

LAW MATTERS

December 2023/January 2024

Volume XXXV No. 4



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Emily Warth



I would be remiss if I did not highlight the best programs LAW presented and projects LAW accomplished in 2023, a Best of List. So, for this President's message, I put together a Best of List for LAW 2023. This list only scratches the surface of what this organization and its brilliant members did last year. And I'm confident we'll do even better in 2024!

1. Development of the LAW Foundation: Under the leadership of Shellie Handelsman, the LAW Foundation was created in November 2022, and in 2023, the board of the LAW Foundation has begun raising funds, creating bylaws, and expanding its board, so that it can begin delivering on its mission. (P.S. The Foundation continues to welcome your donations 😊).

2. Annual Banquet and Silent Auction: The LAW membership celebrated another year of LAW in April, and also held the first fundraiser for the LAW Foundation with a successful silent auction during the banquet. We celebrated the many accomplishments of Shellie and her board, welcomed the 2023-2024 board, and honored Shundra Crumpton Manning with the Rising Star Award and Judge Marietta Shipley with the Martha Craig Daughtrey Award.

3. Membership Happy Hour: The membership committee pulled off an amazing and very well attended happy hour this summer after the bar exam, and invited law students and recent graduates from the local law schools. The happy hour included bar exam and legal themed specialty cocktails and much mingling between lawyers and aspiring lawyers, along with new contacts for potential new members.

4. Social and Networking Events: In addition to the Membership Happy Hour, several committees organized opportunities to socialize and network in unique ways, including a happy hour led by the Health & Wellness Committee at the volleyball court at Sand Bar and a karaoke happy hour led by the Networking Committee at Lonnie's.

5. Annual New Admittees Breakfast: The breakfast was extra fantastic this year. We had more sponsorships and attendees than we've seen since before the pandemic, and it was invigorating to watch so many LAW members mix and mingle with the new admittees. We also had inspiring speeches from LAW members Shundra Crumpton Manning, Tony Orlandi, DarKenya Waller, Judge Aleta Trauger, and our keynote speaker Judge Alistair Newbern. (Pssst...Judge Newbern's speech is included in this newsletter, and is very much worth a read, whether you were able to make the breakfast or not). Thank you to Erin Palmer Polly, Danielle Johns, and of course, our executive director Melanie Gober Grand for their hard work pulling this one off.

6. Programs: Our programs committee has knocked it out of the park this year, planning programs on topics ranging from the current gun laws in Tennessee to the recent Supreme Court decision *Counterman v. Colorado* to employment laws impacting women, not to mention our beloved annual legislative update and a CLE on mindfulness followed by a yoga class at Small World Yoga. The Programs Committee also has more informative programs planned next year, so stay tuned!

7. Book Club: The book club has been rejuvenated, with two book clubs happening this year and another planned for February 29th. Pick up your copy of *Miss Blaylock's School for Girls* by Chancellor Robert Brandt and join us!

8. Oral History Project: Laura Baker, Liz Sitgreaves, and Jorie Zajicek put together the first of hopefully many oral histories, presented just this month at the Annual Member Appreciation CLE and

happy hour. The oral history focused on the remarkable life of Justice Cornelia Clark, and included video from her former clerk, her colleague Justice Sharon Lee, her good friend Margaret Behm and was followed by a panel discussion with participation from Justice Clark's sister, Margaret Behm, and Judge Daughtrey. Hearing about Justice Clark from those who knew her best was inspiring, and I couldn't be more grateful to Laura, Liz and Jorie for putting it together.

I am so thankful for this organization and its members, and in particular the boards who have put these events together (and many more I failed to mention in this list). I hope you all have a wonderful and restorative holiday season and a very happy new year. See you in 2024!

The Lawyers' Association for Women would like to thank the following sponsors for their generous contributions, which helped make this event possible:



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The centerpieces from today's breakfast will be donated to Perenity-Nashville for redistribution to Alive Hospice and Hospital Hospitality House.

New Admittees' Breakfast

By Ellen Bowden McIntyre, Newsletter Editor

This year's annual New Admittees' Breakfast was another smashing success, with hundreds of attendees welcoming the newest members of the Bar. Several LAW members gave opening remarks before the keynote address. Shundra Crumpton Manning shared the importance of joining LAW and becoming active members. Noting LAW's history of excellence, she described its many enriching opportunities for members, like book club, yoga, and CLEs. Ms. Manning even shared that she got her current position through her LAW connections! Tony Orlandi highlighted reasons why LAW is important to men in the profession. Namely, LAW includes men in addressing the challenges facing female attorneys while giving men opportunities to improve as a person, benefit the profession, and gain networking opportunities. DarKenya Waller discussed the importance of pro bono work and urged attorneys to always keep one Legal Aid case open at a time. She said that Legal Aid offers attorneys free CLE for the time they spend on cases, free mediation and interpreter services, and mentorship in poverty law. Ms. Waller also encouraged lawyers to make a recurring, monthly \$25 donation to LAS.org. District Judge Aleta Trauger similarly encouraged lawyers to sign up for the Civil Appointment Panel, in which they represent pro bono civil litigants whose cases have already survived a motion to dismiss or summary judgment.





LAW New Admittees' Breakfast Keynote Address: November 7, 2023 Magistrate Judge Alistair E. Newbern



It is a true honor to be invited to share this morning with all of you. New Admittees, this is a special day. It is the culmination of so much hard work. It is a “what if I could” come true. For some of you, it is the realization of a calling first voiced by your parents when you reasoned them into a corner over an extra hour of screen time. For others, it is a new fork in a longer road. For your friends and family, it is a moment of such pride and, probably, a little relief too. Congratulations to you all.

It wasn't until I was preparing to speak with you this morning that I realized how profoundly LAW has shaped my own legal career. I have managed, somehow, in all the jobs I've held as a lawyer in Nashville, to work with and for LAW founders and past presidents. The judges for whom I was privileged to clerk, Judge Cissy Daughtrey and Judge Aleta Trauger, are both past presidents and founding members. My first years practicing law were with past-president Kathryn Barnett. And when I taught at Vanderbilt, I worked with founding member Dean Sue Kay.

I highly recommend this course of action.

What I know from this run of good luck is that LAW is an extraordinary organization. What you feel in this room today—the camaraderie, the generosity, the laughter—those things have been a part of every LAW event and meeting I have attended. It's unique. Sometimes those things are in short supply in our professional lives, but they seem to permeate our legal community, thanks to the women who met around a table in 1981 and made a plan for women lawyers in Nashville to do more at every level of the profession. What a debt of gratitude we owe them and their continuing example.

New Admittees, I hope you will enthusiastically claim your free membership in LAW and see what I'm talking about.

After Emily invited me to speak and I said my enthusiastic yes, I started to think about the nature of our event here this morning and what kind of address would be appropriate.

This is a celebration of your accomplishments, but it's not a graduation. You don't need a commencement speech. You've done that already, and we don't have the funny hats to throw at the end. The formal swearing-in comes later with the Justices of the Tennessee Supreme Court. You don't need or want a lecture on any particular area of the law at 8:00 a.m. Those days are over.

Finally, it occurred to me: Just like we welcome new American citizens over at the Fred D. Thompson U.S. Courthouse and Federal Building, today we are welcoming you as new lawyers. And this is your naturalization ceremony.

I love a naturalization ceremony. Very little comes close to the level of joy and emotion reached when a group of people from all different walks of life, who applied for admission to this country, who studied

to become proficient in its language and culture, who took and passed a test on the most arcane details of its laws and history, whose character and fitness were examined—is this starting to sound familiar?—when those people, surrounded by their families and friends, reach the end of that long journey, raise their right hands, and, by taking an oath of allegiance, are suddenly transformed into American citizens.

It is quite a moment. If you have not been to a naturalization ceremony, I hope you find one and go. It will transform you as a citizen, too.

But—if you will indulge me in extending this metaphor—what is it the nature of the transformation that awaits you after we finish here this morning?

I propose that, as you raise your right hands and take your oaths, you will become different kinds of citizens, too.

Now, I am not entirely out on a limb here. The Preamble to the Tennessee Supreme Court’s Rules of Professional Conduct states:

A lawyer, as a member of the legal profession, is a representative of clients, an officer of the legal system, and a public citizen having special responsibility for the quality of justice.¹

“Special responsibility for the quality of justice.” That’s a cool phrase, isn’t it?

It sounds a little Shakesperean. Maybe that’s no accident. Portia was disguised as the lawyer Balthazar when she pronounced in *The Merchant of Venice* that “[t]he quality of mercy is not strain’d.”²

In Portia’s speech, mercy “droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven.”³ For Dr. King, famously quoting the Book of Amos, justice must “roll[] down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream.” For the Rolling Stones, justice was rough.⁵ For Janet and Tupac, justice was poetic.⁶ Justice is blind, justice is divine.

Justice has many qualities indeed.

Here, though, the special responsibility for the quality of justice we take on as lawyers is directly tied to our status “public citizens.”

The responsibility is something we do for others—public—and it is something we do as citizens, for our democracy.

And those ideas point to something very specific.

“[L]egal institutions in a constitutional democracy depend on popular participation and support to maintain their authority,” say the Rules of Professional Conduct.⁷

In other words, our legal system does not work without the support of the people it governs. And the people will only truly support systems that they perceive to be fair and just.

Our special responsibility to the quality of justice as lawyers, then, is to show our fellow citizens a legal system they can trust.

Karl Llewellyn in *The Bramble Bush*, his collection of essays on the first year of law school, wrote that the business of law is achieving a solution to a dispute “which, at least in the main, is bearable to the parties and not disgusting to the lookers on.”⁸

Surely we can do better than that. I have three suggestions of how.

First: Show Your Work.

You may have heard that the United States is experiencing historically low faith in its public institutions. The presidency, Congress, newspapers, the criminal justice system—all of their ratings are in the dump. In June of this year, Gallup reported an 11-point nosedive in public confidence in the Supreme Court, with only twenty-seven percent of those surveyed finding it fair and just.⁹ The criminal justice system fell lower still, with public confidence in it at seventeen percent.¹⁰

This is hard to hear, but perhaps it is not shocking. There has been much in the last few years to unsettle our foundations and make us yearn for precedented times.

Here's a bright spot. And thanks to my friend Stephen Zralek for bringing it to my attention.

A different poll taken at around the same time shows that there is one group of Americans whose confidence in civil litigators, prosecutors, defense attorneys, and judges exceeds the general public's by leaps and bounds—by twenty and thirty percentage points.¹¹

Who are these optimistic outliers? What colored their glasses so rosy?

Jury duty. They are people who showed up for jury duty and served as jurors in a trial.

What? Jury duty is a national punch line! There's a whole fake reality show about it on Amazon Prime!¹² It's so funny, it's Emmy-nominated!

Fair enough, says legal reporter Stephen Adler, who helped shape the study. But people who sit on a jury “even for a day or two . . . get a window into a very serious and focused environment.”¹³ And “[h]aving that actual contact makes people, regardless of their preconceived notions, feel better about every actor in the process, all the way up to the judges.”¹⁴

It's not smoke and mirrors. It's not rhetorical flash. It's the details. It's seeing the procedure and the rules in action. It's confidence gained by having navigated the particulars.

Ok, but only around one in ten Americans has served on a jury.¹⁵ How can we make that mundane magic more widespread?

Well, we can be windows, too.

What do I mean?

I mean, when you talk about the law with your non-lawyer friends, bring the details. Give the long answers or the context for the headline news. Be the person at the cocktail party who says “well, actually . . .” (You can have a free pass for first dates, but they're going to find out you're a lawyer sometime.)

Don't let a misconception about how the law works lie. You're cool and socially adept people. You can make room for real talk about the law with the non-lawyers in your life.

Better yet, go talk about the law with some kids.

Only seven states require a full year of civics in high school for graduation.¹⁶ For every \$50.00 per student the federal government spends on STEM education, it spends five cents on civics.¹⁷ That's a 90% decline over the last twenty years.¹⁸

A lot of kids are not learning about the legal system in school. And a lot of kids in school today really want to understand it better. So do their teachers. I help out sometimes with a civics education organi-

zation called Kidizenship that asks kids from ages 8 to 18 to share their ideas for local, state, and national government.¹⁹ Their visions are remarkably inspiring and also remarkably wonky. The kids are tuned in and they want to know how things work. You can tell them.

Go to an elementary school career day, talk to a youth group, meet some Little Brothers and Little Sisters, coach a middle school mock trial team.

And if you think, that sounds great, but I can't do that by myself: We have a lot of bar associations in this town and a lot of people who are passionate about civics education. Put out the call and I bet you'll find some partners.

Second: Work For Change.

Work to change the ways in which equal justice under law falls short, because we know that it does. It's right there in the Rules. There are "deficiencies in the administration of justice"—"the poor, and sometimes persons who are not poor, cannot afford adequate legal assistance."²⁰

Therefore, we have a mandate:

[A]ll lawyers should devote professional time and resources and use civic influence to ensure equal access to our system of justice for all those who because of economic or social barriers cannot afford or secure adequate legal counsel.²¹

You are ready to do that today.

Don't take my word for it. Bryan Stevenson, MacArthur Genius, founder of the Equal Justice Initiative, recently portrayed by Michael B. Jordan in the film *Just Mercy*, recounted his first meeting with a client as a young lawyer.

He said:

I was very nervous about my ability to help someone with my limited law school education, but it was clear to me that being there and talking to him had an impact on the quality of his life . . . His humanity, his willingness to accept me as someone who might be able to make a difference despite my limitations, really said something to me about a dynamic, a relationship that's possible.²²

Dignity, humanity, proximity. You can give all of those things right now to people who are experiencing unequal access to our justice system. It means something to stand next to someone as their lawyer and to amplify their voice.

It will help them and it will improve the quality of justice. It will help you, too.

Like Portia's mercy, this work blesses those who do it and those for whom it is done.²³

You heard about some of the many opportunities for pro bono work through the Legal Aid Society of Middle Tennessee this morning. I would be remiss if I did not mention the opportunities available through the Civil Appointments Panel for the Middle District of Tennessee. There is an acute and under-resourced need for lawyers to represent people who the Court has decided qualify for appointed counsel under the stringent standards set by federal law.

Want to practice constitutional law? These are the cases. Looking for a way to work with the bright new associates in your firm on compelling matters? Senior lawyers, here's your chance. Our Clerk of Court Lynda Hill would be happy to sign you up for the panel and tell you about some available cases.²⁴

Third: Make This Union More Perfect.

You didn't think you'd make it out of a naturalization ceremony without a little talk about the Constitution, did you?

Well, not really. As much as I think the Framers so perfectly captured the idea of democratic self-government in their first fifteen words—"We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union"²⁵—the union I want to talk about perfecting is the one in this room.

United States Surgeon General Vivek Murthy writes in his book *Together* that human beings are hard-wired to connect with each other.²⁶ When we don't, it stresses us out. The caveman who isn't part of the pack gets eaten. When we don't make human connections, we are more likely to suffer from heart disease, diabetes, depression, and anxiety.

We have an adversarial legal system in this country. That means it involves parties who oppose each other in a dispute and who are responsible for developing evidence and presenting it to the neutral judge. It is not an antagonistic legal system. It is not an oppositional legal system.

It is all too easy to forget this when we square off with our colleagues across the "v."

You will be happier and healthier if you connect with opposing counsel as your peers, as your colleagues, as other people who had joyful mornings just like this one—because every one of them did. You'll be a better lawyer. Even when you don't get the same regard, you can give the better example.

All of us here today, every one of us, has a different path that we followed to the law. And every one of us has something to learn from someone whose path was different from our own.

New Admittees, we are better as a community because your paths led you here. With your new perspectives, your thoughtful ideas, your passions, your dedication, your hard work—you have already made this union more perfect.

Let me leave you with this promise: Some days in your law practice will be extraordinary. You will do the deal, you will right the wrong, you will make it happen. The client will say thank you.

Some days will not be like that. The client will say other things.

On those days, I hope you will remember this one and all of us in this room out there beside you. Just a bunch of lawyers. Just a bunch of humans. Tending to the quality of justice the very best that we can.

Welcome to the profession. I am so happy for you. Congratulations again.

¹ Tenn. Sup. Ct. R. 8, Preamble ¶ 2.

² WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE, *THE MERCHANT OF VENICE* act 4, sc. 1.

³ *Id.*

⁴ Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., "I Have a Dream" Speech, March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, Lincoln Memorial (Aug. 28, 1963) (quoting *Amos* 5:24).

⁵ THE ROLLING STONES, *Rough Justice, on A BIGGER BANG* (Virgin Records 2005).

⁶ POETIC JUSTICE (Columbia Pictures 1993) (starring Janet Jackson and Tupac Shakur).

- 15 Jackson and Lohr, *Jury Service and the Legal System*.
- 16 Shawn Healy, *Momentum Grows for Stronger Civic Education Across States*, American Bar Association (January 4, 2022), https://www.americanbar.org/groups/crsj/publications/human_rights_magazine_home/the-state-of-civic-education-in-america/momentum-grows-for-stronger-civic-education-across-states/.
- 17 *Id.*
- 18 Glenn C. Altschuler and David Wippman, *Getting to 'Yes' on civics education*, THE HILL (March 19, 2023), <https://thehill.com/opinion/education/3907255-getting-to-yes-on-civics-education/>.
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- 20 Tenn. Sup. Ct. R. 8, Preamble ¶ 7.
- 21 *Id.*
- 22 Teresa Matich, *Bryan Stevenson on How Lawyers Can Make a Difference*, Clio (July 20, 2021), <https://www.clio.com/blog/bryan-stevenson-make-difference/>.
- 23 SHAKESPEARE, THE MERCHANT OF VENICE act 4, sc. 1 (“It is twice blest; It blesseth him that gives and him that takes[.]”)
- 24 You can reach Clerk of Court Lynda Hill at Lynda_Hill@tnmd.uscourts.gov.
- 25 U.S. CONST. pmb1.
- 26 VIVEK H. MURTHY, MD, TOGETHER: THE HEALING POWER OF HUMAN CONNECTION IN A SOMETIMES LONELY WORLD (Harper 2020).



Tony Orlandi



LAW President Emily Warth



Shundra Crumpton Manning



DarKenya Waller



Federal Judge Aleta Trauger



Wrongful Convictions in Tennessee

By Ellen Bowden McIntyre

In November, Jason Gichner, Deputy Director and Senior Counsel of the Tennessee Innocence Project, gave a fascinating presentation to LAW on “The Nuts and Bolts of Wrongful Convictions.” He explained that the Tennessee Innocence Project only pursues cases of actual innocence.

The National Registry of Exonerations has been tracking exonerations since 1989. According to the registry, 3,400 people have been exonerated as actually innocent nationally in this period, but the true number of actually innocent people is probably larger. According to university studies, the criminal justice system may really convict persons who are actually innocent between four and six percent of the time. According to Gichner, if we applied a more conservative estimate of just three percent of convicts being actually innocent, that would translate to about 900 people who were wrongfully convicted here in Tennessee in that timeframe. Yet there have only been 39 exonerations in Tennessee since 1989, which is a smaller number of exonerations than surrounding states with similar incarceration rates have seen. This lower number probably stems from not having had a non-profit devoted to wrongful exonerations until the Tennessee Innocence Project opened in 2019 as a free-standing statewide non-profit.

The Project usually receives its cases from requests from convicted persons, their friends or family, and their former defense counsel. The Project acts as a gatekeeper for these requests – going through the record and any post-conviction transcripts. Then the Project may make public records requests for police files. If the case still looks promising after this review, the Project visits the convicted individual in prison. Working up potential cases takes about six to eight months.

Gichner shared that the following multiple factors contribute to wrongful convictions:

Perjury or false accusation – 58%

Official misconduct – 54%

Mistaken witness identification – 28%

False or misleading forensic evidence – 23%

False confession – 12%

Inadequate legal defense – 25%

DNA testing – 20%

For example, Gichner said that defense counsel often failed to put on a defense expert to contest a prosecution expert. DNA is not a bigger factor in exonerations, because the cases are often very old and the physical evidence may not have been collected or preserved properly and may have been contaminated.

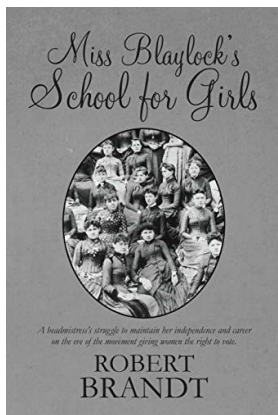
Once the Project agrees to take on a new client, it takes years to prove their actual innocence, according to Gichner. There are only two narrow paths to get these cases back into court: either new scientific evidence of innocence or new non-scientific evidence of innocence.

Though these cases take a long time to pursue, the Project has had success in several cases. In 2021, the Project exonerated Paul Shane Garrett, who previously pled guilty to voluntary manslaughter to

avoid a life sentence. In 2022, the Project helped exonerate Joyce Watkins, the first black woman exonerated in prison, after she finished serving over twenty years prison. The Project also exonerated her co-defendant Charles Dunn, who tragically had already died when he was exonerated.

Gichner shared a case study of Project client Wayne Burgess. Burgess had been convicted of murder for the death of his girlfriend's one-year-old daughter. His conviction was largely based on the opinion of then-medical examiner Charles Harlan, who was later prosecuted and stripped of his medical license. Burgess also gave a coerced "confession," which was objectively untrue itself and contained other untrue allegations as well. The case investigator also eventually acknowledged that he had threatened Burgess during his interrogation, which was particularly significant given that Burgess was cognitively impaired. The Project got new medical experts to review the baby's autopsy too, and they showed that it was not medically possible for Burgess to have committed the crime because the baby's injuries occurred days before her death and Burgess only saw her on the day of her death. The court overturned the conviction, and the prosecutors decided not to retry the case.

People can learn more about the Tennessee Innocence Project's critical work at tninnocence.org.



LAW's Health & Wellness Book Club is pleased to welcome Robert S. (Bob) Brandt, a retired judge, attorney, and author, at its February 29, 2024, meeting to discuss his second novel, Miss Blaylock's School for Girls. More details [Here](#).

Annual Meeting and Awards Banquet

SAVE
THE
DATE

11 APRIL 2024
6:00 PM

MUSIC CITY CENTER, MEETING ROOM 104

Advancing as a Government Attorney:

An Interview with Courtney Orr

By Ellen Bowden McIntyre



Many of us know Courtney Orr as LAW's President-Elect. But she also has an exciting career as an attorney in Tennessee State government and recently received a promotion to Deputy Attorney General at the Tennessee Attorney General's Office. I sat down with Courtney to gather tips on career advancement as a government lawyer.

What was your path to the Tennessee Attorney General's Office?

I took a circuitous path to get here, because I originally planned to return to work in South Carolina after graduating from the University of Tennessee Law School. But during my job search, I received an offer to clerk for Judge Robert L. Holloway, Jr., on the Tennessee Court of Criminal Appeals, and I worked there for two years. Through my clerkship, I got to know several attorneys who worked for the Attorney General's Office's Criminal Appeals Division, who encouraged me to apply to work there. That's how I was hired as an Assistant Attorney General.

During your time as an Assistant Attorney General, are there any things you did to set you apart?

I said "yes" to every opportunity that came my way. For instance, when the office needed someone to serve on an office CLE committee, I said yes. And I took any opportunity I could to be visible to leadership beyond my direct supervisor, which was helpful too. I also had three cases that went all the way to the Tennessee Supreme Court.

What was your first promotion at the AG's Office?

After about five years, I was promoted to Senior Assistant Attorney General and Team Leader of the East Tennessee Criminal Appeals Division. (This role is now called Managing Attorney.) I stayed in that role for two years.

Did you have any particular challenges or opportunities in that role?

I was managing the day-to-day work of five attorneys. The challenge there was that I still had a book of my own cases in which I was lead counsel, and I had to train new attorneys, consult with them on appellate litigation strategies, and manage their caseloads. As a Team Leader, I was also the main point of contact for local District Attorneys and their staff about issues that arose in the trial courts. This was my first experience managing people, so of course this was a huge opportunity for me.

Do you have any advice on managing people?

Because prosecution can be a stressful career, I tried to recognize the humanity of my team members and support them and their career advancement. I tried to relate to my team members on both a personal and professional level. I also tried to balance this with my goals of increasing productivity and getting work out the door.

Tell us about your most recent promotion.

As Deputy Attorney General, I have a lot more responsibility to oversee day-to-day operations of the Criminal Appeals Division. This includes run-of-the-mill personnel issues and larger picture litigation strategy, such as making recommendations to the Attorney General, the Solicitor General, or the Chief of Staff.

What do you enjoy most about your new role?

I like that I have a little involvement in a lot of different things, like focusing on developing appellate issues and advising the Office, rather than handling the intricacies of a particular case.

Do you have any suggestions for other people hoping to advance as government attorneys?

First, take time to get to know all the people involved in the decision-making tree of a bureaucracy. This makes the job easier and – when your name comes up for potential advancement – those people will know who you are. Second, especially in the unique field of government work, don't be afraid to say yes when a new opportunity is presented to you. Jump in and trust that you'll be able to do the task you've accepted. Third, find peer line attorneys who are doing very good work and model yourself after them.

Has LAW benefited you careerwise?

LAW has enhanced my career. The connections and friendships I developed in LAW have lasted years and given me a great support system. It has allowed me to vicariously see what other attorneys are doing without having to leave the Attorney General's Office.



Ellen is a 2023-2024 Newsletter Editor. She is Deputy Civil Chief, Affirmative Civil Enforcement in the United States Attorney's Office.

Recap of Member Appreciation CLE and Holiday Mixer: *A History of LAW Members: The Pioneers and Their Legacy"* on the late Justice Cornelia (Connie) Clark

by Leighann Ness

On December 14, 2023, LAW offered its annual free 2-hour member appreciation CLE and holiday mixer, which was hosted by Holland & Knight. The CLE consisted of the first installment of LAW's oral history project, *A History of LAW Members: The Pioneers and Their Legacy* on the late Justice Cornelia (Connie) Clark. The video presentation featured former Justice Sharon Lee, Margaret Behm, and Justice Clark's long time career clerk Lisa Rippey-McGuffey. It was impressive that even though the speakers were interviewed separately, common themes ran through their long-term experiences with Justice Clark both professionally and personally. By all accounts, she was dedicated to excellence in her career, actively involved in the missions of her church, and deeply cared about people. After the video, Liz Sitgreaves moderated a panel discussion with Margaret Behm, Cathy Clark Perry (Justice Clark's sister), and Judge Martha Craig "Cissy" Daughtrey. They discussed her inspiring life and legacy. Many thanks to Liz Sitgreaves, Laura Baker, and Jorie Zajicek, who did excellent work on the video project.

Afterwards, attendees had the opportunity to visit and enjoy hors d'oeuvres and beverages. Whether making new connections, deepening existing ones, or reconnecting with old friends, the social part of any LAW event is always enriching! We are a welcoming bunch of folks with tons of things in common. Come to the next event and make a new friend!



Leighann is a 2023-2024 Newsletter Editor. She is Senior Operations Counsel, HCA. Healthcare.



Pixie Dust and Disney Musts

By Kristi Arth

“Wait, was that it?” my seven-year-old son, Liam, asked as the Tower of Terror settled just after its final, thrilling drop.

I couldn't help but laugh at this kid who had, at most, ridden a gently rocking dinosaur at Jurassic Quest and was now somehow unimpressed by one of my favorite Disney thrill rides.

In a short five days, Liam progressed from the likes of the Nashville Zoo carousel to riding his first backwards coaster (Everest), his first dark coaster (Space Mountain), his first drop coaster (Tower of Terror), his first upside down coaster (Rock 'N Roll Rollercoaster), and his first unconventional posture coaster (Tron, where you sit like you are on a motorcycle and ride headfirst the whole time). He loved every ride more than the last.

My husband Bill is from Cleveland, Ohio, and we met in Columbus when I was in law school at Ohio State. So, we've enjoyed our share of the world's best rollercoasters at Cedar Point. *How fun was it that our oldest child was going to be as big a fan of rollercoasters as we were?* Exiting the dark of that haunted hotel tower with a beaming Liam was one of those perfect moments of Disney magic.

When we decided to take the kids to Walt Disney World in Orlando, Florida last May, at the ages of 7 and almost-5, we weren't sure if they would be up for all the rides—even the ones they technically qualified for by height. In fact, we weren't sure that all the expense was going to be worth it. But, Disney was every bit as magical as all the hype makes it out to be. Here are my top takeaways if you might be contemplating a Disney vacation:

- 1) Use a Disney Planner.** Disney has travel agents *that you do not have to pay*. Our agent booked our rooms at the Contemporary Resort and was able to make a special request for the ground-floor rooms we wanted (hello, patio!), which was granted. She advised us of the best days to go to avoid peak crowds and how to get bottles of water delivered to our room, so we didn't have to spend \$5 a pop in the parks. Our agent was also the one up at midnight at the 60-day-out mark booking all our dining reservations and special experiences (like building a droid in Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge). We got every single one we wanted, except for one, and she was able to suggest a very fun substitute.
- 2) Spend the Money.** Disney is expensive any way you slice it. Think of it as a luxury vacation, and don't try to pinch pennies once you are there.
- 3) Spend the Time.** If you are going to pay to fly to Orlando (or drive!), I'm firmly of the belief that you should do each park at least once to make it worth it. We flew in on a Sunday, visited the parks Monday-Friday, and then flew home on Saturday. We did each of the four parks, with a repeater of Magic Kingdom on Friday.
- 4) Learn to Use Genie+.** Disney's current iteration of the “fast pass” of old is now all app-based and re-branded as Genie+. You pay a daily rate (appx. \$20-\$25/person/day) for access to the Genie+ service, which entitles you to a certain number of “Lightning Lanes” (LL) in the park each day. When you use a LL, you can bypass the standby queue. We never had to wait more than 15 minutes when

using our LLs. While there may be an understandable resistance to paying an extra \$100/day (for a family of four) on top of the park tickets, you also do not waste half your day just standing in lines. See *supra* #2. With two very active little boys, Genie+ was worth every penny!!! Be aware that LLs for certain rides run out faster than most, so it is good to have a “priority plan” going into each park. See *infra* #6.

- 5) **Learn the Difference Between ILL and LL.** Disney is savvy. It excludes some of the hottest rides from the Genie+ service, meaning *even if* you buy Genie+ for the day, you cannot book LL for certain rides. Instead, for a small fee, Disney will sell you a la carte tickets to the lightning lane for the premium ride in each park. These “Individual Lightning Lanes” (ILL) can be \$20 person, meaning you might pay an extra \$80 (for a family of four) on top of your Genie+ fee on top of your base park admission fee to get them. *But see supra* #2. Having an ILL means you can avoid the headache of trying to land tickets via lottery in the “virtual queue” and then waiting in the long line even if you do get them. ILLs guarantee your ride and the short wait time. When you see the lines for Seven Dwarves Mine Train, TRON, Guardians of the Galaxy, Star Wars: Rise of the Resistance, and Avatar, you will be glad you got an ILL!
- 6) **Make Like Your Children, and Watch Some YouTube Videos Before You Go.** A fellow colleague on faculty at Belmont Law recommended that I watch some videos by Molly (formerly of “All Ears”) to get up to speed on the top tips and tricks for each park. I did that. I also paid for the “Wish Upon a Planner” asynchronous strategy guide. <https://wishuponaplanner.com/>. I referred to it as going to “Disney School.” I would have been sick at the amount of money we spent if I hadn’t also invested the time learning how to maximize all those dollars in the parks. But, with our daily strategy for each park, we were able to ride everything we wanted to in every park. I was less strategic about seeing the characters—figuring we would just run into them serendipitously out and about in the parks. But, after a day sans Mickey and a four-year old bent on seeing the Mouse himself, I learned that was not so. Thus, a mixture of character dining and LLs for character meet-and-greets should be considered so that you don’t miss your fav personalities.
- 7) **Pick Your Property.** I loved staying “on property” at a Disney resort. Every night, we went swimming in the pool and could see the Magic Kingdom fireworks cresting the Contemporary tower. But, I might not necessarily stay at a deluxe resort again. I selected the Contemporary because it was walking distance to Magic Kingdom, but we only made use of that connecting path one time. I also liked that it was on the monorail line, which was very cool for boys who are into trains. However, the monorail only matters for Magic Kingdom and EPCOT. To get to Animal Kingdom and Hollywood Studios, you have to take a bus anyway. I thought being on the monorail would make it easy to “swing back by the room” if we needed a midday break. However, it is quite the ordeal to get your stroller together, go through the security checkpoints, wait on a train, and hike back to your room in these massive resorts. It quickly became apparent that “swinging back by the room” was at least a two-hour affair. Thus, we stayed out in the parks from shortly after the park opened until cast members were shooing us out at park close. You should decide whether you are Team Midday Break or Team Non-Stop, as it might influence which property you choose. Knowing now that we are definitely Team Non-Stop, I would probably opt for one of the value resorts instead.
- 8) **Rent a Stroller.** I never use a stroller anymore in my regular life. However, even your “big kids” might need one at Disney. We regularly logged more than 20,000 steps a day in the parks.
- 9) **Temporary Tattoos.** Disney is a big, busy place where parents sometimes get separated from their kids. Thankfully, this did not happen to us, but our Disney agent did tell us about it. So, I got temporary tattoos customized with our names (not the kids’) and phone numbers. Knowing that our contact info was readily available/readable, even if our kids got flustered and couldn’t remember those details, gave me a lot of peace of mind. I bought enough to replace the tattoos every other day; but, if I went back, I would order enough to put a new one on each day. (The sunscreen eroded the quality by two).
- 10) **Book One Dining Experience Each Day.** The dining is magical! You should think of the dining opportunities as their own attractions. We loved Space 220, Be Our Guest, and Chef Mickey’s, but eating at Cinderella’s Royal Table with my sons bedecked in their prince costumes straight from Bippity Boppity Boutique will be one of my all-time, top Disney memories. Liam even got to ring the chimes in the castle after meeting Cinderella! By peppering in a dining experience and being strategic about shows (Bill even caught a quick wink in the dark of the theater during *Frozen Ever After*), you can get all the rest you need to power through the remainder of the day even if you are on Team Non-

Stop.

11) Buy the Memory Maker. The Memory Maker photography package is a one-time purchase that covers your whole trip. See *supra* #2. It grants you access to all the professional photographers that Disney has stationed around each of its parks. Utilizing the “photo pass” meant that we never had to leave one of us out to take the picture, and we didn’t have to worry about remembering to set up the “perfect shot.” Disney even adds magical touches like photoshopping Tinkerbell into certain shots. Plus, all of the photos they snap of you right before the “big thrill” during the rides go straight to your app for easy downloading/sorting.

12) Bring Grandparents (if They Can Hang). At one point late into the night at EPCOT, my mom had a coffee in one hand and a margarita in the other. By the end of the trip, she had blisters on both feet. But, May-May hung in there, and getting to see the delight on her face and my children’s faces as they shared the Disney experience with each other was priceless.

If you follow these bits of intelligence, gleaned from Disney enthusiasts much wiser than me, you won’t reach the end of your Disney vacation asking, “Wait, was that it?”



Kristi is an LAW member. She is an Assistant Professor of Law at Belmont University College of Law.



Alaina Beach, formerly of Lewis Thomason, P.C., has moved to UBS, where she is Director and Legal Counsel.

Kimberly Faye, formerly of Holland & Knight, LLP, has moved to DaVita Kidney Care, where she is Senior Corporate Counsel.

KUDOS

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Devon Williamson, LAW's nominee to the Nashville Business Journal's 40 Under 40, on being selected as one of the 40!

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