No Offices, No Problem: 3 Months of Philadelphia Bar Association Advocacy

With the closing of many businesses and the courts, the Association immediately understood its responsibility as a vital resource of information, education, and community for its members.

March 16, 2020 was the date that the physical offices of the Philadelphia Bar Association closed due to the stay-at-home order for Pennsylvania residents in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. It was also when the Association kicked into high gear its duty in serving its members and community on multiple fronts, all with the aim of providing guidance, education, advocacy, and myriad opportunities for the Association’s members to continue to thrive and succeed in their good works.

With the closing of many businesses and the courts, the Association immediately understood its responsibility as a vital resource of information, education, and community for its membership. Before Philadelphia’s stay-at-home order even went into effect, a “Coronavirus Response” page was created on the Association’s website that listed national and local resources from official health, professional, and government organizations to serve as a “one-stop shop” for the latest pandemic-related updates. Real-time updates from the courts were also provided via the Association’s social media channels, and a free webinar on transitioning one’s law practice to a virtual environment was provided in mid-March. The Association’s Sections began holding virtual town halls, which facilitated discussion amongst attorneys in different specializations, and provided a channel for professionals to convey their needs and concerns to government organizations and the courts.

In advocating for the profession, the Association released a statement regarding the administration of the 2020 bar exam in light of COVID-19 pandemic restrictions and wrote a letter to the Pennsylvania Board of Examiners supporting the proposal of the Deans of Law Schools to award temporary licenses to law students until they could sit for the bar exam. The Association engaged in continuous dialogues with leaders of the First Judicial District of Pennsylvania regarding the closing, continuing, and renewing of operations during the pandemic to reduce backlogs. The Association also encouraged its Sections to directly engage with court personnel to develop new and more flexible procedures.

The Association’s Lawyer Referral and Information Service, which has been serving the public and the Philadelphia legal community for more than 50 years, also began working remotely on March 16. Since that date, LRIS has handled 3,610 calls from the public and made over 1,928 referrals as of June 29.

To accommodate the shifting needs and priorities of its members, the Association also extended its membership renewal period until June 30. This allowed members to continue to access benefits, list subscriptions, and emails featuring the latest developments from the courts and industry.

The Association’s award-winning CLE program also went completely virtual. Live CLE programs had always had a webcast component, but during the pandemic, webcasting became the center of CLE programming and all programs from that point onward were offered remotely. From March 16 to the present, the Association has offered over 60 CLE programs, highlighting important, time-sensitive, and relevant content, with courses such as “Interacting with the Federal Courts During the COVID-19 Crisis,” “Responding to Hate Crimes and Bias Incidents,” and “Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19): Key Employment Law Issues.”

The Philadelphia Bar Association continued to advocate for justice as its Board of Governors passed resolutions addressing such issues as urgent housing needs during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, and support for...
October 19, 2020, is the last day to register before the November 3, 2020, general election, one of the most important elections in our nation’s history.

ARE YOU REGISTERED TO VOTE?

If not, fill out an application at the newly transformed Official Voter Registration Center at

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9 AM – 6 PM

If you are registered, did you know that anyone in PA can vote by mail?

VOTE BY MAIL APPLICATIONS ARE ALSO AVAILABLE AT OUR VOTER REGISTRATION CENTER

October 27, 2020 is the last day to request a mail in ballot for the November 3 election.
Making Plans – Changing Plans

By A. Michael Snyder

Last year, around the time that you are now reading this, many of you were firming up your summer vacation plans. For others, like my wife and I, you might have just started to have the vacation plan discussions: Where do we go? When do we go? What do you want to do? Do we take the kids or not?

In any case, you probably looked on those discussions with pleasure and anticipation. After all, isn’t talking about vacations, both before and after, one of the more pleasant aspects of a vacation?

Of course, in the new landscape of COVID-19, in the here and now, those discussions aren’t happening. Instead, we’re more likely to be having discussions along the lines of, “Remember that trip we took to [fill in the blank]?” or “I wish we could get away! The (kids) (your mother) (my work) (everything) are/is driving me crazy!”

Getting away, vacationing where we normally are, is a necessary part of existing in a stressful world. We all rely on vacations, of any length, as a way of resetting our mental clocks. This year, we probably will consider ourselves lucky if we can get out for an hour’s drive to nowhere. Even standing in line to buy an ice cream cone seems like a throw-caution-to-the-wind risky adventure. In the blink of an eye, we’ve had to change our plans completely. What’s more, for now, we don’t even have the ability to predict when, or if, we will be able to return to making plans for a vacation or a getaway.

Businesses, like individuals, rely on making plans for the future. In fact, the success or failure of a business or organization often depends on its ability to make plans for the future and to carry them out. This year, those well-crafted plans have been thrown out the window by all of us; the pandemic has seen to that.

Now, as to the actual real-life vacation plans that will probably have to wait until next year: why don’t we each take some time to share favorite vacation stories with friends or loved ones or colleagues? We can’t be expected to spend every waking hour dealing with, or talking about, pandemic-related issues.

One of my favorite memories of a vacation revolved around a trip that my wife and I took to Amsterdam a few years ago. We had heard about an organization called Dining with the Dutch that put us together with a Dutch couple for dinner in their home. We had spent four years in New York, each working in our respective fields. The children were adorable, the husband was a superb chef, and both husband and wife were warm, gracious, inviting, and extraordinarily bright. In all, we spent about 5 hours in their charming home, leaving us with memories of a magical evening making new friends.

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OK, I’ve shared one of my memories. Now, it’s your turn. Send me one of your favorite vacation memories. If we can’t go anywhere, at least we can hear the stories of others as a momentary escape from issues like appropriate PPE gear, the mounting casualty toll, and the dire predictions of resurgences of infection. If I close my eyes, maybe I can believe that I’m back in Amsterdam, walking along one of the canals.

Hon. A. Michael Snyder (ret.) (msnyder@adwv.com) is the 93rd Chancellor of the Philadelphia Bar Association.
Over three months ago, the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) forever changed our world. As we watched the devastating effects of the pandemic wash over our communities, so many of us found comfort in the words of Mr. Rogers, “Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping.”

Many of us also heeded the call to action embedded in this sage advice. Without missing a beat, the YLD took steps to revamp programming to ensure our connections with the community remained intact as we began social distancing.

Now, faced with pleas to end racial injustice, we are being called upon to be listeners. We must listen to each other and try to understand the pain, grief, anger, and exhaustion felt by so many within our community. And, as we listen, we must elevate and amplify their voices.

Helping and listening. Easier said than done. But really, what is a lawyer other than a helper and a listener?

Over the past month, I have been humbled by the number of calls and emails from the YLD looking for ways to help and to listen. Our June Virtual Happy Hour provided a platform for YLD members to voice their thoughts and feelings about George Floyd’s death and the ensuing protests. The conversation was difficult, but we listened to each other and tried to help ease the pain, grief, and anger.

The conversation also served as a brainstorming session for ways to help. During the month of June, the YLD supported the efforts of The Barristers’ Association of Philadelphia, Inc. to provide pro bono counsel to individuals who were arrested or detained during protests and to provide pro bono counsel to small Black-owned businesses impacted by protests. The YLD also collaborated with the Philadelphia Chapter of the National Lawyers Guild to train legal observers. With only a few days’ notice, 30 young lawyers and law school students participated in the training. Legal Observers serve a vital role at demonstrations, often ensuring interactions between protestors, counter-protestors, and police remain civil.

Next month, this column will serve as a platform to elevate and amplify Black voices. YLD Chair-Elect Andre Webb and YLD Treasurer Jahlee Hatchett will share their perspective on serving as leaders in the Bar Association during this critical moment.

As we move forward, it is incumbent on all of us to continue helping and to continue listening. What that will look like will be different for each of us. For some, it may look like attending protests or volunteering to deliver meals. For others, it may mean honest self-evaluation and the hard work of dismantling implicit biases. As for the YLD, we will continue to be helpers and listeners. We will continue to be lawyers.

Hillary N. Ladov (hladov@goldbergsegalla.com), an associate in Goldberg Segalla’s Global Insurance Services practice, is chair of the Young Lawyers Division.
As we find ourselves in an hour of reckoning, amidst a global outcry against systemic racism and injustice coupled with the forces of a global pandemic, it is hard to imagine there will ever be another occasion in our lifetimes when the message of equal access to justice is so necessary, and the need for support for civil legal aid in Philadelphia will be as great as it is now.

We must take this opportunity to come up with solutions that are worthy of how big this moment is—for our future as a democracy and for our hope of ever making good on the American creed for all within her shores—particularly for the sons and daughters of those who were enslaved. In April, the Foundation released emergency grants for immediate distribution to Philadelphia’s civil legal aid agencies. Our Board acted decisively to alleviate some of the unexpected pressure on our public interest community. However, it was not nearly enough.

Structural inequalities and racism are prevalent throughout the American justice system. They are especially apparent in civil legal matters, from housing to unemployment to immigration, which disproportionately affect people of color. And because there is no universal right to an attorney for civil legal needs, more than 80% of Philadelphians before our civil courts are without legal representation in proceedings that threaten their basic human rights. The free and low-cost legal services provided by Philadelphia civil legal aid organizations are critical to the fight for racial justice and equity.

Civil legal aid organizations, including our 36 nonprofit partners, have been an essential instrument of the front-line response during the COVID-19 crisis, and they will be just as critical during our recovery, helping tens of thousands of Philadelphia residents through vital programs and services. An immense surge in the need for legal aid services is anticipated once offices and courts reopen—Philadelphia County’s unemployment rate saw a dramatic jump from 6% in January to 16.5% in April, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Prior to the COVID-19 crisis, nearly 1 in 4 families in Philadelphia were living below the official poverty line, and it is predicted that a record number will be entering poverty for the first time due to circumstances caused by the pandemic. Many individuals will be turning to free and low-cost legal aid for assistance—a system that was already overworked and overloaded prior to the pandemic.

As a funder who provides unrestricted annual grants to nearly 40 agencies, the Philadelphia Bar Foundation knows that the budgets of most legal aid organizations do not offer buffers for surge capacity. They would if they could, but legal aid is notoriously underfunded, and nonprofits are currently experiencing reductions in revenue from all philanthropic sources, including an anticipated 46% to 70% drop in federal IOLTA funding, which will lead to reductions in service delivery, program, and staff in our legal aid organizations.

Financial gifts to the Philadelphia Bar Foundation help us keep working to provide grants and other support to the legal aid agencies that need it most. Please consider donating to the Philadelphia Bar Foundation to support our mission and the vision for equal access to justice. You can donate online at www.philadelphiabarfoundation.org/donate.

Thank you, and stay safe.

Leslie E. John (john@ballardspahr.com), partner at Ballard Spahr LLP, is president of the Philadelphia Bar Foundation.
Special Meeting on Coping with Trauma, June 3

On Wednesday, June 3, 2020, The Barristers’ Association of Philadelphia, Inc. held a special, virtual General Body Meeting to discuss the collective pain, trauma, grief, and anger felt by its members in the wake of George Floyd’s murder. Scores of Black attorneys and law students participated in this opportunity to air their emotions in a safe space. Therapist Dr. Argie Allen-Wilson (“Dr. Argie”) provided important and timely coping techniques and addressed audience questions.

2020–2021 Executive Committee Elected, June 10

On Wednesday, June 10, 2020, The Barristers’ Association of Philadelphia, Inc. held its final, regularly scheduled General Body Meeting for the 2019–2020 term and announced the election results for the 2020–2021 Executive Committee. Barristers’ elected 2020–2021 Executive Committee members are: President Dominique B.E. Ward; President-Elect Adara L. Combs; Vice President of Administration Lakeisha R. Robinson; Vice President of Finance Kristin Johnson; Treasurer Jahlee J. Hatchett; Corresponding Secretary Reginald L. Streater; Recording Secretary Salena Jones; and Elected Members Clay Cauley and Aaron Dunbar. The Appointed Members to the 2020–2021 Executive Committee are Angella N. Middleton, Courtney A. Munnings, and Courtney N. Richardson.

“Know Your Rights” Town Hall, June 11

On Thursday, June 11, 2020, The Barristers’ Association of Philadelphia, Inc. held a free, virtual “Know Your Rights” Town Hall open to the public. Moderated by KYW reporter Cherri Gregg (top left), panelists ACLU of Pennsylvania Executive Director Reggie Shuford (top right), Philadelphia Police Inspector Derrick E. Wood (bottom left), Mincey Fitzpatrick Ross, LLC Founding Partner Kevin Mincey (bottom middle), and Attorney Deborah Watson-Stokes (bottom right) educated participants as to their rights when interacting with the police on the streets, in a traffic stop, and while protesting, drawing upon the recent events in Philadelphia as examples.
The State of Workers’ Comp. in the Age of COVID-19

By Christopher M. Fox

By the time this article goes to press, we will have reached four months of social distancing measures necessitated by COVID-19. Given the impact the pandemic has had on every aspect of our daily lives, it should come as no surprise that both my May and June articles offered commentary on the same. I wrote the May article in early April, which seems like a lifetime ago, especially as it pertains to the timeline of our work-from-home lives.

Given that weeks have now become months, and the ongoing uncertainty as to when we will be able to resume in-person activities, I felt it was appropriate to revisit the state of our practice in the age of COVID-19. While my personal experiences have been wholly positive, I wanted to reach out to some of my colleagues to obtain their feedback as well.

Allison Wheeler, an attorney with O’Hagan Meyer in Philadelphia, who represents employers and insurers, was quick to point out that, “as soon as the shutdown happened, we had judges take immediate action and schedule hearings via an online video platform or telephone.” Understanding that there will be minor growing pains as we learn a new system together, now nearly four months into our current system, she told me that she has successfully completed countless settlement hearings. Further, she recently completed testimony before a judge on a very complicated case, involving “hundreds of pages of documentary evidence.” While she cites the amazing technology available to us as one reason for our success, she further offers “major kudos” to the Office of Adjudication for the ongoing adjudication of cases during these challenging times.

Jason Krasno is managing partner of Krasno, Krasno & Owundjio, which operates offices throughout Pennsylvania, including Philadelphia. Mr. Krasno cited strong leadership at the Bureau of Workers’ Compensation in Harrisburg, including Director Joseph DeRita, as we transitioned to the remote practice of law. Like Ms. Wheeler, he was also complimentary of the Office of Adjudication, noting that “our judges adapted almost immediately to a work-from-home virtual courtroom, which helped tremendously.”

Elizabeth Tobelmann, a paralegal at Del Collo & Mazzanti in Paoli, assists attorneys with preparation of settlement documents and also handles much of the firm’s WCAIS (Workers’ Compensation Automation and Integration System) communications, amongst her many paralegal duties. Ms. Tobelmann told me that she felt relieved once she realized how accessible and responsive both judges and their staff have been, even while working from home. This has ensured that WCAIS requests were promptly ruled upon, and clear instructions have been provided by judges regarding hearing procedures and the uploading of evidence.

Given the unprecedented nature of the pandemic, our only true comparison may be with neighboring workers’ compensation systems. To that end, colleagues that I’ve spoken to who practice workers’ compensation law in both Pennsylvania and New Jersey have told me that there is really no contest as to the functional level our system, as compared to our friends on the other side of Delaware River.

Christopher M. Fox (cfox@gk-wcl.com), an attorney at Gross & Kenny LLP, is certified as a specialist in the practice of Workers’ Compensation Law by the Pennsylvania Bar Association’s Section on Workers’ Compensation Law as authorized by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, and is a co-chair elect for the Philadelphia Bar Association’s Workers’ Compensation Section.

Association Advocacy

continued from page 1

legislation that would allow victims of rape or incest access to the court to request the termination of parental rights of their abusers. The Association also worked as a member of Philadelphia City Council’s working group to create a landlord-tenant eviction diversion program and promoted new remote pro bono opportunities to deliver legal services created by the Association’s nonprofit legal aid organizational members.

In May, Chancellor Hon. A. Michael Snyder (ret.), along with Joseph A. Sullivan and Catherine Carr, cochairs of the Association’s Civil Gideon and Access to Justice Task Force, penned an op-ed about preserving the budget for the Philadelphia Eviction Prevention Project when Mayor Jim Kenney’s original proposed budget proposed reducing PEPP’s funding to just $500,000—25% of the previous year’s budget. Philadelphia City Council recently restored PEPP’s funding to its original $2.1 million.

Night and day, in the office or out, the Philadelphia Bar Association is hard at work for its members, the profession, and for justice. Visit the Association’s website at www.philadelphiabar.org for the latest news, events, membership opportunities, CLE programming, and more.

Brittany Anne Robertson (brobertson@philabar.org) is the communications associate at the Philadelphia Bar Association.

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• Former Chairman, Continuing Legal Education Board of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania
• Former Chairman, Supreme Court of Pennsylvania Interest on Lawyers Trust Account Board
• Former Federal Prosecutor
• Named by his peers as one of the top 100 Super Lawyers in Pennsylvania and the top 100 Super Lawyers in Philadelphia
• Named by his peers as Best Lawyers in America 2015 Philadelphia Ethics and Professional Responsibility Law “Lawyer of the Year,” and in Plaintiffs and Defendants Legal Malpractice Law

1818 Market Street, 29th Floor • Philadelphia, PA 19103 • (215) 751-2863
Delivery of Legal Services Committee  
Wed., July 1, 8:30 a.m.  
Private Meeting

CLE: Conflicts, Contracts and Costs: Tuning Up Your Ethics, Office Systems, Client Relationships, and Operating Documents  
Wed., July 1, 10:00 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.  
2 ETH credits - FEATURED SPEAKER LIVE via WEBCAST

State Civil Executive Committee  
Wed., July 1, 11 a.m.  
Private Meeting

State Civil Litigation Town Hall  
Wed., July 1, 12 p.m.  
Two-week check-in regarding the new protocols and anything related to the judicial emergency. This remains an evolving situation and we value all contributions to the discussion.

Criminal Justice Executive Committee  
Wed., July 1, 12:30 p.m.  
Private Meeting

Mindful Mondays  
Mon., July 6, 8 a.m.  
Start your week off with a short, guided mindfulness meditation.

Professional Guidance Committee  
Tues., July 7, 12 p.m.  
Private Meeting

Law Firm Pro Bono Committee  
Tues., July 7, 12 p.m.  
Private Meeting

CLE VIDEO ENCORE: The CARES Act Beyond the Paycheck Protection Loans – Benefits for Bankruptcy, Housing and Student Loans  
Tues., July 7, 12:30 - 1:30 p.m.  
1 SUB credit - ATTEND via WEBCAST

CLE VIDEO ENCORE: Executing Estate Planning Documents in a Pandemic: What you Need to Know  
Wed., July 8, 10 - 11 a.m.  
1 SUB credit - ATTEND via WEBCAST

CLE VIDEO ENCORE: Pandemic Perils and Progress for the Probate Practitioner: Remote Notarization (Update) and Virtual Probate  
Wed., July 8, 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.  
1 SUB credit - ATTEND via WEBCAST

Solo and Small Firm Committee  
Wed., July 8, 12:30 p.m.  
Please join us to connect and discuss maintaining best practices during these challenging times. We will also be sharing experiences with participating in court hearings remotely via video and telephone along with discussing our future programs.

Law School Outreach Summer Series  
Thurs., July 9, 12 p.m.  
Summer series for law students. This week’s topic, “Criminal Law and Prisoner’s Rights/Sentencing”

Education Law Committee  
Thurs., July 9, 12 p.m.

Legislative Liaison Committee  
Thurs., July 9, 12 p.m.  
Join the Committee as we hear updates from Anthony Cusci, Cusci Associates.

CLE VIDEO ENCORE: The Essentials of Virtual Conferencing with GoToMeeting, Microsoft (MS) Teams, and Zoom  
Thurs., July 9, 12 - 2 p.m.  
2 SUB credits - ATTEND via WEBCAST

The Philadelphia Lawyer Editorial Board  
Fri., July 10, 12:30 p.m.  
Private Meeting

Social Security Disability Benefits Committee  
Fri., July 10, 12:30 p.m.  
Ian Harlow, Director, and Scott Panckeri, Assistant Director, from the Pennsylvania Bureau of Disability Determination (BDD) will discuss BDD’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and answer questions related to BDD policy and operations.

Chat and Chew with the Wellness Committee  
Fri., July 10 at 12:30 p.m.  
The Wellness Committee, in coordination with Chancellor Snyder, is happy to invite you to a weekly lunch-time “Chat and Chew” forum to enjoy your favorite home-made or take-out cuisine while we all discuss (or listen to) topics of interest, whether legal or non-legal.

Mindful Mondays  
Mon., July 13, 8 a.m.  
Start your week off with a short, guided mindfulness meditation.

Section Chairs  
Mon., July 13, 8:30 a.m.  
Private Meeting

Family Law Section  
Mon., July 13, 12 p.m.
Business Law Executive Committee  
Tues., July 14, 12 p.m.  
Private Meeting

Philadelphia Bar Foundation Board  
Wed., July 15, 12 p.m.  
Private Meeting

Law School Outreach Summer Series  
Thurs., July 16, 12 p.m.  
Summer series for law students. This week’s topic is, “Cultural Competency in Public Interest Practice”

Family Law Executive Committee  
Thurs., July 16 at 12 p.m.  
Private Meeting

Chat and Chew with the Wellness Committee  
Fri., July 17, 12:30 p.m.  
The Wellness Committee, in coordination with Chancellor Snyder, is happy to invite you to a weekly lunch-time “Chat and Chew” forum to enjoy your favorite homemade or take-out cuisine while we all discuss (or listen to) topics of interest, whether legal or non-legal.

Mindful Mondays  
Mon., July 20, 8 a.m.  
Start your week off with a short, guided mindfulness meditation.

CLE: Basic Mediation Training  
DAY 1 - LIVE WEBCAST  
Mon., July 20, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.  
6.5 SUB credits - SPEAKERS LIVE via WEBCAST

Public Interest Executive  
Mon., July 20, 12 p.m.

CLE: Basic Mediation Training  
DAY 2 - LIVE WEBCAST  
Tues., July 21, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.  
6.5 SUB credits - SPEAKERS LIVE via WEBCAST

Cabinet  
Tues., July 21, 12 p.m.  
Private Meeting

Law Firm Pro Bono Committee  
Tues., July 21, 12 p.m.  
Private Meeting

Employee Benefits  
Tues., July 21, 12:30 p.m.

CLE: Basic Mediation Training  
DAY 3 - LIVE WEBCAST  
Wed., July 22, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.  
6.5 SUB credits - SPEAKERS LIVE via WEBCAST

YLD Cabinet  
Wed., July 22, 9 a.m.  
Private Meeting

Law School Outreach Summer Series  
Thurs., July 23, 12 p.m.  
Summer series for law students. This week’s topic is, “Direct Services/Community Lawyering”

Zoning, Land Use and Code Enforcement Committee  
Thurs., July 23, 12 p.m.

Civil Justice Section  
Thurs., July 23, 12 p.m.

Workers’ Compensation Section Happy Hour  
Thurs., July 23, 5 p.m.

Diversity Advisory Panel  
Fri., July 24, 8:30 a.m.  
Private Meeting

Chat and Chew with the Wellness Committee  
Fri., July 24, 12:30 p.m.  
The Wellness Committee, in coordination with Chancellor Snyder, is happy to invite you to a weekly lunch-time “Chat and Chew” forum to enjoy your favorite homemade or take-out cuisine while we all discuss (or listen to) topics of interest, whether legal or non-legal.

Mindful Mondays  
Mon., July 27, 8 a.m.  
Start your week off with a short, guided mindfulness meditation.

Section Chairs  
Mon., July 27, 8:30 a.m.  
Private Meeting

YLD Executive Committee  
Mon., July 27, 12 p.m.  
Private Meeting

Real Property Executive Committee  
Tues., July 28, 12 p.m.  
Private Meeting

Women in the Profession Committee  
Tues., July 28, 12 p.m.

CLE: Pennsylvania Cannabis Update - LIVE WEBCAST  
Tues., July 28, 12:30 - 1:30 p.m.  
1 SUB credit - SPEAKERS LIVE via WEBCAST

Diversity in the Profession Committee  
Tues., July 28, 5:30 p.m.  
Private Meeting

Committee Chairs  
Wed., July 29, 8:30 a.m.  
Private Meeting

CLE: Remote Deposition Essentials - LIVE WEBCAST  
Wed., July 29, 10 - 11 a.m.  
1 SUB credit - SPEAKERS LIVE via WEBCAST

LGBT Rights Committee  
Wed., July 29, 12 p.m.

LRIS Committee  
Thurs., July 30, 8:30 a.m.  
Private Meeting

Law School Outreach Summer Series  
Thurs., July 30, 12 p.m.  
Summer series for law students. This week’s topic is, “Policy and Impact Litigation”

Board of Governors  
Thurs., July 30, 4 p.m.  
Private Meeting

Former Chancellor’s Advisory Panel  
Fri., July 31 at 8:30 a.m.  
Private Meeting

Chat and Chew with the Wellness Committee  
Fri., July 31, 12:30 p.m.  
The Wellness Committee, in coordination with Chancellor Snyder, is happy to invite you to a weekly lunch-time “Chat and Chew” forum to enjoy your favorite homemade or take-out cuisine while we all discuss (or listen to) topics of interest, whether legal or non-legal.

For questions regarding Philadelphia Bar Association CLE, contact Director of Continuing Legal Education Tara D. Phoenix at 215-238-6349 or tphoenix@philabar.org.
Red Light, Green Light: Keep Your Law Firm Moving Forward No Matter What

By Jared D. Correia

As many states and cities move into and out of reopening procedures, Philadelphia is toggling through a red-yellow-green light system. Meanwhile, many law firms, risk-averse and more comfortable with long-range planning, are fixated on ‘yellow’, and can’t seem to shift out of neutral. But, if your default position remains shock and awe, it’s well past time to push your law firm ahead.

Even if it’s hard to know what you’ll face waking up each morning, there are some things about law practice management that will withstand a pandemic—and become more important as long it continues—into the future.

Here’s a list of 3 things you can focus on to make sure your law firm remains relevant:

Modern Technology Will Continue to Win.

If you were thinking that the cloud was a fad, I have some bad news . . . Now, more than ever, the right technology is what converts a law from a relic to a modern operation. Especially in a time of pandemic, and afterwards, as the general public eases back into a level of comfort with social interactions, law firms must convert analog processes to digital ones. This requires cloud software, which among other advantages:

- supports a paperless office environment;
- allows for the secure sharing of sensitive data with clients, colleagues and staff; generates seamless online intake processes; and, promotes revenue collection, while also reducing or eliminating accounts receivable. Positioning your law firm as technology-forward not only makes sense from an internal, business management perspective—it can also have a positive effect on how leads and clients see you. If you can, or can be seen as being able to, accomplish more than other law firms in a time in which seamless technology solutions have to be the norm, that also gives you a leg up on your competition.

Reducing Overhead Already Made Sense, Now It Makes Even More Sense.

Law firms rooted in tradition love to spend money. They want butts in seats, signatures on expensive leases, and regular checks sent out to pay for legacy software. But, as law practice enters a new era, it’s clear that clients are less impressed by the former trappings of law firms than ever before. Many don’t care where your office is or even that you have one. Most prefer to meet and message virtually, on their own terms and not yours. Meanwhile, downward pressure on fees increases the need for law firms to find creative ways to cut costs. It probably starts with reducing your office footprint and reverting to low-cost subscription technologies; but, however, you decide to go about it, in today’s environment, lean wins.

Everything Your Law Firm Does Should Be Aimed at Increasing Efficiency.

Given geographical and practice area boundaries, law firms generally bill the same way and with similar hourly rates. So, do you want to know the secret to blowing out your revenue? Become more efficient. Law firms that generate even 2-3% above the average industry utilization rate of 29% double their income every five years. Those that are 2-3% below that number lose 50% of their revenue every five years. If you’re not fast, speed kills. Every decision you make about your law firm from now on should be about increasing efficiency.

Jared D. Correia, Esq. is the founder and CEO of Red Cave Law Firm Consulting. If you want to learn more about building a modern law firm, the Philadelphia Bar Association now offers discounted law practice management consulting services from Red Cave Law Firm Consulting. Get started today!

If you can, or can be seen as being able to, accomplish more than other law firms in a time in which seamless technology solutions have to be the norm, that also gives you a leg up on your competition.
The Association’s Summer Quarterly Meeting will be held virtually on Friday, August 7 at 12:00 p.m. Dr. Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, Professor of Afro-American Studies, African American Religion and the Victor S. Thomas Professor of History and of African and African American Studies at Harvard University and wife of the late Judge A. Leon Higginbotham Jr., will deliver our Judge A. Leon Higginbotham Jr. Memorial Public Interest Lecture.

The Association will proudly present the Justice Sonia Sotomayor Diversity Award to Reggie Shuford, Esq., Executive Director of the ACLU of Pennsylvania. This award is presented annually to recognize an individual attorney, jurist, law firm, corporate legal department, or other organization that has made substantial and lasting contributions to the Association’s goal of promoting full and equal participation and inclusion by all attorneys in Philadelphia’s legal community.

We will also commemorate the 100th anniversary of the passage of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution, which gave women the right to vote, honor our members who have been a Philadelphia Lawyer for 50 and 60 years, and recognize the 2020 recipients of the Eve Biskind Klothen Law Student Pro Bono Distinction Award.
A career in law can be difficult. Likewise, being a parent can be tough at times. While both can be hugely satisfying, given the demanding nature of each, trying to juggle the two can sometimes leave you feeling as though you've been swept up by a cyclone. Add a pandemic to the mix and one can easily understand why we as parents sometimes feel like we're going to snap at any given moment.

The irony of it all is that despite how trying life itself has been during the pandemic, we often create additional suffering for ourselves by the things that we tell ourselves. As a litigator and mother of three little boys I, like many other parents, have had to wear a lot of different hats over the course of the last several months: lawyer, teacher, cook, cleaner, and playmate, just to name a few. We do so much to assure that our families are safe and well on a daily basis, all the while excelling at work; and yet, at the end of the day, we still manage to feel as though we are not good enough or that we should do better.

Mindfulness practices can help us recognize our judgmental tendencies. By paying attention moment-to-moment with a gentle, curious attitude, we can increasingly notice when we “get in our own way” so that we can foster greater kindness and compassion toward ourselves, as well as others, and avoid reactivity. This awareness enables us to more fully attend to our needs so that we can better support ourselves, as well as others, through the challenging moments in our lives.

One way to cultivate greater awareness is with a practice called “PRO.” The “P” stands for “pause.” Given the busyness of our lives, oftentimes we’re totally unaware that we’ve gotten lost in habitual reactivity. By giving ourselves permission to take moments throughout the day to just pause, even if only for a few seconds, we can create space between what we may be telling ourselves—such as I’m not a good enough lawyer, parent, friend, cook, and so on—and reality.

The next step is “R,” which stands for “relax.” We invite the body and mind to relax. Mindfulness is not about forcing ourselves to be any certain way. Instead, we just notice how we are and extend a kind invitation to ourselves to let go, without the need to judge our experience.

The final step is “O” for “open.” We open to what is here for ourselves, as well as others. By turning toward what is, without the need to change it, we are better able to accept even the most stressful of moments and invite some ease into our lives.

The next time you notice yourself getting worked up, perhaps give “PRO” a shot to escape reactivity and choose how to best respond in the moment. If you are interested in additional mindfulness practices and resources, please visit my mindfulness website at https://www.courtneyschulnickmindfulness.com.

To learn more about my mindfulness programs that are being offered via Zoom, please visit www.courtneyschulnickmindfulness.com or call me at (856) 261-8875.
A CALL TO ACTION

It’s Time to Stand Up

By Jordan Strokovsky

In the midst of a national conversation about our justice system, it’s become clear that we’re living through a moment that cries out not just for words, but for action. As attorneys, we have both the ability and the responsibility to spearhead that action in the halls of justice.

Practicing law has granted us power, and the way we wield that power is a conscious choice. We cannot continue passively upholding a system that supports and legitimizes bad actors at the cost of citizens’ lives and livelihoods—especially those of minorities and the poor. It’s time to step forward, address systemic racism, and secure civil rights, both for this generation and the ones to come.

Here in Philadelphia, perhaps our greatest opportunity lies with the Prison Civil Rights Panel of the Eastern District of Pennsylvania. Many prisoners file cases with the panel on a pro se basis, meaning they’re disadvantaged from the start. These cases often have to do with prison conditions or abuse, but they can also arise from use of excessive force by police. Federal judges screen the cases, sending potentially meritorious ones into a pool where they can be accepted by volunteer attorneys.

Prison Civil Rights Panel cases don’t often get picked up by the media, and they aren’t a pathway to fame and glory. But they provide us with a real chance to make a difference by holding our law enforcement and our prisons culpable for their misdeeds. And even if a verdict goes the other way, we’re still contributing to a culture of oversight and accountability.

I’ve personally felt the reward that comes from making police officers sweat in the courtroom and pace in the hallways as their wrongdoing is exposed. The simple act of going through the process sends a message to law enforcement that they are being held liable for their actions. It also sends a message to those who have been wronged—that the system is not aligned against them, that someone is looking out for their rights. And it creates a record that helps dissuade bad actors from repeating their behavior in the future.

Even if you have no experience with civil rights cases, you can still do this. Once you sign on for a case and enter your appearance, you’ll have access to the expertise of mentor attorneys. It’s a perfect opportunity for a fresher attorney to get federal trial experience or for an experienced trial attorney to take on a challenge.

Of course, the volunteer attorney panel is not your only option. The Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law offers many more opportunities to make pro bono contributions, as does the American Civil Liberties Union. My hope is that firms across the city will start ramping up their efforts to contribute to these causes.

If we don’t stand up and fight when people’s rights are violated, our law enforcement is effectively above the law. Let’s show them otherwise.

Jordan Strokovsky (jordan@actionafterinjury.com)—co-chair of the State Civil Litigation Section—is a trial lawyer and founder of Strokovsky LLC, where he handles catastrophic injury, medical malpractice, wrongful death, premises liability, birth injury, and trucking cases.

Have an Ethics Question?

The spread of COVID-19 has caused major disruptions among lawyers, the courts and our clients. Nevertheless, lawyers are still bound by the Rules of Professional Conduct. Are you prepared to address the ethical issues that may arise in this rapidly changing legal landscape? The Philadelphia Bar Association’s Ethics Hotline is a free confidential service for Pennsylvania attorneys. Call 215-238-6328.
2020 YLD Diversity Scholarship Winners

By Jahlee J. Hatchett

Each year, the YLD awards five scholarships to area law school students from diverse backgrounds. The goal of this scholarship is to identify and promote students who will be future leaders within the bar and their respective affinity bar organizations. The YLD Diversity Scholarship Committee considers candidates’ involvement in the community, leadership ability, and a demonstrable commitment to practicing law in Philadelphia following graduation.

The Young Lawyers Division would like to congratulate the 2020 recipients of the YLD Diversity Scholarship: Isabela Alvarez, Desjenee Davis, Antionna Fuller, Chris Velez, and Cary Zhang.

This year’s recipients certainly tick all of the boxes. Isabela, Desjenee, Antionna, Chris, and Cary have already made significant contributions to the profession and the Philadelphia legal community by working on gender-based violence reforms, interning with the Pennsylvania Innocence Project, and serving as a political corruption extern in the United States Attorney’s Office. Congratulations!

Jahlee J. Hatchett is an attorney at the SEPTA Transit Police Department, treasurer for The Baristers’ Association of Philadelphia, Inc., and is the treasurer for the Young Lawyers Division.
2020 Association Charity Run/Walk Went Virtual

The Philadelphia Bar Association 41st Annual Run/Walk to benefit Support Center for Child Advocates went virtual this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Instead of holding a live event, participants were asked to walk or run 3.10 miles on their own from Sunday, May 17, 2020–Sunday, May 24, 2020, and to submit photos of their times to Child Advocates. There were prizes for individuals and teams, and along the way, Child Advocates’ social media posted pictures of participants, some of which you can view below.

Proceeds from the Run/Walk benefited Support Center for Child Advocates in its work to help children struggling with the traumatic effects of abuse and neglect.


Photos courtesy of Support Center for Child Advocates’ Twitter account: @PhillyAdvoKid
Community Legal Services’ (CLS) clients continue to face racial injustice and discrimination in nearly every aspect of their lives, as racism and poverty are inextricably intertwined. The injustices our clients are facing are exacerbated by the COVID-19 crisis. CLS is listening to what our clients need and responding to the problems at the intersection of racial injustice and the global pandemic.

Systematized racial inequality has led to Black and Brown communities being hardest hit by the pandemic. This inequality plays out in many ways. Many have jobs with less flexibility and can’t afford to stay home if they or a family member aren’t feeling well. Many must rely on multiple forms of public transportation to get to work and don’t have jobs that allow them to work remotely. Many are in unsafe working conditions. All of this is leading to higher rates of infection, coupled with less access to quality health care and accessible COVID-19 testing.

As courts reopen, many Philadelphians who have lost jobs and income will face eviction or foreclosure because they have been unable to pay their rent or mortgage. An increase in eviction and foreclosure will inevitably cause more Philadelphians to enter the shelter system, or to stay with relatives and friends, potentially increasing the risk of the virus spreading. And with eviction disproportionately impacting Black families, addressing these issues is an important component of racial justice.

On the homeownership side, a rise in foreclosures threatens to undermine the fabric of Philadelphia and devastate communities of color. Nationally, the median Black household is estimated to have only one-twelfth of the wealth of a median white household, and the home typically makes up to two-thirds of household wealth. Home preservation is one of the strongest ways for families of color to build and maintain wealth and prevent involuntary displacement.

CLS worked with partners to successfully advocate for moratoriums on eviction, foreclosure, and utility shut-offs in order to allow people to “shelter in place” safely and help people get caught up on the payments they owe so they ultimately do not lose their homes. We have worked through the Philadelphia Eviction Prevention Project to prevent illegal evictions and keep people from becoming homeless during this crisis and beyond.

Another focus has been protecting the health and safety of workers. At the beginning of the pandemic, CLS advocated strongly for new policies and programs that provide income and relief for workers who lost their jobs or who needed to be away from work because of the effects of the virus and shutdown. We have been representing many clients who have had problems accessing these programs. Now, as businesses begin to reopen, we are hearing from workers who feel forced back into unsafe jobs. According to the National Employment Law Project, Black workers are twice as likely to experience retaliation when voicing safety concerns at work. CLS is conducting outreach and community education to ensure that workers know their rights and do not feel forced to compromise their health and safety.

As our country turns its attention to issues of racial justice, and as we see the devastating impact of COVID-19, CLS is reaffirming our commitment to collaborate with our clients; to learn from and follow the lead of community leaders and activists who work to dismantle inequality in the City; and, to zealously advocate for systemic legal reform and an end to the racialization of poverty in Philadelphia.

Debby Freedman (dfreedman@clsphila.org) is the Executive Director of Community Legal Services of Philadelphia.
The words to describe the pandemic caused by the novel coronavirus are familiar to us now—unprecedented, seismic, and disruptive, just to name a few. Many of us have been forced to reimagine our practices, reconnect with our clients, and tighten our belts. Despite the economic pressures that the pandemic presents, it has also offered a singular opportunity for lawyers to truly make a difference in our society by advocating for causes that are novel, interesting, and remarkably impactful.

In my case, I have seized the opportunity to do pro bono work with the ACLU of Pennsylvania. I was drawn by the ACLU’s work during the pandemic because its litigation strategy has focused on people who are locked up in jails and immigration detention centers. The pandemic has hit people in prison especially hard. Prisons have been cesspools of virus spread and account for the five largest clusters of the virus in this country. It is easy to see why. They are often crowded, which renders social distancing virtually impossible; hundreds of inmates share bathrooms, dining areas, telephones, and recreation facilities, which are often not cleaned regularly; and PPEs and cleaning supplies are often scarce. And to top it off, many of the people there, because of their age, pre-existing conditions (such as respiratory or heart-related illnesses), or other ailments are medically vulnerable and are at higher risk of death or permanent injury if they develop COVID-19.

Thus, on April 7, 2020, four Dechert colleagues and I, along with the ACLU of PA, the Abolitionist Law Center, and the Pennsylvania Institutional Law Project, brought a federal class action lawsuit on behalf of people detained at the Allegheny County Jail in Pittsburgh. We contended that the conditions in the jail increased the risk that the inmates would contract the coronavirus and die or suffer needlessly. The case was troubling because the jail officials, after overseeing a 20% reduction in the jail’s population, consolidated the remaining inmates rather than spread them out across the facility.

Instead of engaging in a full-blown emergency hearing, which would have been challenging because of our remote-working environment, we tried something different. Leaning on our expert, and guided by a federal magistrate, we participated in extended settlement negotiations with counsel for the jail to put in place best practices to address the conditions. As a former City Solicitor, I found it useful to be the primary point of contact with the County Solicitor, who was representing the defendants, and assist our group to resolve our preliminary injunction motion. As part of that resolution, the jail agreed to implement comprehensive COVID-19 risk mitigation measures to protect inmates there. Though the case is continuing, we have already achieved substantial success for our clients (and frankly helped the jail too).

That case was not isolated for us. Other groups of Dechert lawyers have collaborated with the ACLU of PA in three other COVID-19 federal court lawsuits, including two other class actions, to save the lives of medically vulnerable people held in jails and immigration detention centers.

The pro bono work that I have done with the ACLU of PA here has meant the world to me. I am able to do well and to do good. As I build my practice as a commercial and white-collar litigator and investigator, I am grateful that I can offer my experience and background to have a positive impact, with the support and resources from my firm. Let me put it bluntly—at a time when our world and profession has been upended by the pandemic and an overdue but profound reckoning about systemic racism, this is the time to step up and lean in to do work that makes a real difference. I am glad that I did.

Sozi Pedro Tulante (sozi.tulante@dechert.com) is a partner at Dechert LLP.
**QUICK BITES: OYSTER HOUSE**

**Takeout for the Seafood Lover in You**

**By Lee A. Schwartz**

March 17, 2020, a day that will live in infamy. The Day the Music Died? No. The day the Restaurants closed to eat in business. Yikes! While certainly not a catastrophe, it has led to many more home cooked-meals (we dealt with that in May, with my Trusted Companion refusing to reveal that World-Famous Brownie Recipe . . . so unfair!) or, in the alternative, much more takeout.

Now, let’s face it. Takeout can bet borrrrrinnnnggggg. So, creativity by restaurants has become the new “sport” by folks who previously sought out the newest and shiniest restaurant on the scene. The Oyster House on Sansom has hit a veritable grand slam with the Oyster House Clam Bake Kit.

**Oyster House Clam Bake Kit**

Bake Kit. The Clam Bake Kit is an all-in-one, cook-at-home extravaganza for your taste buds. Now, Oyster House does parboil the lobster and the corn, but everything else in the pot is cooked at home, and it couldn’t be easier.

What does it include: two whole lobsters, about a pound and a half each, a pound of little neck clams, a pound of large mussels, corn on the cob, red skinned potatoes, a large piece of sausage (cut into pieces), drawn butter, lemon, seaweed for flavor, coleslaw, bibs, wet naps, and even a tablecloth! Instructions are provided.

All you do is put the fish, corn, potatoes, and sausage in a large pot with the seaweed. Add water, cook for few minutes per the instructions, and that’s it, my friends: an authentic New England Clam Bake in your home. What could be better, especially when traveling to New England right now could be hazardous to your health?

There are extras you can buy: including a six-pack of Narragansett Pale Ale ($14), or a bottle of house red or house white ($20). We had a beautiful 2011 Ratzenberger Kabinett Feinherb Riesling that has been hanging around our house for six or so years, and it was a perfect accompaniment to this feast.

No doubt, this is truly a splurge at $74 for two, but, if you love the traditional Clam Bake, and will likely miss it this year, this is surely as close as you will come in Philadelphia to anything remotely like this. It was simply divine.

There are rules that must be followed. Your order for this feast must be placed by the Wednesday before your Friday or Saturday pickup. You should know there is limited quantity, so once the orders meet the available numbers, it is “long fly ball, deep left field, outta here” (had to have a baseball phrase; it’s Summer), so call early.

Pickup is Friday or Saturday at the door, between 2:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. You pay by credit card ahead of time, so you just give your name when you arrive at the door, and it is brought out to you.

We give it 5 stars. Oyster House is located at 1516 Sansom Street in Philly, and the number is (215) 567-7683. If this is your jam, don’t miss out. It’s terrific.

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**QUICK TIP - USI AFFINITY: MY BENEFIT ADVISOR**

**Cyber Liability Insurance - Checklist for Law Firms**

With a significant portion of the current U.S. workforce having shifted to a remote environment, many businesses, law firms included, are finding that their employees may not return to the “actual office”. This disruption has opened the doors for Cyber Criminals to do what they do best - mayhem. From phishing scams to social engineering scams – the remote environment makes business more vulnerable to these types of events and law firms have been a prime target.

Now more than ever, law firms need to reconsider their internal controls, review their risk management strategies and secure a comprehensive Cyber Liability policy. Securing a dedicated Cyber Liability insurance policy offers several distinct advantages, not only in response to a breach, but in prevention of one as well.

Here are a few check lists that can help you in securing this important coverage.

Cyber Liability Application Process:

The application is usually 12-15 questions and you typically don’t need to consult with an IT department prior to completion.

- You will want to have a general idea of how many clients records you have.
- Provide carrier with Law Firm Size (# of staff and # of attorneys)
- Provide carrier with Law Firm Revenue
- Risk Management Procedures that need to be in place prior to completion for best Terms and Conditions

Are computers set up to automatically download and install updates to the operating system?

For more information about insurance, visit the Philadelphia Bar Association Insurance Exchange at www.usiaffinityex.com/PhiladelphiaBar. For Lawyers’ Professional Liability and other business coverage, you can continue to visit the regular Philadelphia Bar Association Insurance Program website at www.mybarinsurance.com/PhiladelphiaBar. If you’d like to talk to someone about insurance and benefits options for Philadelphia Bar Association members, call USI Affinity Benefit Specialists at 1-855-697-0467.

For over 75 years, the divisions of USI Affinity have developed, marketed and administered insurance and financial programs that offer affinity clients and their members unique advantages in coverage, price and service. As the endorsed broker of the Philadelphia Bar Association and more than 30 other state and local bar associations and with more than 30,000 attorneys insured, USI Affinity has the experience and know-how to navigate the marketplace and design the most comprehensive and innovative insurance and benefits packages to fit a firm’s individual needs.

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Stuart Davidson, founding partner at Willig, Williams & Davidson will serve as a co-chair of the Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy (LAANE) Advisory Board, the largest social justice advocacy group on the West Coast.

Nancy B. G. Lassen, a partner at Willig, Williams & Davidson, has been elected as a Fellow to the College of Labor & Employment Lawyers.

Gina Rubel, founder and CEO of Furia Rubel Communications, Inc., has been recognized by LAWDRAGON as one of the 2020 LAWDRAGON Global 100 Leaders in Legal Strategy and Consulting.

“People” highlights news of members’ awards, honors or appointments of a community or civic nature. Send news to Brittany Anne Robertson, communications associate at the Philadelphia Bar Association, at brobertson@philabar.org.
Where are the great candidates hiding?

Do you have great jobs to offer but still have a hard time attracting candidates?

Philadelphia Bar Association is the prime resource to finding the high performers in our niche.

Post today or visit the Career Center to create a customized recruiting solution with an array of various products to help find those great candidates you need to succeed.

careercenter.philadelphiabaro.org