COVID-19 has universally affected everyone in some way, shape, or form. This unique and unprecedented time in our history has me contemplating the following three questions:

What it was?
What it is?
What it will be?

For the past 30 years, I have commuted to my Center City office, arriving by 7:00 a.m., no different than what my parents did until they retired from their jobs. As my legal career progressed, so did my personal life, including marriage, children, and the tricky proposition of balancing career and family. I recall many occasions of leaving the office to rush home for a family dinner, playtime with the kids, or, as they grew older, attending one of their many activities. As the years went by and technology advanced, the concept of working remotely gained in popularity. The legal profession was slow to catch on, but eventually my firm began to allow the new generation of lawyers to partake in this process. I, however, remained the same “traditional” lawyer who left my house before daylight and often returned home after dark. While many lawyers were working remotely, it was not my cup of tea. To me, “what it was” was working just fine!

Then, like a lightning bolt in March of this year, life changed dramatically for all of us. For many, the “what it is” had a paralyzing effect. The realization of what was happening caused drastic modifications in our daily lives, both personally and professionally. Fortunately, my firm was ahead of the curve and had an established remote work policy. Within days of the state-wide shut down on non-essential businesses, almost all my firm’s 1,200 employees were working remotely.

While the technology side of working from home was quickly mastered, the mental gymnastics have been an ongoing process. We have childcare issues and the responsibility of ensuring that elderly family members are safe and protected from the virus. There are uncertainties surrounding how the 2020–2021 school year will unfold, and other challenges associated with managing a household during a pandemic. While we are all operating under a new set of rules, the “what it is” is not exactly what we bargained for, but it is what we will have to live with for the foreseeable future.

Despite these trying times, the legal community has rallied with the support of a variety of resources, many of which have changed the way we practice law. The COVID-19 pandemic has given us a time to pause and has helped us to be grateful for the people in our lives and our family connections. As a society, we have reconnected, albeit from a distance, with friends and loved ones and tested our own resilience. I am hopeful we do not lose sight of what truly matters in life and that we continue to value the “human” element. While our situation is real and serious, it appears we are moving ahead in a positive direction. We must continue to focus on what we can control and never stop believing we can make a difference. When we adopt that mindset, the “what it will be” is okay.

Michele R. Punturi (mrpunturi@mdwcg.com) is Director of the Workers’ Compensation Department at Marshall Dennehey Warner Coleman & Goggin.
Dear Members of the Bar,

I am running for vice chancellor of the Philadelphia Bar Association because we are living through a moment in time in which our world and our lives are changing with the speed and force of rapids. The global pandemic and national cries for equality are causing a sea change in our profession and in our community. The survival of our Association will require strong, thoughtful, coalition-building leadership.

The Philadelphia Bar Association’s mission is to serve the profession and the public by promoting justice, professional excellence and respect for the rule of law. To accomplish this mission, the Association strives to foster understanding of, involvement in and access to the justice system.

The immediate needs of our Association, in pursuit of our mission, are to find sound financial ground by recapturing lost revenue and by continuing to drive a diverse and engaged membership. Over time, we must shepherd sustained action for equality in our justice system and we must also promote the growth of our members’ legal careers by providing them with the knowledge, resources and opportunities to flourish as lawyers and to become healthier in mind, body and spirit.

I am compelled to run because our path forward will require a stalwart leader, educated by experience. During my three decades of practicing law, I have built a successful, socially conscious law firm and executed action plans while serving in the trenches with and on the boards of civic, educational and charitable organizations. These experiences are important because learned business skill and growth-centric leadership are needed to tend to the Association’s financial health and navigate the social challenges it faces.

My most salient work on the Board of Governors over the past three years came while serving on the budget task force and finance committee. As a group, we recognized and confronted annual deficit spending and made hard financial decisions, leaving little on the bone to cut, that led to the passage of a balanced budget for the first time in years. As co-chair of the State Civil section, strong communication skills were needed while guiding our membership through 2019’s cyber-attack on Philadelphia’s court systems. I have been most excited to join in consensus building during the Commission on Judicial Selection and Retention’s most impactful years ever. I have and will continue to drive a diverse Association membership. My firm is always at 100 percent membership participation and I have encouraged other firms to follow suit. I have sponsored dozens upon dozens of law student memberships.

The road from vice chancellor to chancellor is three years. The need for the Association to maintain absolute fidelity to its mission over this time has never been more essential. We as Association members must continue to head into the wind and call for equality in our courts and in our community. Just as Philadelphians led this nation at its birth almost 230 years ago, we must now lead this nation at the rebirth of its commitment to the principles of equality, due process and access to justice for all.

I am committed to devoting my time and energy to steering our Association through the changing tides and shifting currents in our profession and in our community.

I invite dialogue.
I encourage action.
I ask for your vote.

Respectfully,

Michael T. van der Veen
"Summertime, and the livin’ is easy" (with apologies to George Gershwin)


The world is not always a beautiful place, and summertime is no more. Soon, the story devolves into a very dark tale of poverty, racism in the South in the 1930s, and brutality. The innocent beauty of the opera is set. The opening song, "Summertime," leads one to think of the innocence and beauty of summer. The lyrics go like this,

Summertime, and the livin’ is easy.
Fish are jumpin’ and the cotton is high.
Oh, your daddy’s rich, and your mom is good lookin’.
So hush little baby.
Don’t you cry! One of these mornin’s, you gonna rise up singin’.
Spread your wings and you’ll take the sky.
Until that mornin’ there’s a nothin’ can harm you. With momma and daddy standin’ by hey!

By A. Michael Snyder

The other day, I watched a performance of “Porgy and Bess,” the great American opera by George Gershwin, recorded at the Metropolitan Opera. Once again, the amazing melodies and the gorgeous voices transported me to a very different time and place. In an instant, I was in 1930 in Charleston, South Carolina, where the opera is set. The opening song, “Summertime,” leads one to think of the innocence and beauty of summer. The lyrics go like this,

Summertime, and the livin’ is easy.
Fish are jumpin’ and the cotton is high.
Oh, your daddy’s rich, and your mom is good lookin’.
So hush little baby.
Don’t you cry! One of these mornin’s, you gonna rise up singin’.
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Until that mornin’ there’s a nothin’ can harm you. With momma and daddy standin’ by hey!

If you go no further than the opening scene of “Porgy and Bess,” you would probably be justified in thinking that this is a sweet love story of summertime in the South. But, fairly soon, the ease and grace promised by that opening song is stolen away: A fight breaks out, and a man is killed. The innocent beauty of the summer is no more. Soon, the story devolves into a very dark tale of poverty, racism in the South in the 1930s, and brutality.

True, the gorgeous melodies of Gershwin continue throughout the opera; music such as this is often one of the most powerful tools available to a composer to depict a very serious reality. The world is not always a beautiful place, and summertime is not always a time of innocence and ease. Somehow, the genius of music is that these messages can be conveyed in ways that can be heard, and remembered, by all.

As I watched and listened to “Porgy and Bess,” my mind kept going back and forth from the issues surrounding America in the 1930s to the America, and the world, of today. Unfortunately, so many unpleasant comparisons came to mind: we have great poverty today; we have seen the ugly face of racism rear its head across America; we have seen great injustice in the way that many are treated merely because of how they look or sound; and we have seen divisiveness fostered for political advantage. In addition, we have the added cloud of the pandemic hovering over all of us, much as the cloud of major diseases hovered over the 1930s.

In truth, the similarities between 1930 and now, 90 years later, are far too numerous to ignore. We are, once again, living in a period of great turmoil in America. Our problems are severe, and the sweet innocence of summer is only a dream for so many. I fear that if we do not work very hard to change things, our second act will not be one that we like.

I fear that if we do not work very hard to change things, our second act will not be one that we like. With momma and daddy standin’ by hey!.
By Jahlee J. Hatchett

As I continued commuting into Center City, Philadelphia throughout the pandemic, I witnessed the protests that erupted throughout the city in the wake of George Floyd’s death. Observing these protests, I noticed a rarely displayed level of solidarity among Philadelphians. I was energized by the sight of our community coming together amid all of the calamity, chaos, and uncertainty that was transpiring. However, as an African American, but even more so as an African American attorney, I know that this show of solidarity is meaningless without real change.

In addition to serving as Treasurer of the YLD, I’m an executive committee member of the Barristers’ Association of Philadelphia. During a recent presentation, I listened as the speaker responded to a question by stating something along the lines of, “members of the Barristers’ can benefit from joining the Bar Association because the Barristers’ often don’t have attorneys with subject matter expertise.” Now, perhaps that was a poor choice of words by the speaker, but the message conveyed to the audience was that Black attorneys just aren’t good enough.

I immediately cringed and thought back to the US Supreme Court’s decision in Plessy v. Ferguson, where the Court held that “[w]e consider the underlying fallacy of the plaintiff’s argument to consist in the assumption that the enforced separation of the two races stamps the colored race with a badge of inferiority. If this be so, it is not by reason of anything found in the act, but solely because the colored race chooses to put construction upon it.”

With the words of the Supreme Court echoing in my head, I am reminded that, as an African American who is a leader of the Philadelphia Bar Association and the Barristers’ Association of Philadelphia, it is incumbent upon me to foster the understanding necessary to effect real change throughout the community so that together we may dispel the notion that African Americans aren’t good enough. Only then will we have true solidarity, and perhaps tragedies like George Floyd can be prevented.

Jahlee J. Hatchett is an attorney at the SEPTA Transit Police Department, treasurer for The Barristers’ Association of Philadelphia, Inc., and is the treasurer for the Young Lawyers Division.
Bar Foundation

Celebrating our Annual Award Recipients and our Community

By Leslie E. John

The Philadelphia Bar Foundation’s annual awards celebrate Philadelphia’s public interest community and remarkable individuals working in the legal profession and organizations that have made a significant contribution to the pursuit of equal justice in our region. These awards are one of the highlights of the year.

The Bar Foundation is pleased to announce that Kelly J. Gastley, Esq., Managing Attorney at Philadelphia VIP, and David Keller Trevaskis, Esq., Pro Bono Coordinator at the Pennsylvania Bar Association, are the recipients of the 2020 Philadelphia Bar Foundation Award, which recognizes public interest attorneys who have dedicated their careers to the fight for equal access to justice. Comcast NBCUniversal and Dechert LLP are the recipients of the 2020 Pro Bono Award, which recognizes Philadelphia law firms and corporate legal departments that perform outstanding volunteer efforts in providing legal services to those in need.

Comcast NBCUniversal’s Law Department has made exceptional contributions to the Philadelphia community through its Pro Bono Program. Launched in 2016, the program connects the company’s in-house legal department with a variety of pro bono opportunities. Attorneys partner with many of the Bar Foundation’s nonprofit partner grantees and other nonprofits to serve members of the community most in need. Recent efforts have included hosting, staffing, and sponsoring citizenship clinics, life planning documents clinics, and birth certificate clinics, in addition to supporting individual client work related to protecting the rights of children and seniors. Comcast’s program has taken innovative approaches to expanding pro bono participation, and Law Department leadership has prioritized and actively promoted pro bono service. As a result, engagement among employees at every level is consistently high.

Dechert LLP has a longstanding history of pro bono legal service, which is evidenced in their significant contributions to protecting civil rights and civil liberties of marginalized residents in Philadelphia and throughout Pennsylvania. In 2020, firm attorneys are providing a substantial commitment of time, resources, and litigation support to assist those who are incarcerated in jails or held at U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) facilities. Many of these individuals are unable to social distance or practice hygiene, putting them at increased risk for contracting COVID-19. This essential, demanding work to protect lives is conducted with Bar Foundation nonprofit partners the American Civil Liberties Union of Pennsylvania and the Pennsylvania Institutional Law Project. Across the firm, Dechert lawyers participate in at least 25 hours of mandatory pro bono work per year, resulting in thousands of hours of annual pro bono service in our communities.

Kelly J. Gastley, Esq., currently serves as the Managing Attorney for Philadelphia VIP, one of the Bar Foundation’s nonprofit partners. Gastley has dedicated her 15-year career to public interest work at VIP, securing representation for individuals, families, and organizations in need, including developing VIP’s Tangled Title Project to stem the tide of Philadelphia’s affordable housing crisis. She has served on the City Council Working Group that overhauled Philadelphia’s real estate tax collection process for owner-occupants as well as the Philadelphia Bar Association’s Fraudulent Conveyance Task Force. She tirelessly advocates with judges, policymakers, and public officials on behalf of homeowners. It is estimated that Gastley has protected thousands of families in Philadelphia from homelessness. As Managing Attorney, she leads VIP’s legal team in recruiting, training, and supporting hundreds of volunteer attorneys.

David Keller Trevaskis, Esq., is a champion of access to justice, pro bono service, and public interest work. The first and only full-time Pro Bono Coordinator for the Pennsylvania Bar Association since he was hired in 2001, Trevaskis coordinates civil legal aid services and clinics for thousands of Pennsylvanians in need each year. During his tenure at the PBA and previously at Temple Law, Trevaskis developed and implemented transformative youth educational programs in hundreds of Pennsylvania schools. An activist for conflict resolution through non-violence, he designed and launched Project PEACE (Peaceful Endings through Authorities, Children and Educators), a peer mediation, anti-bullying, and youth court program.

Trevaskis is receiving the Philadelphia Bar Foundation award as a special tribute in honor of Louis Apothaker’s widow, Cathy Apothaker, who contracted COVID-19 and passed away in April of this year. Established in 1979 as the Louis D. Apothaker Award, and renamed the Philadelphia Bar Foundation Award in 2005, the award memorializes the legal accomplishments and community work of the late Louis D. Apothaker, a past president of the Philadelphia Bar Foundation.

The Philadelphia Bar Foundation’s 2020 award recipients will be honored during our Access to Justice Awards Benefit on Tuesday, October 20 at 5:00 p.m. This annual event celebrates Philadelphia’s public interest community, civil legal aid organizations, and the businesses that partner with the Bar Foundation to support the vibrant and essential civil legal aid system. While this year’s virtual event will be different, I’m looking forward to thanking our generous donors and honoring these inspirational award recipients for their service.

Sponsorship opportunities are available for businesses that serve the legal industry, and there’s still time for law firms to be celebrated and recognized as Unified Giving partners. Please visit www.philabarfoundation.org to learn more.

Leslie E. John (john@ballardspahr.com), partner at Ballard Spahr LLP, is president of the Philadelphia Bar Foundation.
Compiled by David I. Grunfeld

2019-116T Attorney may not charge client for “readying” the file to transfer to successor counsel, but may charge for substantive work in transfer memo, with approval of client.

2019-122T Attorney who prepared estate plan for couple may not, a few years later, represent one spouse against the other in a post-nuptial agreement negotiation.

2019-125T Attorney representing client in an immigration matter should not provide documents to client’s family attorney if that attorney has been suspended.

2019-127T Inquirer says attorney at firm who is handling divorce joined firm of inquirer’s firm. Clients should be notified and asked to approve “screen” for both lawyers rather than have disqualification petition filed.

2019-130T Attorney asked to “ghost-write” pleading for pro se litigant should consider instead working as litigation consultant under limited scope fee agreement.

2019-135T House counsel to PA corporation in employment termination matter, upon learning that adverse counsel representing PA resident employee, is member of NJ bar only, should write counsel and mention referral to PA and NJ authorities.

2019-138T Attorney whose personal injury client filed bankruptcy cannot advance payments to chapter 13 trustee.

2019-148T Attorney admitted only in state other than PA could not represent PA resident in landlord-tenant matter as to PA property lease.

2019-160T Attorney may give marketing material to businesses provided compliance with advertising rules.

2019-166T Attorney handling matter for client personally should not accept retainer check from client’s estate executor account.

2020-2T Attorney who sees law school classmate who did not graduate and is now “assisting clients” should report unauthorized practice to Office of PA Attorney General, Consumer Protection Division.

2020-4T Attorney who does not want to represent potential client with mental health issues should send letter declining representation and setting forth any statute of limitations issues.

2020-9T Attorney who wants to offer to donate percentage of fee to a charity of client’s choosing may do so but should confirm in fee agreement.

2020-17T Attorney who wants co-counsel in case may pay him amount from flat fee, provided no client objection, and no need to disclose amount.

2020-18T Attorney can write letter, with client approval, to other unrepresented party requesting cease and desist from harassment or will file for PFA order.

2020-24T Attorney who made personal service on defendant, as a result of which complaint was dismissed without prejudice, should re-file and have third party serve.

2020-26T Attorney may pay police officer who wrote accident report time and expenses to testify.

2020-35T Attorney who is representing estate with two beneficiaries may represent the estate of one of them, with signed informed consent from beneficiary’s widow.

2020-39T Attorney whose firm represented client in estate planning may now represent another client buying home from previous client.

2020-45T Attorney may act as client’s bill payor and processor provided agreement in writing per RPC 1.8 with independent counsel and consideration of use of interest-bearing account and good record keeping.

2020-46T Attorney should not represent both couple and another woman in domestic relations/home arrangement agreements and estate planning.

2020-47T Attorney may not pay marketing consultant based on cases and fee generated.

2020-51T Attorney representing siblings beneficiaries in handling mother’s estate may have to withdraw from both if disagreements arise with regard to “evening up” pre-death distributions.

2020-58T Attorney may have political figures “endorse” him in ads, provided he say they were clients and not compensated for endorsement.

2020-60T Attorney accepting retainer for costs should put it in IOLTA account, pay any shortfall from operating account, and bill client per fee agreement.

David I. Grunfeld (dgrunfeld@astorweiss.com) is of counsel to Aitor Weiss Kaplan & Mandel, LLP
Workers’ Comp. Setting the Example for Civility During Pandemic

By Christopher M. Fox

Given the current state of Philadelphia, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and our nation as a whole, it’s hard to avoid the obvious stress associated with dealing with two national crises. How do we safely reopen Pennsylvania’s schools and businesses? How do we finally tackle a centuries-old racial divide that has come to a head in the months following the murder of George Floyd? These are serious issues that require major attention, critical thought, and a commitment of both time and energy.

As attorneys, we find ourselves in the forefront on these issues. We possess a unique understanding of the Constitution and an unparalleled access to both the courts and the state house that enables us to make decisions and effect real change that will certainly impact future generations. Reviewing legislative proposals and analyzing how legal principles we’ve lived by for most of our careers are ever changing—during COVID and in the aftermath of the death of George Floyd.

We obviously have a lot on our plates, just as parents, employers, and concerned citizens. We also have a job to do, which we’ve been doing well before 2020 turned everything on its head. Given all that is going on, I am fortunate to be a member of one of, if not the most, collegial bar. The Workers’ Compensation Section is comprised of women, men, attorneys, and judges from different racial, religious, and socioeconomic backgrounds. That said, when we enter the doors of 8th and Arch or, at least for the time being, log into a Skype hearing, we know that we will be greeted by fair and reasonable judges and familiar opposing counsel.

As attorneys, we must zealously advocate for our clients. However, being a zealous advocate is less about being nasty or having to be right, it’s about knowing the law, being prepared, and having deference for the tribunal. The world around us may learn a thing or two about civility if they shadowed a workers’ compensation attorney or judge for a day.

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.
Keep checking the CLE and Events calendar at philadelphiabar.org for more CLE and events added daily.

CLE: Current Challenges to International Justice
Tues., Aug. 4, 12:00 - 1:30 p.m.
1.5 SUB credits - SPEAKERS LIVE via WEBCAST

Professional Guidance Committee
Tues., Aug. 4, 12 p.m.
Private Meeting

CLE VIDEO ENCORE: What Employment Attorneys Need to Know About COVID-19 Return-To-Work Issues
Wed., Aug. 5, 12:00 - 1:30 p.m.
1.5 SUB credit - ATTEND via WEBCAST

Criminal Justice Executive Committee
Wed., Aug. 5, 12:30 p.m.
Private Meeting

CLE - FREE: The Ethics of Freelance Legal Services and Social Media in Litigation and Court
Thurs., Aug. 6, 10:00 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.
2.0 ETH credits - PRESENTER LIVE via WEBCAST

Law School Outreach Summer Series
Thurs., Aug. 6, 12 p.m.
Summer series for law students. This week’s topic, “Case Study in Advocacy”

Education Law Committee
Thurs., Aug. 6, 12 p.m.

Summer Quarterly Virtual Meeting
Fri., Aug. 7, 12:00 - 1:30 p.m.
A virtual event commemorating the 100th anniversary of the 19th amendment and featuring the annual Judge A. Leon Higginbotham Jr. Memorial Public Interest Lecture delivered by Dr. Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham; annual presentation of the Justice Sonia Sotomayor Diversity Award to Reggie Shuford, Esq., Executive Director the ACLU of Pennsylvania; honoring our members who are celebrating 50 and 60 years of being a Pennsylvania lawyer; and recognizing the 2020 recipients of the Eve Biskind Klothen Law Student Pro Bono Distinction Award

Mindful Mondays
Mon., Aug. 10, 8 a.m.
Start your week off with a short, guided mindfulness meditation.

CLE: Tips for Adapting Advocacy for Virtual Hearings
Mon., Aug. 10, 12:00 - 1:30 p.m.
1.5 SUB credit - SPEAKER LIVE via WEBCAST

DLSC Communications Sub-Committee
Tues., Aug. 11, 9 a.m.
Private Meeting

Municipal Court Committee
Tues., Aug. 11, 12 p.m.
Prof. Len Rieser will present a Sheller Center Report on default judgments. Representatives from the FHC will be available at the meeting to answer questions re: the Emergency Housing Protections Act.

CLE VIDEO ENCORE: COVID-19 Issues Affecting Small Businesses and Franchises
Wed., Aug. 12, 9:30 - 10:30 a.m.
1.0 SUB credits - ATTEND via WEBCAST

State Civil Executive Committee
Wed., Aug. 12, 11 a.m.
Private Meeting

State Civil Litigation Town Hall
Wed., Aug. 12, 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.

CLE VIDEO ENCORE: Special Needs Trusts and the ABLE Act: In Theory and in Practice
Wed., Aug. 12, 12:30 - 2:30 p.m.
2.0 SUB credits - ATTEND via WEBCAST

CLE: Urgent Immigration Updates in the times of COVID-19
Thurs., Aug. 13, 12:00 - 2:15 p.m.
2.0 SUB credit - PRESENTERS LIVE via WEBCAST

Young Lawyers Division Happy Hour
Thurs., Aug. 13, 5:30 p.m.

The Philadelphia Lawyer Editorial Board
Fri., Aug. 14, 12:30 p.m.
Private Meeting

Register at philadelphiabar.org
Mindful Mondays  
Mon., Aug. 17, 8 a.m.  
Start your week off with a short, guided mindfulness meditation.

CLE VIDEO ENCORE - FREE: The Ethics of Freelance Legal Services and Social Media in Litigation and Court  
Mon., Aug. 17, 12 - 2:00 p.m.  
2.0 ETH credits - PRESENTER LIVE via WEBCAST

Cabinet Meeting  
Tues., Aug. 18, 12 p.m.  
Private Meeting

Employee Benefits  
Tues., Aug. 18, 12:30 p.m.  
The committee will discuss qualified plans, health and welfare plans, executive compensation plans, ERISA litigation, and other employee benefit matters.

YLD Cabinet  
Wed., Aug. 19, 9 a.m.  
Private Meeting

Philadelphia Bar Foundation Board  
Wed., Aug. 19, 12 p.m.  
Private Meeting

Take Action Philly  
Wed., Aug. 19, 4 p.m.  
Private Meeting

CLE: How to Avoid a Fee Dispute  
Thurs., Aug. 20, 10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.  
1.0 ETH credits - SPEAKERS LIVE via WEBCAST

Family Law Executive Committee  
Thurs., Aug. 20, 12 p.m.  
Private Meeting

Diversity Advisory Panel  
Fri., Aug. 21, 8:30 a.m.  
Private Meeting

Workers’ Compensation Executive Committee  
Fri., Aug. 21, 10:30 a.m.  
Private Meeting

Public Interest Associates’ Committee  
Fri., Aug. 21, 12 p.m.  

CLE: Workers’ Compensation Compliance Crusher: 2020 Update on Important Issues in Workers’ Compensation Practice  
Fri., Aug. 21, 12:30 p.m. - 4:45 p.m.  
3.0 SUB/1.0 ETH credit - LIVE via WEBCAST

Mindful Mondays  
Mon., Aug. 24, 8 a.m.  
Start your week off with a short, guided mindfulness meditation.

Section Chairs  
Mon., Aug. 24, 8:30 a.m.  
Private Meeting

YLD Executive Committee Meeting  
Mon., Aug. 24, 12 p.m.  
Private Meeting

Real Property Executive Committee  
Tues., Aug. 25, 12 p.m.  
Private Meeting

Diversity in the Profession Committee  
Tues., Aug. 25, 5:30 p.m.  
Private Meeting

State Civil Executive Committee  
Wed., Aug. 26, 11 a.m.  
Private Meeting

LGBT Rights Committee  
Wed., Aug. 26, 12 p.m.  

State Civil Litigation Town Hall  
Wed., Aug. 26, 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.

CLE: Tips on Conducting Mediation and Arbitration Remotely: The Future of ADR in the Pandemic World and Beyond  
Wed., Aug. 26, 1 - 2 p.m.  
1 SUB credit - SPEAKER LIVE via WEBCAST

CLE VIDEO ENCORE - FREE: The Ethics of Freelance Legal Services and Social Media in Litigation and Court  
Wed., Aug. 26, 3 - 5:15 p.m.  
2 ETH credits - PRESENTER LIVE via WEBCAST

LRIS Committee  
Thurs., Aug. 27, 8:30 a.m.  
Private Meeting

Zoning, Land Use and Code Enforcement Committee  
Thurs., Aug. 27, 12 p.m.  
Private Meeting

Board of Governors  
Thurs., Aug. 27, 4 p.m.  
Private Meeting

Former Chancellor’s Advisory Panel  
Fri., Aug. 28, 8:30 a.m.  
Private Meeting

Mindful Mondays  
Mon., Aug. 31, 8 a.m.  
Start your week off with a short, guided mindfulness meditation.

Mon., Aug. 31, 12 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.  
1.0 SUB/0.5 ETH credits - SPEAKERS LIVE via WEBCAST

For questions regarding Philadelphia Bar Association CLE, contact Director of Continuing Legal Education Tara D. Phoenix at 215-238-6349 or tphoenix@philabar.org.
Law practice management consulting is, essentially, business management consulting for law firms. That may sound basic, but law practice management consulting is a highly specific genre, which contemplates the special components related to law firm management that do not attach to running other small businesses, including the ethics rules that lawyers must adhere to.

Why Does Your Law Firm Need Business Management Consulting?

There are at least a couple of major reasons that it’s helpful for lawyers to access business management consulting. The first relates to their educational background. Only recently have law schools begun to focus on teaching law students about business management—and, even now, that practice is only just beginning to gain acceptance. That means that the vast majority of lawyers who have started law firms did so with no formal business training whatsoever. The second reason why business management consulting is helpful to lawyers is because, even after those same attorneys are knee-deep in running their own law firms, they have precious little time to gain practical business management skills. Oftentimes, even managing partners are head-down on substantive work and manage their businesses by the seat of their pants. It helps to have someone with experience and knowledge in law firm business management to talk with in order to spot and resolve issues and to keep you on track.

What Can You Do About It?

There are business management consultants who specialize in law firm management, some of whom are lawyers themselves. Accessing a law firm business management consultant can help you address the major business issues facing your law firm. If you’re wondering whether you’re using the most efficient technologies, a law practice management consultant can help. If you’re not sure whether you’re getting the most out of your marketing efforts, a law practice management consultant can help. If you want to know for sure whether your financials are in order, a law practice management consultant can help. If you want to grow your practice, create a lifestyle firm, or wind down—a law practice management consultant can help.

A number of bar associations offer law practice management consulting services, and that number now includes Philadelphia.

Through a unique partnership between the bar association and attorney Jared Correia’s Red Cave Law Firm Consulting, Philadelphia Bar members now have access to experienced law practice management consultants at a deep discount.

To get started, contact Red Cave today at https://redcavelegal.com/contact-us/ and start running your law firm like a business.

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!
A Life Lesson Learned from Mindful Eating

By Courtney Schulnick

For many of us, it feels as though the pandemic has turned our once daily routines upside down. Just the other day, as I was preparing lunch for my family, I thought of how, if we weren’t in the midst of the quarantine, my kids would be playing at camp, and I would probably be sitting in my office at my desk eating lunch as I responded to emails and returned telephone calls, all the while totally unaware of what I was eating, or that I was even eating?

On most days now, my family and I eat many of our meals together, and I don’t have the opportunity to sit behind a closed office door in silence. While I sometimes crave more quiet moments, mealtimes have reminded me of the importance of taking time to disconnect and allow ourselves to simply rest. We are so conditioned to constantly being doing. When we live like that, day after day, trying to check off items from what may feel like our endless lists of to-dos, we miss out on the moments of our lives.

Mindful eating is a simple, yet profound way, to engage all of our senses to connect with the here and now. Below is a guide to a mindful eating practice, which is traditionally done with a raisin, but any snack of choice will do. Whatever type of food you choose, try to bring a beginner’s mind, as if you are just seeing your chosen snack for the first time.

The Process

Begin by using your sense of sight and notice what you see, such as your snack’s color, shape, and markings. Next, place your snack in between your forefinger and thumb and, using your sense of touch, notice what you feel. Is it hard, malleable, sticky, or smooth? Although we don’t usually do this with food, for purposes of exploration, gently raise your snack to your ear and notice any sounds as you squeeze or roll your snack in between your fingers.

If you care to, next bring your snack towards your nose and smell it. You may notice the inside of your mouth begin to water. As much as you’re able, be curious as to what arises. Then, bring your snack towards your mouth and gently place it in between your lips and notice its texture between the lips. Next, allow your snack to enter your mouth and notice its sensations against the tongue.

When you feel ready, take one mindful bite of your snack and begin to notice any changes in its texture as you continue to mindfully chew it. Once you get the urge to swallow, mindfully swallow it. Allow yourself to really notice what arises in the moment after having eaten one snack mindfully.

You may be surprised at just how satisfying that even a snack as simple as a raisin can be when you pay attention and eat mindfully. It doesn’t take much effort to pay attention. And this practice may also show you how the moments in our lives are better when we choose to actually show up for them.

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

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MEMBER EDITORIAL

Remote Depositions Are Here to Stay

By Jordan Strokovsky

For years, the courthouse has been one of the most important places in my life. If you’re a trial lawyer, the courthouse is your stadium—or even your shrine. There’s a reason that both my home and office are in Center City, a five-minute walk from my favorite place in Philadelphia, City Hall.

But I haven’t set foot in there for months. These days, I walk by City Hall with a heavy heart, knowing that the courthouse is empty inside. No jurors, no judges, no defendants, no plaintiffs, no attorneys, no trials. I would never have become a lawyer if not for the excitement, the pressure, the twists and turns of presenting my case in front of judges and juries.

One day, I’ll be back in that courtroom to represent my clients. But until then, I’m learning to appreciate some aspects of this “new normal”—none moreso than remote depositions.

Before the pandemic, I rarely took depositions remotely. The odd case would come up here and there, like venue depositions or instances where there was a corporate designee many states away. With the encouragement of the court, that’s changed drastically since March—remote depositions have gone mainstream, and they should be here to stay.

When I think back on the old way of things, I’m struck by the inefficiency. As much as I enjoy them, depositions can take up significant time and energy. Whether I was walking through the city in the dead of winter, leaving extra early to avoid traffic, or waiting around for someone who was running late, I was wasting valuable time that could have been put to better use. Now that it all happens remotely, I’m eating better, I’m sleeping better, and I have more time to take care of my well-being. The differences in my health, stress level, and ability to focus have been palpable.

At the same time, remote depositions are far more convenient for witnesses, who no longer have the burden of blocking out travel time and making their way into the city. That flexibility is invaluable for them, and thus far, my deponents have been just as engaged and insightful remotely as they would be in person. There are always some exceptions—certain people will need to be deposed in person—but by and large, this paradigm shift is good for everyone.

Of course, depositions aren’t the only aspect of the legal system that can go remote on a permanent basis. Mediations and even hearings are prime candidates as well. Now is the time for us to bring modern technology into our courtrooms. If we take this challenge as an opportunity to future-proof our legal work, we’ll all be better off for the long haul.

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.
2020 Summer Quarterly: An All-Virtual Event

By Brittany Anne Robertson

On Friday, August 7, the Philadelphia Bar Association will hold its Summer Quarterly Meeting entirely virtually, beginning at 12:00 p.m.

At the meeting, the Justice Sonia Sotomayor Diversity Award will be presented to Reggie Shuford, Esq., Executive Director of the ACLU of Pennsylvania. The Sotomayor Diversity Award is presented annually in recognition of 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.

Shuford has also been a leader within the Bar Association, serving on the Public Interest Section Executive Committee from 2012–2016 and as Diversity Chair of the Philadelphia Bar Association since 2019.

Also at the meeting, the Judge A. Leon Higginbotham Jr. Memorial Public Interest Lecture will be delivered by 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. The title of the lecture—in commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the passage of the 19th Amendment, granting women the right to vote—is entitled “Women’s Pursuit of the Vote: A Picture in Black and White.”

In addition, the Association will honor members who have been Philadelphia Lawyers for 50 and 60 years, and recognize the 2020 recipients of the Eve Biskind Klothen Law Student Pro Bono Distinction Award.
Eve Biskind Klothen Law Student Pro Bono Distinction Award Recipients

Each year, the Philadelphia Bar Association recognizes several law students who have done outstanding pro bono work during their time in law school. The law school community has named this recognition “The Eve Biskind Klothen Law Student Pro Bono Distinction” in honor of the former Assistant Dean for Pro Bono and Public Interest Programs at Rutgers Camden School of Law, who is a pioneer in public interest law.

Drexel University Thomas R. Kline School of Law

Kimberly Kaelin has consistently shown a desire to empower her community throughout her law school career. During her first year, she was a Drexel Community Scholar through the Lindy Center for Civic Engagement. In that position, she created and coordinated an after-school mock trial club at Philadelphia Futures, a nonprofit educational organization that assists low-income high school students. Her work with high school students was echoed during her third year when she was a teaching fellow with the Marshall-Brennan Constitutional Literacy Project and conducted weekly lessons on constitutional rights at George Washington Carver High School. Kimberly’s pro bono service also included volunteering at the Philadelphia Lawyers for Social Equity Criminal Record Expungement Project and assisting individuals with immigration issues at HIAS Pennsylvania. She was a summer intern and a co-op student at the Montgomery County District Attorney’s Office, where she will begin working as an Assistant District Attorney later this year. She hopes to bring a well-rounded and open-minded perspective to the field of criminal law.

Bridget Mead’s commitment to social justice began as a child and transformed during her law school career through her pro bono work in public service. As a lifelong Philadelphian, Bridget is committed to helping the vulnerable in our community. She began her pro bono service on Election Day 2018, as a Poll Monitor for Common Cause, committing her time to ensure equal access to the polls in one of Philadelphia’s most vulnerable neighborhoods. For the past two years, Bridget has worked with the Homeless Advocacy Project in both the Veterans and Disability Benefits departments, providing legal services to end homelessness. Additionally, Bridget was a member of the Drexel Law Review Executive Board. Bridget will be joining the firm of Marshall Dennehey in the fall and plans to join her colleagues in their pro bono work at the Christian Legal Clinics. Bridget counts her pro bono service hours experience as one of the most important during her time at Drexel’s Kline School of Law.

Ragha Narasimhan has shown a significant commitment to public service throughout her law school career. She began her pro bono service her first year of law school by volunteering with the Homeless Advocacy Project, where she reviewed veterans’ records to help determine eligibility for VA benefits. She then volunteered with the Criminal Expungement Clinic her second year of law school and assisted citizens of West Philadelphia with initial intakes to begin the process of expunging criminal records. Ragha always knew that she wanted to be more involved with the Philadelphia community her third year of law school, so she not only participated in the Marshall-Brennan Constitutional Literacy Program, a year-long pro-bono project where she taught constitutional law to Philadelphia high school students, but she also participated in the Federal Litigation & Appeals Clinic. In this clinic, Ragha worked on immigration issues, and helped a client win his cancellation of removal case in court, which allowed him to stay in the United States. Ragha has been interested in criminal law since her first year of law school and has participated in think-tanks with The Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program in Philadelphia multiple times. Ragha will be working at the Philadelphia District Attorney’s Office this fall, and she hopes that she can continue to make an impact and create social change in the Philadelphia community.

Rutgers Law School

Lauren Bateman’s dedication to serving her community goes back to her childhood, where her family emphasized the importance of doing and giving whenever possible. Therefore, being named a Social Justice Scholar upon entering Rutgers Law School was not a designation that Lauren took lightly. From the very start, Lauren demonstrated her commitment to public service by participating in pro bono events aimed at preparing tax returns and estate planning documents, observing voting practices, and assisting immigrant families with emergency preparedness documents. By Lauren’s 2L year, she had taken on the roles of Secretary of the Immigration Law Society and Community Outreach Chair for the Association of Public Interest Law. Lauren also became trained as a mediator and began assisting with landlord/tenant matters in Camden’s Hall of Justice. Finally, Lauren has remained steadfast to her original reason for attending Law School, which is to address discrimination in employment, through her summer employment. Lauren first served as a Peggy Browning Fellow at Justice at Work (Philadelphia, PA) and, since May 2019, has served as a Law Clerk at the plaintiff-side firm of Schall and Barasch, LLC (Moorestown, NJ).

Landon Hacker’s dedication and commitment to serving the public arose out of his own personal life experiences. For years, Landon spent a significant amount of time either homeless, incarcerated, or in institutions as a result of his drug addiction. Today, Landon has over eight (8) years clean. In 2014, Landon graduated from Burlington County Drug Court. Since then, he has dedicated his life to helping those that are in the position he once occupied. In 2016, Landon co-founded a non-profit, Oncidium, that provides pro bono legal services, job assistance, and housing assistance to the homeless. Through Oncidium, Landon and his team have helped many individuals resolve their legal issues and have helped a handful of individuals obtain employment and permanent housing. In 2017, Landon interned with the Camden County Office of the Public Defender working with their Drug Court Program. Over the years, Landon has been the keynote speaker at various Drug Court graduations throughout New Jersey. More recently, Landon published an article in New Jersey Lawyer Magazine’s February 2020 edition, which was dedicated to Drug Court. Landon plans on becoming a public defender, specifically a Drug Court...
continued from previous page

Justice Clinic’s power-of-attorney events and expungement screening events.

Claire Newsome’s desire to use her law degree to serve others took root with her participation in pro bono projects and events including the Immigrant Justice Clinic’s power of attorney events and an expungement screening that grew out of her class in legal issues related to prisoner reentry. These experiences led her to become a public interest leader for the Social Justice Scholars (SJS) program and throughout the law school. After organizing the SJS Pro Bono Committee, Claire organized a peer-to-peer mentorship program, and established a Social Committee and a Communications Committee, which created an SJS newsletter. The SJS Pro Bono Committee planned the first ever Know Your Rights Conference which engaged a broad range of law school student organizations to educate the Camden community about their rights. Most recently, she organized a phone bank to connect local small businesses with CARES Act resources. Claire earned a Mary Philbrook Public Interest Award for her many contributions to the law school community and beyond.

Temple University Beasley School of Law

Pretty Martinez, a Rubin-Presser Fellow, served as co-President of Temple Law’s National Lawyers Guild and President of the Latinx American Law Student Association. She completed a summer internship and practicum with the ACLU of Pennsylvania. As part of a collaboration between the Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA) and the Sheller Center for Social Justice, she conducted research for an annotated index of documents to support claims by asylum seekers from Northern Triangle countries and Mexico. Pretty was also active in the Sheller Center Social Justice Lawyering Clinic where she worked on an immigrant worker center proposal, a wage theft case, and adjustment of status for T-visa holders. She also worked on an FTCA case serving an immigrant family which was forcibly separated at the U.S.-Mexico border.

Mary McDow completed summer work study and practica at Community Legal Services where she assisted residents with property tax issues, and the Taxpayer Advocate Service within the IRS. Additionally, she worked with Habitat for Humanity and Regional Housing Legal Services preparing construction contracts for low income housing groups. She was an Equal Justice America Fellow in 2018 where she was the all-time top fundraiser. Through her Low-Income Taxpayer class, she volunteered with VITA assisting low income taxpayers in filing tax returns. In 2018, she was the Judge Sandra Mazer Moss Scholarship Award recipient.

Brianna Vollmer served as the Program Director for School Discipline Advocacy Service (SDAS), which served Philadelphia youth facing disciplinary hearings affecting their access to education. During her time at Temple, she was also the director of training and a volunteer advocate. She was also active in Temple’s chapter of the Student Public Interest Network (SPIN). Brianna completed various practica, externships, and clinics during her study at Temple Law with the Youth Sentencing and Reentry Project, Juvenile Law Center, Defender Association of Philadelphia, Montgomery County Public Defender, and New Jersey Public Defender in Camden County. She spent many hours advocating for indigent clients both in and out of the courtroom. She also drafted two extensive sentencing memos that provided mitigation evidence to support clients facing lengthy prison terms.

University of Pennsylvania Carey Law School

Jarron McAllister is a 2020 graduate of The University of Pennsylvania Law School from Flint, Michigan. He cares deeply about economic justice issues and has spent his three years learning ways to advocate for Black, low-income, and marginalized communities like Flint. While at Penn Law, Jarron engaged in experiential learning inside and outside of the law school. Jarron was an Advocate and the Managing Advocate for Penn Law’s Employment Advocacy Project—a pro bono project associated through Philadelphia Legal Assistance that helps low-income clients with unemployment compensation hearings and appeals. During the spring of his 2L year, he externed at the Public Interest Law Center and worked on a variety of cases related to environmental, consumer, and housing rights. Jarron then worked at Berger Montague—a plaintiff side law firm in Philadelphia—in their Employment and Unpaid Wages Unit. Finally, Jarron participated in Penn Law’s Civil Practice Clinic, through which he was able to work on matters related to employment, disability, and housing. Jarron will begin working at The National Center for Law and Economic Justice in New York City, as a Penn Law Catalyst Fellow. There, he will continue his work supporting communities on economic justice issues and continue to grow as an advocate.

Sabrina Merold graduated in May 2020 from Penn Law and is a passionate advocate for reproductive justice and economic justice. Following graduation, Sabrina will begin her public interest career as a fellow at the Center for Reproductive Rights in Washington, D.C. During her time at Penn, Sabrina served as an Executive Editor for the Journal of Law & Social Change, President of If/When/How: Lawyering for Reproductive Justice; Co-Director of the Civil Rights Law Project; and a pro bono advocate with the Pardon Project and the Employment Advocacy Project. For her advocacy work with If/When/How: Lawyering for Reproductive Justice, Sabrina received the 2019 Cari Siestra Excellence in Organizing Award. In her 2L and 3L years, she participated in the Legislative Clinic and the Interdisciplinary Child Advocacy Clinic, continuing on as an advanced clinical student in both clinics. Sabrina interned her 1L summer at Philadelphia Legal Assistance in their Unemployment Compensation Unit and her 2L summer at the Center for Reproductive Rights in their Federal Policy and Advocacy Team in Washington, D.C. For her summer internships, she was awarded the Morgan Lewis Public Interest Fellowship and the Leo Model Government & Public Affairs Initiative Fellowship. Additionally, during law school, Sabrina interned with Senator Hirono’s office on the Senate Judiciary Committee; Women’s Law Project; the National Institute for Reproductive Health;
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and The Lawyering Project.

Valerie Snow is a 2020 graduate of Penn Law. She logged over 120 pro bono hours and was awarded a Toll Fellowship—a scholarship based on demonstrated commitment to public service and potential for leadership in the legal community. She co-directed the Criminal Record Expungement Project, a career in civil legal services. She will start a judicial law clerk for the Honorable Bradford Bury in the Superior Court of New Jersey, Somerset County.

Mary O’Rourke wanted to go to law school to become an immigration lawyer, and she is excited to reach that goal. Over her first summer, Mary received a fellowship from the Walter Lucas Public Interest Fellowship Program (PIFP) to work at the Pennsylvania Farmworker Project, which represents migrant farmworkers in cases involving labor trafficking, wage, theft, and discrimination. In the CARES clinic, Mary represented asylum seekers and was happy to see clients receive asylum. Mary pursued her interest in employment law through an intake volunteer for the Montgomery Fraudulent Conveyance Task Force, as part of the Philadelphia Bar Association’s Equal Justice Works fellowship, and at the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission.

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At the New Jersey Attorney General’s Office, Division of Criminal Justice as well as the Ocean County Prosecutor’s Office. Additionally, she assisted with educating Delaware Law students on domestic violence through a community awareness project. Angela looks forward to her clerkship with a Monmouth County Superior Court Judge in the Criminal Division beginning in August 2020. She hopes to continue her career path in the public interest sector, with the Attorney General’s Office or Prosecutor’s Office.

Alexandria Marie Shaffer is a Widener University Delaware Law School Pro Bono Distinction recipient. She volunteered over 400 hours combined volunteer work at the Delaware Law School Veterans Law Clinic and the Public Defender’s Office of Delaware. At the Public Defender’s Office, she represented a client at a bench trial under limited admission to the Delaware Bar and assisted at counsel table during a Delaware Supreme Court argument. Alexandria also acted as the Domestic Violence Community Awareness Project Student Coordinator during her 3rd year of law school where she created public educational materials on resources for survivors of domestic violence.

Villanova University Charles Widger School of Law

As Street Law President, Jake Etienne organized 15 visits to schools, churches, and community centers in the Philadelphia area to empower and educate young people about the law. These visits had topics such as First Amendment rights, voting rights, and dealing with the police as a black man in America. Jake’s biggest highlight was hosting Street Law’s first ever visit on the Villanova Law campus, where he welcomed a group of 7th graders from Henry H. Houston Middle School. The students were able to meet with various professors and students in small-group sessions. They then attended a VLS student panel, where they were able to learn more about how current law students overcame similar difficulties to attend law school. Finally, the students received a tour of the law school, the undergraduate campus, and the Finneran Pavilion. Jake’s leadership with Street Law deepened the school’s relationship with the surrounding community and its commitment to developing a law school pipeline that breaks down barriers to the profession. Additionally, Jake enrolled in the Health Law Clinic in his final semester of law school, where he represented a client who was blind and arthritic in a hearing, advocating for her to have her home health aide hours reinstated. He also represented a client in her SSDI appeal. After graduation, he will be joining White and Williams in Philadelphia as a Commercial Litigation Associate.

Caroline Lesce has been dedicated to public interest since her first year in law school. This past semester, she represented low-income clients and provided community education with the Civil Justice Clinic. She previously interned at Community Legal Services, for which she received a Walter Lucas Public Interest Fellowship Program (PIFP) fellowship, and at the Pennsylvania Innocence Project. She served on the executive boards for PIFP and the National Lawyers Guild. She has also been involved with the Philadelphia Bar Association’s Fraudulent Conveyance Task Force, as an intake volunteer for the Montgomery County Public Defender’s Criminal Record Expungement Clinic, and as a student representative for Equal Justice Works. After graduation, Caroline plans to pursue a career in civil legal services. She will start her career as a judicial law clerk for the Honorable Bradford Bury in the Superior Court of New Jersey, Somerset County.

Mary O’Rourke wanted to go to law school to become an immigration lawyer, and she is excited to reach that goal. Over her first summer, Mary received a fellowship from the Walter Lucas Public Interest Fellowship Program (PIFP) to work at the Pennsylvania Farmworker Project, which represents migrant farmworkers in cases involving labor trafficking, wage, theft, and discrimination. In the CARES clinic, Mary represented asylum seekers and was happy to see clients receive asylum. Mary pursued her interest in employment law at the EEOC in Washington, DC, where she drafted appellate decisions for Title VII cases involving federal employees. Over spring break, Mary volunteered with Al Otro Lado, a nonprofit that serves asylum seekers in Tijuana impacted by the “Remain in Mexico” policy. Mary also served as a PIFP Event Coordinator, President of Immigration Law Society, and Social Media Coordinator for the VLS Democrats. This fall, Mary will begin her career as a Staff Attorney at Texas Río Grande Legal Aid in San Antonio, Texas. She will be working with the Dilley Pro Bono Project, which provides direct legal services to asylum-seeking women and children detained at the South Texas Family Residential Center.

Widener University Delaware Law

Rachael D. Bozman is a Widener University Delaware Law School Pro Bono Distinction recipient, volunteered over 300 hours at the Delaware Law School Veterans Law Clinic where she assisted in setting new precedent in the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims to increase benefits for veterans (see article). Rachael’s work with the VLC highlighted her appreciation for the meaningful changes legal professionals have in clients’ lives. She looks forward to continuing to give back to the community throughout her professional career.

Angela M. Cifelli is a Widener University Delaware Law School Pro Bono Distinction recipient. She volunteered over 300 hours at the Delaware Law School Veterans Law Clinic and the Public Defender’s Office of Delaware. At the Public Defender’s Office, she represented a client at a bench trial under limited admission to the Delaware Bar and assisted at counsel table during a Delaware Supreme
By Elizabeth V. Wingfield

My client is a scientist. My client has a Bachelor of Science degree and hopes to pursue a Master of Science degree. He wants to work in a laboratory. But when employers do a background check, all they see is his drug conviction. Even though the conviction was 10 years ago for an infraction so minor that he was never sentenced to confinement, he has been turned down for every lab job he has applied for.

Unfortunately, my client’s story is not unlike that of many Black and Brown people in Philadelphia. Philadelphia Lawyers for Social Equity (PLSE) reports that close to 60% of people in some “low income, high arrest, heavily minority communities” have a criminal record.

When I talk to my client, I think of all my friends at Haverford College who were science majors. Haverford’s student body is largely white, and the neighborhood in which Haverford is located is an affluent area without an aggressive police presence. Looking back, I realize that their youthful indiscretions were not unlike my client’s. But if they were even arrested, they probably were not charged with a crime and might have been put in diversion program for first-time offenders—they certainly were not jailed for months and then convicted. And they all got to work in laboratories.

My client is every bit as smart as my college friends. He is every bit as motivated. But because of how law enforcement and our society stereotypes Black men and low-income neighborhoods as dangerous, he has not been able to even get started on his career. Thinking about that unfair disparity fills me with a deep sense of outrage that he is 10 years behind in pursuing his career because of a society that provides unfair advantages to white people and cruel disadvantages to people of color.

That is why I am happy to volunteer with PLSE. PLSE helps Philadelphians clear their criminal records. My client deserves to be seen as more than a mistake he made as a very young man. He deserves a pardon, and I am glad I can help him get one. I hope that soon his prospective employers will not be distracted by his decade-old conviction, but will be able to focus on his attributes as the smart, qualified scientist that he is. I also hope that through broader reforms, such as those for which PLSE advocates, we can create a world where people like my client will not have to endure being targeted because of their race, neighborhood, or class—and will not have to wait over a decade and retain a lawyer before they can fulfill their potential.

Elizabeth V. Wingfield is a third-year associate at Ballard Spahr practicing in the Litigation Department with a focus on the needs of educational institutions. She is a volunteer with PLSE’s Pardon Project.
Long Awaited 9th Street Gem Meets the Hype

By James Zwolak

VA

Photos by James Zwolak

I admit that I haven’t watched “Queer Eye” since Season 1 of the old Bravo series aired. But in reading about the new Netflix reboot Alma Del Mar, I saw that the show had decamped to a Philly HQ for its new season on Netflix, and Alma was profiled for this season.

“Queer Eye”’s episode, titled “Father Knows Fish,” highlights fishmonger Marcos Tlacopilco, proprietor of Marco’s Fish and Crab House on 9th Street. Tlacopilco—who at the beginning of the episode sported a super-stylin’ (IMHO) and hirsute Carlos Santana vibe—emigrated from Puebla, Mexico to Philly and had a dream of opening a restaurant with his wife Alma Romero. But Marco’s routine 20-hour workdays took a toll on his family; precipitating, in part, his older daughter Gennifer’s decision to move on a year earlier.

So, of course, the Fab Five (I did remember that moniker!) worked their magic; initially giving Marcos a makeover and haircut (boo), renovating the interior with a chic, modern vibe (including a “subtle” floor-to-ceiling photo collage of the Five, replete with neon Spanish inscription above), then reconciling Marcos and Gennifer at the end.

Great stuff.

Three meals at Alma’s inviting, socially distanced outdoor space confirmed that their serious cooking—focusing on fresh seafood from their shop next door—is not just reality show puff. The French Onion Soup was decent. But the Crab and Corn Chowder—taught to Marcos by Fab Fiver Antoni Porowski—was swimming in crab and absolutely delectable. On the sweet side, I blissfully wolfed down Alma’s Tres Leches Pain Perdu’s sliced baguette cooked in butter and served with strawberry coulis, maple syrup, condescended milk, peaches, strawberries, and whipped cream.

But the seafood dishes are the necessary focus here, and a tremendous value, with nothing over $14. Marco’s Crazy Mango Salad—also a “Queer Eye” inspiration—was incredible, with juicy, perfectly ripe chunks of mango complimenting generous chunks of blue point crab meat and homemade mango dressing. My colleague and review veteran Frank—the only friend on my Facebook page to respond to my “crowdsourcing review” offer—opined that the salmon burger, with old bay remoulade, tomato, greens, and pickled red onions, had very little filler and was solid. However, he declared the gulf shrimp in the Shrimp Club with bacon, heirloom tomato, red onion, romaine, and lemon caper aioli was perfectly cooked, and went along great with the Red Stripe beer he purchased at legendary nearby bodega “The Corral.”

My final visit with my daughter Claire provided more awesomeness. Claire’s decadent lobster benedict—with plentiful chunks of succulent lobster under a perfectly poached egg—would be charged double in any Shore town. And Alma’s daily special swordfish was a colossal piece of delectable flesh—just acquired from Marco’s wholesaler that morning—served with red onion, a super tasty sauce, and freshly grilled asparagus and home fries.

Alma’s vibe is so pleasant; Alma herself hosts, busses tables, and even took pics with me. And it turned out that Gennifer and my daughter were old high school buddies after she responded to Claire’s Instagram pics! Their family story—like so many immigrant families throughout South Philly—is what makes Philly awesome, and their food is scrumptious. Please watch the episode, then support them.

James Zwolak (james.zwolak@philago.org) is a divisional deputy solicitor in the City of Philadelphia Law Department.
Ivo Becica, of Obermayer Rebmann Maxwell & Hippel LLP, has been named to the 2020 Super Lawyers® Rising Stars List.

Pamela Coyle Brecht, of Pietragallo Gordon Alfano Bosick & Raspanti, LLP, has been appointed a Hearing Committee Member serving the Disciplinary Board of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania. She began her three-year term July 1, 2020.

Qiwei Chen, of Obermayer Rebmann Maxwell & Hippel LLP, has been named to the 2020 Super Lawyers® Rising Stars List.

Samantha Koopman, of Obermayer Rebmann Maxwell & Hippel LLP, has been named to the 2020 Super Lawyers® Rising Stars List.

Ken Fulginiti, of Duffy + Fulginiti, has been named vice president of the Philadelphia Trial Lawyers Association (PTLA).

Matthew S. Olesh, of Obermayer Rebmann Maxwell & Hippel LLP, has been named to the 2020 Super Lawyers® Rising Stars List.

Michael V. Phillips, of Obermayer Rebmann Maxwell & Hippel LLP, has been named to the 2020 Super Lawyers® Rising Stars List.

Katherine M. Robinson, of Obermayer Rebmann Maxwell & Hippel LLP, has been named to the 2020 Super Lawyers® Rising Stars List.

Theodore “Ted” Simon, of the Law Offices of Theodore Simon, spoke at the Pennsylvania Bar Institute’s Employment Law Institute on July 23 for a presentation entitled “Managing the Media,” which reviewed the ethical rules.

Marc P. Weingarten, senior partner at The Locks Law Firm, presented a webinar on July 1 to the Pan European Organisation of Personal Injury Lawyers (PEO-PIL); in mid-July, he was elected US Co-Chair of the International Practice Section and was appointed by the President of AAJ to serve on the International Relations Committee.

“Weople” 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.
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