer Co.	Justin Evan Tharp.....	Angela Christine Marsee
Delaware Co.	Clayton Matthew Baker	Kenneth Earl Wright III
Dewey Co.		
Ellis Co.	Judge Laurie E. Hays	(Ret.) Judge Joe Lee Jackson
Garfield Co.		
Garvin Co.		
Grady Co.		
Grant Co.		
Greer Co.	Cory Kendall	Eric Yarborough
Harmon Co.		
Harper Co.		
Haskell Co.		
Hughes Co.		
Jackson Co.		
Jefferson Co.		
Johnston Co.		
Kay Co.	William Oldfield.....	Lauren Jech
Kingfisher Co.		
Kiowa Co.		
Latimer Co.		
Le Flore Co.	Amanda Vernell Grant	Nicholas Eugene Grant
Lincoln Co.		
Logan Co.		
Love Co.	Richard A. Cochran Jr.	Kenneth L. Delashaw
Major Co.	Joe Dawson Houk	W. Scott Church
Marshall Co.	Kristen L. Speer	
Mayes Co.		
McClain Co.		
McCurtain Co.	Donald Ray Shaw	Emily Maxwell Herron
McIntosh Co.	Sara Ann Dupree	Cindy Marie Dawson
Murray Co.	Rebecca Brewer Johnson	Mark Damon Melton

COUNTY**DELEGATE****ALTERNATE**

Muskogee Co.	Lowell Glenn Howe.....	Matthew Ryan Price
	Parker Lee Wilkerson	Judge Roy Duane Tucker
Noble Co.		
Nowata Co.		
Okfuskee Co.		
Oklahoma Co.	Judge Richard C. Ogden.....	Benjamin Ryan Grubb
	William Todd Blasdel.....	Nicole Renea Jones
	Courtney Kay Warmington	Bart Jay Robey
	Judge Anthony Lorinzo Bonner Jr.	John Handy Edwards III
	Judge Heather Elizabeth Coyle	Curtis J. Thomas
	Judge Susan Camille Stallings.....	Chelsea Celsor Smith
	Michael Wayne Brewer.....	Coree L. Stevenson
	William Henry Hoch.....	Kayli Lynn Maxwell
	Holly Hefton.....	Zane Tyler Anderson
	Monica Ybarra Weedn.....	Aimee Lynn Majoue
	Justin Don Meek	Wyatt Daniel Swinford
	Angela Ailles Bahm	Chad William Philip Kelliher
	Jeffrey Allen Curran.....	Chance Lynn Pearson
	Amber Brianna Martin	Reign Grace Karpe
	Katherine Ruth Mazaheri.....	Barrett Ford Fuller
	Shanda Marie McKenney	Genni Dawn Ellis
	Kelli J. Stump.....	M. Courtney Briggs
	Andrew Scott Mildren.....	Jeffery Darnell Trevillion
	Mariano Acuna	Gary Wayne Wood
	Kyle Wayne Goodwin	Rachel Stoddard Morris
	Clyde Russell Woody	Faye Christine Rodgers
	Judge Natalie Nhu Mai.....	Michelle Lynn Edstrom
	Mack Kelly Martin.....	Lisa Marie Black
	Collin Robert Walke.....	Kate Naa-Amoah Doodoo
	Richard Wayne Kirby.....	Justin P. Grose
	Judge Kathryn Ruth Savage	Robert Parrish Powell
	Seth Aaron Day	Chelsi Nicole Chaffin Bonano
	Cody Jarrett Cooper	Daniel Joseph Thompson
	Fred Albert Leibrock.....	L. Camille Ruff
	Barbara Carol Stoner	Merideth Bentley Herald
Okmulgee Co.		
Osage Co.		
Ottawa Co.	Stephanie Elizabeth Tadjewski	Jeremy Jay Bennett
Pawnee Co.		
Payne Co.	Sean Ryan Webb.....	Dan Richard Byrd
	Christin Paige Lee	Anthony Richard Seeberger
	Mozella Beth Irwin-Smith	Zachary Scott Yarborough
Pittsburg Co.		
Pontotoc Co.	Ethan Byrd	
	Eric Cook	
Pottawatomie Co.		
Pushmataha Co.....	Jana Wallace	James Branam
Roger Mills Co.		
Rogers Co.		
Seminole Co.....	Blayne Phillips Norman	William Donald Huser
Sequoyah Co.....	Kent S. Ghahremani	Jordan Lee Pace
Stephens Co.		
Texas Co.....	Rodrigo Carrillo	
Tillman Co.		
Tulsa Co.		

COUNTY

DELEGATE

ALTERNATE

Wagoner Co.	Richard Loy Gray Jr.....	Ben Steven Chapman
	Eric Wayne Johnson.....	Kenneth A. Hicks
Washington Co.		
Washita Co.		
Woods Co.		
Woodward Co.	Sierra Lauren Roach.....	Bartlett Andrew Bouse

DELEGATE

ALTERNATE

Oklahoma Judicial Conference

Dist. Judge Justin P. Eilers	Dist. Judge Stuart Tate
Assoc. Dist. Judge Russell Vaclaw	Assoc. Dist. Judge Jana Wallace
Special Judge Jennifer H. McBee	Special Judge Richard Hathcoat

PAST PRESIDENTS – DELEGATES AT LARGE

William J. Baker.....	Garvin Isaacs Jr.
Stephen D. Beam	Michael Charles Mordy
Michael Burrage.....	Charles Donald Neal Jr.
Charles “Chuck” W. Chesnut.....	Jon Keith Parsley
Cathy M. Christensen.....	William George Paul
Gary Carl Clark.....	David K. Petty
Andrew M. Coats	David Allen Poarch Jr.
M. Joe Crosthwait Jr.	Deborah Ann Reheard
Melissa Griner DeLacerda	Douglas W. Sanders Jr.
Renee DeMoss.....	Susan Stocker Shields
Sidney George Dunagan.....	Allen M. Smallwood
John A. Gaberino Jr.	James Thomas Stuart
William Robert Grimm.....	Linda Suzanne Thomas
Kimberly Hays	Paul Miner Vassar
James Rouse Hicks	



2024 OBA BOARD OF GOVERNORS VACANCIES

Nominating Petition deadline was 5 p.m. Friday, Sept. 1, 2023

OFFICERS

President-Elect

Current: Miles T. Pringle,
Oklahoma City
(One-year term: 2024)
Mr. Pringle automatically becomes OBA president
Jan. 1, 2024
Nominee: **D. Kenyon Williams Jr., Sperry**

Vice President

Current: D. Kenyon Williams Jr., Sperry
(One-year term: 2024)
Nominee: **Amber Peckio Garrett, Tulsa**

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Supreme Court Judicial District One

Current: Michael R. Vanderburg, Ponca City
Craig, Grant, Kay, Nowata, Osage, Ottawa, Pawnee,
Rogers and Washington counties
(Three-year term: 2024-2026)
Nominee: **William Ladd Oldfield, Ponca City**

Supreme Court Judicial District Six

Current: Richard D. White Jr., Tulsa
Tulsa County
(Three-year term: 2024-2026)
Nominee: **Philip D. Hixon, Tulsa**

Supreme Court Judicial District Seven

Current: Benjamin R. Hilfiger, Muskogee
Adair, Cherokee, Creek, Delaware, Mayes, Muskogee,
Okmulgee and Wagoner counties
(Three-year term: 2024-2026)
Nominee: **Chad Alexander Locke, Muskogee**

Member At Large

Current: Kara I. Smith,
Oklahoma City
Statewide
(Three-year term: 2024-2026)
Nominee: **Judge Matthew C. Beese, Broken Arrow**
Nominee: **John P. Cannon, Edmond**
Nominee: **Jeffery Darnell Trevillion, Oklahoma City**

NOTICE

Pursuant to Rule 3 Section 3 of the OBA bylaws, the nominees for uncontested positions have been deemed elected due to no other person filing for the position. The election for the Member at Large position will be held at the House of Delegates meeting Nov. 3, during the Nov. 1-3 OBA Annual Meeting. Terms of the present OBA officers and governors will terminate Dec. 31, 2023.

OKLAHOMA BAR ASSOCIATION NOMINATING PETITIONS

(See Article II and Article III of the OBA Bylaws)

OFFICERS

President-Elect

**D. Kenyon Williams Jr.,
Sperry**

Nominating Petitions have been filed nominating D. Kenyon Williams Jr., Sperry, for President-Elect of the Oklahoma Bar Association Board of Governors for a one-year term beginning Jan. 1, 2024. Fifty of the names thereon are set forth below:

Christopher Lance Carter, Sarah C. Miller, Bailey Bryant Betz, Jack Coryell Bowker, Stuart Edward Van De Wiele, Margo Elizabeth Shipley, Thomas Michael Ladner, James Collins Hodges, Brita Haugland-Cantrell, James Robert Gotwals, Molly Anne Aspan, Paul Mario Catalano, Michael Hoyt Smith, Logan Lawrence James, Daniel Reading Ketchum, Richard Mark Petrich, Brian Timothy Inbody, Aaron Christian Tiffitt, Stephen Russell McNamara, Mason Blair McMillan, James C.T. Hardwick, James Kevin Hayes, Pamela Sue Anderson, Blake Howard Gerow, Mark Banner, Seth Aaron Day, Jonathan A. Epstein, Collin Robert Walke, John Frederick Kempf Jr., Stephen R. Pitcock,

Daniel Jess Glover, Robert Dale Nelon, Raymond Stephen Rudnicki, Moira C. G. Watson, W. Davidson Pardue Jr., Jared Raye Ford, Bryan Ross Lynch, Kent Allan Gilliland, Elaine Renee Turner, Michael Raye Ford, Daniel Vaughn Carsey, Alexandra Albert Crawley, Alyssa Marie Gillette, John Wesley Gile, Hilary Hewitt Price, Emily Paige Pittman, Eric Christopher Money, Braden Wesley Mason, Nicholas Edwin Thurman and Johnathan Louis Rogers.

Tulsa County Bar Association and a total of 126 signatures appear on the petitions.

Vice President

Amber Peckio Garrett, Tulsa

Nominating Petitions have been filed nominating Amber Peckio Garrett, Tulsa, for Vice President of the Oklahoma Bar Association Board of Governors for a one-year term beginning Jan. 1, 2024. Fifty of the names thereon are set forth below:

Miles Thomas Pringle, Shanda Marie McKenney, James Rouse Hicks, Kara Anne Smith, Jennifer Marie Castillo, John Eric Barbush, Sheila Joanne Naifeh,

Kara Elizabeth Pratt, Caroline Marie Shaffer, Randy Gayle Gordon, Brett Daniel Cable, Joseph Christopher Bone, Adam Patrick Carroll, Kensey Rose Wright, Peggy Stockwell, Melissa Griner DeLacerda, Sara Marie Schmook, Hilary Kate McKinney, Charles W. Chesnut, A. Mark Smiling, Michael Paul Taubman, Jim Charles McGough Jr., Catherine Zilahy Welsh, Sarah Elizabeth Yates Reddy, Shea Bracken, Ann Elena Murray, Jazmin Guadalupe Zaragoza, J. Andrew Brown, Parker Lee Wilkerson, Roger Henry Hilfiger, Scott Bearskin Goode, Philip John Eller, Ralph Louis Reynolds, Ryan Robert Nigh, Guy Anthony Fortney, Clayton Lee Badger, Angela Ailles Bahm, Felina Noelle Rivera-Brown, Allyson Leigh Knox, Kindra Nicole Dotson, Millicent Faye Daniels, James R. Prado, Anna Yesenia Sanchez, Blake Edward Lynch, Brecken Allyn Wagner, Paul Dillon Pratt, Tony Wayne Edwards, Matthew Thomas Sheets and Ellen Clare Quinton.

A total of 51 signatures appear on the petitions.

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Supreme Court Judicial District No. 1 William Ladd Oldfield, Ponca City

A Nominating Resolution from the Kay County Bar Association has been filed nominating William Ladd Oldfield, Ponca City, for election of Supreme Court Judicial District No. 1 of the Oklahoma Bar Association Board of Governors for a three-year term beginning Jan. 1, 2024.

Supreme Court Judicial District No. 6 Philip D. Hixon, Tulsa

A Nominating Resolution from the Tulsa County Bar Association has been filed nominating Philip D. Hixon, Tulsa, for election of Supreme Court Judicial District No. 6 of the Oklahoma Bar Association Board of Governors for a three-year term beginning Jan. 1, 2024.

Supreme Court Judicial District No. 7 Chad Alexander Locke, Muskogee

Nominating Petitions have been filed nominating Chad Alexander Locke, Muskogee, for election of Supreme Court Judicial District No. 7 of the Oklahoma Bar Association Board of Governors for a three-year term beginning Jan. 1, 2024. Twenty-four of the names thereon are set forth below:

Mark Andrew Grober, Andrew Lange Hayes, Daniel Joe Medlock, Stephen R. Money, Roger Clifton Johns, Justin Clay Stout, Paula Ranallo Wilburn, J. Ronald Wright, Gary William Huggins, James Eric Jones, Rachel Marie Dallis, John Phillip Bennett, Parker Lee Wilkerson, Matthew Ryan Price, John Tyler Hammons, Lowell Glenn Howe, David M. Littlefield, Juliet N. Brennan, Alexander Cale Wilson, Nalani Michele Ching, Brandon Ryan Gassaway and Brian Dean Watts.

Muskogee County Bar Association and a total of 28 signatures appear on the petitions.

Member at Large Judge Matthew C. Beese, Broken Arrow

Nominating Petitions have been filed nominating Judge Matthew C. Beese, Broken Arrow, for election of Member at Large of the Oklahoma Bar Association Board of Governors for a three-year term beginning Jan. 1, 2024. Fifty of the names thereon are set forth below:

Vaden F. Bales, James C.T. Hardwick, James Kevin Hayes, John Michael Hickey, Pamela H. Goldberg, William Walker O'Connor, Mark Banner, Keith Andrew Wilkes, Daniel Reading Ketchum II, Kyle Douglas Freeman, Samantha Weyrauch Davis,

William Deke Canada, David Thomas Potts, Logan Lawrence James, Mason Blair McMillan, James M. Reed, Dale Kenyon Williams Jr., Richard Mark Petrich, Jeffrey Lee Wilson, Steven William Soule, David Grenville Graves, James Craig Milton, Brian Timothy Inbody, John Thomas Richer, Ann Ellen Keele, Parker Huntington Foster, Christopher Lance Carter, Thomas Haskins Hull Jr., Christopher Joe Gnaedig, Pamla E. Kehn Cornett, Craig Roger Armstrong, Cynthia J. Braly, Chad Robert Whitten, Susan Hamilton Jones, Bret Alexander Unterschuetz, Tara Sebourn Inhofe, John Robert Evans Jr., David John Lowell Frette, Blake Ivy Whitten, Patricia Blair McMillin, Molly Elizabeth Lawyer, Lindsey Kay Christopher, Matthew Richard DeFehr, Mark Louis Collier, Larry Rodman Edwards, Justin Clay Stout, Lowell Glenn Howe, Daniel Joe Medlock, Chad Alexander Locke and Roger Clifton Johns.

A total of 79 signatures appear on the petitions.

John P. Cannon, Edmond

Nominating Petitions have been filed nominating John P. Cannon, Edmond, for election of Member at Large of the Oklahoma Bar Association Board of Governors for a three-year term beginning Jan. 1, 2024. Fifty of the names thereon are set forth below:

David Troy McKenzie,
Dalton Hayes Guthery,
Kasey McGough Odom,
Thomas Austin Stone,
James M. Levine, Shelley Lynne
Levisay, Lynn Lee Loftis,
Pamela Springer Stillings,
Andrew Edward Hutter,
Col. Robert Donald Gifford II,
Evan Darrell Watson, Paul Scott
Faulk, Joseph Daniel Costa,
Elliott Clark Crawford, Larry Don
Biddulph, William R. Pierce,
Jaye Harie Mendros, Sheila Ann
Cunningham, Mark L. Springer,
Jason Erskine Lowe,
Benjamin Charles Brown,
Steven Corey Stone,
James David Ogle,
Joshua Colby Smith,
Richard William Anderson,
John William Coyle IV,
Christopher Kent Bridge,
Cody E. Gilbert, Hopson Ned
Burlison II, Levon Danner
Eudaley, Gunner Zaine Cy
Briscoe, Emily Elizabeth
Grossnicklaus, Chelsea Grace
Scoggins, Bailey Ann Daugherty,
Samantha Lea Patterson,
Aushianna Nadri, Jared Scott
Plaudis, Erick W. Harris,
John E. Hunsucker, Jodi Heather
Childers, Sean Michael Sanders,
Sajani Geevarghese Zachariah,
Eric Lee Strocen,
Steven Michael Holden,
Mary Irene McMahan,
Garin Derek Chance, Ky Dowdy
Corley, Joseph Alan Dobry,
Sadie Jo Flynn and
LeAnne McGill.

**A total of 69 signatures
appear on the petitions.**

**Jeffery Darnell Trevillion,
Oklahoma City**

Nominating Petitions have
been filed nominating Jeffery
Darnell Trevillion, Oklahoma
City, for election of Member
at Large of the Oklahoma
Bar Association Board of
Governors for a three-year
term beginning Jan. 1, 2024.
Fifty of the names thereon are
set forth below:

Miguel Angel Figueroa,
Lucas Miller Meacham,
Lauren Elizabeth Kiefner,
Joel Warren Harmon,
Timothy Dylan Hartsook,
Timothy James Gallegly,
Drew Allen Cunningham,
Kari Anne Hoffhines,
Richard Paul Propester,
Chandler G. McDonald,
Andrew E. Henry, Amanda Mayo
Finch, Jaycee McKenzie Booth,
Kelly Suzanne Kinser,
James William Larimore,
Joan Lorraine Lopez, Gary Wayne
Wood, Holly Hefton, Jordan K.
Field, David Michael Sullivan,
Adam Wade Childers,
Margaret Kay Martin,
Michael Wayne Bowling,
Andrew Nash Rader,
Sarah Margaret Simpson,
Anthony Jerome Hendricks,
Elizabeth Ann Scott,
Matthew Colin Kane,
Grant Michael Lucky,
Joshua Kyle Hefner,
Devin Carolyn Frost,
Daniel Gordon Webber Jr.,
Phillip Gardner Whaley,
Gerard F. Pignato, Jason Andrew
Ryan, Patrick Ray Pearce Jr.,
Madison B.C. Miller,
Chance Lynn Pearson,
Robert Ray Redwine,

Corey Adeline Neller,
Stephen Lee Jantzen,
Paula Meyer Jantzen,
Timothy Lee Rogers,
Robert Wallace Hill,
Ashley Faith Vinson,
Dillon James Hollingsworth,
Emily Brooks Kosmider,
John Charles Gotwals,
Melissa Henke Sartin and
Bruce E. Roach Jr.

**A total of 99 signatures
appear on the petitions.**



2024 LEADERSHIP & CANDIDATES



2023 President
Brian T. Hermanson,
Ponca City

Brian Hermanson is the district attorney for Kay and Noble counties and has served in this position since 2011. He received his bachelor's degree from Carroll College in Wisconsin and his J.D. from the OU College of Law. He is a

member of the Kay and Noble county bar associations, having served as president of the Kay County Bar Association in 1989 and the Noble County Bar Association from 2016 to the present.

Mr. Hermanson was vice president of the OBA in 1988, Oklahoma Bar Foundation president in 1993 and chair of the OBA Young Lawyers Division in 1982. He has served as chair of the OBA General Practice/Solo and Small Firm, Law Office Management and Technology, and Criminal Law sections and has served three terms as chair of the Litigation Section. He has also served as president of the Oklahoma Chapter of the American Board of Trial Advocates, the Oklahoma Criminal Defense Lawyers Association, on the OBA Board of Editors and as president of the Oklahoma District Attorneys Association and chair of the District Attorneys Council. Mr. Hermanson was awarded the David Moss Memorial Award for Outstanding District Attorney in 2016, the Oklahoma Criminal Defense Lawyers Association Clarence Darrow Award in 1986, the OBA Earl Sneed Award in 1998, the OU Regents Award in 1994, and he was named Sole Practitioner of the Year by the ABA Solo, Small Firm and General Practice Division.

He has served on the Oklahoma Court of Criminal Appeals Committee for Uniform Criminal Jury Instruction

since 1994, chair of the ABA Standing Committee on Gavel Awards, president of the Ponca City Rotary Club, Ponca City YMCA, Ponca Playhouse, an *ex officio* member of the Ponca City Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors and an elder and past chairman of the board of Community Christian Church. Mr. Hermanson lives in Ponca City with his wife, Ruslyn, and is the proud father of two grown daughters.



2024 President
Miles T. Pringle,
Oklahoma City

Miles Pringle is the executive vice president and general counsel at The Bankers Bank in Oklahoma City. A native Oklahoman and third-generation attorney, Mr. Pringle is licensed to practice law in Oklahoma, Missouri and Texas. After graduating from Heritage

Hall High School, he obtained his bachelor's degrees from the University of Kansas in political science and history and his J.D. from the University of Missouri – Kansas City School of Law, where he was a member of the National Moot Court Team. Prior to joining The Bankers Bank, he was a partner with the law firm of Pringle & Pringle.

He has served the OBA and the legal community for many years, including as governor and vice president of the OBA Board of Governors, chair of the OBA Financial Institutions and Commercial Law Section and chair of the OBA Legislative Monitoring Committee. He is a frequent CLE speaker on topics ranging from banking law to legislative issues, and he has had multiple articles published in the *Oklahoma Bar Journal* and regularly contributes to the Oklahoma

County Bar Association *Briefcase*. In 2018, he was awarded the Oklahoma County Bar Association Geary L. Walke Briefcase Award, and in 2021 and 2022, he received the OBA President's Award.

Mr. Pringle is a recognized leader in the banking community. He has been a teacher for the Oklahoma Bankers Association Intermediate Banking School and other banking organizations. As an officer and past chair of the Financial Institution and Commercial Law Section, he helps to coordinate and present at the Annual Banking and Commercial Law Update. In 2022, Mr. Pringle was named on the 40 Under 40 list of national emerging community bank leaders by the Independent Community Bankers of America.

He is also very involved in his community. He is a board member of the Oklahoma City Rotary Club, Oklahoma's oldest and largest civic organization, and has served on the boards of local nonprofits. Mr. Pringle and his wife, Andrea, have two sons and are members of St. Luke's United Methodist Church.

Elected as the 2023 president-elect and serving one year in that position, he automatically becomes president Jan. 1, 2024.

2024 NEWLY ELECTED BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Pursuant to Rule 3, Section 3 of the OBA bylaws, the following nominees have been deemed elected due to no other person filing for the position.



President-Elect

*D. Kenyon Williams Jr.,
Sperry*

Ken Williams is a shareholder at the Tulsa office of Hall Estill Hardwick Gable Golden & Nelson PC, having joined the firm in 1996. Prior to joining the firm, Mr. Williams served as in-house counsel for Helmerich & Payne after forming his own firm in

1977. He received his bachelor's degree in petroleum engineering from TU and his J.D. from the TU College of Law. He is licensed in Oklahoma and Arkansas and represents businesses and communities in environmental, regulatory, administrative and litigation matters.

Mr. Williams has been active in the OBA and the Tulsa County Bar Association throughout his career. He has served in almost every TCBA position, including president in 2014 and Trustee of the Tulsa County Bar Foundation. While serving as president, the TCBA was awarded the OBA Outstanding County Bar Association Award. The association also received the OBA Hicks Epton Law Day Award for its outstanding Law Day while he was serving as TCBA Law Day chair.

In the OBA, Mr. Williams currently serves as vice president, has served as governor for the 6th Judicial District on the Board of Governors and as a master, vice chief master and presiding master for the Professional Responsibility Tribunal. He currently serves as chair of the Professionalism Committee and has also served as chair of the Environmental Law Section and on various other OBA committees. Currently, Mr. Williams serves on the Budget Committee and the Judicial Professional Responsibility Commission.

He is a frequent CLE presenter and the recipient of the OBA Earl Sneed Award in recognition of his

contribution to continuing legal education. The TCBA also awarded him the Gary C. Clark Distinguished Service Award in recognition of his many years of service to the TCBA and the legal profession.

Mr. Williams serves as an elder of The Park Church of Christ, where he and his wife, Teresa, and two of their three adult children and families also attend. Their third adult child and two of their eight grandchildren live in Scottsdale, Arizona.



Vice President

Amber Peckio Garrett, Tulsa

Amber Peckio Garrett is a solo practitioner with the Amber Law Group in Tulsa. As an AV-Rated Preeminent attorney with over 20 years of trial experience, Ms. Peckio Garrett specializes in litigation, insurance dispute litigation, complex family litigation and personal injury litigation. She

also works extensively in the newly established cannabis law field in Oklahoma and routinely counsels Oklahoma businesses in all cannabis-related legal matters.

Ms. Peckio Garrett is a past governor for the OBA Board of Governors and chairs the newly formed OBA Cannabis Law Committee. She is also a member of the American Bar Association, where she serves as vice chair for the Tort Trial & Insurance Practice Section Cannabis Policy and Law Committee and as state membership chair for Oklahoma.

She has previously served the OBA as an Oklahoma Bar Foundation Trustee (2014-2019), Women in Law Committee past chairperson (2007), Lawyer Advertising Task Force member (2007), Young Lawyers Division board director for Tulsa (2006-2014), Professionalism Committee member, Law Related Education Committee chairperson, Solo and Small Firm Conference Planning Committee member, Audit Committee member (2022), graduate of the inaugural OBA Leadership Academy (2009) and as a frequent CLE speaker. She is also the co-host of the Between Two Weeds: The Joint Sessions Cannabis Legislation update CLE for the OBA.

She received her J.D. from the TU College of Law in 2003 and is admitted to practice in all courts in the state of Oklahoma and before the U.S. District Court for the Eastern, Northern and Western districts of Oklahoma and the U.S. 10th Circuit Court of Appeals.

Ms. Peckio Garrett lives in Tulsa with her fiancé, C. Alex Stodghill, and their beloved dogs, Woody, Bulliet and Hendricks. She was active in the Tulsa County Bar Association, having served as vice

president (2020), secretary (2019) and small firm director (2021). As a graduate of the TU College of Law, she has served as a past member of the Alumni Association board. Ms. Peckio Garrett is also a sustaining member of the Junior League of Tulsa.



Supreme Court Judicial District One

William Ladd Oldfield, Ponca City

William Oldfield was born in Stillwater and grew up in Osage County. He graduated from OSU with a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering and received his J.D. from the OU College of Law. He was admitted

to the Oklahoma bar in 2005.

Mr. Oldfield is a partner with the Ponca City law firm of Northcutt, Clark, Oldfield & Jech, where his practice is primarily focused on civil litigation. He is admitted to practice before the U.S. District Courts for the Western, Northern and Eastern districts of Oklahoma. He also serves as the chief trial court judge for the Osage Nation.



Supreme Court Judicial District Six

Philip D. Hixon, Tulsa

Philip D. Hixon is a shareholder in the Tulsa office of GableGotwals. He has more than 20 years of litigation and contract negotiation experience representing the interests of clients in a variety of legal matters including healthcare, construction,

business counseling and general civil litigation, with approximately 25 state and federal appeals.

He received his J.D. *summa cum laude* and his graduate degree in business administration from OCU. He earned his undergraduate degree *summa cum laude* in business administration from the University of Central Oklahoma.

Mr. Hixon is active with the bar and in the Tulsa community. He is a past president of the Tulsa County Bar Association and was honored with the TCBA's Distinguished Service Award in 2020-2021, as its Outstanding Young Lawyer in 2003-2004 and as the President's Award recipient in 2020-2021 and 2003-2004. He has served on the OBA Budget Committee.

He also serves on the board and executive committee of Morton Comprehensive Health Services and the board of the Will Rogers Memorial Foundation. He is a past board member of Tulsa Habitat for Humanity and Rebuilding Together Tulsa and a former commissioner of the Will Rogers Memorial Commission.



Supreme Court Judicial District Seven

Chad Alexander Locke, Muskogee

Chad Locke graduated from the University of Missouri – Kansas City School of Law in 2004. Licensed in both Oklahoma and Missouri, he joined the family practice in 2006 and has been a fixture in

the community ever since. He is a member of the Muskogee County Bar Association and is admitted in the Muskogee Creek Nation and Cherokee Nation as well as the U.S. Eastern District Court of Oklahoma.

Mr. Locke has served on countless charitable boards, including Kids' Space Child Advocacy Center, Monarch Inc., Muskogee Little Theatre, Five Civilized Tribes Museum and Downtown Muskogee Inc. He is a past president of the Exchange Club of Muskogee, Muskogee Young Professionals, and he was inducted into the 14th class of Leadership Muskogee. For the past four years, Locke Law Office has sponsored the All Pro Tour Junior Clinic, where Muskogee children have the chance to learn from professional golfers. Mr. Locke holds himself to the highest standards of integrity, hard work and fairness. When he isn't in the courtroom or helping around the local community, he enjoys traveling with his three daughters and wife, golfing, reading and spending time on the lake.



OBA YLD Chair

Laura Talbert, Oklahoma City

Laura Talbert works for ISN Corporation, which is the prime contractor for the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to provide Mortgage Compliance Manager services. Ms. Talbert graduated from the OU College of Law

in 2012 and worked as a prosecutor upon graduation. Prior to starting her own firm, she also worked for the

General Counsel's Office for the Oklahoma Department of Corrections. In her free time, she enjoys playing volleyball and cheering on the Sooners.

MEMBER AT LARGE ELECTION

The election for the Member at Large position will be held at the House of Delegates meeting on Nov. 3 at the 2023 OBA Annual Meeting.



Judge Matthew C. Beese, Broken Arrow

Judge Matthew C. Beese currently serves as an administrative law judge with the Oklahoma Corporation Commission. He is actively engaged in local and state professional organizations, previously serving as a governor on the OBA Board of Governors for Judicial

District 7. He is also a member of several OBA committees, currently serving on the Professional Responsibility Commission and the Mandatory Continuing Legal Education Commission. Judge Beese is a past president and past vice president of the Muskogee County Bar. He has been an instructor for the Oklahoma Forensic Academy and the Council on Law Enforcement Education and Training, providing training to law enforcement agencies. He also served as a municipal judge for the town of Okay and is a trained and certified court-appointed mediator and arbitrator, serving as chair of numerous arbitration panels.

Judge Beese has presented seminars on municipal topics for Leadership Muskogee and Youth Leadership Muskogee and has frequently spoken on municipal regulation topics. He is also a former adjunct instructor of business law. He has an associate degree from Northeastern Oklahoma A&M, a bachelor's degree in education from Missouri Southern State College and a J.D. from the Northern Illinois University College of Law. He is licensed to practice law in Oklahoma and Illinois (retired status) and is admitted to practice before the Eastern District of Oklahoma, the Northern District of Illinois, the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals and the United States Supreme Court.



John P. Cannon, Edmond

As the proud owner and founder of Cannon & Associates, John Cannon provides unwavering dedication to his team and the services they provide to families navigating the challenges of family law and criminal justice.

In addition to running Cannon & Associates, he is a judge advocate in the Oklahoma Army National Guard and is currently serving as brigade judge advocate for the 45th Field Artillery Brigade in the Middle East on a nine-month deployment in support of Operation Inherent Resolve and the Office of Strategic Services. He will return to his family and firm in October 2023.



Jeffery D. Trevillion Jr., Oklahoma City

Jeff Trevillion Jr. is a director in the Oklahoma City office of Crowe & Dunlevy and a member of the firm's Taxation Practice Group. He is an experienced trial lawyer and a certified public accountant who also chairs the Criminal Defense, Compliance &

Investigations practice. Mr. Trevillion, a native Tulsa, has called Oklahoma City home for more than 20 years. His OBA service history includes the Professional Responsibility Tribunal, past president of the Oklahoma Bar Foundation, the Credentials Committee, the Strategic Planning Committee, the inaugural Leadership Academy and the Young Lawyers Division board.



**OKLAHOMA
BAR FOUNDATION**
Law. Education. Justice.

Trustee Nominations Announced

Pursuant to Article IV, Section 2 of the Bylaws of the Oklahoma Bar Foundation (OBF), the following OBF members have been nominated by the 2023 Nominating Committee to serve on the OBF Board of Trustees: Justin Meek, OKC, Dylan Erwin, OKC, and David Van Meter, OKC have been nominated for their first three-year terms.

Any group of twenty-five or more Partners for Justice (formerly Fellows) may submit the name of a member of the Foundation as an additional nominee by submitting a petition duly signed by said Partners and submitted to the OBF Executive Committee no later than ten days after the nomination slate is published in the Oklahoma Bar Journal. Nominating petitions can be mailed to Renee DeMoss, Executive Director, Oklahoma Bar Foundation, P.O. Box 53036, Oklahoma City, OK 73152-3034, or delivered to 1901 North Lincoln Boulevard, Oklahoma City, OK 73105-4901.

Cool.



**New frequency discounts. New digital ad sizes.
Design services available. How refreshing.**

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EVENT SPONSORS

Diversity Awards Dinner Sponsored By
McAFEE & TAFT

Hug-a-Pup Sponsored By



Sponsorship opportunities are still available!

To learn more about sponsoring the OBA Annual Meeting, visit www.okbar.org/annualmeeting/sponsors



REGISTRATION

Join your peers Nov. 1-3 for great CLE, camaraderie, networking and fun events at this year's Annual Meeting. See what's included with your Annual Meeting registration below. Plus, choose from optional CLE courses with nationally recognized speakers and add-on events and luncheons. Your Annual Meeting registration includes:

- Conference gift for in-person attendees
- OBA continental breakfast and hospitality refreshments daily
- Wednesday evening's welcome reception
- Thursday's Plenary Session (3 hours general MCLE credit)
- Thursday's Wellness Matters: Lawyers Helping Lawyers program (3 hours ethics MCLE credit)
- Thursday evening Oklahoma Bar Foundation Reception

HOW TO REGISTER



ONLINE

Register online at
[www.okbar.org/
AnnualMeeting](http://www.okbar.org/AnnualMeeting)



MAIL

OBA Annual Meeting
P.O. Box 53036
Oklahoma City, OK 73152



PHONE

Call Ben Stokes
at 405-416-7026 or
800-522-8065



FAX/EMAIL

Fax the form to
405-416-7092 or email
it to bens@okbar.org

MEETING DETAILS

LOCATION

Most activities will take place at the Skirvin Hilton, One Park Avenue, Oklahoma City.

PARKING

The Skirvin Hilton offers covered on-site valet and self-parking options. There are also several garages, surface lots and street parking spots nearby.

HOTEL

Fees do not include hotel accommodations, which must be booked separately. To reserve a room, call 1-800-HILTONS and mention the Oklahoma Bar Association 2023 Conference (or group code OKBAR3) or visit <https://bit.ly/3E9b33A> to book online. The deadline to reserve a room under the room block is Oct. 10.

CANCELLATION POLICY

A partial refund *may* be available after the conclusion of the Annual Meeting. Contact Ben Stokes at bens@okbar.org.

SPECIAL NEEDS AND REQUESTS

Please notify Ben Stokes at bens@okbar.org at least one week in advance if you have a special need and require accommodation.

Check www.okbar.org/annualmeeting for updates.

MEETING REGISTRATION

Name _____

Badge Name (if different from roster) _____ Bar No. _____

Email _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

Name of nonlawyer guest _____

Check all that apply: Judiciary Delegate Alternate

Check the box next to your choice:

ON OR BEFORE OCT. 10

Member New Member*

\$200 Free

ON OR AFTER OCT. 11

Member New Member*

\$250 \$150

Member who has not attended Annual Meeting in the past 10 years: \$150

**Members sworn in within the past two years*

MEETING REGISTRATION SUBTOTAL \$ _____

CLE

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 1:

Check the box next to your choice: \$150 (*In Person*)

THURSDAY, NOV. 2:

Check the box next to your choices: Morning Plenary* (*In Person*) Afternoon Wellness Matters* (*In Person*)

**Included with registration*

CLE SUBTOTAL \$ _____

EVENTS & LUNCHEONS

OU College of Law Luncheon - *Wednesday, Nov. 1* OU luncheon registration is available at deahcaldwell@ou.edu or 405-401-6628

TU College of Law Luncheon - *Wednesday, Nov. 1* TU luncheon registration is available at TULawAlumni@utulsa.edu

OCU School of Law Luncheon - *Wednesday, Nov. 1* OCU luncheon registration is available at 405-208-7102

Annual Luncheon - *Thursday, Nov. 2* _____ # of tickets at \$75 \$ _____

Ice Cream Social and Movie - *Thursday, Nov. 2* _____ # of tickets at \$30 \$ _____

Diversity Awards Dinner - *Thursday, Nov. 2* _____ # of tickets at \$90 \$ _____

Delegates Breakfast for nondelegates and alternates - *Friday, Nov. 3* _____ # of tickets at \$40 \$ _____

Delegates Breakfast for delegates (no charge) - *Friday, Nov. 3* (check if attending as a delegate)

EVENTS & LUNCHEONS SUBTOTAL \$ _____

PAYMENT

Check enclosed: Payable to Oklahoma Bar Association

TOTAL COST \$ _____

Credit Card: Visa Mastercard American Express Discover

Card # _____ CVV _____ Exp. Date _____

Authorized Signature _____

Check www.okbar.org/annualmeeting for updates.

TUESDAY,
OCTOBER 24, 2023

Beginning @ 9 a.m.
Oklahoma Bar Center

MCLE - 6/0

FEATURED SPEAKER:



RICK HOROWITZ, PRIME PROSE, LLC



MORE EFFECTIVE WRITING MAKES MORE EFFECTIVE LAWYERS

There's what you know in your particular areas of the law – and then there's how well you're able to communicate that knowledge. Communicate it to a variety of different audiences, through a range of different documents, to accomplish many different goals.

That can be hard work. Even stressful work. Maybe you could use a little help.

Help is on the way! Join writing coach and former attorney Rick Horowitz at the Oklahoma Bar Association on Tuesday, October 24, for "More Effective Writing Makes More Effective Lawyers." It's sure to be a lively and highly practical workshop that will reintroduce you to your legal-writing toolbox, including a few tools you didn't know were in there.

We'll explore the fundamentals (and the critical details) of creating clear, concise, well-organized, persuasive legal documents. We'll take a fresh look at some of the assumptions and habits that often lead lawyers down less-than-productive writing paths. And we'll talk about other approaches that might be even better options for you in dealing with the variety of legal-writing tasks most lawyers face.

Briefs, memos, client letters, even daily correspondence all benefit from your deeper understanding of what goes into successful writing, so we'll examine good and not-so-good writing to see what worked, what didn't, and why. Among the topics we might cover:

- What should you include, and what can you leave out?
- Should you use an outline? Are there better options?
- Is your writing flexible enough to take on multiple assignments – and multiple readers?
- Are there ways to overcome "blank-screen panic"?
- How do you help your readers (whoever they are) follow your argument (wherever it goes)?
- Shouldn't your brief be a little more...brief?
- Can you make the in-house editing process less of a strain?
- And do you really need all that legalese?

"Rick was fabulous! He was clear, concise, and entertaining. Who knew that this 'More Effective Writing' class would be both effective and enjoyable?" – Past Attendee

Disclaimer: All views or opinions expressed by any presenter during the course of this CLE is that of the presenter alone and not an opinion of the Oklahoma Bar Association, the employers, or affiliates of the presenters unless specifically stated. Additionally, any materials, including the legal research, are the product of the individual contributor, not the Oklahoma Bar Association. The Oklahoma Bar Association makes no warranty, express or implied, relating to the accuracy or content of these materials.



ADA LOIS SIPUEL FISHER DIVERSITY AWARD WINNERS



**Judge
Richard C.
Ogden**

Judge Richard C. Ogden is the first openly gay member of the judicial branch in Oklahoma.

Judge Ogden was first selected as a special judge for Oklahoma County and took office Feb. 12, 2015. On May 11, 2017, Gov. Mary Fallin appointed Judge Ogden as a district judge for Oklahoma County. He was then elected to the same office in 2018 and 2022.

Judge Ogden received his J.D. from the OU College of Law. Before taking the bench, he practiced law in Oklahoma City as a civil litigator. During his years in private practice, he was active in many LGBT organizations. He was the first and founding president of the Cimarron Alliance Group in 1995 and later served as chairperson of the Cimarron Alliance Foundation for three years. The Cimarron organizations were the first advocacy and educational LGBT organizations in Oklahoma that took major steps in building an effective statewide advocacy LGBT civil rights movement. The Cimarron organizations later became Freedom Oklahoma, which is active to this day.

Judge Ogden also served as the first openly gay chair of the OBA Young Lawyers Division in 1996. He was selected as the Outstanding Young Lawyer for Oklahoma County in 1996 and Outstanding Young Lawyer for Oklahoma in 1997. In 2010, Gov. Brad Henry appointed Judge Ogden as a regent for the Regional University System of Oklahoma, which is the largest university system in Oklahoma and is the governing board for the University of Central Oklahoma, Northeastern State University, Southwestern Oklahoma State University, East Central University, Southeastern Oklahoma State University and Northwestern Oklahoma State University. He served as chairperson of the regents from 2013-2014. Judge Ogden thoroughly enjoyed his service as a regent but was required to resign from the board when he became a judge in 2015.

He served as president of the Oklahoma Judicial Conference in 2021-2022 and is the current president of the Oklahoma County Bar Association. Judge Ogden is a Trustee of the Oklahoma Bar Foundation and a member of the OU College of Law Board of Visitors. He is the vice presiding administrative judge for the 7th and 26th judicial districts. He is also a longtime and active member

of St. Paul's Episcopal Cathedral in Oklahoma City, where he married his husband, Nathan, on Oct. 1, 2022.



**Lenora F.
Burdine**

Lenora F. Burdine has served as an assistant public defender in Oklahoma County for the Juvenile

Division since February 2015. She began practicing law in October 1983. She has since worked in private practice, served as staff attorney for the UAW Legal Services Plan and represented the Corporation Commission's Public Utility Division as deputy general counsel.

Her areas of expertise include social security law, wills and trusts, estate planning, probate, guardianships, municipal and state criminal representation, public utility regulation in administrative court, juvenile law and appellate work at the Oklahoma Supreme Court and Court of Criminal Appeals.

Ms. Burdine has been a member of the Oklahoma City Association of Black Lawyers (OCABL) since 1983 and represented the OCABL as an appointed board member of the Oklahoma County Bar

Association. She was the first African American appointed to the Oklahoma City Community College Board of Regents and the Pioneer Library System governing board.

After earning her bachelor's degree in business administration from Oklahoma State University, she fulfilled her calling to earn her J.D. from the OU College of Law.

She is married to Kevin Burdine, and they have two children, Jake, a staff sergeant in the U.S. Air Force serving in South Korea, and Emmily, a licensed pharmacist in the Oklahoma City area. Ms. Burdine is a pillar in the Oklahoma County Juvenile Justice Center and has helped many youths with rehabilitation.



Angie R. Christopher

Angie R. Christopher currently serves as the global vice president for Human Resources and Talent

for the HSG division of Convatec. In her role, she leads the people processes for more than 1,000 employees in seven countries with nearly \$500 million in revenue.

Ms. Christopher attended OU, where she received both her

Bachelor of Arts and her J.D. Her inspiration and leadership have been recognized at Convatec with several global awards, including the Operations Award, CEO Award of Excellence and the Corporate Values Award for her work in diversity, equity and inclusion. She also was recognized as one of *The Journal Record's* 50 Making a Difference.

She serves on the board of Allegiance Credit Union, as advisory chair for the Institute for Emerging Leaders, co-chair of the Big Brothers Big Sisters Taste of OKC and has served as the keynote speaker at numerous local civic events.

Ms. Christopher is most passionate about her opportunities through her philanthropic connections as a board member and life member of the Urban League of Greater Oklahoma City, chair of the Urban League's Community Convening and Social Justice Committee, co-chair of the Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, executive council for Guiding Right Inc., as well as board chair and member of Delta Sigma Theta Inc.

She is also proud to serve in her local church, Champions Church, under the leadership of Bishop Charles Martin. Her

philosophy: To serve others well, we need to have faith that we are ultimately serving someone greater.



Tom Vincent

Tom Vincent is a shareholder at GableGotwals and is a certified regulatory compliance manager and certified

information privacy professional for the United States. He brings extensive experience in regulatory compliance to his practice, having served as chief compliance officer for different financial institutions as well as anti-money laundering compliance officer, responsible for ensuring compliance with a myriad of requirements, including customer protection, privacy, information security, corporate governance and reporting information to the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN).

Mr. Vincent assists his clients with issues involving data security and privacy, including the establishment of privacy and cybersecurity programs, negotiation of appropriate protections for client information, breach identification and required reporting. He

applies his corporate compliance experience to guide clients through the myriad of state, federal and international laws, regulations and requirements to ensure compliance and protect them from potential lawsuits and regulatory action.

He also regularly presents on privacy and security issues to a variety of audiences, including attorneys, healthcare practices, financial and human resource professionals and professional services firms. He is currently an adjunct instructor of cyber security at TU and is a member of the Information Systems Security Association.

Currently, Mr. Vincent serves as a member of the Board of Directors of Tulsa Zoo Management Inc. He also serves as co-chair of GableGotwals's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee and is a member of the Banking Working Group of the Law Firm Antiracism Alliance, which focuses on examining the practices and habits of banking and financial institutions to determine how best to dismantle those elements that have the effect of perpetuating racial inequity. He is a member of the Tulsa Regional Chamber's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Advisory Committee, serves on the Board of Trustees of Riverfield Country Day School and chairs the steering committee of the RCDS Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice Alliance.



Southwest Center for Human Relations Studies at the University of Oklahoma

The Southwest Center for Human Relations Studies (SWCHRS) stands as a beacon of progress, equity and social justice in the

southwestern United States. Established in 1961 as a department of University Outreach/ College of Continuing Education (CCE) at OU, SWCHRS has a rich history of fostering understanding, cooperation and inclusivity in a diverse and ever-changing society.

SWCHRS's journey began more than six decades ago when it was founded with the primary mission of extending the resources of OU to communities in the southwest dealing with civic conflict and controversy. During this period, one of the center's landmark initiatives was the organization of large, annual two-week workshops designed to assist public school personnel in complying with court-mandated school integration decisions. These workshops were instrumental in promoting integration and inclusivity in education.

At its core, SWCHRS is a university-based human relations and social justice organization with a mission to promote equity and human rights through education, research, advocacy and collaboration. This mission extends beyond the university's boundaries to impact society, ultimately striving to transform people and institutions to ensure opportunities for all.

One of the critical pillars of SWCHRS is its commitment to promoting understanding and cooperation. The center recognizes the importance of bringing together various stakeholders from different sectors of society, including businesses, education professionals, the media, government agencies, labor unions and community-based organizations. By uniting these diverse groups, SWCHRS aims to create equal opportunities in multiple spheres, thereby addressing systemic inequalities that persist in society.

The center's work has been supported by a range of influential agencies and organizations, including the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the National Conference for Community and Justice (NCCJ), the American Jewish Committee (AJC) and others. This support underscores the recognition of SWCHRS's critical role in advancing social justice and promoting harmonious human relations.

Today, SWCHRS remains steadfast in its commitment to its core mission. It continues to provide invaluable learning opportunities, facilitated training, research and knowledge dissemination on intercultural and intergroup relations issues. These issues encompass a wide spectrum, including communication, conflict management, collaboration, leadership, organizational culture, decision-making and inclusive practices.

From its humble beginnings in the 1960s to its enduring commitment to promoting understanding and cooperation today, SWCHRS has been an essential catalyst for positive change in the United States. As it continues its mission into the future, SWCHRS remains a beacon of hope, education and professional skill development for a more just and inclusive society where opportunities are available to all by promoting understanding and cooperation among those of different racial, ethnic, religious and economic backgrounds.



Phillips Murrah PC

Phillips Murrah PC is a full-service law firm providing integrated business and litigation services to a diverse base of clients since 1986.

The firm is focused on four pillars to establish a trustworthy relationship: integrity, service, competency and excellent results. Today, the firm has offices in Oklahoma City and Dallas.

Phillips Murrah continuously strengthens its commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion, both internally and in the legal community. The firm's efforts demonstrate a consistency of purpose and growth while providing real opportunities for its attorneys to lead and flourish in their legal careers. The firm is also dedicated to facilitating positive change in the overall community to support a more diverse, equitable and inclusive society. The following are key examples of Phillips Murrah's efforts:

Midsize Mansfield Plus Certification – In 2023, it achieved Midsize Mansfield Plus Certification, a science-driven, data-based, 18-month diversity initiative for law firms facilitated by Diversity Lab. Phillips Murrah is the only Oklahoma-based law firm to be certified as such. The firm's Midsize Mansfield Plus Certification confirms that its processes for advancement and job qualifications for leaders are transparent and that it proactively considers a broad slate of talent, including lawyers who are historically underrepresented in law. Certification "Plus" indicates that, in addition to successfully meeting the program requirements, Phillips Murrah has achieved a 30% representation of historically underrepresented lawyers in current leadership roles and pathway activities.

Law360 Glass Ceiling Report: Women in Law – Phillips Murrah has been recognized for the past four years by Law360, a New York City-based legal industry news service, in their national *Glass Ceiling Report: Women in Law*,

which tracks gender diversity and equity within law firms. The firm has been recognized as a "Ceiling Smasher," a nationwide list that includes law firms, categorized by size, with the highest percentage representation of women equity partners. Additionally, Phillips Murrah is ranked in the top 10 in firmwide representation of female attorneys in both associate and of counsel categories.

Phillips Murrah Fellowship Program – Since 2021, Phillips Murrah has facilitated its Fellowship Program in partnership with Oklahoma City-area law schools, continuing its efforts to foster diversity and inclusion within the firm and in the legal community at large and to recruit talented, motivated future attorneys who reflect the diversity of the overall community. The Fellowship Program exposes historically underrepresented students to the everyday practice of law, cultivates relationships and provides mentorship and opportunities to enhance legal skills. The program, spearheaded by the firm's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee, is designed in alignment with Phillips Murrah's goal to create a workplace culture that is open to all needs, perspectives, contributions, experiences and backgrounds.

Mona Salyer Lambird Spotlight Award 2023 Winners Honored

SINCE 1996, SPOTLIGHT Awards have been given to five women who have distinguished themselves in the legal profession and have lit the way for other women. In 1998, the award was named to honor the late Mona Salyer Lambird, the first woman OBA president and one of the award's first recipients. The award is sponsored by the OBA Women in Law Section. Each year, all previous winners nominate and select the current year's recipients. A plaque bearing the names of all recipients hangs in the Oklahoma Bar Center in Oklahoma City. This is the 27th year of award presentations. Recipients were honored during the Women in Law Conference held Sept. 22 in Oklahoma City.



LeAnne Burnett

LeAnne Burnett is a director in Crowe & Dunlevy's Oklahoma City office. Her practice focuses on environmen-

tal and regulatory aspects of utility grade renewable energy projects and on environmental law, regulation and litigation, including guiding clients through issues related to chemicals alleged to affect human health or the environment, such as per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, commonly referred to as PFAS.

Ms. Burnett is a founding member of the OBA Environmental Law Section and served as chair of that section. She was an editor and co-author of the *Oklahoma Environmental Law Handbook* published by the OBA.

She spent nearly a decade as Crowe's associate development director, mentoring yearly classes of lawyers through the early years of their careers. She has also been a member of the Robert J. Turner American Inn of Court since 1998. She serves on the Oklahoma County Bar Association's Fee Grievance and Ethics Committee. She was recognized by *The Journal Record* as one of its 50 Making a Difference and received their Leadership in Law Award.

She is also very involved in the legal volunteer community. Since 2000, she has been a member of the Executive Board, the Board of Directors and a volunteer lawyer and guardian *ad litem* for Oklahoma Lawyers for Children. She was a three-term member of the Board of Trustees of Pivot, a turning place for youth (formerly Youth Services for Oklahoma County), and upon appointment, she has served as a federal guardian *ad litem* in child sex trafficking cases in the Western District of Oklahoma.

She was admitted to practice law in Oklahoma in 1989 after she received her J.D. from the OU College of Law with honors. She is also admitted to practice in

Arkansas and Kansas. She received her Bachelor of Arts from Southern Methodist University in 1971.



Susan Carns Curtiss

Susan Carns Curtiss' legal career story began in 2002 when she served as a juror on the *Badillo* case. It

was this jury experience that led her to law school in the fall of 2003.

She began her litigation career with Farmers Insurance Co., and then several years later, she accepted an invitation to work for a large plaintiffs' firm. By 2014, she opened her own law office, Carns Curtiss Law PLLC, where her work is devoted to the representation of plaintiffs – primarily in motor vehicle-related personal injury and wrongful death claims.

As Ms. Carns Curtiss developed her practice, she searched online for a place where women in the profession could gather. Unable to find one, she launched GIRL ATTORNEY LLC, which facilitates a national community for women attorneys and helps to level the "playing field" for women in the practice of law. Since its inception in 2016, this community has organically grown from serving 46 women attorneys located in Oklahoma City to over



36,000 women across the United States. In 2018, GIRL ATTORNEY LLC was awarded the OBA Diversity Committee's Ada Lois Sipuel Fisher Diversity Award.

In 2022, for her work through GIRL ATTORNEY LLC, Ms. Carns Curtiss was awarded the Donald Deason Community Service Award from the Ruth Bader Ginsburg American Inn of Court, as well as the Community and Public Service Award from the OCU School of Law Alumni Association.

She loves to run, read and knit. She and her husband enjoy traveling, and she is the proud mother of Anna, Lily and James. She enjoys volunteering and speaking locally and nationally for professional and civic groups, schools and churches. In 2013, she gave a TEDx talk titled "The Imperfect Path to Peace."



Tricia Everest

Tricia Everest, a native of Oklahoma City and fourth-generation Oklahoman, attended Casady High School before

receiving her Bachelor of Science from Vanderbilt University. Ms. Everest started her legal career as a legal assistant at Crowe & Dunlevy, splitting some of her time working with Oklahoma Lawyers for Children. She went on to earn her J.D. from the OU College of Law. After graduation, she served the state as an assistant attorney general. In 2010, she left the Attorney General's Office to help build public/private partnerships to help people find hope and purpose by creating pathways for stronger lives.

Ms. Everest was the founding chair of ReMerge, which diverts mothers from prison and empowers the women to build healthy foundations for themselves and their children. She plays an integral role as the founding chair of Palomar, which removes barriers for abuse victims to access the services they need. Her other philanthropic endeavors include chair of Allied Arts, past chair of the YMCA – the organization's first female chair in its 128-year history – and service on numerous nonprofit boards and commissions.

Amongst a number of recognitions, Ms. Everest received the Lee Allan Smith Oklahoma Legacy Award in 2013. The Oklahoma County Bar Association presented her with the President's Professional Award in 2017. In 2019, she was inducted into the OCU Meinders School of Business Oklahoma Commerce and Industry Hall of

Honor. She received the state's highest honor in 2019 with her induction into the Oklahoma Hall of Fame. She received the 2020 Volunteer of the Year from the Department of Justice for her work with crime victims. In 2023, she was inducted into the Order of the Owl, the OU College of Law's highest honor. She also holds an honorary doctorate in humanities from OCU. She currently is the cabinet secretary of Public Safety for the state of Oklahoma.



Betsy Grabel Jackson

Betsy Grabel Jackson is a shareholder at Hall Estill, where she practices in the corporate/commercial

area, specifically dealing in securities, business transactions, commercial finance, mergers and acquisitions, and real estate. She earned her J.D. from the TU College of Law and her undergraduate degree – a Bachelor of Business Administration in finance – from Southern Methodist University. Ms. Jackson began her legal career as a law clerk for Judge Paul Mannes, chief bankruptcy judge for the District of Maryland, and then

with Weil, Gotshal & Manges in Washington, D.C. Upon returning to her hometown of Tulsa in 1996, she joined Hall Estill. She serves on the firm's Board of Directors and Executive Committee.

Ms. Jackson is an active member of the Tulsa community and currently serves on the Board of Directors for the Tulsa Area United Way and Tulsa CARES. In addition, she is the vice chair of the Tulsa Women's Commission. Further, she was an attorney recipient in 2018 of the OBA Diversity Committee's Ada Lois Sipuel Fisher Diversity Award for her participation in a variety of corporate and community events that promote mutual respect, acceptance, cooperation or tolerance and contribution to diversity awareness in the community and workplace. In 2019, she was named one of *The Journal Record's* 50 Making a Difference, which recognizes Oklahoma's leading women who epitomize leadership in both their professional endeavors and in the communities where they live.

Ms. Jackson is married to Judge Gerald L. Jackson, magistrate judge for the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Oklahoma. In 2022, they were jointly honored at the Tulsa CARES Red Ribbon Gala with the Patricia Chernicky Luminary Award.



Sharolyn Whiting-Ralston

Sharolyn Whiting-Ralston is an attorney with McAfee & Taft in Tulsa, where she practices

business and class action litigation. She recently rejoined the firm after working more than nine years in-house at Samson Resources Co., serving most recently as general counsel, vice president of human resources and corporate secretary. As a member of the executive management team at Samson, she managed all aspects of the legal and human resources functions of the organization. Prior to June 2014, she was a shareholder at McAfee & Taft, practicing litigation and labor and employment law.

Ms. Whiting-Ralston graduated with highest honors from the TU College of Law in 2006 and earned her Bachelor of Science in business from OSU. She currently serves as chair of the Board of Directors for the Tulsa Day Center, where she has served on the board for nine years. She volunteered for Tulsa Lawyers for Children from 2006 to 2014.

INTERESTED IN ANIMAL LAW?

New OBA Section Forming Now



The Animal Law Section has been created to promote and assist OBA members with studying and understanding the laws, regulations and court decisions dealing with the legal issues involving animals. It is also intended to provide a forum for members to consider, educate and discuss the legal issues involved in humanity's relationship and coexistence with animals. Annual dues are \$20, and any OBA member in good standing is eligible to join. Interested in section leadership? Contact Enid attorney Gary Maxey at 60maxey@gmail.com or 918-323-5160 for more information.

VISIT AMS.OKBAR.ORG TO JOIN!



OKLAHOMA BAR ASSOCIATION



BAR BENEFITS

**You make a difference.
OBA member benefits
make it easier.**

MYOKBAR COMMUNITIES

MyOKBar Communities serves as the main communication tool for OBA committees and sections and automatically links with your MyOKBar account, so your information is synced.

DID YOU KNOW?

1. Communities replaced OBA committee and section electronic mailing lists. If you are a member of a committee or section, you are auto-subscribed to receive a single email each day called a "daily digest" that contains all Communities communications from the previous 24 hours. You can change your preferences to receive an email for any notification or to no email notifications of postings.
2. For critical messages, like a meeting notice or immediate alerts, section officers and select OBA staff are able to send urgent emails to all section members regardless of email notification preferences.
3. All sections and committees have a file library where meeting notices, agendas and minutes, as well as forms, practice aids, CLE presentation materials and other helpful files are stored. Through the upload/download feature, Communities allows for open discussions and file sharing available to every OBA member.
4. Join the optional forums to get the most out of Communities. These include Practice Management Advice with tips from the OBA Management Assistance Program, OBA Water Cooler for general discussions, Mentoring and Young Lawyers Division. They are open to all OBA members, but you will need to affirmatively join and set your email notification preferences.

CHECK IT OUT

Access Communities through the "MYOKBAR Communities" link on your MyOKBar page or by visiting <https://community.okbar.org>.

FIND MORE MEMBER BENEFITS AT WWW.OKBAR.ORG/MEMBERBENEFITS

2024: Your Time to Get Involved!

NOW IS YOUR OPPORTUNITY to join other volunteer lawyers in making our association the best of its kind – by signing up to serve on an OBA committee in 2024.

Did you know the OBA has more than 20 active committees – meaning there are many opportunities for you to serve and lead in your profession? By joining a committee, you can get more involved in the association, network with colleagues and work together for the betterment of

our association and our communities – all in a way that is meaningful and relevant to you!

By serving on an OBA committee, you can tackle projects for which you have a passion – whether that’s improving access to justice for all Oklahomans, fostering public understanding of the law or helping your fellow lawyers who may be facing challenges with addiction or substance abuse. Plus, you’ll have the opportunity to build relationships with your professional

colleagues and build your network and leadership skills at the same time.

I invite you to review the full list below. We will make appointments for 2024 soon, so choose your top three committee choices and fill out the online form at <https://bit.ly/3SjMzce>.

I am looking forward to hearing from you!

Miles Pringle
President-Elect



To sign up or for more information, visit www.okbar.org/committees/committee-sign-up.

Access to Justice

Works to increase public access to legal resources

Awards

Solicits nominations for and identifies selection of OBA Award recipients

Bar Association Technology

Monitors bar center technology to ensure it meets each department’s needs

Bar Center Facilities

Provides direction to the executive director regarding the bar center, grounds and facilities

Bench and Bar

Among other objectives, aims to foster good relations between the judiciary and all bar members

Cannabis Law

Works to increase bar members’ legal knowledge about cannabis and hemp laws

Civil Procedure and Evidence Code

Studies and makes recommendations on matters relating to civil procedure or the law of evidence

Disaster Response and Relief

Responds to and prepares bar members to assist with disaster victims’ legal needs

Diversity

Identifies and fosters advances in diversity in the practice of law

Group Insurance

Reviews group and other insurance proposals for sponsorship

Law Day

Plans and coordinates all aspects of Oklahoma’s Law Day celebration

Law Schools

Acts as liaison among law schools and the Supreme Court

Lawyers Helping Lawyers Assistance Program

Facilitates programs to assist lawyers in need of mental health services

Legal Internship

Liaisons with law schools and monitors and evaluates the legal internship program

Legislative Monitoring

Monitors legislative actions and reports on bills of interest to bar members

Membership Engagement

Facilitates communication and engagement initiatives to serve bar members

Member Services

Identifies and reviews member benefits

Military Assistance

Facilitates programs to assist service members with legal needs

Professionalism

Among other objectives, promotes and fosters professionalism and civility of lawyers

Rules of Professional Conduct

Proposes amendments to the ORPC

Solo and Small Firm Conference Planning

Plans and coordinates all aspects of the annual conference

Strategic Planning

Develops, revises, refines and updates the OBA’s Long Range Plan and related studies

Access to Justice: A Cornerstone of a Just Society

By Janet Johnson

WHEN I THINK ABOUT this topic, I am taken back to my senior year of undergrad at OU. I was in my capstone course with Dr. J. Rufus Fears, and we often discussed what cornerstones in society made America different. I'll spare you a regurgitation on my capstone paper, but I will say I pointed out five key points then and have managed to come up with five key points here. Coincidence? I think not.

Access to justice is a cornerstone of any fair and equitable society. It embodies the principle that every individual, regardless of their social or economic status, should have the means to seek recourse through the legal system when their rights are violated or when they face legal challenges. As I am

sure you have read from our many other authors, gaining said access can be difficult for many.

ONE: UPHOLDING INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS FOR ALL

At the heart of access to justice lies the protection of individual rights. In a society where access to justice is readily available, individuals can seek legal remedies when they are wronged. This ensures that even the most vulnerable members of society have a chance to assert their rights and seek redress when they suffer harm, discrimination or injustice.

TWO: PROMOTING EQUALITY

Access to justice is a powerful tool for promoting equality. Without it, disparities in wealth

and power can lead to a situation where only the privileged can access legal assistance. This inequality perpetuates existing social divides and hampers progress toward a fairer society. By providing equal access to the legal system, we level the playing field and ensure that justice is blind to one's socioeconomic status.

THREE: ENCOURAGING ACCOUNTABILITY

A just society holds individuals and institutions accountable for their actions. Access to justice plays a pivotal role in this process by allowing individuals to bring their grievances to court. When people know that they can seek legal remedies, it acts as a deterrent against wrongful conduct – whether it's a case of corporate misconduct or individual wrongdoing. This accountability strengthens the fabric of society and fosters a culture of responsibility.

FOUR: FOSTERING TRUST IN INSTITUTIONS

Trust in institutions is essential for the stability of any society. When individuals believe that the legal system is accessible and fair, they are more likely to have confidence in the institutions that uphold the rule of law. Conversely,

At the heart of access to justice lies the protection of individual rights. In a society where access to justice is readily available, individuals can seek legal remedies when they are wronged.

a lack of access to justice can erode trust in these institutions, leading to cynicism and disillusionment among the populace.

FIVE: RESOLVING DISPUTES PEACEFULLY

Access to justice provides a peaceful means of resolving disputes. When individuals have the opportunity to address their grievances through the legal system, it reduces the likelihood of taking matters into their own hands. A society that encourages peaceful dispute resolution through legal channels is one that prioritizes stability and harmony.

Want to take an even deeper dive into the topic of peaceful dispute resolution? I hope you will join us for the Plenary Session during this year's Annual Meeting. Author and speaker Megan Hunter, co-founder of the High Conflict Institute, will present in-depth on mediation and methods for resolving disputes. The session, co-sponsored by the OBA Alternative Dispute Resolution Section, is included with Annual Meeting registration, plus you'll earn MCLE credit.

CONCLUSION

Access to justice is not a political issue; it is a fundamental human right and a vital component of a just society. It upholds individual rights, promotes equality, encourages accountability, fosters trust in institutions and facilitates peaceful dispute resolution. In a world where justice is accessible to all, we can build fairer, more stable and more prosperous communities. It is our collective responsibility to ensure that access to justice remains a cornerstone of our society.



To contact Executive Director Johnson, email her at janetj@okbar.org.

Providing Exceptional Customer Service

By Jim Calloway

YEARS AGO, I PUT TOGETHER a presentation called “The Client-Centered Law Practice.” It focused on the irony that while law firms focused on serving clients and appropriately addressing their legal needs, clients sometimes had an impression that differed from that. To those (hopefully few) clients, it seemed that the law firm was busily engaged doing important work for other, very important people, while their matter was not a priority.

In fairness to lawyers, that was usually a perception rather than reality. But in the legal world, your client’s perception often *is* your reality. Certainly, it is your reality where concerns such as client retention and clients referring others to the firm are involved. So client service improvement is important – even though lawyers understandably focus more on the legal work.

Designing a law practice that provides exceptional client service should be the goal of every lawyer. But this goal requires an understanding that accomplishing great results for the client’s legal problem differs from providing good client service.

Suppose the lawyer settles a claim for \$10,000 more than anticipated. The lawyer is thrilled by the accomplishment. The client, however, may have their assessment of

the lawyer’s performance clouded by the number of times they waited several days for the lawyer to return a telephone call or the in-person office appointment that started 15 minutes late and was then cut short because the lawyer had a court appearance.

What about receiving a better-than-predicted settlement? Once a client is critical of a lawyer’s performance, it is easy for the client to assume the lawyer was just “low-balling” that initial estimate. Weak customer service practices impact every aspect of a lawyer’s representation of a client, including weakening the client’s confidence and trust in the lawyer.

A MAJOR CHANGE IN LAW PRACTICE: THE TYPE OF CLIENTS SERVED

In 1967, businesses constituted 39% of U.S. legal services, and individuals made up 55%. By 1992, it was 51% businesses and 40% individuals. By 2012, the percentages were businesses 72.5%, individuals 23.9% and government 3.6%.

That means that 75% of legal work now involves a client representative who is a general counsel, a government lawyer or a business owner who is knowledgeable about their legal needs. It is understandable that law-firm-to-client communications developed

into more like lawyer-to-lawyer communications. Larger law firms may handle more than 90% corporate work, while rural or small-town lawyers may have the opposite ratio, which requires different strategies.

If you haven’t read my thoughts about the practice of people law, I’d encourage you to do so. “The Practice of People Law” was published in the May 2022 *Oklahoma Bar Journal*.¹ The ABA published my piece, “The Changing Dynamics of a People Law Practice,” in its July/August 2023 *Law Practice Magazine* “Big Ideas” issue.²

AN EMPATHETIC APPROACH

We are all consumers of goods and services. We can all empathize with poor consumer service, whether it is being stuck in a waiting room for too long after a scheduled appointment or providers not doing things as they said they would when they said they would.

Empathy is an important lawyer skill. Having others in control of very important and personal aspects of our lives is inevitably personal. Being forced to discuss your marital problems or an arrest with a stranger is hard. Clients may be embarrassed to discuss some things and will be more likely to be more forthcoming when they sense an empathic listener.



IDEATE

The design challenge for the law firm is delivering legal services effectively and affordably in a way that assures the client that their matter is being handled diligently and professionally while they are kept informed.

Invite everyone who works in the law firm to participate in brainstorming creative solutions that might improve law office operations. The lawyer's view of what is most frustrating to clients during the representation process may differ from the law firm receptionist, who may have great input on what they hear.

Post-representation surveys, exit interviews and other techniques can solicit input from your past clients to improve future clients' representation. One wants to encourage clients to pass along any criticism or frustration they experienced. One good way to solicit these responses is to ask questions like "What is the best

thing that our law firm did during your representation?" and "What is an area where we can improve?"

Now let's discuss some of the major areas that are often ripe for improvement.

MANAGING CLIENT EXPECTATIONS

It is important to appreciate that different types of clients have different expectations. Using your initial interview with the client to set expectations for the representation is important, especially regarding how long it may take to resolve the matter.

A key to representing someone unfamiliar with the legal process is to provide them with understandable and clear explanations of exactly what the situation is and the possibilities for the future. It may become more common to have clients watch a brief video before meeting with the lawyer to gain familiarity without billing them the lawyer's hourly rate.

Many clients have no appreciation for how much time certain legal processes involving courts and government agencies take to accomplish. This is particularly true if their main exposure to the law is watching television dramas where the crime, investigation, arrest and trial all occur within the same episode.

Law firms appreciate the dockets in their jurisdiction, and it should be an important part of the client intake process to help establish the client's expectations as to how rapidly their legal matter may take to be resolved.

CLIENT COMMUNICATIONS

No matter how much energy is devoted to planning law firm improvements, it is likely that many improvements will be related to attempting to improve the law firm's client communication. Some challenges in the attorney-client relationship are caused by poor communication practices.

What are the values you want your client-centered law firm to prioritize?

Even if they are not caused by poor communication, the primary way to address the challenges is often through improved communication practices.

Clients are entitled to receive communication in a method that is appropriate and useful to them. But it can also be important to explain how many digital methods of communication are insecure and the consequences of confidential information being exposed to help the client appreciate why the law firm insists on using secure communications tools. Online client portals are a primary tool for accomplishing this. Once you explain the challenges, clients may feel better about logging in and posting queries to the portal as opposed to using email or phone.

The client intake process should cover lawyer client communications and create expectations on how quickly responses to inquiries will occur. Client input is required when important decisions affecting the matter are made. Retaining records of those important communications protects the law firm.

AUTOMATION

Automation wouldn't have ranked high on lists of law firm needs a few years ago. But today, a law firm should incorporate current automation tools to facilitate client services without needing as much law firm staff time. Your

client portal should be configured so that when new documents are uploaded, a notice of the new document availability is automatically sent out to the client. Templates should be created for important client communications that happen regularly just as templates should be created for legal documents frequently used.

TRANSPARENCY

The need for greater transparency is often associated with governmental entities.

It is unnecessary to sketch out every aspect of how representation might proceed during the initial interview. But once the client has retained the firm, it is important to provide a clear road map to understand the steps involved. Many legal matters will deviate from standard process as unanticipated developments occur. If a client is upset about "delays," it may help to review the original road map initially provided where this type of delay was suggested as a possibility. It is also appropriate to note in a nonjudgmental way when the client's actions or inactions have contributed to a delay. Transparency should apply in both directions.

RESPECT THE CLIENT'S TIME

No one likes waiting in the waiting room 20 or 30 minutes after their scheduled appointment. Once, clients were more tolerant of this. But today, the law firm must

exert great effort to make sure that clients are seen at their scheduled appointment time or within a few minutes afterward.

People today have a more limited attention span for reading lengthy material. If it is necessary to provide the client with a lengthy document or memo explaining a legal position or theory, perhaps the firm should consider beginning these documents with a short executive summary.

ACCESSIBILITY

Lawyers need to appreciate that meeting a client's preference for receiving information today may require flexibility.

Recently, a colleague talked to a person who was upset about how her 80-year-old father was being treated by his law firm. He was frustrated with his lawyer due to all the emailing, printing, scanning and getting documents notarized he had to do for himself relating to a real estate transaction. When the person tried to discuss her concerns with the lawyer, he became defensive. The father believed he had signed up for full legal representation and was receiving a do-it-yourself experience. Here, expectations were not in line between attorney and client. When we go to a convenience store, we expect to pay a higher price for the convenience. Those with a legal problem have options ranging from online legal information

websites to limited-scope services to full-service legal representation. Even though lawyers believe our services are the high-quality option, we must appreciate some clients are hiring us as the easiest, most convenient option.

WHAT IS YOUR EXCEPTIONAL CLIENT SERVICE MODEL?

Every law firm is different. A law firm that serves mainly consumers differs from a firm that serves mainly businesses and corporate clients. A firm in a particular geographical region will reflect the values and culture of that region. Some things that might work for other law firms may not work for yours. Therefore, every law firm must seek its own path forward.

Jack Newton, CEO and co-founder of Clio spoke via

video at the 2020 OBA Annual Meeting about this subject. His book, *The Client Centered Law Firm*, identified five major values of a client-centered law firm approach:

- 1) Developing deep client empathy
- 2) Practicing attentiveness
- 3) Providing ease of communications between lawyer and client
- 4) Demanding effortless experiences
- 5) Creating clients for life

What are the values you want your client-centered law firm to prioritize? Improving customer service should be a continuing project for the law firm. But don't let the scope of this nonbillable task

prevent your law firm from taking action. Your clients deserve your best, and less anxious clients make things better both for the clients and those working in your firm.

Mr. Calloway is the OBA Management Assistance Program director. Need a quick answer to a tech problem or help solving a management dilemma? Contact him at 405-416-7008, 800-522-8060 or jimc@okbar.org. It's a free member benefit.

ENDNOTES

1. <https://bit.ly/3LvFMf5>.
2. <https://bit.ly/3EFey8m>.



ETHICS COUNSEL

DID YOU KNOW?

The ethics counsel is available to assist members with ethical questions and inquiries on subjects such as conflicts, confidentiality and client concerns. All contact with ethics counsel is confidential per Oklahoma law. The ethics counsel also presents CLE programs on ethics and professionalism.

CONTACT

Richard Stevens, *OBA Ethics Counsel*
www.okbar.org/ec | richards@okbar.org | 405-416-7055

FIND MORE MEMBER BENEFITS AT WWW.OKBAR.ORG/MEMBERBENEFITS

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- 8:30 a.m. Registration and Continental Breakfast**
- 9:00 a.m. The Business of Law**
Jim Calloway, OBA Management Assistance Program
- 10:00 a.m. How to Manage Everything!**
Jim Calloway and Julie Bays, OBA Management Assistance Program
- 11:00 a.m. Break**
- 11:10 a.m. Professional Liability Insurance and Risk Management**
Phil Fraim, President, Oklahoma Attorneys Mutual Insurance Company (OAMIC)
- 12:15 a.m. Lunch**
Provided by Oklahoma Attorneys Mutual Insurance Company
- 12:30 p.m. Tools of the Modern Law Office, Hardware/Software and Fastcase**
Julie Bays, OBA Management Assistance Program
- 1:30 p.m. Professionalism in the Practice of Law**
Presiding Judge David Lewis, Oklahoma Court of Criminal Appeals
- 1:50 p.m. Break**
- 2:00 p.m. Trust Accounting and Legal Ethics**
Gina Hendryx, OBA General Counsel
- 2:50 p.m. Break**
- 3:00 p.m. How to Succeed in Law Practice**
Jim Calloway and Julie Bays, OBA Management Assistance Program
- 4:00 p.m. Adjourn**

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Confidentiality: The Basics

By Richard Stevens

ORPC 1.6 (A) STATES, “A lawyer shall not reveal information relating to the representation of a client unless the client gives informed consent, the disclosure is impliedly authorized in order to carry out the representation or the disclosure is permitted by paragraph (b).”

EVIDENTIARY PRIVILEGE VS. ETHICS CONFIDENTIALITY

The attorney-client evidentiary privilege is so closely related to the lawyer’s ethical duty to preserve confidentiality that the two terms are often used interchangeably. The two terms, however, describe two different concepts entirely. A lawyer’s duty to preserve confidentiality is extremely broad. It protects all “information relating to the representation of a client” and is always in effect. The attorney-client privilege is an evidentiary privilege that protects communications from compelled disclosure and applies in proceedings governed by the rules of evidence.

The evidentiary privilege only applies to communications made “in confidence” and not disclosed to others. Similarly, ORPC 1.9 allows a lawyer to use information relating to the representation of a former client if that information “has been disclosed to the public or to other parties adverse to the former client.” ORPC 1.6 does not contain any exception for publicly available or previously disclosed information.

IMPLIED AUTHORIZATION

Lawyers may be impliedly authorized to reveal information “in order to carry out the representation.” While the client’s identity may be confidential, its disclosure would certainly be impliedly authorized in the context of litigation involving that client. Other implied authorizations may deal with facts that cannot properly be disputed or disclosures that may contribute to a satisfactory resolution of a matter. What is impliedly authorized is heavily fact dependent. Lawyers may be impliedly authorized to disclose information to other lawyers both within and outside of the law firm if the lawyer reasonably believes the disclosure will further the representation.

EXCEPTIONS TO NONDISCLOSURE

ORPC 1.6 (b) contains certain exceptions to nondisclosure. ORPC 1.6 (b) (1) allows a lawyer to disclose confidential information “to prevent reasonably certain death or substantial bodily harm.” Often, these disclosures relate to threats of harm to others by a client, but self-harm and suicidal threats by the client are also included. Information may be revealed to prevent both accidental and intentional death or substantial bodily harm.

ORPC 1.6 (b) (2) allows disclosure if a lawyer reasonably believes disclosure will prevent a client from committing either:

ORPC 1.6 (a) states, “A lawyer shall not reveal information relating to the representation of a client unless the client gives informed consent, the disclosure is impliedly authorized in order to carry out the representation or the disclosure is permitted by paragraph (b).”

- 1) a crime; or
- 2) a fraud that is reasonably certain to result in substantial injury to the financial interests or property of another and in furtherance of which the client has used or is using the lawyer's services.

Similarly, 1.6 (b) (3) allows the lawyer to reveal confidential information "to prevent, mitigate or rectify substantial injury to the financial interests or property of another that is reasonably certain to result or has resulted from the client's commission of a crime or fraud in furtherance of which the client has used the lawyer's services." This section also requires the lawyer to attempt to contact the client so that the client can rectify criminal or fraudulent acts and allows a lawyer to reveal confidential information only after the client has failed or neglected to do so.

ORPC 1.6 (b) (4) allows the lawyer to reveal confidential information to secure legal advice about compliance with the Rules of Professional Conduct.

ORPC 1.6 (b) (5) allows a lawyer to reveal confidential information "to establish a claim or defense on behalf of the lawyer in a controversy between the lawyer and the client." Most often, this exception is used in the collection of attorney's fees. I would caution lawyers that, to my knowledge, no court has

found that a "social media fight" is a controversy under this rule.

Lawyers are also allowed to reveal information "to establish a defense to a criminal charge or civil claim against the lawyer based upon conduct in which the client was involved, or to respond to allegations in any proceeding concerning the lawyer's representation of the client[.]" "Proceeding" in this context includes disciplinary actions. ORPC 1.6 (b) (6) allows lawyers to reveal confidential information to comply with the Rules of Professional Conduct, "other law or a court order."

ET CETERA

Lawyers should also be aware that ORPC 1.9 and 1.18 prohibit revealing confidential information, and confidentiality survives the death of the client.

Mr. Stevens is OBA ethics counsel. Have an ethics question? It's a member benefit, and all inquiries are confidential. Contact him at richards@okbar.org or 405-416-7055. Ethics information is also online at www.okbar.org/ec.



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Meeting Summary

The Oklahoma Bar Association Board of Governors met virtually on July 28, 2023.

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

President Hermanson reported he attended the OBA Solo & Small Firm Conference, the OBA Board of Editors meeting and the funeral of an OBA member, Enloe Baumert. He presented a CLE program with Executive Director Johnson, "How to Get the Most Out of Your Bar Association." He also attended the Oklahoma District Attorneys Association Summer Conference, their board meeting and annual membership meeting. He gave a presentation to the Oklahoma Judicial Conference on the state of the OBA, virtually spoke at the Bench and Bar Committee meeting about professionalism and attended the District Attorneys Council board meeting and the appellate court's annual dinner in Tulsa. Additionally, he attended the 2023 Annual Meeting Planning Committee meeting, approved the 2023 Annual Meeting theme and virtually attended the Membership Engagement Committee meeting. He held discussions and took part in email conversations dealing with potential changes in the OBA insurance plans and reviewed materials and resolutions for the upcoming ABA and ABA House of Delegates meetings in Denver. He also met with Executive Director Johnson and General Counsel Hendrix on issues affecting the OBA and authored his article for the August issue of the *Oklahoma Bar Journal*.

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT-ELECT

President-Elect Pringle reported by email he worked on the Oklahoma Bar Center entry remodel, including meeting with architects, and worked on the schedule for the 2024 OBA year. He reviewed the materials sent by the ABA for the upcoming annual meeting, attended a virtual meeting of the Financial Institutions and Commercial Law Section and chaired the Strategic Planning Committee meeting. He attended a reception at the Oklahoma Judicial Conference and a meeting of the Oklahoma Bar Foundation Trustees.

REPORT OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

Vice President Williams reported he attended the OBA Solo & Small Firm Conference, where he hosted an alcohol-free hospitality suite and the July meetings for the OBA Environmental Law Section, the Strategic Planning Committee and the Professional Responsibility Commission, which he chaired. He also attended the July meeting of the Oklahoma Association of Municipal Attorneys, completed work on an assignment from the OBA Professional Responsibility Commission and coordinated with the Tulsa County Bar Association to present a one-hour CLE program on Aug. 16 on behalf of the OBA Professionalism Committee.

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Executive Director Johnson reported she worked on remodeling the OBA entry, including meeting with architects, attaining roof replacement quotes and meeting with roofers. She prepared for upcoming annual meeting events for the ABA, the National Association of Bar Executives, the National Conference of Bar Presidents and the Southern Conference of Bar Presidents. She met with President Hermanson and OBA directors on 2023 Annual Meeting planning, attended the June Board of Editors meeting and worked on her article for the August issue of the *Oklahoma Bar Journal*. She attended the June and July YLD board meetings, as well as the YLD bar exam survival kits assembly, the debrief after the OBA Solo & Small Firm Conference and the July meetings for the Strategic Planning Committee and the Membership Engagement Committee. She also met with A/V companies for Emerson Hall and security upgrades to the bar center and had discussions with Management Assistance Program Director Calloway and Administration Director Brumit on a Wills for Heroes coordinator. Additionally, she attended the CLE movie night at the Supreme Court, a meeting to work on the 2024 Annual Meeting timeline due to the shift to the summer and the YLD Wills for Heroes event at the Shangri-La Resort.

REPORT OF THE IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT

Past President Hicks reported he attended the State Bar of Texas Annual Meeting in Austin, Texas, as the OBA representative and reviewed resolutions for the upcoming ABA House of Delegates on Aug. 7. He also attended the Strategic Planning Committee meeting and began planning for the has-beens dinner on Jan. 18, 2024.

BOARD MEMBER REPORTS

Governor Ailles Bahm reported she participated in communication with Executive Director Johnson and other stakeholders, including A Chance to Change, to schedule a comprehensive meeting about Lawyers Helping Lawyers and the expansion of services for members. She attended the July Bench and Bar Committee meeting and the annual meeting of the Professional Responsibility Tribunal, concluding her six years of service. **Governor Barbush** reported he met with the Lawyers Helping Lawyers Assistance Program Committee chairperson about LHL and its foundation at the OBA Solo & Small Firm Conference. He also met with the Cannabis Law Committee chairperson. **Governor Bracken** reported he attended the Bench and Bar Committee meeting and the OBA Solo & Small Firm Conference. **Governor Dow** reported she attended the monthly Cleveland County Bar Association meeting

and the swearing-in ceremony for Judge Kim Conyers. She virtually attended the Oklahoma County Family Law Section meeting. **Governor Hilfiger** attended the Muskogee County Bar Association meeting and began planning for the Board of Governors meeting and the bar banquet in Muskogee. **Governor Knott** reported she presented a civil case law update to the Oklahoma Judicial Conference and an Oklahoma Supreme Court review to the OBA Appellate Practice Section and attended the Canadian County Bar Association's summer social. She also attended the June meeting of the Board of Editors during the Solo & Small Firm Conference. **Governor Rogers** reported he attended the Professionalism Committee meeting and the Clients' Security Fund Committee meeting. **Governor Smith** reported she attended the Diversity Committee meeting. **Governor Thurman** reported he has corresponded with the Disaster Response and Relief Committee, had discussions with Pontotoc County officers regarding the appointment of a new delegate for the OBA and presented the Pontotoc County Drug Court Exceptional Participant Award. **Governor Vanderburg** reported he attended meetings of the Rules of Professional Conduct Committee, the Oklahoma Association of Municipal Attorneys board, the Oklahoma Municipal Judges Association board meeting and the Climate Change Committee for the

International Municipal Lawyers Association meeting. **Governor White** reported he attended the Professional Responsibility Tribunal annual meeting on July 25.

REPORT OF THE YOUNG LAWYERS DIVISION

Governor Shaffer Siex reported she attended the June and July YLD Board of Directors meetings, the bar exam survival kits assembly and the YLD Wills for Heroes event at the Shangri-La Resort in Afton. She also assisted Dylan Erwin with the OBA YLD leadership election and reviewed the OBA YLD budget and projected expenses.

REPORT OF THE GENERAL COUNSEL

General Counsel Hendryx provided an update on litigation involving the OBA and also reported the July bar exam went off smoothly. She said as of June 30, there were three disciplinary cases and one resignation pending disciplinary proceedings awaiting decisions from the Oklahoma Supreme Court. Between June 1 and June 30, the Supreme Court issued three orders of suspension, two orders of dismissal, two orders approving reinstatement and one order approving resignation pending disciplinary proceedings. A written report of PRC actions and OBA disciplinary matters for the month was submitted to the board for its review.

BOARD LIAISON REPORTS

Governor Conner said members of the **Awards Committee** are currently reviewing the packets of nominations the committee received for annual OBA Awards consideration. Governor Thurman said the **Disaster Response and Relief Committee** met June 22 and is staying abreast of recent disaster declarations in Oklahoma. Governor Ailles Bahm said the **Bench and Bar Committee** recently met and heard a presentation from President Hermanson. She also said the **Lawyers Helping Lawyers Assistance Program Committee** is working with Executive Director Johnson to schedule a meeting of stakeholders to develop a plan for improving services. Governor Barbush added he met with that committee's chair to discuss the LHL Foundation and methods of increasing grant funding. He also said the **Cannabis Law Committee** met this month and is working to develop CLE and review relevant ABA materials. Governor Rogers said the **Clients' Security Fund Committee** met in July and is reviewing a large number of claims. He also reported the **Professionalism Committee** met and is planning CLE both before and during the Annual Meeting. Vice President Williams reported the **Strategic Planning Committee** has been meeting regularly, and among the topics of discussion are the 2024 Annual Meeting to be held in July at the Embassy Suites Conference Center in Norman. He also said the **Legislative Monitoring Committee** has set the date of Aug. 25 for its annual Legislative Debrief. Governor White reported the **Legal Internship Committee** met in June and is discussing a funding mechanism for licensed legal internship awards along with program participation requirements.

WITHDRAWAL OF PREVIOUS MOTION

During the June 2023 meeting, the board approved a motion to consider amending the Oklahoma Bar Association Bylaws to include the past president as an officer of the OBA Board of Governors. The board decided to withdraw the motion.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE LEGAL INTERNSHIP COMMITTEE

Governor White reported the committee has multiple projects in progress. Among them are the development of a new exam for program applicants and the discussion of program funding strategies. The committee is also considering changes to the exam schedule to spread the exams more evenly throughout the school year, providing more students with opportunities to take the exam. He also said the program is being evaluated to find methods of providing more practical experience and leadership opportunities. The committee report will next be submitted to the Supreme Court for its review.

OKLAHOMA BAR FOUNDATION BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The board passed a motion to approve the appointment of S. Shea Bracken of Edmond to replace Kim Hays of Tulsa when her term expires on Dec. 31, 2023.

JUDICIAL NOMINATING COMMISSION ELECTION RESULTS

Executive Director Johnson announced the results of the 2023 election. The District 1 winner is Mary Quinn Cooper, Tulsa; and the District 2 winner is Weldon W. Stout Jr., Muskogee. Their terms will expire Oct. 1, 2029.

BOARD OF GOVERNORS VACANCIES

President Hermanson reminded members of the board that the deadline for filing nominating petitions is Sept. 1. Discussion occurred about eligible potential candidates for upcoming vacancies.

UPCOMING OBA AND COUNTY BAR EVENTS

President Hermanson reviewed upcoming bar-related events, including several monthly joint receptions with local county bars, the annual Legislative Debrief, Aug. 25, Oklahoma City; the New Admittee Swearing-In, Sept. 26; the annual Women in Law Conference, Sept. 22; and the OBA Annual Meeting, Nov. 1-3, Skirvin Hilton Hotel, Oklahoma City.

NEXT BOARD MEETING

The Board of Governors met in August and September, and a summary of those actions will be published in the *Oklahoma Bar Journal* once the minutes are approved. The next board meeting will be held Friday, Oct. 13, in Ponca City.



SHOW YOUR CREATIVE SIDE ON THE BACK PAGE

We want to feature your work on "The Back Page" of the *Oklahoma Bar Journal*! Submit articles related to the practice of law, or send us something humorous, transforming or intriguing. Poetry, photography and artwork are also welcomed.

Email submissions of about 500 words or high-resolution images to OBA Communications Director Lori Rasmussen at lorir@okbar.org.



OBF Impact Update: Tulsa Lawyers for Children

“WHAT A PRIVILEGE TO volunteer for TLC and be empowered to make such a difference in the lives of children who need help. This has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my career.” – April Ryan

Tulsa Lawyers for Children (TLC) and volunteer attorney April Ryan recently handled a case involving two clients, ages 2 and 9. The children had spent two years in foster care after being removed from their home by the Oklahoma Department of Human Services for several reasons: the father’s extreme domestic abuse toward the mother, the neglect of the children, the mother’s mental illness and finally, the incarceration of the father. The mother was also emotionally abusive to the children. The situation was very difficult, complicated and painful for them.

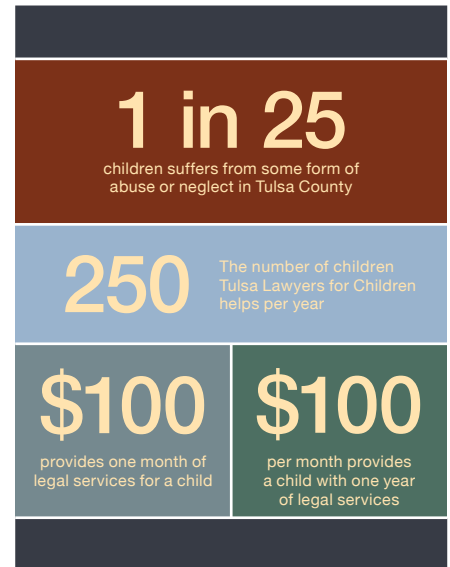
Thankfully, the children had been placed in a loving foster home. The 2-year-old knew no other family. While under the care of the foster parents, the 9-year-old went from



April Ryan serves as a volunteer attorney with Tulsa Lawyers for Children.

exhibiting extreme behavioral issues that negatively impacted his education to being a straight-A student.

The mother’s parental rights were terminated when she abandoned the children. The father, however, despite serving less than one year of his 10-year prison sentence and having no



place for the children to live, requested the motion to terminate his parental rights be set for jury trial. He simultaneously initiated a joint motion to remove the children from foster care and place them with a grandparent who had failed to maintain a relationship with the children while they were in foster care. The attempt to remove the children from their foster home of two years was terrifying for them and heart-wrenching for Ms. Ryan, the volunteer attorney working the case.

Properly preparing for the jury trial, the TLC staff and Ms. Ryan secured an expert witness and advocated for the children’s wishes – to remain in their foster home. Ultimately, the court allowed the children to remain there, and the father relinquished his parental rights. Ms. Ryan was able to attend the subsequent adoptions of both of her clients a couple of months later.



Tulsa Lawyers for Children is actively seeking attorneys interested in serving children in child welfare cases. In addition to the support provided by TLC’s staff, TLC provides a wealth of resources on their website (with free registration) and trainings on child welfare law and practice throughout the year. For new volunteers, TLC provides a quarterly three-hour CLE introducing the law and procedures of child welfare law, including an hour on the ethics of representing children. If you are interested in learning more about volunteering, please reach out to TLC’s program coordinator at volunteer@tulsakidlaw.org. You can also get more information at <https://bit.ly/3sViuZQ>.

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Election for 2024 Leadership

By Caroline Shaffer Siex

FALL IS BY FAR MY FAVORITE time of year. We are currently in the golden month, October. We are done with the 100+ degrees, the leaves are falling and scary movies are streaming abound! We revive friendly arguments over football teams and pumpkin spice.

With the cooler season, we also have the final OBA wrap-ups. A new YLD Board of Directors will be elected soon. During this month, each member of the YLD will have the opportunity to vote in contested elections. I think many young lawyers do not understand the YLD board and what it means to select your representative.

As always, we like to remind you that *anyone who is a member of the OBA who has been practicing for 10 years or less is a young lawyer*. You are also automatically part of the YLD. The YLD has a Board of Directors, who after qualifying with a nominating petition, run for each district and/or at-large seat. Each lawyer is a volunteer who wants to work to serve other YLD members.

Now why should you care to vote? You are truly picking who is going to help your district. I went to law school in Tulsa, live in Tulsa, work in Tulsa and the list would continue. To have someone serve as my representative to the bar can make an impact on my legal community and aspects of my career. For example, a tradition returned to Tulsa of happy hour social events

for newly sworn in lawyers. For at least a few years, this event was not occurring in Tulsa. However, it was occurring in Oklahoma City. The reason was not known why this event was not happening, but (with the exception of the pandemic era) I helped return these for the new Tulsa admittees. These events are a great kickoff – held not only to celebrate joining the bar but as an initial networking event.

After serving on the board, I made more connections across the state, and then I was able to share my connections with others in Tulsa. That was just my own experience of how serving could impact those within my district. This is just to show how voting can make a difference in YLD activity and opportunities within your district.

The announcement of the election results coincides with another special time of the fall – the OBA Annual Meeting. The Annual Meeting will take place Nov. 1-3 at the Skirvin Hilton in downtown Oklahoma City. In conjunction, the YLD Board of Directors will hold its meeting where election results are announced. It's also one of the times that YLD members who do not normally have the opportunity to attend board meetings can meet the YLD board.

The YLD board always has fun and hosts the party! At past Annual Meetings, we have enjoyed magicians, foosball tables, 80s costumes

and more. If you have not gotten involved with the YLD and would like to at least meet your representatives, this would be a great chance. Let's not forget – if you have not yet completed your MCLE for the year, the Annual Meeting can give you all the credits that you need.

YLD members, it is now your duty to select those who will ultimately lead. Please look at the candidates in your district, and don't forget to vote! Again, every lawyer who was first admitted to the practice of law in any jurisdiction within the past 10 years is automatically a member of the YLD and is eligible to vote. Please take a moment to read the candidate information and vote; voting is a quick and easy process. Voting for YLD elections is conducted by electronic ballot, which will be emailed to you Oct. 2. You may cast your vote any time before midnight, Oct. 27. To ensure you receive a ballot, verify the OBA roster contains your current email address. You may do so by visiting MyOKBar at <https://bit.ly/48ohC00> or by calling the OBA Membership Department at 405-416-7080. If you do not receive a ballot, email derwin@holladaychilton.com

Ms. Shaffer Siex practices in Tulsa and serves as the YLD chairperson. She may be contacted at cshaffer@gablawyers.com.

2024 LEADERSHIP

2024 Chair



Laura Talbert

Laura Talbert works for ISN Corporation, which is the prime contractor for the US Department of Housing

and Urban Development (HUD) to provide Mortgage Compliance Manager services. Ms. Talbert graduated from the OU College of Law in 2012. After graduating, she worked as a prosecutor. Prior to starting her own firm, she also worked for the General Counsel's Office for the Oklahoma Department of Corrections. In her free time, she enjoys playing volleyball and cheering on the Sooners. She has been on the YLD board for six years and is excited to continue serving.

2024 Immediate Past Chair



Caroline M. Shaffer Siex

Caroline Shaffer Siex is a December 2016 graduate of the TU College of Law. She is a partner

at Gibbs & Armstrong PC, handling civil litigation, nursing home defense and family law matters.

Ms. Shaffer Siex has served the OBA as a member of the YLD Board of Directors since 2017 and as the YLD Hospitality chair from 2018 to 2019. In 2020, she served as the board's secretary, and in 2021, she served as the board's treasurer. From 2020 through 2021, she concurrently served as the ABA YLD district representative for District 24 (Oklahoma and Arkansas).

During her time on the board, she has shown her willingness and effort to help other young lawyers, especially those just emerging into practice, from passing out bar exam survival kits, hosting a swearing-in happy hour for the newly admitted Tulsa-area lawyers and attending the TU bar preparation class to provide information about the Oklahoma bar and advice to law students. She has also contributed to publications aimed at assisting young lawyers to grow in their careers.

UNCONTESTED ELECTIONS

The following persons have been nominated. They are running uncontested and will be declared elected at the OBA YLD meeting in November.

Chair-Elect



Taylor Venus

Taylor Venus is a native of Ponca City and graduated from OSU with bachelor's degrees in economics and finance. While

attending OSU, Mr. Venus had the honor to be Pistol Pete. Thereafter, he obtained his J.D. and MBA at OU. While in law school, he served as the articles editor for the *Oil and Gas, Natural Resources, and Energy Journal* and served as an officer or representative in multiple student groups.

Mr. Venus has a passion for serving his local community and supporting other regional or statewide organizations. In Enid, Mr. Venus is the president of the Enid Public Schools Foundation, a member of Rotary and AMBUCS, and actively volunteers with several other entities in Garfield County. Outside of his local community, he is the current treasurer for the OBA YLD, a member of his fraternity alumni board and president of the Cherokee Strip OSU Alumni Chapter.

In his time out of the office, Mr. Venus enjoys spending time with his friends and family, golfing, hunting and being an arm-chair expert on his favorite sports teams and political views.

Treasurer



**Alexandra
"Allie" J. Gage**

Alexandra "Allie" Gage graduated from the TU College of Law in 2019.

She currently works as a civil litigation attorney at Doerner, Saunders, Daniel & Anderson LLP.

Ms. Gage has always had a strong commitment to community service and mentorship. Before attending law school, she lived and worked in the Eastern European country of Kosovo, where she served as a community center coordinator for a center in the nation's capital. After returning, she chose to follow her call to a legal career at TU. She enjoyed serving as a mentor in law school and continues to support and encourage new lawyers and law students entering their legal careers.

After the COVID-19 pandemic left its mark on Oklahoma, Ms. Gage sought to find a way to further serve her recovering community. In that effort, she joined the OBA YLD as a member of the Board of Directors for District 6. Her time on the board has been short, but she dove headfirst into her duties and continues to show her willingness to serve the YLD and its members. She now seeks to continue her service on the Executive Committee as the board's treasurer.

Secretary



**Randy G.
Gordon**

Randy G. Gordon joined the firm of Stuart & Clover PLLC in Shawnee in 2021 as a partner, bringing his wealth of litigation and creditor's rights knowledge from his previous employment.

He remains a dedicated OSU fan, despite receiving his law degree from his dreaded rival, OU.

He currently serves on the OBA YLD Board of Directors, which has been personally and professionally enriching. He enjoys serving on a board that serves not only the legal community but the Oklahoma City community at large through philanthropic efforts. Mr. Gordon also serves as the head of the community outreach committee of Emmanuel Episcopal Church in Shawnee.

Mr. Gordon shares two sons with his fellow partner, Breanne. They keep him busy! In his spare time, he loves to try new foods and watch college football. Go Pokes!

District 2



Chloe M. Moyer

Chloe M. Moyer is a native of Idabel and a proud citizen of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma.

Ms. Moyer received her BBA (accounting) from Northeastern State University in 2018 and a J.D. from the OCU School of Law in 2021. During her time at OCU, she participated in the American Indian Wills Clinic and was a member of multiple organizations/groups including the *Oklahoma City*

University Law Review, the William J. Holloway Jr. American Inn of Court and the International Legal Honor Society of Phi Delta Phi. She focused her studies on Indian law and estate planning. Her note, "An Oklahoma Tribal Employer's Guide to Conducting Business in the Tenth Circuit," was published in the *Oklahoma City University Law Review*. Upon graduation, she received a certificate in estate planning. She currently serves as a government attorney for the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. As an attorney for the nation, Ms. Moyer drafts and negotiates contracts for tribal services, drafts legislation and codes, consults on issues of federal Indian law and policy, and reviews tribal policies and procedures. She is also a proud board member of the Chahta Foundation and enjoys serving her Native community.

District 4



Morgan Maxey

Morgan Maxey is an associate with Mitchell DeClerck PLLC in Enid. His practice focuses primarily on

criminal defense law, family law, probates and estate planning. Mr. Maxey is a graduate of the TU College of Law. After receiving his J.D., he worked as the NW director of early settlement mediation for the Oklahoma Administrative Office of the Courts. He is certified by the AOC as a civil, family law and child permanency mediator. Mr. Maxey subsequently began his work as defense counsel for the Oklahoma Indigent Defense System (OIDS). He is a member of the Garfield County Bar Association, the Oklahoma Criminal Defense

Lawyers Association, the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers and the OBA Animal Law Section. In his free time, he enjoys hiking, sailing, OSU football and attending music festivals.

District 5



Liz Stevens

Liz Stevens is originally from Norman. She received a bachelor's degree in European history and a J.D.

from the OU College of Law. Upon graduation in 2019, she started her legal career in civil litigation in New Mexico. She returned to Oklahoma in August 2020 and joined the Office of the Attorney General. She currently represents several agencies in various capacities, such as prosecuting enforcement actions, advising boards and commissions, and acting as an administrative hearing officer.

In her spare time, she enjoys traveling, reading historical fiction books and playing with her black lab, Bear. Before attending law school, she spent several years teaching English as a second language in Russia and Rwanda.

District 7



Clayton M. Baker

Clayton M. Baker is a partner at Davis & Thompson PLLC in Jay. Mr. Baker graduated

from Midwestern State University in 2011 with a bachelor's degree in criminal justice and political science and from the TU College of Law in 2015 with a J.D. with honors. Mr. Baker and his wife, Joanna, moved to Grove in 2015 and have

enjoyed raising their family on Grand Lake ever since. They have two beautiful daughters, Gentry (7) and Everly (2). Most of their free time is spent chasing Everly, cheer practice and football games for Gentry, and running their homemade ice cream shop, Back Porch Ice Cream.

Mr. Baker's practice areas include probate, trusts and estate planning, real estate and civil litigation. Mr. Baker has represented clients throughout northeast Oklahoma and regularly practices in Delaware, Ottawa, Craig and Mayes counties. He currently serves as the municipal court judge for the town of Bernice, and the president of the Delaware County Bar Association. He is a graduate of the Oklahoma Bar Association Leadership Academy and has served on the YLD Board of Directors since 2015. Mr. Baker enjoys giving back to his community as much as he can and serves on the Board of Directors for the Delaware County Children's Special Advocacy Network and the Grove Rotary Club board of directors.

CONTESTED ELECTIONS

The following persons have been nominated and are running contested for the following positions. Results will be announced at the YLD November meeting.

District 3 (One seat available)



Thomas Grossnicklaus

Thomas Grossnicklaus was born in Oklahoma City. He enlisted in the Marine Corps after

graduating from Piedmont High School. He was assigned to the Fleet Anti-Terrorism Security Team, which was created under President

Reagan after the Iranian Hostage Crisis. Mr. Grossnicklaus deployed with his unit to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. After Cuba, his unit was deployed to Bahrain. There, his unit served as a Quick Response Force to the Middle East region and also as a protection crew (Raven Crew) to C-130 airplanes and highly important cargo/individuals around the region. During this deployment, he was the section leader for the Designated Marksmen Unit. At this time, the Middle East erupted after the killing of Christopher Stevens in Benghazi, Libya. His unit was activated and was on mission from that point until eight months later. The bulk of this time was spent recapturing and securing the American Embassy in Yemen. After this long and difficult deployment, he decided to come home and dedicate himself to serving his home state and community in whatever way would be the best.

He enrolled at OCU and received a degree in political science. During this time, he was lucky enough to work for Rep. Steve Russell in his district office as well on a successful reelection campaign. Mr. Grossnicklaus started his law school journey at the OCU School of Law. During law school, he worked for Gov. Mary Fallin during her last year in office. He served as an aide and liaison to general counsel. After, he was given the opportunity to clerk for Justice James Winchester. He is currently in the Leadership Certificate Program in the Kennedy School at Harvard University and plans on using these hours towards receiving a master's degree in public administration. He is a graduate of the Leadership OKC LOYAL program, a NextGen Under 30 recipient and a member of the Oklahoma City Downtown Rotary.

He previously served as an assistant attorney general. He

prosecuted for the Oklahoma Funeral Board and for the Workers' Compensation Commission, Compliance Department. He was also the general counsel for the Secretary of State, Oklahoma Historical Society, Oklahoma State Fire Marshall and the Oklahoma State Board of Examiners for Long-Term Care Administrators.

He currently serves as the chief of staff and general counsel for the Oklahoma Department of Commerce, where he recruits companies to relocate to Oklahoma or existing businesses to expand within the state. This is a natural fit for him as he moved back to Oklahoma to help change the perception of our state and contribute in diversifying the local economy.



Bryan Goodpasture

Bryan Goodpasture graduated from OSU in 2015 and the OU College of Law in 2019

(Go Pokes). He is currently an associate attorney at Durbin, Larimore & Bialick, representing clients in a wide variety of civil litigation matters. Mr. Goodpasture has the good fortune to be practicing at the firm that made him realize his interest in the legal profession through an internship during his first year of undergraduate studies and is looking for opportunities to get more involved in and give back to the legal community. Outside of work, you will find him golfing, watching any and all OSU sports or just hanging out with my family or friends. You will also be sure to find him at the local piano bar, no matter what city he may be in (though none have topped Shady Keys in Tulsa).



Sean-Michael Brady

Sean-Michael Brady is a fourth-year litigation attorney with Elias, Books, Brown & Nelson PC.

Mr. Brady's practice involves litigation in state and federal trial courts with an emphasis on energy industry disputes, including disputes over oil and gas leases, surface and mineral interests, easement rights and quiet title matters. Mr. Brady's practice also includes transactional work focusing on energy industry-related agreements. He received his J.D. from the OU College of Law, where he earned the American Jurisprudence Award for International Energy Law and was on the Dean's Honor Roll.

Mr. Brady currently serves as the membership director for the OBA Energy and Natural Resources Law Section and as a YLD director for the Oklahoma County Bar Association. Mr. Brady also served as a member of Make-A-Wish Oklahoma's Young Professionals Council. Mr. Brady was born and raised in Oklahoma City and received his bachelor's degree from OU. Prior to embarking on a legal career, he worked as an oil and gas landman for a publicly traded company in Houston. In his free time, Mr. Brady enjoys spending time with his wife, Alex, and their two daughters, walking Bogey, their chocolate lab, and cheering on the Sooners.

District 6 (Two seats available)



Joel Daniel Auringer

Joel Daniel Auringer is a staff attorney in the Tulsa office of Legal Aid Services of Oklahoma

Inc., where he serves on the eviction defense team. Mr. Auringer previously taught middle and high school music in the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex before moving to Oklahoma to enter the legal profession. He is a former staff editor for the *Tulsa Law Review* and a former volunteer compact disc reviewer for *The Clarinet*, the official journal of the International Clarinet Association.

Mr. Auringer joined the OBA in April. He received his master's degree in library science from the University of North Texas, his J.D. from the TU College of Law and further holds multiple degrees in music performance. He lives in Tulsa with one rambunctious, orange cat named Tennyson.

Alexandra "Allie" J. Gage

See bio on page 94



Madison Cataudella

Madison Cataudella is a trust officer at BancFirst. She is a graduate of the University of Arkansas,

where she received her bachelor's degree. In addition, she attended and graduated from the TU College of Law, where she received her J.D. and Master of Laws in energy and natural resources law. After graduating in 2019, she practiced law in the areas of probate and estate planning, administrative law, oil and gas, and title. Ms. Cataudella strives to initiate and

maintain healthy relationships with her local community as well as the community at large in Oklahoma. She believes that mentoring is imperative to developing a strong and reliable legal community. As a board member, she hopes to increase involvement from young lawyers across the state and facilitate and/or directly provide mentorship to law students and young attorneys over the coming years. She has previously served on the Board of Directors as an at-large director after joining in 2023 for a partial term.

At Large (Two seats available)



Patrick C. Madden

Patrick C. Madden earned a bachelor's degree in history from Mount St. Mary's University,

an master's degree in American history from Villanova University and his J.D. from the OU College of Law in 2018. He is admitted to practice before the Supreme Court of Oklahoma, the Supreme Court of the Chickasaw Nation and is a member of the Carter County Bar Association. He practices in the areas of family law, civil litigation, appeals, probates and estate planning.

Thomas Grossnicklaus

See bio on page 95

Bryan Goodpasture

See bio above

Sean-Michael Brady

See bio above

Joel Daniel Auringer

See bio above

Alexandra "Allie" J. Gage

See bio on page 94

Madison Cataudella

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NEW LAWYERS HAPPY HOUR

Congratulations to the newest members of the Oklahoma bar who were sworn in Sept. 26 – we are excited to welcome you! Please make plans to join us in Oklahoma City or Tulsa for this fun happy hour mixer.

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FOR YOUR INFORMATION

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL: OKLAHOMA FAMILY REPRESENTATION AND ADVOCACY PROGRAM

In 2023, the Oklahoma Legislature passed SB19 enacting the Family Representation and Advocacy Act effective Nov. 1, 2023. The legislation creates the Family Representation and Advocacy Program (FRAP) within the Oklahoma Supreme Court Administrative Office of the Courts.

The purpose of the program is to ensure uniformly available high-quality legal representation of children, indigent parents, legal guardians and Indian custodians in deprived child actions brought by the state pursuant to the provisions of Section 1-1-101 *et seq.* of Title 10A of the Oklahoma Statutes.

This request for proposal, which can be found at <https://bit.ly/3LvphQq>, announces the details of service requirements and terms for submitting proposals to be considered for award of the contract for provision of statewide services. Responses are due to the Administrative Office of the Courts by Oct. 10.

CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENTS

Because every lawyer must have systems in place that protect attorney-client privilege, the OBA Management Assistance Program has created a sample confidentiality agreement, which is available for download. OBA MAP suggests explaining to your employees the importance of attorney-client privilege and adding a confidentiality agreement to your new employee onboarding process. The sample confidentiality agreement can be downloaded from the OBA MAP Resources webpage, www.okbar.org/map/resources, and edited as you see fit.

2024 PROPOSED BUDGET

Pursuant to Article VII, Section 1 of the Rules Creating and Controlling the Oklahoma Bar Association, Miles Pringle, president-elect and Budget Committee chairperson, has set a public hearing on the 2024 OBA budget for Tuesday, Oct. 24, at 4 p.m. at the Oklahoma Bar Center, 1901 N. Lincoln Blvd., in Oklahoma City.

LHL DISCUSSION GROUPS HOST NOVEMBER MEETINGS

The Lawyers Helping Lawyers monthly discussion group will meet Nov. 2 in Oklahoma City at the office of Tom Cummings, 701 NW 13th St. The group will also meet Nov. 9 in Tulsa at the office of Scott Goode, 1437 S. Boulder Ave., Ste. 1200.

The Lawyers Helping Lawyers Oklahoma City women's discussion group meets the fourth Thursday of every month from 6-7:30 p.m. at the Oil Center, 2601 NW Expressway. The next meeting will be Oct. 26.

Each meeting is facilitated by committee members and a licensed mental health professional. The small group discussions are intended to give group leaders and participants the opportunity to ask questions, provide support and share information with fellow bar members to improve their lives – professionally and personally. Visit www.okbar.org/lhl for more information.



IMPORTANT UPCOMING DATES

Register and join us for the OBA Annual Meeting to be held at the Skirvin Hilton in downtown Oklahoma City Nov. 1-3.

And don't forget, the bar center will be closed Friday, Nov. 10, in observance of Veterans Day, as well as Thursday, Nov. 23, and Friday, Nov. 24, in observance of the Thanksgiving holiday.

THE BACK PAGE:

SHOW YOUR CREATIVE SIDE

We want to feature your work on "The Back Page"! Submit articles related to the practice of law, or send us something humorous, transforming or intriguing. Poetry, photography and artwork are options too. Email submissions of about 500 words or high-resolution images to OBA Communications Director Lori Rasmussen, lorir@okbar.org.

CONNECT WITH THE OBA THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA

Are you following the OBA on social media? Keep up to date on future CLEs, upcoming events and the latest information about the Oklahoma legal community. Connect with us on LinkedIn, Facebook and Instagram.



ON THE MOVE

Daniel G. Couch and **Arthur F. Hoge** have joined the Oklahoma City office of Hall Estill as of counsel. Mr. Couch focuses on assisting businesses and families with a variety of legal needs, practicing in the areas of litigation, construction, real estate, business services, probate and trusts and homeowners association matters. He also works in the firm's Denver office. Mr. Hoge practices in the areas of litigation, estate and charitable planning and trust and estate administration. He also has a national practice to represent national and international fraternity and sorority organizations, as well as local fraternity and sorority housing corporations.

Boyd A. Mouse, **Brandon R. Wade** and **Justin E. Tharp** have joined the law firm of Christensen Law Group PLLC to expand the firm's offerings in western Oklahoma. Mr. Mouse joined the firm in January 2022 and helped open the firm's Elk City office after 24 years of practice at law firms in Dallas. He has represented clients in industries including banking and financial services, real estate, construction, manufacturing, hospitality, finance, healthcare, software and publishing.

Mr. Wade joined in April and works in the firm's office in Elk City. Prior to joining the firm, he practiced in one of Fort Worth's oldest law firms for the past 22 years. He practices in the areas of banking, business, estate planning and real estate. Mr. Tharp joined the firm in January and works in the firm's Thomas and Clinton offices. He practices in the areas of estate planning, wealth management, probate, energy law, real estate transfers and commercial litigation.

Hilda Loury and **Colby D. Karcher** have joined the Oklahoma City office of Phillips Murrah as associate attorneys. Ms. Loury received her J.D. from the OU College of Law, where she was appointed to the Order of the Barristers, Dean's Leadership Fellows and the Phi Delta Phi International Legal Honor Society. She previously worked as a judicial clerk for Judge C. Brent Dishman of the Oklahoma County District Court. Ms. Loury also was the advisor to the chairperson of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in Geneva,

Switzerland, the head mentor to incoming law students and the class vice president. Mr. Karcher received his J.D. from the OCU School of Law, graduating *summa cum laude*. He was awarded merit scholar, faculty honor roll, dean's honor roll, five CALI Excellence for the Future awards and the Association of Corporate Counsel scholarship. He was a member of the *Oklahoma City University Law Review* and the Phi Delta Phi Honor Society.

Ericka McPherson was appointed executive director of Covenant Choice. She will play a pivotal role in developing and executing the business development strategy for the captive insurance solutions, overseeing all captive operations and serving as the senior relationship manager for existing captive clients. Ms. McPherson brings a comprehensive understanding of various areas of insurance and law, including employment law, corporate governance, compliance, healthcare, public policy, advocacy, legislative relations and executive leadership.

HOW TO PLACE AN ANNOUNCEMENT:

The *Oklahoma Bar Journal* welcomes short articles or news items about OBA members and upcoming meetings. If you are an OBA member and you've moved, become a partner, hired an associate, taken on a partner, received a promotion or an award or given a talk or speech with statewide or national stature, we'd like to hear from

you. Sections, committees and county bar associations are encouraged to submit short stories about upcoming or recent activities. Honors bestowed by other publications (*e.g., Super Lawyers, Best Lawyers, etc.*) will not be accepted as announcements. (Oklahoma-based publications are the exception.) Information selected for publication is printed at no cost, subject to editing and printed as space permits.

Submit news items to:

Hailey Boyd
Communications Dept.
Oklahoma Bar Association
405-416-7018
barbriefs@okbar.org

Articles for the December issue must be received by Nov. 1.

KUDOS

OBA Executive Director Janet Johnson was recently named as one of "The Metro's Most Influential" by *405 Business Magazine*. The inaugural stand-alone issue of the publication recognized 250 Oklahoma City metro area leaders in 10 different industry clusters as some of the most influential executives and leaders in the area.

Judge Robert Murphy received a special presidential commendation from the Washington State Bar Association for his significant contributions to address systemic racism on the Challenging Systemic Racism in Our Regional Justice System Task Force. The task force examined institutions, procedures and rules that contribute to systemic racism, identified issues and created solutions to the pervasive problems of bias and racism, and supported lasting societal and judicial reform to end the suffering of all racial and ethnic minority communities. Judge Murphy previously served as the Payne County associate district judge.

AT THE PODIUM

Marty Ludlum spoke on the topic of transparency pricing and the Federal Trade Commission's final rule at the National Funeral Directors Association 2023 Annual Convention and Expo in Las Vegas.

MANDATORY CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION CHANGES

OK MCLE RULE 7, REGULATION 3.6

Effective **Jan. 1, 2021**, of the 12 required instructional hours of CLE each year, at least two hours must be for programming on Legal Ethics and Professionalism, legal malpractice prevention and/or mental health and substance use disorders. For more information, visit www.okmde.org/mde-rules.



IN MEMORIAM

Leon Fred Collins of Ardmore died Aug. 14. He was born Nov. 24, 1952, in Texarkana, Texas. He received his J.D. from the OCU School of Law in 1978. Mr. Collins began his career in Ardmore as an assistant district attorney and, eventually, district attorney. He transitioned to private practice, which he maintained for 30 years. He taught government, public speaking and criminal justice at Murray State College. Additionally, he taught Sunday school at the First Baptist Church and refereed for the Oklahoma Secondary School Activities Association in football and basketball. Mr. Collins was involved in his community, which included serving on the Board of Directors for the Ardmore Little Theatre, the Oklahoma Community Theatre Association, the Ardmore YMCA, the state mental health board and the March of Dimes. Memorial contributions may be made to the March of Dimes or the charity of your choice.

Thomas Roy Cook of Oklahoma City died Aug. 11. He was born Nov. 22, 1948, in San Diego. He received his J.D. from the OCU School of Law in 1974. Mr. Cook retired from law in 2015.

Raymond Lewis Edelstein of Oshkosh, Wisconsin, died Aug. 24. He was born Aug. 17, 1954. He received his J.D. from the TU College of Law in 1980. Mr. Edelstein practiced law for more than 40 years. He was the former district attorney of LeFlore and Latimer counties then served as an assistant attorney general of the Oklahoma Attorney General's Office, where he specialized in grand jury investigations and was

cross-deputized to manage federal and state drug prosecutions. In 1988, he was honored with the Governor's Award for Conservationist of the Year from the Oklahoma Wildlife Federation for his thorough prosecution of wildlife poaching. After moving back to Wisconsin in 1991, Mr. Edelstein based his practice in Oshkosh. Memorial contributions may be made to a charity of your choice.

Jerry R. Fent of Oklahoma City died Aug. 14. He was born Oct. 9, 1934, in Tulsa. **In 1953, Mr. Fent enlisted in the U.S. Army and was sent to the 11th Airborne Division at Fort Cambell for heavy weapons training as a paratrooper.** He received his J.D. from the OCU School of Law in 1966. His legal career began as an assistant municipal counselor with the city of Oklahoma City, where he worked for over 35 years focused on eminent domain. He retired in 1999 but still continued to be contracted to do special projects part time for the city in eminent domain cases. Mr. Fent served as a lector and usher at the St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church and as a coach and sports coordinator at Rosary School. Memorial contributions may be made to the Rosary School Endowment Fund at the Catholic Foundation.

Susanna Maria Gattoni of Oklahoma City died Sept. 11. She was born May 8, 1972. She received her J.D. with honors from the OU College of Law in 1997. Ms. Gattoni was a deputy general counsel at OU, where she worked since January 2018. Memorial contributions may be made to OKC Beautiful's Tree OKC.

Tamara Erin Hurd of Colorado Springs, Colorado, died Aug. 14. She was born March 23, 1982. Ms. Hurd received her J.D. from the OCU School of Law. She practiced at Hurd Legal Service. Memorial contributions may be made to the Immanuel Baptist Church in Perkins.

Rodney Dale Ramsey of Bartlesville died Aug. 18. He was born Nov. 3, 1968. Mr. Ramsey received his J.D. from the OU College of Law in 1994. He established his general law practice in Bartlesville in 1995, serving Washington, Osage and Nowata counties, and eventually opened a law practice with longtime friend Marty Meason. He additionally taught concurrent government classes at the high school through Rogers State University. He was an active member of his church and community, in organizations such as Kiwanis and the Bartlesville Jaycees. Memorial contributions may be made to the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals or Catholic Charities.

Ralph Theodor Stricker of Fayetteville, Arkansas, died Sept. 5. He was born Sept. 10, 1943, in Woodward. He received his J.D. from the OCU School of Law and practiced in the area of personal injury. Mr. Stricker was well known in his community for supporting his clients with 24-hour availability and giving back, devoting time and resources to care for others. Most recently, he was a volunteer at Compass Fellowship NWA to make sandwiches for the community kitchen ministry. Memorial contributions may be made to Compass Fellowship NWA's community assistance fund.

Joseph A. Young Jr. of Chandler died July 27. He was born Oct. 4, 1932, in Chandler. He served as an aircraft mechanic and electrician in the U.S. Air Force from 1951 to 1955. After being honorably discharged, he received his LL.B. from the OU College of Law in 1960. Mr. Young returned to Chandler to work as a partner with his father in private practice. Throughout his career, he worked as the District 4 district judge, president of the Oklahoma Judicial Conference, presiding judge of the Northwest Judicial District and associate general counsel for Kerr-McGee Corp., among other positions. Mr. Young retired from Kerr-McGee in 1994. Memorial contributions may be made to the Chandler Alumni Association.

EDITORIAL CALENDAR

2023 ISSUES

NOVEMBER

Agricultural Law

Editor: David Youngblood
david@youngbloodatoka.com

DECEMBER

Family Law

Editor: Sheila Southard
SheilaSouthard@bbsmlaw.com

2024 ISSUES

JANUARY

Litigation & Trial Practice

Editor: Roy Tucker
roy.tucker@oscn.net

JUNE

Real Property

Editor: David Youngblood
david@youngbloodatoka.com

FEBRUARY

Bankruptcy

Editor: Melanie Wilson Rughani
melanie.rughani@crowedunlevy.com

SEPTEMBER

Women in Law

Editor: Jana Knott
jana@basslaw.net

MARCH

Estate Planning

Editor: Evan Taylor
tayl1256@gmail.com

OCTOBER

Aviation Law

Editor: Melanie Wilson Rughani
melanie.rughani@crowedunlevy.com

APRIL

Indian Law

Editor: Sheila Southard
SheilaSouthard@bbsmlaw.com

NOVEMBER

Military & Veterans

Editor: Roy Tucker
roy.tucker@oscn.net

MAY

Natural Resources Law

Editor: Melissa DeLacerda
melissde@aol.com

DECEMBER

Ethics & Professional Responsibility

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If you would like to write an article on these topics, contact the editor.

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LEGAL AID SERVICES OF OKLAHOMA, INC (LASO) is urgently seeking PARALEGALS and ATTORNEYS in the OKC and Tulsa areas. You'll be a great fit if you're passionate about ensuring access to justice for all Oklahomans. LASO offers you exceptional benefits that include employer-paid health and dental insurance, an employer-funded pension, generous paid leave, and training, just to name a few. But the very best benefit we can offer you is the chance to make a difference by joining our mission.

REQUIRED SKILLS: • Provide high-quality legal assistance to eligible clients on matters pertaining to their situations and civil matters. • Strong interpersonal skills: able to work well with a wide range of people. • Legal research skills. • Ability to prepare for and present evidence at trial. • Strong organizational and time management skills. • Able and willing to continue professional development. • Proficiency in PC applications.

REQUIRED EXPERIENCE: Knowledge of and expertise of the law and legal system regarding civil legal issues.

If you are interested in a rewarding career working to provide equal access to justice for all, you are encouraged to apply. Please contact or send your resume to Michael Figgins at Michael.Figgins@LAOK.org.

THE LAW FIRM OF COLLINS, ZORN & WAGNER, P.L.L.C. is currently seeking an associate attorney with a minimum of 5 years' experience in litigation. The associate in this position will be responsible for court appearances, depositions, performing discovery, interviews and trials in active cases filed in the Oklahoma Eastern, Northern, and Western Federal District Courts and Oklahoma Courts statewide. Collins, Zorn & Wagner, P.L.L.C., is primarily a defense litigation firm focusing on civil rights, employment, constitutional law and general insurance defense. Salary is commensurate with experience. Please provide your resume, references and a cover letter including salary requirements to Collins, Zorn & Wagner, PLLC, Attn: Stephen L. Geris, 429 NE 50th, Second Floor, Oklahoma City, OK 73105.

POSITIONS AVAILABLE

Full Time Attorney Position With American Litigation Law Group, PLLC (“AmeriLit”)

Job Summary

AmeriLit has an immediate opening for a licensed attorney, in good standing with a state bar (Oklahoma license is not required). AmeriLit is a full-service law firm that focuses on handling Consumer Credit Card Defense. AmeriLit was formed in 2016 to fill an essential need in providing legal services to assist our clients when served a lawsuit. Since that time, AMERILIT has grown to more than 50 attorneys and legal professionals licensed and operating in 45 states throughout the United States.

Responsibilities and Duties

Responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Negotiating settlements with Plaintiff’s counsel while navigating incoming and responsive pleadings when matter is in litigation;
- Work with AMERILIT contract attorneys in other states to resolve litigation with Plaintiff’s firms;
- Supervise legal assistants and paralegals with legal matters and resolving lawsuits with Plaintiff’s firms;
- Work with Managing Attorney, Managing Member, Operations, and IT staff to improve systems and processes;
- Work with attorneys on compliance with state statutes and federal and local court rules to stay in compliance with other jurisdictions; and
- Work closely with the Managing Attorney on uncommon legal issues that may arise and how to work through the issues.

For more information and to apply, visit <https://amerilit.com/job-board>.

NORTHEAST OKLAHOMA. Logan & Lowry, LLP is seeking associates with two or more years of experience to assist senior partners in civil, regulatory, family, and criminal practice. Firm’s clients are widely diversified, ranging from major institutional clients to personal injury, insurance bad faith and wrongful death plaintiffs. Salary is based on experience, plus competitive benefits. Healthy work/life balance. Send resume, references, and cover letter to Logan & Lowry, LLP, P.O. Box 558, Vinita, OK 74301.

POSITIONS AVAILABLE

LOOKING TO HIRE A LEGAL ASSISTANT that can work flexible hours. Assist 2-3 attorneys with preparation, review and organization of pleadings, discovery, and transaction documents, docketing deadlines, scheduling meetings and depositions, billing time, proficiency with WORD, EXCEL, and billing software, client communication, and assisting other legal assistants in a team atmosphere. Business litigation and transactions are the primary areas of practice. Send cover letter, resume, references and writing sample to TheEdmondlawfirm@gmail.com.

JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL’S (JAG) CORPS for Oklahoma Army National Guard is seeking qualified licensed attorneys to commission as part-time judge advocates. Selected candidates will complete a six-week course at Fort Benning, Georgia, followed by a 10 ½-week military law course at the Judge Advocate General’s Legal Center on the University of Virginia campus in Charlottesville, Virginia. Judge advocates in the Oklahoma National Guard will ordinarily drill one weekend a month and complete a two-week annual training each year. Benefits include low-cost health, dental and life insurance, PX and commissary privileges, 401(k) type savings plan, free CLE and more! For additional information, contact CPT Jordan Bennett at jordan.r.bennett.mil@army.mil.

THE BOARD OF EDUCATION FOR MOORE PUBLIC SCHOOLS, a school district with approximately 24,000 students, is currently seeking district legal counsel. The position requires the ability to interact and function effectively in an academic setting. Applicants must be licensed to practice law in Oklahoma. Experience/background in education law and/or constitutional law is highly preferred. Also preferable, but not mandatory, is for the incumbent to office, either wholly or partially, in the Administrative Service Center of Moore Public Schools. Salary for the position is negotiable. If interested, send your application to: Vicki Brickman, Clerk of the Board, Moore Public Schools, 1500 S.E. 4th Street, Moore OK 73160. Applications will be accepted through October 31, 2023.

SMALL AV RATED NORTH OKC/EDMOND FIRM looking to add two associates with an eye to expanding scope of practice. Send resume and compensation requirements to Jon Hester, 16311 Sonoma Park Drive, Edmond, OK 73013 or jhester@hesterlaw.net.

POSITIONS AVAILABLE

OKLAHOMA INDIGENT DEFENSE SEEKING ATTORNEYS

The Oklahoma Indigent Defense System (OIDS) is seeking applicants for Attorney (Defense Counsel) positions in our Non-Capital Trial Division satellite offices. OIDS employs Defense Counsel in each of our nine NCT satellite offices: Altus, Clinton, Enid, Guymon, Lawton, Norman, Okmulgee, Sapulpa, and Woodward.

Defense Counsel provide clients with competent legal advice and zealous advocacy at every phase of the criminal trial process, while representing indigent individuals in state court at the trial level in felony, misdemeanor, juvenile delinquency, traffic and wildlife cases. Applicants should possess a Juris Doctorate degree, active membership, and good standing with the State Bar of Oklahoma, or eligibility for admission; OR should be scheduled to take the Oklahoma Bar Exam.

Salary for this position starts at \$66,900; commensurate with qualifications and agency salary schedule.

OIDS provides a comprehensive benefits package designed to support our employees and their dependents, including:

- Benefit allowance to help cover insurance premiums
- Health/Dental/Vision/Basic Life/Supplemental Life/Dependent Life/Disability insurance plans
- Flexible spending accounts
- 15 days of vacation and 15 days of sick leave (increases with years of service)
- 11 paid holidays
- Retirement Savings Plan with generous match
- Longevity Bonus for years of service

Applications must be submitted online. Visit www.oids.ok.gov or <https://bit.ly/3lsI70r> to view job announcements and apply online. This is an open, continuous announcement; application reviews will be conducted periodically until all positions are filled.

POSITIONS AVAILABLE



CITY OF TULSA – 2 MUNICIPAL ATTORNEY POSITIONS

- ATTORNEY III – REAL PROPERTY/ZONING
- ATTORNEY I – PROSECUTOR (Entry Level)

Why did you go to law school? If your passion is to make a difference in your community rather than stress over billable hours, join our dedicated team of attorneys and see your impact all around. We provided legal support for: construction of the BOK, Driller's Stadium, BMX Headquarters, and development of the Blue Dome entertainment district, Amazon Fulfillment Center, and the new Costco. We work on cutting-edge legal issues like McGirt/tribal jurisdiction, 1st Amendment rights for protests and social media, and zoning for medical marijuana businesses; and we routinely try cases in state and federal courts, including appeals to the 10th Circuit and the US Supreme Court.

In addition to competitive wages, we offer great benefits and work-life balance, including:

- Medical, Dental, Vision, Life, FSA, HSA, and a host of other insurance options
- Retirement – both a defined benefit plan (where we contribute 16.5% of your salary to your pension) and deferred comp similar to a 401(k)
- Paid time off: 14 vacation days to start, plus 12 sick days, and 13 holidays
- Paid bar dues and CLE
- Paid parental leave
- Opportunity for public service loan forgiveness

Read the full job descriptions and start the process by applying at: <https://bit.ly/3RQ1SZW>. Don't miss this opportunity to grow a limitless career with the Tulsa City Attorney's Office.

POSITIONS AVAILABLE

OKC AV RATED LAW FIRM IS SEEKING AN ASSOCIATE with excellent litigation, research, analytical and writing skills, 3-5 years' experience for general civil/commercial litigation practice, health care law. Must have solid litigation experience for all phases of pretrial discovery and trial experience. Submit a confidential resume with references, writing sample and salary requirements to Box LC, Oklahoma Bar Association, P.O. Box 53036, Oklahoma City, OK 73152.

THE U.S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF OKLAHOMA in Muskogee, OK is seeking applicants for one or more Assistant U.S. Attorney positions for our Criminal Division. AUSAs in the Criminal Division have the unique opportunity to represent the United States of America by directing the investigation and prosecution of federal offenses occurring within the Eastern District, including Indian Country. Salary is based on the number of years of professional attorney experience. Applicants must possess a J.D. degree, be an active member of the bar in good standing (any U.S. jurisdiction) and have at least one (1) year post-J.D. legal or other relevant experience. Prior violent crime prosecution and jury trial experience is preferred. AUSAs may live within 25 miles of the district, which includes much of the Tulsa metropolitan area. See vacancy announcement 23-12029252-AUSA at www.usajobs.gov (Exec Office for US Attorneys). Applications must be submitted online. See How to Apply section of announcement for specific information. Questions may be directed to Jessica Alexander, Human Resources Specialist, via email at Jessica.Alexander@usdoj.gov. This is an open, continuous announcement that will close no later than December 26, 2023. Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis, with the first review no earlier than 5 days after the date of this announcement. Additional reviews of applications will be conducted periodically, after the initial review, until all positions are filled.

POSITIONS AVAILABLE

WATKINS TAX RESOLUTION AND ACCOUNTING FIRM is hiring attorneys for its Oklahoma City and Tulsa offices. The firm is a growing, fast-paced setting with a focus on client service in federal and state tax help (e.g. offers in compromise, penalty abatement, innocent spouse relief). Previous tax experience is not required, but previous work in customer service is preferred. Competitive salary, health insurance and 401K available. Please send a one-page resume with one-page cover letter to Info@TaxHelpOK.com.

CIVIL DIVISION OF THE TULSA COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE is seeking applicants for the position of Assistant District Attorney | Civil Division. Be part of a team of five attorneys who advise county officials in various matters regarding all aspects of county government, and represent the county and its officials in both state and federal civil litigation. Qualified applicants must have a J.D. degree from an accredited school of law and be admitted to the practice of law in the State of Oklahoma. Ideal candidates will have experience in civil litigation, discovery, motions, oral arguments, trials and settlements. Excellent research and writing skills are required. As a state employee, you will enjoy excellent health care and retirement benefits, and have all federal, state and county holidays off. Send cover letter, resume, professional references and a recent writing sample to: [Staci Eldridge seldridge@tulsacounty.org](mailto:StaciEldridge@tulsacounty.org).

THE OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND ENTERPRISE SERVICES (OMES) is seeking a Deputy General Counsel to join the OMES legal team. This position reports to the OMES General Counsel. For information about the position and to apply, please use the following links: Current state employees: <https://bit.ly/3Zq7M9E>. Other applicants: <https://bit.ly/3sZ2cip>.



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Listen

By John Morris Williams

WHEN I WAS IN LAW school, a firm I worked for always sent the “crazy” calls to me. I got a call from a lady who shouted into the phone, “They killed my parrot, and they are killing me.” Supposedly, her next-door neighbor was doing something on the property that was bad, and she wanted it stopped. I didn’t ask many questions and got off the call as soon as I could.

About six months later, there was a front-page story in the paper about a lady who was sick, and her parrot had already died. The lady was next door to what would become the largest Superfund contamination site in the United States. Millions of dollars in legal fees were paid out over the years as the site was being cleaned up. It sounded very familiar.

The fact is I didn’t listen to the lady’s full story. Had I been a licensed attorney with knowledge of environmental law, it probably would have been the biggest case of my career. From that experience, I learned a very valuable lesson: Always listen to other people’s stories. Some of them are rather incredible. However, sometimes incredible things happen to people, and they sound a bit out of kilter when they tell their stories.

After reading the article, I felt remorseful that I had not given her more time and listened better. From that moment on, I swore I would listen to all the stories. I can

tell you that I heard some stories during my time as executive director of the OBA. Whether they called or just stopped by, I tried to always make time. Oftentimes, the folks had some mental health challenges. They deserve to be heard too. My experience is they are often not treated kindly, and a kind listening ear often calms them, and they appreciate someone listening. Even if I could not be of help, almost every one of those encounters ended in the person being grateful that someone had listened.

On occasion, I have had an angry person, even a member or two, call me upset. I usually knew the call was coming, and staff well prepared me with information. We weren’t perfect, but we were pretty good, and I got very few of those calls. Upon answering, I always asked the caller to tell me their story. After they finished, I responded, “If that had happened to me, I’d be madder than you are.” That always caused a pause in the conversation. Whereupon I would go over the facts that were in our records, and almost always, the mistake was not on our end. I first listened rather than engage in a defensive conversation. I actually made several



friends in that process, all because I chose to hear someone’s story. Even if it was accusatory or angry, I felt the person had the right to be heard.

Sometimes in our business, people need to be heard. Their day in court is sometimes what is needed. An acknowledgment that they have a story to tell. Sometimes it’s just listening when you can offer no solution except to grant the person some kindness and courtesy. Sometimes it’s a multibillion-dollar environmental case.

I never had a multibillion-dollar call like the one I received my last semester of law school. But I have had hundreds, if not thousands, of priceless calls where I have listened to other people’s stories. Each one of them affirmed that a kind, listening ear is pretty good medicine for the world.

John Morris Williams is the executive director emeritus of the OBA.

THURSDAY,
OCTOBER 26, 2023

Noon - 1 p.m.

Live Replay

MCLE - 1 HOUR OF ETHICS

FEATURED SPEAKER:



STUART TEICHER, THE CLE PERFORMER
PRACTICING ATTORNEY AND PROFESSIONAL LEGAL EDUCATOR

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THE BAD LAWYERS OF HOLLYWOOD:

AN ETHICS PROGRAM

Whether it's fictional lawyers in film, or real lawyers who represent celebrities, a ton of these characters have committed ethical violations. Join the CLE Performer Stuart Teicher as he explores the misdeeds of the real and fake lawyers of Hollywood. Rules addressed include 1.5 (fees), 8.4 (misconduct) and 1.6 (confidentiality).


ABOUT OUR SPEAKER:

Stuart I. Teicher, Esq. is a professional legal educator who focuses on ethics law and writing instruction. A practicing lawyer for 30 years, Stuart's career is now dedicated to helping fellow lawyers survive the practice of law and thrive in the profession. Mr. Teicher teaches seminars, provides in-house training to law firms and legal departments, provides CLE instruction at law firm client events, and also gives keynote speeches at conventions and association meetings.

Stuart helps lawyers get better at what they do (and enjoy the process) through his entertaining and educational CLE "performances". He speaks, teaches, and writes — Thomson Reuters published his book entitled, *Navigating the Legal Ethics of Social Media and Technology*.

Mr. Teicher is a Supreme Court appointee to the New Jersey District Ethics Committee where he investigates and prosecutes grievances filed against attorneys. Mr. Teicher also served on the New Jersey Office of Attorney Ethics Fee Arbitration Committee. Mr. Teicher is an adjunct professor of law at Georgetown Law where he teaches Professional Responsibility, and he is an adjunct professor at Rutgers University in New Brunswick where he teaches undergraduate writing courses. He also taught legal writing at St. John's University School of Law in New York City.

Disclaimer: All views or opinions expressed by any presenter during the course of this CLE is that of the presenter alone and not an opinion of the Oklahoma Bar Association, the employers, or affiliates of the presenters unless specifically stated. Additionally, any materials, including the legal research, are the product of the individual contributor, not the Oklahoma Bar Association. The Oklahoma Bar Association makes no warranty, express or implied, relating to the accuracy or content of these materials.



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