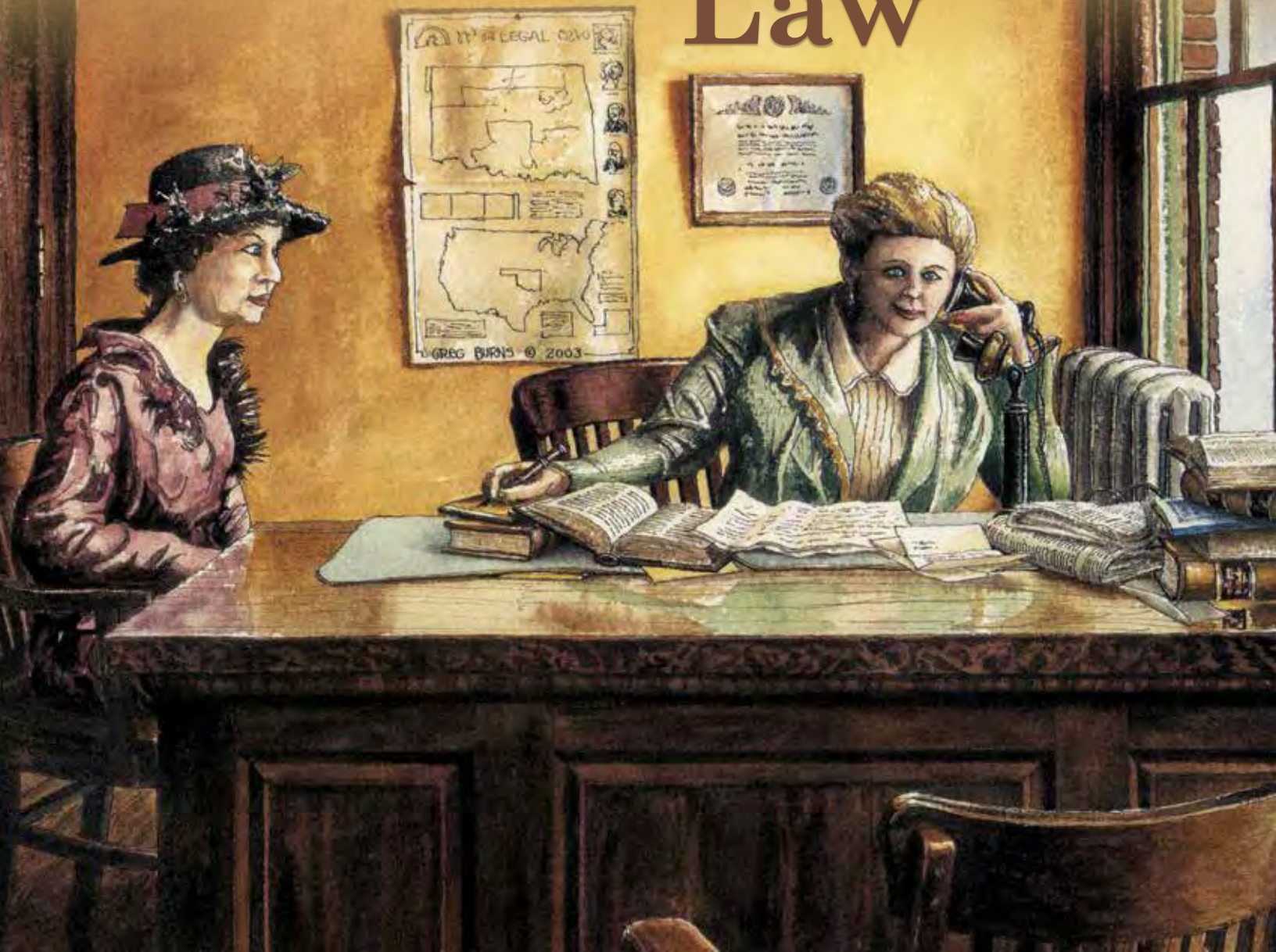


ALSO INSIDE: Women in Law Conference
2024 Mona Salyer Lambird Spotlight Award Winners
Texting for the Win: Using Text Messages in Family Law Trials
The Last Resort: Title 30 Adult Guardianship

THE OKLAHOMA BAR Journal

Volume 95 — No. 7 — September 2024

Women in Law





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THE OKLAHOMA BAR Journal

contents

September 2024 • Vol. 95 • No. 7

THEME: **WOMEN IN LAW**

Editor: Melissa DeLacerda

ON THE COVER: "Leading the Way" by Greg Burns



This original lithograph was commissioned by the OBA in 2003 to accompany the book Leading the Way: A Look at Oklahoma's Pioneering Women in Law, published by the Oklahoma Bar Association in conjunction with the 2004 OBA centennial celebration.

FEATURES

6 | WOMEN IN LAW

PLUS

- 50 | WOMEN IN LAW CONFERENCE
- 52 | 2024 MONA SALYER LAMBIRD SPOTLIGHT
AWARD WINNERS
- 56 | TEXTING FOR THE WIN: USING TEXT MESSAGES
IN FAMILY LAW TRIALS
By M. SHANE HENRY AND ASHLEY D. RAHILL
- 62 | THE LAST RESORT: TITLE 30 ADULT GUARDIANSHIP
By MELISSA BROOKS
- 66 | ANNUAL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

DEPARTMENTS

- 4 | FROM THE PRESIDENT
- 76 | FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
- 78 | LAW PRACTICE TIPS
- 82 | ETHICS & PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY
- 84 | BOARD OF GOVERNORS ACTIONS
- 94 | OKLAHOMA BAR FOUNDATION NEWS
- 98 | YOUNG LAWYERS DIVISION
- 102 | FOR YOUR INFORMATION
- 104 | BENCH & BAR BRIEFS
- 108 | IN MEMORIAM
- 115 | EDITORIAL CALENDAR
- 120 | THE BACK PAGE



PAGE 56 – Texting for the Win: Using Text Messages in Family Law Trials



PAGE 62 – The Last Resort: Title 30 Adult Guardianship

From the Son of a Trailblazer

By Miles Pringle

A TRAILBLAZER IS A PERSON WHO “BLAZES a trail” through uncharted territory and shows that it is possible for other people to follow. There have been many women trailblazers in the Oklahoma legal profession. Minerva K. Elliott Lentz was the first woman to pass the Oklahoma Territory Bar (1893). Almost 100 years later, Justice Alma Wilson was the first woman to serve on the Oklahoma Supreme Court (1982). Mona Salyer Lambird was the first woman to serve as president of the Oklahoma Bar Association (1996). Susan Loving was the first and only woman Oklahoma attorney general (1991). Much of this history is well documented in an article co-authored by past OBA President Melissa Delacerda and Patsy Trotter, “Oklahoma’s Women Lawyers” in the *Oklahoma Women’s Almanac* (2002).

This month’s bar journal topic, “Women in Law,” provides the opportunity to highlight women attorneys who have made a difference in the practice of law in Oklahoma. At this time, I would like to use my

presidential prerogative to highlight another woman attorney who has made a tremendous difference – my mother, Laura Pringle.

Laura grew up in Clinton, Iowa, along the Mississippi River, where her father was an attorney and Presbyterian minister. Scholarship, hard work and faith were very important aspects of her upbringing. Following college, Laura went to law school at the University of Iowa (finishing her work at Emory University). Few women attended law school at that time, and the University of Iowa had just hired its first female law professor in 1973, the year before Laura’s arrival. Despite few female examples and role models, Laura blazed a path for a successful legal career.

Laura began at the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency in Atlanta.



From left Miles' parents, Lynn and Laura Pringle, President Miles Pringle and his wife, Andrea Pringle

After being persuaded by her future husband, Lynn Pringle, to move to Oklahoma City, she worked as in-house counsel for the First National Bank downtown. She eventually became general counsel and a lobbyist for the Oklahoma Bankers Association and was instrumental in the passage of several laws, including changing bank branching laws in Oklahoma.

In 1988, she and Lynn founded their own firm, Pringle & Pringle PC. Her practice centered around community banks and helping them navigate an ever-changing (and growing) regulatory environment. She and Lynn founded a publishing company that developed policies and procedures for financial institutions that were distributed nationwide. Growing up, I got to take many fun trips because my mother had been hired by a bank to help them work through complex issues.

(continued on page 97)



Miles Pringle is executive vice president and general counsel at The Bankers Bank in Oklahoma City.
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Timeline of Women Leaders

Reflections on *Leading the Way*

By Melissa DeLacerda

IN 2003, WE PUBLISHED THE BOOK *Leading the Way: A Look at Oklahoma's Pioneering Women Lawyers*. At the time that book was published, only two women had served as OBA presidents (the first, not until 1996), and two women had been members of the Oklahoma Supreme Court throughout the OBA's history.

Now, a little more than 20 years later, we have had six additional OBA presidents who are women. For the first time, the number of female law school students is equal to, or more than, the number of male students enrolled,

and the number of women lawyers who are associates in large firms is equal to the number of male associates. The exponential growth of women in the legal field in the past century is a remarkable accomplishment.

The notable women attorneys featured in this issue broke barriers, gained the respect of their male counterparts and clients and highlighted the importance of diverse perspectives in the legal field. It is important that we continue the momentum, expanding the roles women hold in the legal field, allowing today's women lawyers to continue carrying the torch that the women before us held.

We dedicate this month's publication to Oklahoma's pioneering women lawyers. This issue of the *Oklahoma Bar Journal* serves to remind us, to inspire us and to honor those notable women who tread bravely into a world where a path for them – and others – didn't yet exist.



The 2024 Golden Gavel Award was presented to the Oklahoma Bar Journal Board of Editors at the Annual Meeting in July. Accepting the award from President Miles Pringle was Chairperson Melissa DeLacerda of Stillwater along with associate editors Evan Taylor of Norman and Norma Cossio of Enid. The award is presented annually to the outstanding OBA committee or group.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Melissa DeLacerda is an OBA past president (2003) and the current chair of the *Oklahoma Bar Journal* Board of Editors.

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Introduction

By Retired Judge Stephanie K. Seymour

IN 1898, LAURA LYKINS WAS THE ONLY WOMAN LAWYER IN INDIAN TERRITORY.¹ In 1930, Grace Elmore Gibson was a lawyer and a part-time judge before she had the right to serve on a jury. By 2002, women made up approximately a quarter of the active Oklahoma bar.²

In the first century of women practicing law in Oklahoma, there were many advances, and we reached many milestones. It is important for us to look back and remember what these pioneering women accomplished so that we may learn from their vision and perseverance as well as appreciate their achievements. My young law clerks were often surprised to hear about what it was like in “the old days” – by which they meant, of course, the 1970s – and to contemplate a professional world in a reality so recent but so startlingly different from what they saw in their law school and law firm experiences at the beginning of the 21st century. It is important that new generations discover the past and remember that they are only in the middle, not at the end, of the journey begun by a handful of amazing women in the late 19th century. They must learn to emulate the women they will read about in this journal and to continue their work, for there are many battles yet to fight. This is not a new sentiment. In 1894, Susan B. Anthony wrote:

We shall someday be heeded, and when we shall have our amendment, everybody will think it was always so, just exactly as many young people believe that all the privileges, all the freedoms, all the enjoyments which women now possess always were hers. They have no idea of how every single inch of ground that she stands upon today has been gained by the hard work of some little handful of women of the past.³

This journal tells a wonderful set of stories. They are the stories of Oklahoma women who fought for every single inch of ground we stand on today. These are women of character who made great strides in difficult times.

For example, in Oklahoma Territory in 1890, a law was enacted that stated: “The husband is the head of the family. He may choose any reasonable place or mode of living and the wife must conform thereto.” Amazingly, this law is still on the books.⁴ Although a 1986 attorney general advisory opinion found the

statute unconstitutional, and although it has come before the Oklahoma Supreme Court more than once, the law remains.⁵ When the Oklahoma Constitution passed, it was considered a very progressive one, but even so, it left many battles for the women of the state to fight. It was not until 1918 that State Question 97 passed by 25,000 votes, allowing women to vote. It was not until 1942 that a woman could hold state office. It was not until 1951 that Oklahoma afforded women the right to serve on juries. Only when federal law required it in 1974 did Oklahoma allow a wife to sue for loss of consortium.

In 1924, Bertha Rembaugh wrote an essay on the topic of “Women in the Law” for the first issue of the *New York University Law Review*. She wrote:

[I]s there a subject? Is there anything to say about women in the law, or women in relation to the practice of law, any more or different than there is to say of men in the law? One’s first and immediate reaction is, of course, that there is not; that the relation

of the individual woman practitioner to the law is the relation of an individual rather than of a member of a class; that there are no generalizations to be made about the woman lawyer as such.⁶

She went on to catalog the problems, challenges, achievements and general progress of women in the law and concluded with this thought: "As far as I know there is no woman general counsel for a railroad or an oil company ... When there is – as there will be – my subject will have completely ceased to exist."⁷ She was perhaps a bit ahead of her time but sadly also a bit over-optimistic.

In 1961, the year before I started law school, only 316 women graduated from law school out of 11,220 graduating students.⁸ There were three women sitting on the federal bench, the only three that had ever been appointed to that position.⁹ In my law school class in 1962, I was one of 23 women out of 580 students. There were no women law professors, and one of the professors refused to call on women except once per semester when he conducted "ladies' day" and called only on the women students. When I began practicing law in 1965, I only knew of eight other women who were then in the practice of law in Tulsa. At the Tulsa County Bar picnic that summer, the entertainment after dinner was a stripper!

The face of the legal profession in Oklahoma and across the United States has changed dramatically in the years since I became a lawyer. In 1965, for example, no women graduated from the OU College of Law. Likewise, neither OUC nor TU has any record of a female law graduate that year. In the 1970s, women began attending law schools in much greater numbers. Now, more than 50% of law students across the country are female.¹⁰ In 1996, when Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg came to speak at the Women in Law Conference in Tulsa, Roberta Cooper Ramo had just become the first woman president of the American Bar Association, Mona Salyer Lambird was the first woman president of the Oklahoma Bar Association, Millie Otey was immediate past president of the Tulsa County Bar Association, I was the first woman chief judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the 10th Circuit, and Justice Yvonne Kauger was about to become the second woman chief justice of the Oklahoma Supreme Court.

There are still barriers to overcome. Those that lie ahead are in some ways more pernicious and, consequently, perhaps more difficult to take on. For example, we now see the persistence of the so-called "mommy track." So despite the great hopes of Bertha

Rembaugh, the subject of women in the law does still exist. The Oklahoma Bar Association celebrates that subject in this journal.

*Note: This introduction was originally published in the 2003 book *Leading the Way: A Look at Oklahoma's Pioneering Women Lawyers*. It has been slightly modified with Judge Seymour's permission for republication in this issue of the Oklahoma Bar Journal.*

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Stephanie K. Seymour was the first female judge appointed to the 10th Circuit U.S. Appeals Court in 1979. She served as chief judge from 1994 until 2000.

ENDNOTES

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2. "2002 Oklahoma Bar Association Membership Survey Report," 73 *OBJ* 3402 (Dec. 7, 2002).
3. *History of Women's Suffrage* 233 (E. Stanton, S. Anthony, M. Gage and I. Harper, eds. 1981-1922).
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Mirabeau Cole Looney

MIRABEAU LAMAR COLE LOONEY WAS BORN JAN. 16, 1871, in Talladega County, Alabama, to William Isaac Cole – a Gatesville, Texas, lawyer – and Martha (Mattie) Ann Nixon.¹ She was named after Mirabeau B. Lamar, the second president of the sovereign Republic of Texas.² It is believed the Cole family moved to Robertson County, Texas, around 1880 because the census from that year shows a Lamar Cole living on a farm with her mother; her brothers; her mother’s brother, William A. Nixon; and her grandmother, Talitha Walston Nixon.³

Ms. Looney’s interest in the law surfaced early in her life, and she could often be found reading her father’s tan calf law books or fictional accounts of trials. Paralleling her interest in the law was her interest in civil government and history – interests that would serve her well in later years.⁴

In 1891, she married “Doc” Tourney Looney in Texas. Shortly thereafter, the young couple crossed over the Oklahoma line into the future Greer/Harmon County in the southwestern part of Oklahoma Territory and settled in what would later become the Looney community, named after the family.⁵ The Looneys filed for a 160-acre homestead in December 1897 in Greer County, where they would begin their family⁶ and where Doc Looney would become one of the earliest postmasters in the new area.⁷

While still a young man, Doc Looney died, leaving his wife with five children under the age of 10 to raise alone.⁸ It is not known whether she sold the family farm or just left

the land, but the patent was canceled by ruling on June 21, 1900.⁹ To put food on the table, she taught music for a year and then saw the opportunities inherent in becoming a landowner. She filed a claim on a quarter section of government land one mile from Hollis, traded her organ for a team of mules and set about building a sod house on the hard-baked prairie soil.¹⁰

With courage of the “chilled steel variety” and “fires of determination glinting in her blue eyes,” Ms. Looney started digging her own dugout.¹¹ The basement home where the family lived for the first year was four feet deep and lined with boards that stood on end and capped with a shingle roof.¹² Once the home was complete, Ms. Looney drove her mule team 13 miles to the Red River, where she cut the posts that would form a fence around her quarter section of land. If the posts were too heavy for her to lift into the wagon, they were dragged by a mule onto the wagon. Part of the fence built by

Ms. Looney was still standing in 1921.¹³ She planted her first crop of 20 acres in blowing sand with her 10-year-old son holding on to and guiding the plow handles while she drove the mule team.¹⁴

After the children were in bed that first night, Ms. Looney went outside and walked around the new sod house in the moonlight and would later say, “Nothing I have ever lived in since has seemed so grand as that place did that night.”¹⁵ The next day, before going to El Dorado to buy a windmill, she traded two of their 12 cattle and gave notes for an organ. Once the sod house was finished and the crop was in, Ms. Looney would again teach music lessons. With the money from those lessons and the crop, she purchased a two-room frame shack that she had moved to the farm. As she would later say, “We never felt richer than when we settled in our two-room house, with a new organ to take the place of the old one, and a windmill to

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lighten the labor of drawing water for the stock."¹⁶ The family lived and worked on the farm for five years, the amount of time required to prove their claim, and received the land patent on March 29, 1906.¹⁷ After the five years were up, Ms. Looney moved the family to Hollis so that the children could attend better schools.

In 1912, Ms. Looney was elected registrar of deeds for Harmon County, the "first of a series of political triumphs that ... distinguished her as one of the state's most successful women politicians."¹⁸ Completing her term, she was twice elected treasurer of her county¹⁹ and, in 1916, was elected Harmon County clerk for two terms.²⁰

Since Ms. Looney maintained that she was a staunch Democrat but not a politician, a group of her friends got together to discuss her entrance into the Oklahoma Senate race and, believing that she could win, encouraged her to enter the race. Her friends then went to Mangum to discuss the plan with the "boys," finally convincing them that a woman could serve in the Legislature.²¹ In 1920, Ms. Looney entered the Democratic primary as a candidate for state senator.²² Since she had not finished her term as county clerk when the campaign for the Senate seat started, she told everyone she was "paying strict attention to being county clerk."²³ She continued by saying, "I refuse

to slacken or neglect anything. My books shall be turned over in perfect order."²⁴

During her Senate campaign, one of her supporters was asked, "Aren't you afraid to match a woman against the politicians in the Senate?" The supporter smiled and replied, "They won't get anything by her."²⁵ Ms. Looney campaigned only in Greer County, covering the county in her own car, and had campaign expenditures totaling \$149.80.²⁶ Ms. Looney, elected as a Democrat from the 4th Senatorial District for Harmon and Greer counties, not only carried her own Harmon County 3-1, but she also carried her opponent's county 2-1. Thus, she was seated the first woman in the Oklahoma Legislature.²⁷ She maintained the distinction of being the only woman to be in the state Senate until 1975.²⁸ Her daughter, Mabel Looney Parks, remembers going door-to-door seeking votes for her mother and recalls the comments of several men regarding the election. "Ms. Looney, I know you are a capable lady, but I believe a woman's place is in the home." Her response was, "Eating what?"²⁹

On Jan. 4, 1921, Ms. Looney took her seat in the Oklahoma Senate, wearing a "smart brown suit and a brown hat, draped with a bit of lace veil." In an interview, she said, "There is nothing extraordinary about me."³⁰ But



none who knew of her past would agree with that statement. The new senator had a "chain-lightning mind of a type essentially masculine," idealistically practical³¹ and was a surprise to her fellow senators. One senator said: "It is easy to prophesy that she will prove a 'good sport,' cooperate well, work hard, realize her mistakes with a smile – and never weep. She has a good chance of becoming a 'fixture' in the Senate since she has a political future in mind and has in the past pleased her constituents."³²

At the time of her election to the Senate in 1921, Ms. Looney expected to be admitted to the bar within the year, but she was not admitted until Dec. 10, 1923.³³ Her application, number 2139, was by motion directly to the Oklahoma Supreme Court, and her admission was granted by Chief Justice J. T. Johnson. She was 52 when she was admitted to the bar.³⁴

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While serving in the Oklahoma Senate, Ms. Looney was chairman of the State and County Affairs Committee, the Prohibition Enforcement Committee and the Agriculture Committee.³⁵ She also served on the Education, Hospitals and Charities, Penal Institutions, Public Service Corporations and Roads and Highways committees.³⁶

In 1926, after serving three terms in the state Senate, she considered running for lieutenant governor of Oklahoma. Investigating the possibility of winning that election, she decided the courts would sustain the Oklahoma constitutional requirement that a man hold the office, and she abandoned the race. Realizing that Oklahoma courts and lawmakers had no control over federal offices and there were no limitations based on sex, she shocked the political establishment by announcing her candidacy for the U.S. Senate.³⁷ Her campaign slogan was, "Let Oklahoma be first and elect one of her qualified and legislative tried women to the U.S. Senate."³⁸ Although she was indeed a proven legislator, the newspapers wrote varied comments about her race. "The men of the Democratic Party organization are talking now of trying to get two of the three male candidates to withdraw from the race for U.S. Senator; otherwise they say Ms. Looney may walk away with the nomination."³⁹ "Ms. Lamar Looney's senatorial aspirations are unlikely to take her to Washington. However this sojourn on the sidelines has taught us that a woman is unlikely to be chosen for any place for which men clamor."⁴⁰

Positive comments also appeared in some papers. "Ms. Looney won respect for her political acumen and legislative judgment while she served in the state Senate.

'She had an unusually high conception of the duties of a legislator and she served her people with a fidelity that never faltered or weakened. Oklahoma has never had a public servant who tried harder to serve the people well.'

She is not an exponent of freakish measures and her friends say she would grace the U.S. Senate."⁴¹ "A political observer says to the credit of Ms. Lamar Looney, senatorial aspirant, that she never asks for favors on the grounds that she is a poor defenseless woman; which suits us pretty well. Whether a candidate is man or woman has little bearing on fitness for parliamentary positions. Sex does not determine one's knowledge of governmental affairs."⁴²

After losing her bid for a spot on the ticket for the U.S. Senate, Ms. Looney ran and won her fourth and final term in the Oklahoma Senate in 1927.⁴³ During her four terms in the Senate, Ms. Looney championed farmers and their need for more roads between cities and counties. Education and schools were also of particular interest to her, and she stood fast in the belief that each district should have the option to vote in favor of enough tax to ensure good schools in the district, with better equipment and instruction. She was interested in making government more efficient and went so far as to suggest that

the number of representatives and senators in the state Legislature be reduced and the costs of government should be reduced by 50%. She was for prohibition, the World Court and the League of Nations. She favored the universal draft, conscription of wealth and property, and manpower.⁴⁴ She also believed that Oklahoma held possibilities for vast industrial development and encouraged the offer of inducements to industries.⁴⁵

Ms. Looney also wanted laws protecting working women and children, along with ways to ensure their strict enforcement.⁴⁶ Although she believed in a generous policy with soldiers, she said she believed as William Tecumseh Sherman did on the issue of war, "We should exhaust all diplomatic and legal means of avoiding it and then, if we can avoid it only at the cost of honor."⁴⁷ She did believe in the enforcement of the payment of war debts but "was not in favor of playing Santa Claus to the foreign nations."⁴⁸ Her concern for the elderly was seen in her belief that their homes should be exempt from taxation.⁴⁹ In the financial arena,

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she thought we needed a different system of money and wanted the government to strike more money and do away with the Federal Reserve System.⁵⁰ She wanted the government to provide 20-year home mortgages at 2% or 3%.⁵¹ Perhaps because it was an issue when she tried to run for lieutenant governor, but likely because she also championed women's rights, Ms. Looney pushed for legislation that would allow women to serve in state offices.⁵² Although the constitutional amendment was not adopted during her lifetime, Ms. Looney was instrumental in starting the drive to get women qualified for all state elective offices.⁵³ After two failed attempts to have the Constitution amended, in a 1942 general election, SQ 302 was adopted, which allowed women to run for state offices.⁵⁴ She was also actively involved in the campaign giving women the right to vote.⁵⁵

During her years as a senator, when the Senate was not in session, Ms. Looney worked for Co-Operative Publishing Co. of Guthrie as a traveling salesman of books and supplies used in public offices.⁵⁶

Mirabeau Lamar Cole Looney died Sept. 3, 1935, and the flags flew at half-staff over the state Capitol in her honor. Her casket was placed in state in the Capitol rotunda.⁵⁷ She was honored posthumously at the annual statehood dinner of the Oklahoma Memorial Association on Nov. 16, 1935, along with Wiley Post and Will Rogers.⁵⁸ At the dinner, Camille Nixdorf Phelan's Oklahoma History Quilt was presented to the Oklahoma Historical Society with a panel depicting Ms. Looney as one of Oklahoma's prominent women.⁵⁹ The quilt still hangs at the Oklahoma Historical Society.

Perhaps words from a *Daily Oklahoman* editorial best describe Ms. Looney:

It is those who served with Ms. Lamar Looney in the Oklahoma Senate who can render the truest testimony to her complete devotion to the public interest. She had an unusually high conception of the duties of a legislator and she served her people with a fidelity that never faltered or weakened. Oklahoma has never had a public servant who tried harder to serve the people well. She was never soiled by the sordid political currents which have soiled so many political officials. She was a womanly woman when she entered official life, and she was a womanly woman when she cast off her official cares. She was sufficient answer to the current assertion that a really fine woman had better let politics severely alone. Women who enter politics should study well the high example set by Ms. Looney.⁶⁰

After caring for and educating her children and watching them leave home, Ms. Looney once said, "I have time now to set a stone rolling for the good of humanity, if I can."⁶¹ And that she did.

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Jessie Randolph Moore

JESSIE ELIZABETH RANDOLPH MOORE WAS BORN ON A PLANTATION in the Chickasaw Nation, Panola County (now Bryan County), on Jan. 30, 1871, to William Colville Randolph and Sarah Ann Tyson Randolph. In 1874, her parents – along with 10 other families – moved to the White Bead Hill region north of the Washita River in what was then Pontotoc County. They established the Randolph settlement north of what is now Maysville. Ms. Moore first attended school in a log schoolhouse built on the Randolph ranch, but the family later moved to Gainesville, Texas, where she attended school at St. Xavier Academy in Denison, Texas, and later Kidd Seminary at Sherman, Texas. Kidd Seminary was known as the “alma mater for the daughters of many prominent families from the Indian Territory.”¹

The Randolph family eventually returned to the ranch in the Chickasaw Nation, and Ms. Moore spent a year teaching at Pierce Institute, a Methodist school established in 1884.

After marrying U.S. Marshal Elisha Mac Moore in Knoxville, Tennessee, in 1899, the couple lived on a ranch south of Purcell for 10 years before moving to Pauls Valley in 1901. The Moores had four children: Thomas R. Moore, Eula Catherine Moore, Sarah Moore and Imogene Moore Rockwood.

After the death of her husband, Ms. Moore moved to Oklahoma City. Entering public life out of necessity rather than choice, she became deputy clerk of the Oklahoma Supreme Court and Criminal Court of Appeals in 1914. It was during this time that she studied law with Judge Doyle. In addition to her duties with the Supreme Court, Ms. Moore was assistant state commissioner of

charities and corrections from 1924 to 1925. In this position, Ms. Moore and Mabel Bassett, commissioner of charities and corrections, were attorneys of record on a reopened decision seeking the release of a juvenile from the state reformatory in Granite.²

In a 1926 election, which she won by a handsome majority, Ms. Moore became the first woman elected clerk of the Oklahoma Supreme Court and Criminal Court of Appeals. With the victory, she also became the second woman in Oklahoma history elected to a state office. She served in that position until 1931. Of her bid for a second term as clerk, an article in *Harlow's Weekly* stated that to hold the office was “something to be justly proud of. But to have filled that office with success and credit and to have it truthfully said that you have kept the faith is something to be more than proud of; because the voters of the state have

helped to make the first possible, but to have given satisfying service from this office is fulfilling a sacred trust, and something that rests entirely upon the shoulders of the person elected to the office.”³ Elaborating on the duties of the office, it was noted that more than 1,000 new appeals were filed each year, and Ms. Moore was responsible for the maintenance of all briefs, records and petitions. She was also required to answer all requests for information from attorneys. Otherwise, she said, the lawyer “situated at a distance from the state capitol is discommoded.”⁴ The article described the Supreme Court Clerk’s Office as one of the busiest offices at the state Capitol, saying that Ms. Moore “continues daily to wait upon 22 law clerks from three high courts, as well as the Supreme Court referee and the constant stream of lawyers visiting her office for information regarding their cases.”

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In an article printed during her reelection campaign, it was noted that Ms. Moore was one of the emancipated women able “to grasp the opportunities offered by the political field” and make good proving that “a woman [could] fill a state office efficiently.”⁵ It was further noted that she “[had] made a success of her position because she was not afraid of hard work and responsibility.” The article credited her dedication and the example she set for “placing the women of the state on firmer ground in holding public offices.” “She served 10 years as clerk in the office in a manner so outstanding that the Supreme Court admitted her to the practice of law in 1923.”⁶

In 1927, she sponsored and secured the passage of a bill through the Legislature that initiated a fixed initial deposit of \$25 for the Supreme Court, which resulted in annual savings to taxpayers and litigants.⁷ During that year, she also was ex officio secretary of the bar commission. In this position, she was responsible for managing all complaints against lawyers, overseeing disbarment proceedings and attending to the examination and admission of attorneys to the practice of law in Oklahoma.

She “was active in Democratic politics for many years, participating in various campaigns and for the party ticket in general elections.”⁸ She was instrumental in

the election of President Franklin D. Roosevelt when she served as a Democratic presidential elector in 1940 and 1944. Ms. Moore also spearheaded Indian participation in the campaign when Robert S. Kerr ran for and was elected governor.⁹ She served as director of the Bureau of Maternity and Infancy of the state health department and was named by then-governor W. H. “Alfalfa Bill” Murray to head the first Women’s Division of the Federal Emergency Relief Organization in Oklahoma County. Ms. Moore planned and organized the statewide rollout of the organization so successfully that her plan was “adopted and put into force on a nationwide scale by the federal government in 1933.”¹⁰

Being of Chickasaw blood, Ms. Moore served as a member of the Chickasaw Tribal Counsel under the late Gov. Douglas H. Johnston of the Chickasaw Nation and later Gov. Floyd E. Maytubby. One of her last efforts and honors on behalf of the Chickasaw Nation and “Indian historical interests was when she served as an official representative for the Chickasaw Nation in ceremonies in Memphis, Tenn., dedicating the newly formed Chickasaw Wing of the U.S. Air Force on Sept. 26, 1954.”¹¹

Ms. Moore was a charter member of the White Bead Presbyterian Church and remained active in the church after it moved to Pauls



Valley. Members of her Sunday school class praised Ms. Moore as a wonderful teacher and Christian leader.¹² She was president of the Alternate Saturday Club and active in the Eastern Star. For her outstanding contributions in both private and public life, Ms. Moore was inducted into the Oklahoma Hall of Fame by the Oklahoma Memorial Association at its Statehood Day banquet on Nov. 16, 1937.

Although her legal, political and community contributions were impressive, a campaign article in *Harlow’s Weekly* noted that Ms. Moore was not a politician but rather was the type of woman you would “expect to find presiding over church, Red Cross, literary and civic improvements meetings. You can easily picture her at the head of the dinner table in a Southern mansion. She is attractive, cultured and gracious; one recognizes immediately that she comes from Southern people ... She

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is unassuming, with a kind word and sincere friendliness toward everyone with whom she comes in contact ... the messenger boy gets as cordial a smile as does the biggest lawyer or the richest oil man.”¹³

Ms. Moore was a poet at heart and displayed her ancestral pride in her literary endeavors. One of her works, “The Five Great Indian Nations,” appeared in the autumn 1951 issue of the *Chronicles of Oklahoma* and depicted the part played by the Chickasaw, Cherokee, Choctaw, Seminole and Creek Indian tribes on behalf of the confederacy in the Civil War.¹⁴ Another of her works, “Lines on an Indian Face,” written in 1907, gives a “sensitive perspective on the decimation of the Native American culture.”¹⁵

Following the death of Jessie Elizabeth Randolph Moore on Oct. 7, 1956, Muriel H. Wright wrote an article for the *Chronicles of Oklahoma* commemorating her life. Ms. Wright noted, “Oklahoma has lost one of its best loved and revered pioneer women. Ms. Moore was known far and wide over the state for her devotion and her contributions to the history of Oklahoma.”¹⁶ According to her obituary, Ms. Moore’s contributions to public life made her one of the state’s leading women in its development, as well as a guiding spirit in its attainments, and in the growth of the Oklahoma Historical Society, serving as a member of the Board of Directors for 37 years and as treasurer for 35 years, becoming a lifetime member in 1920. She possessed “fine executive abilities and staunch loyalty,” and “yet her talents lay in her inquiring mind and her choice of words in expressing her thoughts.”¹⁷ Ms. Moore’s pride in her Chickasaw heritage was recognized at her funeral, where

she requested that the pallbearers be selected from persons of Chickasaw descent. Among the pallbearers were Chickasaw Nation Gov. Floyd Maytubby and Oklahoma Supreme Court Justice Earl Welch.

At her funeral, Haskell Paul – of the pioneer Paul family of Pauls Valley – paid tribute to Ms. Moore as “one of Oklahoma’s heroic women,” saying she was courageous, generous and humble with a strong intellect. He noted that it was in Pauls Valley that she was first recognized for her great character, which would later be appreciated by all Oklahoma citizens. Mr. Haskell’s mother, Victoria Paul, who had known Ms. Moore for 60 years, said she was always a lady who “could look the world in the face with a clear conscience.”¹⁸

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Florence Etheridge Cobb

FLORENCE ETHERIDGE COBB WAS BORN IN BRIDGEPORT, CONNECTICUT, on Sept. 20, 1878, to Samuel W. and Emma A. (Nichols) Etheridge. Her childhood was spent near Boston and Everett, Massachusetts, and she graduated from Everett High School on June 23, 1897. Although she was raised in New England, she did not appear to have a stilted manner or live by the customs of mid-Victorian Boston.

Because of her belief that women had the ability to succeed in activities outside the home, she pursued a legal education. She attended the Washington College of Law, where she received her law degree on May 26, 1911. On Oct. 3, 1911, she was admitted to the Court of Appeals of the District of Columbia on a motion by Ellen Spencer Mussey.¹ Ms. Cobb continued her legal education, and on May 27, 1912, she received an LL.M. from the Washington College of Law. She was admitted to practice law before the U.S. Supreme Court on Jan. 29, 1915.

While living in Washington, D.C., she was employed at the Census Bureau, the Department of Commerce, the Division of Education and, finally, the Office of Indian Affairs. During her years in government service, she was elected treasurer of the Federal Employees Union in 1916, and from 1917 to 1921, she served as the fourth vice president of the National Federation of Federal Employees. Ms. Cobb was one of the few women in federal government service during these years

and did her part in the “war of independence for women,” according to an article in the *Wewoka Times-Democrat*.² She was a “revolutionist when it came to the question of woman’s place, and proper amount of activity in the world outside of the home.”³

Ms. Cobb’s drive to establish the independence of women led her to organize the inaugural suffrage parade on March 3, 1913. This concerted effort on behalf of the women’s movement came at a time when there was a “newer, more liberal, progressive administration under Woodrow Wilson ... and the Democratic Party was forced to take cognizance of the growing demand of women for a share in the government.”⁴ However, the conservatism of the Old South and New England forced many women suffragists to play the “role of unwanted martyrdom,” as the press portrayed them as exhibiting unladylike attitudes of defiance while picketing the White House.⁵

During this same period, Ms. Cobb was appointed to the office of probate lawyer based on her work as a law clerk, where

she consistently demonstrated her legal aptitude and ability. In 1918, she relocated to Vinita and became a U.S. probate attorney. After serving there for two years, she went to Seminole County and served in the same position for one year. Upon arriving in Oklahoma, she was admitted to practice law before the Oklahoma Supreme Court on June 3, 1918.

Settling in Wewoka, it was noted that there was an “unusual stir of chivalry among the pioneer legal practitioner who had any probate practice.”⁶ The gentlemen curtailed their rough-and-tumble tactics on days when she might be in court, but perhaps the unfailing show of courtesy in the courtroom made her wonder what might be going on behind the scenes. She was constantly on the alert as to “whether any unfortunate Indians were being defrauded of their lands secretly by old ruses.”⁷ In 1923, Ms. Cobb represented the intervener in a reported decision dealing with constitutional amendments, one of which was the so-called women’s amendment, which would extend the

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qualifications of persons eligible to elective or appointive offices of the state to women.

On March 25, 1921, she married T. S. Cobb, a former county judge of Seminole County. He was one of the typical fighting, frontier-type lawyers, and she admired his spirit; he admired hers as well. After leaving the Indian Department, she continued practicing law with her husband and assisted him in his projects throughout his bouts with failing health.

Ms. Cobb “was a woman of considerable literary ability, and had she chosen an exclusively literary career might have risen to heights of distinction.”⁸ Even with her focus on her legal career, she did have many published poems and articles. Fostered by her intense interest in literature, Ms. Cobb helped form the Wewoka Writers Club, which may have explained her willingness to become a librarian for the Wewoka City Library.

Ms. Cobb also exercised her literary abilities when she and her husband produced *The Gossip*, a news sheet that championed the unpopular issues of the day and stood up for the underprivileged minority. After the death of her husband, she continued its publication and “was a champion of what she felt was right against corruption, politically and socially.”⁹

Ms. Cobb’s legal career was diverse. Besides practicing law, she served a term as justice of the peace in Wewoka, and for several years, she was a municipal judge for the city of Wewoka. During her tenure as judge, she prepared the charter and ordinances of the city of Wewoka for publication in 1935.

In 1922, Ms. Cobb became the Oklahoma chairman of the National Women’s Party, and in 1924, she organized a convention for the Government Workers Council of the National Women’s Party in Washington, D.C. She was also parliamentarian of the Federation of Women’s Clubs and a member of the Women’s Bar Association of Oklahoma, the National Institute of Social Sciences, the American Bar Association, the American Academy of Political Science, the American Economic Society and the Women Lawyers Club of New York. She was also listed in “Who’s Who in America.”

When Ms. Cobb died March 14, 1946, the Seminole County Bar

Association resolved that “it has lost an honored and distinguished member of the bar, a positive and dynamic thinker who had the courage of her convictions, whose place in our association will probably never be filled during the lifetime of any of its present members.”¹⁰

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Grace Elmore Gibson

BORN AUG. 8, 1886, IN KANSAS, Grace Elmore Gibson's life was dedicated to being involved in civic and community affairs and setting precedents for women in the legal profession.

Once she graduated from the University of Kansas and married Judge Nathan A. Gibson, she took up the study of law so she "could be a good listener when her husband talked."¹ Ms. Gibson was motivated to action following a conversation with her husband about a case he was handling. When she asked about the case, Judge Gibson commented, "I forgot for a moment that you don't understand law." It was shortly after that conversation that she enrolled in classes and began studying the law.² She soon realized she was interested in pursuing a legal career, not just to be a good listener but to practice law as well.

After completing her legal studies and being admitted to the bar in 1929, Ms. Gibson began practicing law in Tulsa's Court Arcade Building. Once she discovered she had a particular interest in cases dealing with the "human equation,"³ Ms. Gibson developed quite a clientele in the area of domestic difficulties. When discussing the problems women encountered in those times, Ms. Gibson noted that being a wife was a difficult job and involved "expecting things of a man, believing he can do them, keeping an even keel in that most

delicate of human relationships, and spending wisely."⁴ She said she found herself being a woman first and then a lawyer – not because he wanted it that way, but because her "colleagues were so acutely conscious that a woman was in the courtroom lawyering."⁵

As all women from that era understood, the legal profession had been a man's profession and he was at home in it, but "he was not at home with women in it."⁶ As the world watched women beginning to claim their rights in the legal profession, "the men watching ... [were] good sports about it."⁷ Despite men's preconceived ideas of women in the workplace, Ms. Gibson always found her colleagues very courteous and gallant, perhaps more than she would have liked them to be. Ms. Gibson would say, "I am here as a lawyer, not as a woman, and I ask no odds because I am a woman. In the courtroom, men get up to give me their chairs, but I'd rather they wouldn't."⁸ She saw a woman lawyer as a "concrete vocation of interesting actualities."⁹

When trying a case before a jury, she had only men to address since women had not yet been granted the right to serve on juries. In her dealings with male jurors,

Ms. Gibson felt that how they viewed her depended on how they viewed their wives at home. If a man's wife was domineering at home, then he, as a juror, tended to see a woman lawyer pleading a case "as a bossy sort of a hussy and looked upon her with a resentful eye. She wasn't going to tell him what to do."¹⁰ If a juror thought his wife was intelligent and respected her, he tended to treat the female attorney the same way. Ms. Gibson was concerned that women be granted the right to serve on juries because she, unlike many of her time, felt that women would add a new dimension to decision-making in jury trials. She was not concerned that, when they were granted that right, their emotions would make the decisions for them. She saw the topic of women jurors as "an abstract subject of interesting possibilities."¹¹

In 1930, Ms. Gibson became the first woman to be elected to a county or district judgeship in Oklahoma when the Tulsa County Bar Association tapped her to replace vacationing Judge John Boyd for several weeks. In 1936, she was named by Gov. E. W. Marland to sit for Judge James S. Davenport on the Oklahoma Criminal Court

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of Appeals in the embezzlement case against E. M. Landrum, county judge in Vinita. This honor, believed to have never before been accorded a woman, led to the first opinion ever written by a female member of the Criminal Court of Appeals.¹² Presiding Judge Thomas A. Edwards and Judge Thomas H. Doyle concurred with Ms. Gibson's mostly technical opinion.

Perhaps the traits that made her one of the trendsetting female attorneys of her time can best be seen in her excerpts from the *Landrum* opinion:

This case comes before this court upon 12 assignments of error by the defendant. No good purpose can be served by setting out these assignments in detail. Suffice it to say that they formulate the real issues in this case to be as follows:

1. Is the information duplicitous?
2. Does the information state a public offense?
3. Is the verdict in proper form to justify the sentence imposed?¹³

In the closing statements of the opinion, Special Judge Gibson noted that "the evidence might have justified a greater fine, and the defendant will not be heard to complain ... If error was committed by the trial court in this regard, it was in favor of the defendant, and he will not be heard to complain of it."¹⁴

In addition to her impressive legal career, she was actively involved in political and community affairs. In 1932, she made an unsuccessful bid for the U.S. House of Representatives on the Democratic ticket, running on a platform of "intelligence in legislation" and "economy in government." During World War II, she was director of the Women's Contact Corps of the Office of Civilian Defense, marshaling women to serve as volunteers in the civil defense area in Oklahoma. In 1944, Tulsa Mayor Olney Flynn appointed her to the position of city treasurer, the highest nonelective city post to be held by a woman up to that time.¹⁵

In a *Tulsa Daily World* article, Ms. Gibson said: "A man may do anything he likes, from steeple-sitting to ditch-digging, and nobody bothers to ask him why he did it. He might be asked how he did it, but he's seldom called upon to explain the reason why. But with a woman it's different. If she goes far afield from teaching, stenography or marriage, people want to know how come."¹⁶

Grace Elmore Gibson, former city treasurer, civic leader, attorney and judge, died May 6, 1975, at the age of 88 in Tulsa.

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Ethel Kehrer Childers

ETHEL KEHRER CHILDERS WAS BORN OCT. 19, 1887, in Coal Hollow near Chanute, Kansas, to Mr. and Ms. Charles H. Kehrer. She and her six siblings were reared on an 80-acre farm 10 miles southeast of Chanute. She attended a country school near home, and at age 12, she took the examination for admittance into high school and passed with flying colors. After graduating from high school at 15, she obtained a teaching position at Coal Hollow. One day, after several encounters with students – many of whom were larger than she was – she took a rubber hose to 24 students who had disregarded her instructions. Three of them were children of members of the Board of Education. She feared for her job, but the board members respected her “straightforwardness of decision and resoluteness of character” and told her she had the job as long as she wanted it.¹

Not wanting to return to Coal Hollow, she enrolled in Chanute Business College. After a year, she took a position in Coffeyville, Kansas, for \$8 a week. In 1904, the law office of Veasy & Rowland in Bartlesville, Indian Territory, contacted Chanute Business College looking for a legal stenographer. After interviewing for the position, James A. Veasy and L.A. Rowland, just out of law school, asked her if she would stay until they found someone fitted for the job since she had no legal experience. This was another challenge she met by studying the law and learning what she needed to know to keep the job.

After she married John E. Childers on Aug. 22, 1910, in Bartlesville at the age of 23, she decided to retire from the business world. The Childerses adopted two children, Dorothy and Robert. The Veasy & Rowland firm had difficulty accepting Ms. Childers' retirement,

and their daily telephone calls finally convinced her she might as well be drawing a salary because she was still working.²

In 1912, Ms. Childers became the law partner of H. H. Montgomery in Bartlesville, and after taking the bar examination and passing with highest honors, she was admitted to the bar between 1912 and 1913. The fact that the Montgomery firm was general counsel for Kanotex would play an important role in Ms. Childers' future.

Ms. Childers and Kittie Sturdevant, another pioneer female attorney, were the only female attendees at the voluntary bar association meeting held in Tulsa in 1914. In 1918, Ms. Childers was an attorney of record in a reported decision dealing with the rights of a Cherokee to make a voluntary alienation of allotted lands.³

In 1918, after working for two years under her former boss, Mr. Veasey, who was general counsel for the Carter Oil Co., Ms. Childers joined

the Kanotex Oil Co. in Arkansas City, Kansas, as secretary, assistant treasurer and general counsel. She had proven herself in the business world as a “trouble shooter of manifold possibilities in the other business positions she had held”⁴ and had a “competent knowledge of nearly every phase of the production, transportation, refining and distribution of petroleum products. She had supervised the construction of pipelines”⁵ and “was capable of running the oil through all the operations which make it into gasoline.”⁶

In 1919, Ms. Childers went to Devol for Kanotex when the Burkburnett field was coming into its most complete activity. Within one month, in the heart of the oil fields, she counted 25 holdups on the block in front of her office. Although she was never held up, she was threatened many times when she “threatened to put men in jail or send them to the penitentiary for thefts or other crimes.”⁷

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As Ms. Childers' career was developing at Kanotex, she and C. M. Boggs, president of Kanotex, and Robert R. Cox, treasurer of Kanotex, organized the Crude Oil Transit Co., a pipeline company that transported crude oil to refineries.

An interest aside from the oil industry developed when Ms. Childers became involved in the enactment of Arkansas City's zoning ordinances and became one of the original members of the city planning commission. Her interest in municipal planning was realized with her purchase of the Crestwood District, where she hired authorities to lay out the residential areas. Ms. Childers had streets built, brought in utility service, constructed a community lodge and pool, planted hundreds of trees and installed a nursery to provide for future landscaping. She was also a member of the First Church of Christ Scientist and the Business and Professional Women's Club.

According to Mr. Boggs, Ms. Childers was an amazing woman and a brilliant attorney with a very good business mind.⁸ She was not your masculine, heavy-voiced, too-efficient type of woman but seemed to be more at home presiding at a tea table than sitting at a desk directing the destinies of a half-million-dollar business concern.⁹ As Ms. Childers stated, "A woman in the business world will be treated simply as she wants to be treated. If she is businesslike, and knows her place and stays in it, the men in her office will treat her in a perfectly friendly, businesslike fashion."¹⁰

Ms. Childers' advice to women entering the business world was, "Say your prayers and do your best, be honest and work hard ... if you don't want to be criticized, do nothing, say nothing and be nothing."¹¹

Ethel Kehrer Childers died June 23, 1946, in Arkansas City.

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Grace Arnold

GRACE ARNOLD WAS BORN IN 1888 IN CREEK COUNTY. After passing the bar examination, Ms. Arnold was admitted to the bar in 1915 and began traveling the state of Oklahoma looking for a place to begin her law practice. According to Earl Newsom in *Drumright! The Glory Days of a Boom Town*, “Fascinated by the oil fields, she came back to Creek County and Drumright on one of the first passenger trains in 1915.”¹ She opened her office on the second floor of the J.W. Fulkerson Building, where she practiced until her retirement.

It soon became evident that Ms. Arnold, Drumright’s only female attorney, was to be one of Oklahoma’s most colorful women leaders. According to Mr. Newsom, “She carried a gun and kept it under her pillow at night.”² Disregarding that “proper women” did not smoke in those days, Ms. Arnold did. When preparing for a case, she would lean her forehead on her hands, and the smoke from her cigarettes rose into her snow-white hair, eventually turning it yellow in front.³ She always wore trousers and could be seen sitting in the movies with her legs draped over the seat in front of her. Although she normally used proper language, if people in the oil field wanted to communicate with her on a “less sophisticated level,” it was said that Ms. Arnold could hold her own.⁴

Underdogs were her favorite clients, and she championed many unpopular causes by representing them in court. In 1917, she joined the International Workers of the World, a group that protested World War I,



and over the years, she represented many of its members in court.

Ms. Arnold’s court presentations were often very graphic. During a rape case, she once went to the extreme of demonstrating to the court how a woman could resist being attacked.⁵ From 1919 to 1956, Ms. Arnold was the attorney of record in 19 reported decisions

in Oklahoma. From the day she opened her office in Drumright, she was both respected and accepted in the legal community.⁶

Aside from her legal practice, she was actively involved in politics, taking the stump for Democrats in every election. She was an organizer of the League of Women Voters and the Business and Professional Women’s Club in Drumright.

Grace Arnold is buried in the Drumright cemetery.

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Kathryn Nedry Van Leuven

KATHRYN NEDRY VAN LEUVEN WAS BORN FEB. 5, 1888, to John B. and Kathryn Rhyne Nedry in Fort Smith, Arkansas, where she received her primary and secondary education.¹ She moved to Nowata in 1909, where she met her husband, Bert Van Leuven, neighboring Ottawa County's first county judge.² A product of six generations of lawyers on both sides of her family, it was only natural that she would be interested in the law.³ Although she never received a law degree, Ms. Van Leuven was tutored by her husband and father for six years and studied for 18 months at the University of Chicago⁴ prior to her admission to the bar in 1913 at the age of 25.⁵

Soon after she began practicing in 1914, Ms. Van Leuven became Nowata County's first female prosecuting attorney when she was named assistant attorney from 1913 to 1915.⁶ In 1920, she became the first female assistant attorney general in the U.S. after being appointed to the office by Oklahoma Attorney General S. Price Freeling. Attorney General Freeling, a well-known women's suffrage opponent, had hoped to appease his female critics with the appointment of Ms. Van Leuven,⁷ who held the position until 1926.⁸

During her tenure as assistant attorney general, Attorney General Freeling sent Ms. Van Leuven to Tulsa in response to a plea by a delegation of Tulsa women to Gov. Robertson about vice conditions in Tulsa. According to the women, conditions were so bad in their city that it was "unsafe for a woman to travel unescorted."⁹ A. J. Biddison, a Tulsa attorney, believed sending Ms. Van Leuven to Tulsa was a

political ploy intended to give her something to do. Of the decision to put Ms. Van Leuven on the case, Mr. Biddison stated that she could "do as little harm [in Tulsa] as she [could] anywhere else."¹⁰ Some described the Tulsa assignment as the "most responsible assignment ever entrusted to an Oklahoma woman to that time."¹¹ Eventually, Ms. Van Leuven "was credited with breaking up the Tulsa vice ring and soon became Oklahoma's best-known female attorney."¹² During her six years in the Attorney General's Office, she "was assigned to the Department of Labor where she made an enviable record."¹³

Having served many challenging years in the public sector, Ms. Van Leuven decided to enter private practice in 1926 when she joined the Oklahoma City law firm of Blakeney & Ambrister. After her son, Kermit, graduated from law school, they formed a mother-son partnership, which was reported to be the first such

legal partnership in the nation.¹⁴ Attempting to satisfy her political ambitions, Ms. Van Leuven entered the primary for the U.S. Senate in 1930 and finished seventh in a field of 10 Democratic candidates,¹⁵ an impressive finish for a woman in that era. In 1935, she became a special master to the Supreme Court of Oklahoma and was the first woman appointed to the Supreme Court Commission in Oklahoma.¹⁶

Beginning in 1924, "Ms. Van Leuven's efforts [became] focused on securing material realization of the program of the National Welfare Committee" when she served on the committee, chaired by Eleanor Roosevelt.¹⁷ The committee compiled and coordinated information, suggesting federal legislation in areas of social security and public welfare. Their suggestions were based on years of work and study by the U.S. Department of Labor, the American Child Health Association, the American Federation of Labor, the National Council of

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Unemployment, the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, the Brookings Institution, the American Association of Social Security and others.¹⁸ The work of Ms. Van Leuven and her fellow committee members was “of decided importance in shaping the legislation of the land.”¹⁹

When the Federal Social Security Board was formed, President and Ms. Roosevelt asked Ms. Van Leuven to become a member of the legal staff. She was appointed to the Social Security Commission in 1937 by President Roosevelt.²⁰ After a brief tenure on the Federal Social Security Board, Ms. Van Leuven took a leave of absence to accept an appointment by Oklahoma Commissioner of Labor W.A. Pat Murphy to serve as an attorney in the Unemployment Compensation and Placement Division of the Oklahoma Department of Labor.²¹ Mr. Murphy was not only impressed with her extensive study of social security but also with her enviable record of legal experience, her position as a national figure and her popularity in Oklahoma. At this juncture in her legal career, an article in the *Oklahoma State Bar Journal* referred to her as the “first lady of Oklahoma law.”²²

Ms. Van Leuven became legal advisor, legislative counselor and secretary for the Oklahoma Associated Industries in the early 1940s but resigned in 1945 to become

attorney and service director for the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post No. 1857. In 1947, Ms. Van Leuven reentered private practice in Oklahoma City, associating with Judge H. B. King.²³ In private practice, Ms. Van Leuven was a trial lawyer practicing primarily in criminal law. Known for her courtroom advocacy skills, Justice Marian P. Opala remembered her as very tenacious, “as tough a defense lawyer as you could find.”²⁴ Ms. Van Leuven was an attorney of record in 66 reported decisions from 1919 to 1956.

In addition to being a lawyer, Ms. Van Leuven was actively involved in community and political activities. She was secretary of the State League of Young Democrats, founder and past president of the Young Women’s Democrats, member of the Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce and founder of the Oklahoma Hospitality Club.²⁵ Ms. Van Leuven’s tremendous involvement in her community, as well as her legal contributions, led to her induction into the Oklahoma Hall of Fame in 1939.²⁶

Throughout her life, Ms. Van Leuven was a social activist and championed the rights of her clients and women until her death in December 1967 at the age of 79.²⁷

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Kathryn Sturdevant

KATHRYN CLYDE “KITTIE C.” STURDEVANT was born Sept. 10, 1890, in Cyclone, Texas,¹ to Charles Wesley and Mary Alice Toole Sturdevant.² From the age of 4, she was encouraged by her father, a lawyer, to become a lawyer. He knew the time would “come when women would be more active in business affairs,” so they “should all be trained for professional work.”³ After graduating from Shawnee High School in 1908, she went to New York City to become a student at the American Academy of Dramatic Arts.⁴ Upon returning to Shawnee, she went to work as a stenographer with the law firm of Biggers and Lydick.⁵

Mr. Lydick acknowledged her “legal mind” and encouraged her to study law the day she timidly suggested that perhaps he had omitted the jurisdictional statement essential to the petition for an important damage suit.⁶ Several Pottawatomie County attorneys also took an interest in her study of the law. Ms. Sturdevant said, “I had the advantage of having several attorneys who were university graduates just to tutor me all the way through until 1912 when I took the (bar) examination.”⁷ She would later say, “My law school was in the university of hard knocks.”⁸ In her study of the law under Mr. Lydick, she gained valuable experience in Indian land matters, railroad damage suits and the general practice of law.⁹ In addition to her work and study with Mr. Lydick, she also took a correspondence course at the Blackstone Institute in Chicago.¹⁰

After statehood, the Oklahoma Supreme Court included in the admission requirements that the applicant pass a three-day state bar

examination.¹¹ The final question on the 1912 bar examination was, “Is it lawful for a man to marry his widow’s sister?”¹² The lone female applicant in 1912, Ms. Sturdevant responded, “It is unlawful for a marriage relationship to exist between a woman and the ghost of a man.”¹³ Making the highest grade out of the 125 participants, Ms. Sturdevant was one of the first women in Oklahoma to be admitted to the bar through examination.¹⁴ In prior years, a tradition had been established that the clerk of the Supreme Court would give a choice bird dog to the person attaining the highest grade on the bar examination. When it became known that the highest grade had been made by Ms. Sturdevant, the clerk – who thought a lot of his bird dogs – said he didn’t want them to go to anybody who didn’t know how to hunt, so according to Ms. Sturdevant, he gave her a check instead.¹⁵

In 1912, when she was admitted to the bar and began her law practice in Oklahoma City,

female lawyers were something of a rarity. The public was not accustomed to female lawyers and doubted that a female was capable of handling legal matters as men did. Some of the judges were also skeptical, and crowds would gather in the courtroom doorway when she tried a case.¹⁶ “At least in the first 20 years, I had to do something much better than a man lawyer would do to get recognition,” Ms. Sturdevant once said.¹⁷ Her determination and hard work gained her the respect required to practice law in those days.

Another obstacle presented itself when Ms. Sturdevant was nominated by attorney Edgar A. DeMeules for membership in the voluntary bar association in 1913. Mr. DeMeules concluded his nomination with the following poem:

They talk about a woman’s sphere
As though it had a limit:
There’s not a place in earth or
Heaven,

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There's not a task to mankind
given,
There's not a blessing or a woe,
There's not a whisper, yes or no,
There's not a life, a death, a birth,
Nor aught that has a feather's
weight of worth,
Without a woman in it.¹⁸

Despite the glowing recommendation, remarks by General Counsel Chairman R. A. Kleinschmidt indicated there was a division in ranks over the question of admitting a woman to the bar. Mr. Kleinschmidt said, "We have taken the precaution to fortify ourselves by securing the signature of at least every well-known admirer of the opposite sex."¹⁹ Mr. W. H. Kornegay then raised the question, "Is she eligible under our constitution?" President James H. Gordon replied, "I am unable to answer

that question, for at the time we formed the organization we were not aware we had this danger to confront."²⁰ G. C. Abernathy of Ms. Sturdevant's hometown of Shawnee moved for her admission. It was seconded, and after a hand vote, Ms. Sturdevant became the association's first woman member²¹ and remained an active participant for 75 years.

When she began her practice, Ms. Sturdevant did not specialize in any particular area of law. As she said, "We specialized in anything that came in the front door."²² She preferred preparing cases and doing research to trying cases in court. When she did go to the courthouses in Wewoka and some of the smaller counties, "the janitors would start cleaning up the courtrooms so they would look neater."²³



Finally receiving the recognition she deserved due to her hard work, Ms. Sturdevant became president of the Pottawatomie County Bar Association in 1918 and served as secretary and treasurer for 30 years.²⁴ In 1936, she formed a partnership with Ruby Turner Looper, which "established the first totally female law partnership."²⁵ Their partnership continued until 1950 when Ms. Sturdevant again became a solo practitioner.²⁶ During the partnership, Ms. Looper and Ms. Sturdevant were attorneys of record on five reported decisions.²⁷ Ms. Sturdevant would be an attorney of record on 35 additional reported decisions from 1914 to 1956.

Ms. Sturdevant was instrumental in forming the Lawyers' Tax Group, of which she served as secretary and treasurer for 30 years. She was also active in the Oklahoma Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs,

When she died on Oct. 24, 1986, she had practiced for 75 years; she had the distinction of being the oldest practicing female attorney in the state.

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the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Daughters of American Colonists, the Colonial Dames of the 17th Century and the La Petite Soeur Book Club.²⁸

At 96, she was still practicing three to four days a week in her downtown Oklahoma City office. When she died on Oct. 24, 1986, she had practiced for 75 years; she had the distinction of being the oldest practicing female attorney in the state.²⁹ She filed her last pleading, a notice of hearing on the final account in a probate matter, on Feb. 25, 1986.³⁰ As Stephen P. Friot would say in a *Briefcase* article paying tribute to Ms. Sturdevant, “She was an inspiration to me. Not only did I see her practice law until she was in her mid-90s, I saw her go about her business with an indomitable spirit.”

Ms. Sturdevant was an inspiration to both the legal community and her family. Her great-niece,

Susan Huddleston Belote, who was also a lawyer, commented, “A person couldn’t have had a better role model in both the law and in life, and we were truly blessed to have this remarkable woman in our family and in our lives.”³¹

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Fred Andrews

FRED ANDREWS, CHRISTENED FREDDIE, was born Jan. 14, 1895, in Cecil, Arkansas. When asked if she had been named Freddie because her father wanted a son, she said she “doubted it, for he had plenty of boys, seven girls and six boys.”¹ She grew up in Cecil on the family farm and attended Fort Smith Business College.

Ms. Andrews started her career as a legal stenographer in Wetumka. Working in a law firm gave her the opportunity to study law as she worked. She augmented her legal studies with night classes and correspondence courses in law, and after taking the bar examination, she was admitted to the bar on Dec. 13, 1934. She moved to Ada around 1930 and practiced “law in a partnership until 1939, when she opened her own office.”² She was the first woman attorney in Ada and practiced there for 21 years.

Since there were so few women attorneys when she began her practice, she decided that if she were going to get clients, she would have to use the shortened version of her name.³ Ms. Andrews tells the story of her first client, a farmer, who purchased a tractor only to find it unsatisfactory. Upon his arrival at the office of “Fred Andrews, Attorney at Law,” the farmer kept insisting he wanted to see a lawyer. When Ms. Andrews finally convinced him she was Fred Andrews, he said, “Well, I better find another, a man. A woman wouldn’t know anything about farm machinery.” She retorted, “No, but I know about

contracts.”⁴ The farmer became a regular client.

Ms. Andrews served as county attorney and, in 1947, served as county judge *pro tempore* for a brief period of time. She was appointed to the county and juvenile court judgeship in Pontotoc County in 1955 and was unopposed when she ran for election in 1956. During the rest of her 14-year tenure as judge, she would draw an opponent in each election and always come out the victor. She “was the only woman to hold the office of county and juvenile court judge in Pontotoc County.”⁵ She served “until 1969, at which time she retired and returned to the general practice of law.”⁶

A 1957 article in *The Daily Oklahoman* noted, “Oklahoma women lawyers couldn’t be said to dominate the state’s judiciary – yet. But keep an eye on them.”⁷ Ms. Andrews was one of the seven who had made a “wedge into what until very recent times was considered strictly a man’s field.”⁸

Upon retiring from the judiciary, Ms. Andrews said: “For the most part my work has been pleasant. The last five years, though, the workload has snowballed. With the

addition of criminal cases, juvenile and dependent children’s cases and mental health matters doubling, there’s much more to be done. I’m too compassionate, and tense up trying to find solutions in ‘the best interest’ of the child or adult.”⁹

Although Ms. Andrews never felt the legal profession called “for exceptional qualities in a woman any more than it does a man,” she did question the ability of women to deal with “dependent and neglected or delinquent children.”¹⁰ Although she had her doubts about her abilities in these areas, she felt she had helped a number of young people, a fact confirmed by the many who kept in touch with her throughout her life.

Retiring to a private practice, Ms. Andrews hoped to return to a 9-to-5 workday. She anticipated that private practice would allow her more time to work in her yard with her flowers, a diversion she thoroughly enjoyed. She opened her office in Ada’s First National Bank in a space offered by Albert E. Trice. Returning to the areas of practice she enjoyed before she became a judge, she opened her doors to a civil practice focusing on probate matters.

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Never marrying, Ms. Andrews “made her way through the difficult times of the Great Depression and raised her deceased sister’s children, Norma Wood Smith and James ‘Jimmie’ Smith.”¹¹

A “doer, not a spectator,” Ms. Andrews was active in community affairs.¹² She was a charter member of the Business and Professional Women’s Association and served as president of the Wetumka chapter and legislative chairman and parliamentarian of the state organization. She was a recipient of the Ema Warmac trophy for being the outstanding member of the Ada Business and Professional Women’s Association. She also served as president of the Knife and Fork Club and the Ada Community Chest in 1961. She was a member of the Order of the Eastern Star and was on the Board of Directors of Valley View Hospital. She worked as a volunteer for the American Cancer Society from 1955 to 1959 and

remained an active member thereafter. She was county director of the American Red Cross and was on the sanitation board, working in conjunction with the health department.

She was a member of the Pontotoc County and Oklahoma bar associations and also spent a great deal of time promoting the Women Lawyers Club, which became the Oklahoma Association of Women Lawyers.

Awards, citations and plaques noting her many accomplishments lined the walls of her Ada office. As noted by fellow attorney Bob E. Bennett of Ada, Ms. Andrews was “highly respected and admired by all who knew her. She was a dedicated member of the bench and bar ... a tribute to our profession.”¹³

Fred Andrews died in October 1977 at the age of 82.

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Norma Frazier Wheaton

NORMA FRAZIER WHEATON WAS BORN AUG. 13, 1899, in New York City and was orphaned at the age of 11. The oldest of three children, Ms. Wheaton became a parent to her younger siblings. After graduating from Northwestern University, she took a secretarial position in the office of Hudson and Hudson, a Tulsa law firm, so her siblings could also receive a college education.¹

While working for Robert D. Hudson and his father, Wash Hudson, Ms. Wheaton realized she wanted her legal career to involve more than just typing briefs for the Hudsons. She wanted to be a lawyer. Determined, she entered the TU College of Law and graduated with highest honors in 1927.² She was admitted to the Oklahoma bar later that year. After graduating, Ms. Wheaton continued her career with Hudson and Hudson but traded her secretarial duties for those of an attorney. In 1947, she was named a partner in the firm, which became Hudson, Hudson, Wheaton and Brett.³

Ms. Wheaton practiced in the area of real property, insurance and domestic law until her retirement in 1972.⁴ She was an attorney of record on six reported decisions from 1928 to 1965, one of which, *In re House Bill No. 145*, secured for women the right to serve on juries.⁵ Up against Attorney General Mac Q. Williamson and First Assistant Attorney General Fred Hansen, Ms. Wheaton – along with Mildred Brooks Fitch, Jewell Russell Mann and Dorothy Young – convinced

the Oklahoma Supreme Court to declare that in the constitutional provision stating that 12 men should serve on grand juries, the use of the term “men” was generic and should also include women. Ten long years after she began pushing the Legislature to secure the rights for women to serve on juries, her efforts were finally realized with the decision in *In re House Bill No. 145* and the primary election on July 1, 1952.⁶

During this time in Oklahoma history, women had no stronger advocate than Ms. Wheaton. She wanted women to not only gain equality in the legal profession but in all areas of life. In 1942, when the highest office a woman could hold in Oklahoma was that of department head, Ms. Wheaton “spearheaded legislation to amend the Oklahoma Constitution to grant women the right to hold the state offices of governor,

Ms. Wheaton’s involvement in the legal community demonstrated that not only could women practice law, but they could also hold responsible positions in legal organizations previously held primarily by their male counterparts.

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lieutenant governor, secretary of state, auditor, attorney-general, treasurer, superintendent of public instruction and state examiner and inspector.”⁷ State Question 302 – addressing the qualifications for elective officers, including allowing women to run for office – was adopted in a 1942 general election thanks in large part to Ms. Wheaton’s tireless efforts.⁸

As a response to Ms. Wheaton’s successful quest to acquire the rights for women to hold state offices, an article in a Tulsa newspaper on Oct. 21, 1942, described her latest achievement:

S’elp’us, gals, it’s enough to try a woman’s soul.

You may run for president of the United States – if you can persuade F.D.R. to give up – but, by golly, down here in Oklahoma they won’t even trust you to run for state examiner and inspector – probably for fear you’d get elected.

That’s what makes folks like Norma Wheaton plenty mad, and when Norma gets mad, you can bet there’ll be fireworks.⁹

In response to the article, Ms. Wheaton said, “It’s not that I wanted to be governor. I just resented women not having the right to be.”¹⁰

Ms. Wheaton’s efforts on behalf of women were certainly monumental, and it was never unusual for the “silver-haired and bespectacled” lady to get fired up over laws that were partial to men, speaking “like a business woman with a lawyer’s flair for the dramatic.”¹¹

After women had won the right to serve on juries, a 1963 *Tulsa Daily World* article tried to get Ms. Wheaton to commit herself to whether she thought men or women made the best jurors. In response to the question, Ms. Wheaton said: “I can’t see any difference between the two, except that maybe women give more attention to details. Sometimes this is good. Sometimes it’s not. Women certainly know the value of the dollar, speaking of women handing down a verdict in civil cases as opposed to criminal ones.”¹² In the 1970s, her efforts became focused on getting the Equal Rights Amendment passed in Oklahoma.¹³

Ms. Wheaton’s involvement in the legal community demonstrated that not only could women practice law, but they could also hold responsible positions in legal organizations previously held primarily by their male counterparts. Her proficiencies in all areas furthered women’s efforts to attain equal status with men in the legal profession. In 1946,



Ms. Wheaton received some much-deserved recognition when the male attorneys of Tulsa “recognized her competence as a lawyer and leader and elected her the first woman president of the Tulsa County Bar Association.”¹⁴ She would also be the first woman on the OBA Board of Governors, then called the Executive Council, serving from 1966 to 1968. Ms. Wheaton belonged to the OBA when, in 1934, “a group of Oklahoma City women formed the Women Lawyers Club of Oklahoma which became the current Oklahoma Association of Women lawyers.”¹⁵ After the establishment of the organization, it was decided there would be a monthly publication, *The Citator*, to keep members informed about happenings in the legal community. Ms. Wheaton was named editor of *The Citator*.

She was also a member of the American Bar Association’s

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American Judicature Society, serving on its Board of Directors for three terms. She was a regional director of the National Association of Women Lawyers, a member of the American Bar Association's American Society of International Law and Phi Delta Delta International Legal Fraternity for Women and associate editor of the *Oklahoma Bar Journal*.¹⁶

Her achievements were not restricted to the local arena. She gained national recognition in 1950 when she toured Europe inspecting the progress of the Marshall Plan.¹⁷ In 1953, she represented the southeast division of the 10th Circuit on the American Bar Association's committee to study possible revisions to the United Nations Charter.¹⁸

Ms. Wheaton was a lifetime member of the YWCA, and in

1965, she was selected as the Tulsa Soroptimist Club's Woman of the Year.¹⁹ Colleagues of Ms. Wheaton describe her as "a well-thought of and very capable lawyer"²⁰ and "a very fine lady and a pleasure to work with (against!!)."²¹ The respect of her colleagues was demonstrated when Tulsa's Hudson-Hall-Wheaton American Inn of Court was named for Robert D. Hudson, Amos T. Hall and Norma Frazier Wheaton. She died in Tulsa on Feb. 18, 1974.

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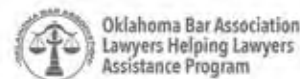
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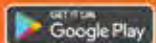
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Dorothy Young

DOROTHY YOUNG WAS BORN IN LINN CREEK, MISSOURI, ON NOV. 8, 1901.

She graduated from the Tulsa College of Law and was admitted to the bar in 1928, which paved the way for a diverse legal career. Ms. Young began her legal career as a clerk and assistant to the deputy state umpire in the Tulsa office of the Oklahoma Corporation Commission. Her next position was with the Land and Leasing Department of the Indian Territory Illuminating Oil Co. in Bartlesville. Following that, she joined the Barnsdall Oil Co. in Tulsa. Her diverse career culminated in the 1950 opening of her own office in Tulsa.

In 1951, an impressive group of women attorneys tested the constitutionality of House Bill No. 145 in the 23rd Legislature in the Supreme Court. The bill eliminated the disqualifications of women to serve on juries. The group included Ms. Young, Mildred Brooks Fitch, Jewell Russell Mann and Norma Wheaton. They faced Attorney General Mac Q. Williamson and First Assistant Attorney General Fred Hansen. The women prevailed, with the court ruling the act was constitutional and that women could serve on juries. In 1952, Ms. Young was again the attorney of record on a reported decision dealing with a descent, distribution and rights of heirs question before the Oklahoma Supreme Court.

In 1950, and again in 1954, Ms. Young ran for election as the Democratic candidate in a race for a common pleas court judgeship but was defeated.¹ Even with the endorsement of Gov. Johnston Murray, Ms. Young suffered defeat

in 1954 in her quest to succeed the late Judge Wallace Marks.² The county commissioners appointed Whit Y. Mauzy to the position instead. In 1954, Gov. Murray finally obtained a position for Ms. Young that was commensurate with her legal skills and abilities. She was serving as assistant to former Tulsa County attorney Robert Wheeler when she was appointed judge of the juvenile court, making her Tulsa County's first woman judge.³ It was noted in a *Tulsa Tribune* article that Judge Young was one of the women in Oklahoma who had invaded the judiciary, an arena that was once strictly masculine.⁴ The article went on to say that in her position as a juvenile judge, she was well respected and had a good reputation in the legal community.

From 1954 until 1966, she served as Tulsa County's juvenile court judge. Judge Young instituted numerous reforms for punishing juvenile lawbreakers. Opposed to the term punishment, Judge

Young preferred to view her work as disciplinary in nature. She said, "There is a difference between punishment and discipline. We try to change a delinquent's thinking to rehabilitate him as a parent should."⁵ She discovered in her work with juveniles that children "love to be properly disciplined."⁶

Judge Young thought that 98% of Tulsa County parents were doing a good job, but 2% shirked the responsibility of disciplining their children. She felt that parents wanted the courts "to change their delinquents to normal children in 15 minutes after [they had spent] 15 years ruining them."⁷ "One change that starts rather easily is an attitude of parents to let something or someone else rule their children – television, babysitters, picture shows, and sometimes even juvenile courts," she said.⁸ Judge Young came to believe that people receive their consciences from their parents.⁹

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She felt the child labor laws should be revised and more vocational training should be offered in schools. Acknowledging that all children are not on the same level, she said, "Certainly, we must have advanced training for young minds that are bound for the stars, but there will always be the earth-bound."¹⁰

The capstone of Judge Young's outstanding legal career came in 1962 when American Women in Radio and Television named her "Woman of the Year." She was also on the Executive Committee of the National Juvenile Judges Association and was the first woman named to the advisory council of the National Council on Crime and Delinquency. She was a member of the First Church of Christ, Scientist, and was the past president of the Tulsa Business and Professional Women's Club and the Tulsa County Bar Association.

Judge Young was educated and pursued her legal career in Oklahoma, only leaving when ill health caused her to move to Pittsburgh in 1969 to be near her son, John Keith (Jack). She died April 23, 1970, in Pittsburgh.



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Jewell Russell Mann

JEWELL RUSSELL MANN WAS BORN JUNE 13, 1903, in Madison, Arkansas,¹ and was a champion fighter for women’s rights from her high school years in Okmulgee until her death in 1987. In high school, she was a member of a women’s club, the forerunner of the Business and Professional Women’s Club.² Graduating from high school at age 15, the remainder of her education was accomplished through evening courses. In 1928, after three years of attending classes six nights a week, she obtained her law degree from the Tulsa College of Law, the predecessor of the TU College of Law.³ Ms. Mann was admitted to the bar in 1928.

After graduating from law school, she went to work as a secretary for Midstates Oil Corp., and when asked why she accepted a position as a secretary instead of as an attorney, she replied, “You had to accept it. Now I tell young women applying for jobs not to mention they can type.”⁴ In her first days at Midstates, she was given such legal tasks as examining oil lease titles but soon found herself on the path to a probate, real estate and corporate law practice.⁵

In 1942, Ms. Mann – along with Minnie L. Dettweiler, Nell W. Bracken, Maude Rounsaville and Lou Etta Bellamy Dick – were attorneys of record on a reported decision reversing an earlier district court decision denying a widow’s allowance during the administration of her deceased husband’s estate.⁶ In 1951, *In re House Bill No. 145*, 23rd Legislature, Ms. Mann and another group of pioneer women attorneys – Mildred Brooks Fitch, Norma Wheaton and Dorothy Young – took on the state

of Oklahoma to eliminate the disqualifications of women to serve on juries. The constitutionality of the House bill was upheld, saying the “constitutional provision that says that grand juries should be composed of 12 men used ‘men’ in its generic sense, and included women or females as well.”⁷

After working several years as a staff attorney as well as an officer for a corporation engaged in the oil business, Ms. Mann became associated with Corinne Childs, an attorney and CPA.⁸ Following her association with Ms. Childs, she became a partner in the firm of Harrington & Mann in Tulsa, where she practiced from 1965 until 1985 when she retired.⁹

When Ms. Mann was admitted to the bar in 1928, only three female attorneys were practicing in Tulsa. When asked how she was treated as a female attorney practicing law, she said, “[Only] once did my gender pose difficulties, when a judge ordered I obtain male counsel to appear with me

in a case I was arguing. The Judge later apologized.”¹⁰ Although she contended that her gender did not pose difficulties, another Tulsa attorney told the story that Ms. Mann would “disguise herself as a man, wearing a suit and hat, so she could get in to the Tulsa County Bar meetings.”¹¹

During the Chicago Seven trial, when the law was being questioned, Ms. Mann commented: “There is nothing in particular which is wrong with the law. People – be they lawyers and judges or laymen – misconstrue and misinterpret the law. We do have laws, such as one in Oklahoma which allows a woman no cause of action for loss of consortium, which needs changing [but] on the whole, the laws as presented in the Constitution and in state statutes are good.”¹²

In an effort to enter a new arena for women, in 1966, Ms. Mann lost an election for Tulsa judge by less than 2,000 votes out of 100,000 votes cast.¹³

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Ms. Mann was a member of the Tulsa County Bar Association, the Oklahoma Bar Association and the American Bar Association.¹⁴ In addition, she was secretary of the TCBA in 1940.¹⁵ Ms. Mann founded the Oklahoma Association of Women Lawyers and was an officer of the National Association of Women Lawyers and the International Legal Associations for Women. She urged women to join the national association as a way to keep “in touch with the activities of our sisters in the profession and learn from them how to better our own position in the profession of law.”¹⁶ She was treasurer of the Tulsa Title and Probate Lawyers Association from its beginning until her retirement.¹⁷

Ms. Mann’s endeavors were never limited to the practice of law. Many of her efforts were on behalf of women as citizens and employees. Through the years, Ms. Mann was a frequent lecturer on the employment conditions of women, stating, “Women always have been second class citizens.”¹⁸ Ms. Mann was “particularly scathing in denouncement of state protective laws which in Oklahoma decreed most women employees work no more than 54 hours a week.”¹⁹

As William A. Harrington, her former partner, would state, she was a “vigorous advocate of women’s rights, including

the proposed Equal Rights Amendment.”²⁰ Her interest in and work on behalf of women’s rights was acknowledged by President Richard M. Nixon when he appointed her to an advisory commission on women’s rights.²¹ She was on the first Governor’s Commission on the Status of Women, a commission that was instrumental in securing passage of the Equal Pay and Minimum Wage bills in 1965,²² which was designed to be a deterrent to sex discrimination in employment. She also “spearheaded campaigns, and then helped to write the bills, enabling women to serve on juries in Oklahoma and to run for major elective offices in this state.”²³ In 1968, Ms. Mann was appointed to Tulsa’s Selective Service board and “promptly announced her belief that women should be subject to the draft.”²⁴ During this time, she was also a director of Admiral State Bank in Tulsa.²⁵

Her community involvement also included membership in the League of Women Voters, the Tulsa Legal Aid Society, the Tulsa Council of Churches and the YWCA.²⁶ She was a member of the Tulsa Business and Professional Women’s Club, serving as president, director, treasurer and chairman of most of the organization’s standing committees. She was president of the Oklahoma Federation



of Business and Professional Women and a member of the legislative steering committee of the National Federation of Business and Professional Women.²⁷ She was also a superintendent, teacher and worker in the juvenile department of the First Christian Church for more than 30 years.²⁸

Ms. Mann’s contemporaries recognized her as having a good reputation as a lawyer and as being a “strong advocate for women, and a big supporter of the Equal Rights Amendment.”²⁹ She was also seen as a “good attorney, one who gave good advice.”³⁰ People had great respect for Ms. Mann, the lady who always wore a hat. They would often find themselves saying, “Slow down Jewell, we need to catch up with you.”³¹ Jewell Russell Mann died in March 1987.

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Bernice Beckham

BERNICE DONA BERRY BECKHAM WAS BORN IN ENID IN 1910. She attended schools in Enid, skipping several grades in high school and combining her last year of college at Phillips University with her first year of law school at the OU College of Law. In addition to her academic achievements, Ms. Beckham was a member of the debate and swim teams throughout high school and college. She was also a competitive bridge player in college, a hobby that continued while she was in law school. As one of only two female students in her class at the OU College of Law, she was made a member of the Order of the Coif thanks to her academic achievements.¹ She graduated from law school in 1931 and was admitted to the bar on July 7, 1931.

Like several other female lawyers at the time, Ms. Beckham was active in politics, supporting the Democratic Party in Enid and Oklahoma City. According to her daughter, Joan Whitmore, Ms. Beckham was unable to find a job in the male-dominated legal profession despite her academic credentials and her community and political involvement. Determined to practice law, she opened her own office in Enid's Broadway Tower in 1931, where she practiced until moving to Oklahoma City in 1940.² It is said that she took every case that walked through her door. Ms. Beckham and Attorney General Mac Q. Williamson were attorneys of record for the respondents in a reported decision against the State Industrial Commission in an accidental personal injury.³

After moving to Oklahoma City, Ms. Beckham worked for the U.S. Department of Justice and, after Pearl Harbor, for the Department

of Defense in California. She met her future husband, John Leslie Beckham, in Enid. After Mr. Beckham proposed, she quit her job with the Department of Defense, and the couple married on Aug. 4, 1944, in Dallas.⁴

During World War II, Mr. Beckham was assistant to

the secretary of the War Production Board and resided in Washington, D.C. His extensive travel schedule allowed Ms. Beckham the opportunity to return to Oklahoma City, where she practiced law part time out of her home in Nichols Hills during the war. Her practice involved divorces, trusts

After her friend and former law school classmate, Curtis P. Harris, offered her a job in the district attorney's office, Ms. Beckham became Oklahoma City's first female assistant district attorney in 1966.

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and estates and personal injury cases. She was also a justice of the peace, the local coroner and a municipal court traffic judge for Nichols Hills.⁵ After her friend and former law school classmate, Curtis P. Harris, offered her a job in the district attorney's office, Ms. Beckham became Oklahoma City's first female assistant district attorney in 1966.⁶

Besides her busy legal career, Ms. Beckham was also active in the Women Lawyers Club, which became the Oklahoma Association of Women Lawyers, serving as parliamentarian of the organization in 1940.⁷ Ms. Beckham was active in promoting and encouraging women in the practice of law. She was also involved in her daughter

Joan's years at Casady School, where she served as president of the Parent's Club.⁸

Bernice Dona Berry Beckham died in August 1970.⁹



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Ada Lois Sipuel Fisher

IN 1946, NO INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION in the state of Oklahoma accepted Black students as enrollees. At the same time, Ada Lois Sipuel Fisher was a recent graduate of Langston University and eager to enter law school.

On Jan. 16, 1946, Ms. Sipuel attempted to enroll in the law school at OU. She was refused admission by the president of the university, who referred her to Title 70, Sections 452-464 of the Oklahoma Statutes, which prohibited Black students from attending schools in Oklahoma.

Two days after Ms. Sipuel was denied admission to the OU School of Law, attorney Thurgood Marshall flew to Oklahoma City and joined with attorney Amos T. Hall of Tulsa to file a petition for a writ mandamus in the District Court of Cleveland County.

District Judge Ben T. Williams, on July 9, 1946, ruled to deny the writ of mandamus on the basis that the laws of Oklahoma prohibited the university from admitting Black students. He further based his decision on the fact that Oklahoma maintained an out-of-state tuition plan for Black citizens who wanted to secure graduate training that was not available to them in the state.

The next appeal was to the Oklahoma Supreme Court, where Mr. Marshall argued the case. The Oklahoma Supreme Court sustained the ruling of the Cleveland County District Court.

After a petition for rehearing was denied, Ms. Sipuel's attorneys filed a petition for a writ of certiorari with the U.S. Supreme Court. They based their request on the allegation that Oklahoma was violating the equal protection requirement of the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution in refusing their client's admission to the one state-supported law school. The writ was granted, and oral arguments were set for Jan. 8, 1948.

Within seven days of the oral argument, the U.S. Supreme Court

handed down its decision that Oklahoma had violated the 14th Amendment and issued a mandate that Oklahoma must provide Ms. Sipuel the same opportunity for securing a legal education as it provided other students in the state and must do so forthwith.

In continued opposition to the admission of Black students to the OU School of Law, the governor, the attorney general and the Oklahoma Board of Regents selected the alternative of providing a separate law school for Ms. Sipuel. There was an

She further stated, 'Having suffered severely from bigotry and racial discrimination as a student, I am sensitive to that kind of thing,' and she said she planned to bring a new dimension to university policies.

attempt made to create a Langston University Law School at the state Capitol. Three white attorneys were hired to comprise the law school faculty in an attempt to create a “separate but equal” law school. On March 15, 1948, Mr. Hall filed a motion in the District Court of Cleveland County that contended that Langston University Law School did not afford advantages for legal education to Black students substantially equal to those afforded to white students at the OU School of Law.

Ms. Sipuel was again denied admission at the district court level and appealed her decision to the State Supreme Court. The State Supreme Court heard the appeal and ruled against Ms. Sipuel. Once again, Ms. Sipuel’s attorneys appealed the ruling to the U.S. Supreme Court.

The Oklahoma attorney general determined there was no chance of winning before the U.S. Supreme Court and advised the Board of Regents that he would not return to Washington and, therefore, the case should be settled.

On June 18, 1949, Ms. Sipuel was enrolled in the law school at OU. When school started, she was instructed to sit in a designated seat, which was separated by a heavy chain from the seats of the other members of the class. The chain held a large sign that read, “For Colored.”

While attending OU Law School, the U.S. Supreme Court issued a ruling in *McLaurin v. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education* in which the court agreed that the restriction that segregated Black students from white students impaired and inhibited the ability to learn and struck down the practice.

After that time, Ms. Sipuel was able to join the other students at the OU Law School and graduated in 1952. She passed the bar exam and began practicing in Chickasha, her hometown. She later practiced in an Oklahoma City law firm and, in 1956, was hired by Langston University as a faculty member, where she spent approximately 20 years. While at



Langston, she also served as chair of the Department of Social Sciences and as assistant vice president for academic affairs.

In 1992, Gov. David Walters appointed her to the OU Board of Regents, which she noted in an interview “completes a forty-five-year cycle.” She further stated, “Having suffered severely from bigotry and racial discrimination as a student, I am sensitive to that kind of thing,” and she said she planned to bring a new dimension to university policies.

Ada Lois Sipuel Fisher died Oct. 18, 1995.

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Mona Salyer Lambird

MONA SALYER LAMBIRD WAS BORN JULY 19, 1938, and was raised in Oklahoma City. She obtained a bachelor's degree in 1960 from Wellesley College in Massachusetts and an LL.B. in 1963 from the University of Maryland Law School, where she was one of three women in a class of 100.

She began her legal career in the civil division of the Department of Justice in Washington, D.C., during the time Robert Kennedy was the attorney general. After a move to Oklahoma City in 1969, Ms. Lambird associated part time with a bond attorney. In 1971, she joined the Oklahoma City law firm of Andrews Davis Legg Bixler Milsten & Price, becoming a shareholder in 1977. Her practice was primarily in employment law on behalf of management.

Ms. Lambird was extremely active in Oklahoma Bar Association activities. She served as chairperson of the Women in Law Conference in 1992 and 1994, served on the Professional Responsibility Tribunal from 1984 to 1990, served as co-chairperson of the Leadership Development Conference in 1992 and 1993, and served as a member of the Budget Committee from 1989 to 1994 and the Clients' Security Fund Committee from 1989 to 1994. She was the second woman elected to the Board of Governors for a three-year term, serving as a member from 1992 to 1994 before being elected to serve as 1995 president-elect. On Jan. 19, 1996, she took the oath of office to become the first woman to lead the Oklahoma

Bar Association. Following her year as OBA president, she continued to be active and served on the OBA Long Range Planning Committee in 1999 as one of the authors helping to develop a new strategic plan.

Her other professional activities included serving on the American Judicature Society Board of Trustees, Oklahoma County Bar Association past president, Luther Bohanon American Inn of Court XXIII past president, Oklahoma State Election Board member, ABA Committee on the Federal Judiciary member, American Bar Foundation and Oklahoma Bar Foundation Fellow.

Ms. Lambird was also a community leader. She served as legal advisor for the Junior League of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma City Orchestra League and Autumn House I and II. She was a past director of RSVP of Oklahoma County, Friends of the Library and the Center for Nonprofit Management. She was also a member of Historic Preservation Inc.

She was honored as *The Journal Record's* 1969 Corporate Woman of the Year, inducted into the Oklahoma Women's Hall of Fame in 1995 and, in 1996, received the



Oklahoma City Public School Foundation's Wall of Fame Humanitarian Award.

Mona Salyer Lambird was killed Aug. 25, 1999, in a vehicle accident that also claimed the lives of her husband, Dr. Perry Lambird, and her daughter, Jennifer, while vacationing in Turkey. In a 1996 *Oklahoma Bar Journal* interview, Ms. Lambird said her favorite recreation activity was "exploring international capital cities and discovering their uniqueness."



SHOW YOUR CREATIVE SIDE ON THE BACK PAGE

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

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



Women in Law Conference

**FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 20
THE MAYO HOTEL | TULSA**

- 8:15 A.M.** Registration and Networking Breakfast
8:45 A.M. Welcome
8:55 A.M. Are You Running a Law Firm or a Law Business?
9:45 A.M. Curiosity as a Core Value: Understanding Diversity, Culture and Inclusion
10:40 A.M. Morning Break
10:50 A.M. Career Transitions Panel: When, Why and How to Make a Career Transition
11:45 A.M. Morning Break
NOON Mona Salyer Lambird Spotlight Awards Luncheon
Keynote Speaker: Asha Rangappa
1:30 P.M. Afternoon Break
1:45 P.M. Judicial Panel
2:40 P.M. Afternoon Break
3 P.M. The Ethical Pitfalls of Using ChatGPT and AI
3:50 P.M. Closing Remarks and Adjourn

Agenda is subject to change

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Featuring Keynote Speaker



Asha Rangappa

Asha Rangappa will serve as the keynote speaker for this year's Mona Salyer Lambird Spotlight Awards Luncheon, where she will present "The Mechanics of Complicity."

How do people get away with bad behavior without being held accountable? Typically, the conduct of bad actors in any organization isn't a secret; in fact, usually, it was enabled by a supporting cast of characters who were complicit through action or inaction and helped shield them from accountability.

In this thought-provoking talk, Ms. Rangappa will show how complicity is both a pattern of individual behavior and an organizational system. Using case studies across different sectors - including the Theranos scandal, the CIA torture program, Harvey Weinstein, the Minneapolis police department, Facebook and even Vladimir Putin, among others - she will analyze the incentives, fears and goals of the cast of characters who are invariably part of any corrupt system. Ms. Rangappa's presentation examines the way lawyers, in particular, have been enlisted to become complicit in authoritarian regimes around the world and the steps that can be taken to inoculate against this trend.

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2024 Mona Salyer Lambird Spotlight Award Winners Honored

SINCE 1996, SPOTLIGHT Awards have been given to five women every year who have distinguished themselves in the legal profession and have lit the way for other women. In 1998, the award was named to honor the late Mona Salyer Lambird, the first woman OBA president and one of the award's first recipients. The award is sponsored by the OBA Women in Law Section. Each year, all previous winners nominate and select the current year's recipients. A plaque bearing the names of all recipients hangs in the Oklahoma Bar Center in Oklahoma City. This is the 28th year of award presentations. Recipients will be honored during the Women in Law Conference on Sept. 20 in Tulsa. For more information about the conference, visit www.okbar.org/wil.



Taylor Henderson

Taylor Henderson has dedicated her legal career to the great state of Oklahoma and the best boards and

agencies it has to offer. She started her public service career in 2012 in the Oklahoma Tax Commission Litigation Division, where she learned that any subject matter, even taxes, can be interesting and

rewarding when paired with a great attitude. Thereafter, she continued to serve the state of Oklahoma in various divisions of the Oklahoma attorney general's public protection units as a special counsel and deputy chief assistant attorney general. Since 2018, Ms. Henderson has served as the administrative director of the Oklahoma Council on Judicial Complaints, where she leads the council's day-to-day operations and the investigative team and frequently coordinates and presents at judicial education seminars across the state. Otherwise, she can be found drumming up more work and side projects for herself to promote confidence in the judicial system.

Ms. Henderson serves on the Board of Directors of the Association of Judicial Disciplinary Counsel and the OBA Bench and Bar Committee. She frequently presents on various topics relative to judicial ethics for both the Association of Judicial Disciplinary Counsel and the Center for Judicial Ethics at the National Center for State Courts. She attributes any successes that have come her way to doing her best and forgetting the rest.

Outside the office, she enjoys her free time by traveling with her husband, Jacob, doting on their golden retrievers, Charlie and Crouton, and serving on various committees for her historic neighborhood in Oklahoma City.



Janet Johnson

Janet Johnson is the first female executive director of the Oklahoma Bar Association. Before beginning that role

in 2023, she had served as director of educational programs for the OBA Continuing Legal Education Department since 2020.

Previously, Ms. Johnson held different positions within the Department of Human Services Child Support Services, including serving as managing attorney in the Office of Impact Advocacy and Legal Outreach. In that role, she advocated as lead counsel in appellate proceedings and managed legal trainings and workshops for Child Support Services and the legal community. Before joining DHS, she was a solo practitioner focusing on family law and collections.

Ms. Johnson earned her bachelor's degree in letters from OU in 2006 and received her J.D. from the OCU School of Law in 2010. She is licensed to practice in Oklahoma and the United States District Court for the Western District of Oklahoma.



Judge Loretta F. Radford

Judge Loretta F. Radford received her bachelor's degree in business administration from

TU, and she is a 1984 graduate of the OU College of Law. She is admitted and licensed to practice law in the state of Oklahoma and is authorized to practice law in the federal courts located within Oklahoma.

On Sept. 13, 2019, Judge Radford retired from the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Oklahoma after 26 years and accepted a position as legal director for the Center for Criminal Justice at the OCU School of Law, where she worked from 2019 until 2022.

As a part of her legal career, she has had the honor of serving as the first assistant to the U.S. attorney for the Northern District of Oklahoma and later as acting United States attorney for the Northern District of Oklahoma during a presidential transition period. Prior to these appointments, Judge Radford prosecuted criminal cases and defended the government in civil actions.

Before working for the U.S. Attorney's Office, she was an assistant public defender in Tulsa County for approximately eight years, providing legal representation to indigent defendants charged with felony and misdemeanor crimes.

In May 2018, she was inducted into her high school alma mater's hall of fame. Judge Radford has received numerous honors and awards throughout her legal

career that highlight her work as a public servant in the legal community and the Tulsa area.

She currently serves as a special judge for the 14th Judicial District in Tulsa County.



Emma Rolls

Emma Rolls is the first assistant federal public defender for the Western District of Oklahoma and the chief of its Capital

Habeas Unit. She represents individuals under a sentence of death during their federal habeas proceedings, as well as through the clemency process. In 2021, Ms. Rolls received the Opio Toure Courageous Advocate Award from the Oklahoma Coalition

to Abolish the Death Penalty and the Thurgood Marshall Appellate Advocacy Award from the Oklahoma Criminal Defense Lawyers Association. She is a member of the Oklahoma bar, as well as all the federal district courts in Oklahoma, the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals, the 7th Circuit Court of Appeals and the United States Supreme Court.

Prior to her service at the Federal Public Defender's Office, she was a legal research and writing professor at the OCU School of Law for nine years, during which time she received the J. William Conger Mentor of the Year Award and the Professor of the Year Award from the Student Bar Association. She began her career as an attorney with the Oklahoma Indigent Defense System, representing capital defendants during their state direct appeals. She graduated with distinction from the OU College of Law in 2000.

Ms. Rolls currently serves on the board of the Western District of Oklahoma Historical Society. She has also served on numerous other boards, including Planned Parenthood of Central Oklahoma and the Oklahoma Children's Theater. She lives in the heart of Oklahoma City with her husband, Professor Lee Peoples, their daughter, Amelia Peoples, and their two beloved rescue mutts, Trixie and Teddy.



Marshal Sharon Schooley

Marshal Sharon Schooley has been privileged to serve as the marshal of the Oklahoma

Supreme Court since 2017. She manages cases in the Supreme Court from filing to mandate and assists the chief justice with court proceedings and various administrative and procedural matters. She is honored to have worked for five chief justices, including Justices Reif, Combs, Gurich, Darby and Kane. In 2020, she received the Chief Justice Award of Excellence presented by Chief Justice Noma Gurich in recognition of her outstanding contributions to the Oklahoma judiciary. She also serves as marshal for the Court on the Judiciary, Trial Division, and for the Court of Tax Review.

She earned her bachelor's degree at OU as a Phi Beta Kappa and her J.D. from the TU College of Law, where she received the Order of the Curule Chair. She began her legal career as a staff attorney for the Court of Civil Appeals and then became an associate attorney at Blackstock, Joyce, Pollard & Montgomery. She represented nonprofit organizations in tax litigation and handled matters

in securities law and immigration. She became a member of the State Bar of California and assisted tax-exempt clients in California.

Marshal Schooley returned to the Court of Civil Appeals in Tulsa and became an adjunct professor at the TU College of Law, where she was voted the Outstanding Adjunct Professor in 1997-98. She was also a co-adjunct professor with Justice Reif for Business Law at Oral Roberts University. She then returned to private practice and enjoyed working with Clay Roberts in general civil practice. Unable to resist the draw of the court, she accepted a staff attorney position with the Oklahoma Supreme Court and was proud to be subsequently appointed as the sixth marshal of the Oklahoma Supreme Court.

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Agenda

Opening Plenary: The Lawyer as Citizen

*Featuring Guest Speaker David Holt, Mayor of OKC
and Dean of OCU School of Law*

Right to Counsel in Housing and Family Law

When Opposing Counsel is Unrepresented

Courts in the Community

Balancing Act: Pro Bono in Private Practice

Exploring New Models for Legal Access: Community Justice Workers

Removing Barriers: Criminal Costs and Fines Modifications

Law + Policy: Taking Action on Eviction

Paths to Passion: Pursuing Public Interest Careers

Closing Panel: The Lawyer as Changemaker

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Texting for the Win

Using Text Messages in Family Law Trials

By M. Shane Henry and Ashley D. Rahill

"I say to her, 'Did you dictate the Pages Of Hell to Dante?' She answers, 'Yes, I did.'"
 – "The Muse" by Anna Akhmatova

TEXTING HAS BEEN CALLED "a brilliant way to miscommunicate how you feel and misinterpret what other people mean."¹ The history of written communication can be traced back to around 3400 B.C. when humans expressed their thoughts with pictures and symbols.² You might say these were the earliest text messages, even though communication has evolved enormously since ancient times.

Text messaging in modern society has, in many ways, replaced other forms of verbal and oral communication. Prior to the early 1980s, when the fax machine became popular,³ people primarily communicated in person, via telephone or through letters. Electronic mail (email) then gained popularity and was widely used beginning in the late 1990s.⁴ So in the past 30 years, society has transitioned from face-to-face chats and phone calls to faxes, emails and, finally, text messages.

The first text message was sent Dec. 3, 1992, when Neil Papworth texted "Merry Christmas" to Richard Jarvis at Vodafone.⁵ Originally, text messages were used

mainly for personal communication, but over the past five years, their use has increased dramatically, replacing email for business communications at many companies. Millennials are the most prominently represented generation in the current workforce. Because this generation grew up with the gradual introduction of email, instant messaging and now text messaging, the latter is their most comfortable and preferred form of communication.⁶

It's easy to understand why text messaging has become so popular – because it's easy! The prevalence of smartphone ownership has given most of us the ability to communicate 24/7 via text message. Phone calls often require advanced scheduling and direct focus as opposed to text messages, which can be composed or read anytime users have a few free moments. Texting is quick and simple. It takes less time than a phone call or even an email.

Text messages are usually shorter than emails and take a fraction of the time a typical call requires. The rapid pace of modern society pushes

us toward brevity in communication, and texts are the most concise form available. Thoughts are boiled down. Sentences are shortened. Punctuation is often absent. The idea is to communicate the message as concisely as possible. American linguist John H. McWhorter once said, "No one thinks about capital letters or punctuation when one texts, but then again, do you think about those things when you talk?"⁷ Because so many of us today would much rather text than speak in person, it is not uncommon to hear someone say, "Text, don't call."

Pictures, emojis, GIFs and abbreviations are commonly used to communicate quickly via text message while adding some entertainment value. Users also utilize multimedia tools to text images, videos and audio clips. These types of text message communications do not even use written words to communicate messages.

The popularity of text message communication because of its ease, speed and adaptability, combined with its ability to transform and evolve with technology, suggests that it will continue to dominate in the future.

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One of the primary responsibilities of a trial lawyer is to efficiently present their client's evidence during trial without wasting time. As such, trial lawyers must highlight portions of content that are vital to the body of evidence. This is especially important because, like the public members in the gallery, the fact finder learns the case as it is presented. Understanding that judges are also humans with large caseloads, trial lawyers need to distinguish themselves from the monotony of line-by-line text reading during the presentation of a case. When properly and efficiently presented, however, text messages can be utilized by trial lawyers to gain success in family law trials.

THE ROLE OF TEXTS AT TRIAL

Trials are used to resolve disputes between parties who cannot otherwise reach an agreement.

If the parties were able to work together to reach a solution to their issue(s), they would not be in the courtroom. This is especially true in family law trials.

Family law trials often deal with the division of two of the most important things in a parent's life: their children and their money. With these paramount issues at stake, coupled with the breakdown of the marriage, it is no wonder these trials are so hotly contested. The parties are often in the middle of one of the most difficult situations of their lives as they fight over the most important things in their lives.

We all perceive and experience things through lenses unique to each of us. The same two people can be in a room when something happens only to describe two completely different versions of the event. This happens because we all perceive reality based on our

history, views and personal experiences. Because those are different for each person, we impose unique interpretations on the actions of others. This is why parties often have very different versions of the "facts." A good example is found in cable news. MSNBC and Fox News might cover the same event but provide completely different reports and interpretations. The same is true for the parties at a trial.

Differing perceptions lie at the heart of witness testimony in family law trials. Usually, the two main witnesses are the parties being divorced. These two parties cannot agree, and each wants different things. Simply put, their credibility is at issue. Who is reliable? Who can be believed? Who is telling the actual truth, and who is telling their own perceived truth? These are the questions running through the judge's mind.

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In short, the parties at trial are biased. They each see things in their own way and want opposite results. This is why evidence presented during direct examination has the least value compared to evidence brought forward on cross-examination and presented through tangible exhibits.

Text messages can be presented as exhibits that everyone can view at trial. The messages are often clear. The parties can each provide their explanations of the surrounding events, but the messages say what they say. Text messages are credible, reliable and unbiased. For these reasons, they are important evidence that can be pivotal in leading to trial outcomes.

STIPULATIONS AND PRETRIAL

Because text messages are important pieces of evidence, they must be utilized as exhibits at trial. To do so properly, they must be admitted into the record. This can be worked out ahead of trial through stipulations or pretrial rulings.

Stipulations come about when counsel agrees to the admission of certain exhibits. Effective trial lawyers aim to keep the judge focused on the issues that matter. They

do not want to waste the judge's precious time and attention on routine matters.

If the parties have each identified text messages as exhibits for trial, they can be discussed by counsel prior to pretrial. The text message exchanges must be complete, accurate and identifiable as to the timeframe. If these requirements are met, counsel can then agree or "stipulate" to their admission. This means they will come into the record, and no time will be wasted at trial laying their foundation.

When counsel stipulates to the admission of an exhibit, they still have the right to challenge the meaning, context and weight of the text message exchange at trial. A text message can often appear to mean something on its face yet have a completely different meaning once the context is explained. Stipulating to the admission of the messages does not mean the evidence cannot be challenged at trial. It just means the opposing lawyer acknowledges the foundation is proper. Judges realize and appreciate the professionalism of lawyers who provide reasonable stipulations. It also lends greater credibility to the objections the

lawyer chooses to bring against non-stipulated exhibits.

If counsel is not able to obtain stipulations before pretrial, these can become major issues for discussion with the judge during pretrial. The offering counsel can explain the issue of admission and the foundational requirements. The judge will then allow opposing counsel the opportunity to state and explain their objections. The judge may then issue a conditional ruling as to admissibility or wait to rule at trial. Either way, it gives counsel the opportunity to discuss and explain their positions as to the admissibility of the exhibit during pretrial.

Significant trial time can be saved by using stipulations and exploring admissibility during pretrial. If depositions are taken, counsel may use that opportunity to lay the appropriate foundations. It is then easy to point to the transcript for the foundational elements for admission. These foundations can also be established during motion hearings that occur in advance of trial. Successful trial lawyers are always thinking ahead and planning for trial, much like expert chess players who always stay several moves ahead of their opponent.

Because text messages are important pieces of evidence, they must be utilized as exhibits at trial. To do so properly, they must be admitted into the record.

TEXT MESSAGES AS EXHIBITS

Text messages to be used as trial exhibits must be sufficiently detailed for their proper foundation to be established. First, the parties involved in the communication must be identified. This is commonly accomplished by noting the names of the parties at the top of each message. The individual offering the text messages should also testify as to whom they were texting.

In addition, the date must be identified so the judge knows when the text communications occurred. A text message exchange that occurred five years prior to trial may not be relevant or carry the same weight as an exchange that occurred shortly before trial. The individual offering the text message exchange can testify as to the date, but best practices are for it to be noted in the messages. The text message exchange must be accurate. It cannot be altered. Finally, the text message exchange must be complete. One party cannot pick certain parts and omit others.

GETTING TEXTS INTO THE RECORD

When the proposed exhibit is marked for identification, the trial attorney addresses the judge and states, “Your Honor, may I approach the witness?” As counsel does so, they identify the exhibit on the record by stating, “I am handing you what, for identification purposes only, has been marked as Respondent’s Exhibit 12, and I would like the record to reflect that opposing counsel has been given a copy of this.” At that time, a copy is given to opposing counsel, or even better, the trial attorney has already given a copy to opposing counsel well in advance of trial. As counsel approaches the witness and hands

them the exhibit, the trial attorney will say, “I am handing you what has been marked as Respondent’s Exhibit 12 for identification purposes only. Do you recognize this document?” And then, the trial attorney will begin to lay the foundation.

Next, have the witness lay the appropriate foundation with their testimony to identify and authenticate the exhibit. In the law of evidence, authentication refers to the procedure through which evidence – especially documentary and physical evidence – is certified to be authentic rather than counterfeited. One way to authenticate evidence is to have a witness testify as to the chain of custody from discovery to the time of trial.

If this occurs during cross-examination, the trial attorney can lead the witness by saying: “You agree with me that this is a text message exchange. This text message exchange took place on [state the dates identified on the exhibit]. This text message exchange was between you and the following phone number [state that number]. You agree with me that the phone number you recognize to be that of the Petitioner [or opposing party] in this matter. This text message exchange covers the discussion topic of [state the topic – for example, the kids’ drop-off location]. This is the text message exchange that occurred between you and the Petitioner in this matter. You recognize this, and this is the full and complete text message exchange that occurred on this date in regard to this matter.”

At that time, the trial attorney should turn to the court and move for admission by saying, “Your Honor, at this time, I move for the admission of Respondent’s Exhibit Number 12.” The court will then allow opposing counsel to lodge

any objections and then rule on any objections. If no objections are made or they are overruled, the evidence is admitted.

When seeking to admit evidence into the record, the trial lawyer needs to remain persistent. If at first they fail, they should try to understand the opposing counsel’s objection and think about how to overcome the objection. Usually, judges know that lawyers without sufficient experience will give up easily. Therefore, it is important to note that it is still valid when a lawyer continues down the path on which they started and makes multiple attempts to have evidence admitted.

As a practical suggestion, a trial attorney can talk about the exhibit and ask enough questions so that the fact finder will understand what the exhibit is and what the message contains. One of the rules that applies here is that they cannot directly reference the contents of an exhibit until it has been admitted into evidence.⁸ When the exhibit is admitted, the trial attorney can start having the witness talk about the exhibit. Prior to admission, it is improper to have the witness talk about any of the contents of exhibits.

OPPOSING TEXT MESSAGES AT TRIAL

Below are common objections that can be made when opposing counsel attempts to admit text message exchanges at trial:

- 1) Improper Authentication 12 O.S. §2901 – This objection is made when opposing counsel did not lay the proper foundation. Opposing counsel did not establish the date and time of the text exchange, did not establish

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who the text message exchange was between and/or did not establish it was the true, accurate and complete reflection of the text message exchange that occurred.

- 2) Rule of Completeness 12 O.S. §2107 – The entire text message exchange needs to be included. Attorneys cannot cherry-pick the parts that are best for their clients and submit those. If this happens, a valid objection can be made as to the rule of completeness.
- 3) Hearsay Rule 12 O.S. §2802 – Hearsay evidence refers to any out-of-court statements offered for the truth of the matter asserted. This is a foundational rule of evidence. Most times, hearsay evidence is not admissible due to the inability of the proponent of the statement to be challenged through cross-examination. However, there are exceptions to this rule.
- 4) Hearsay Exceptions 12 O.S. §2803 – Text message exchanges are hearsay as they are statements made by the opposing party. However, there is a hearsay exception for statements made by a party to the case.⁹

Practically speaking, if the whole text message exchange is presented, the date (and ideally, the time) is indicated, and the communicating parties are identified, it is most likely coming in. There have been instances when unbeknownst to the opposing lawyer, the opposing party has provided text message exchanges that were incomplete and, thankfully, the

client was able to open their phone and show the court the exchange. The court could then see that parts of the exchange had been omitted, and it seriously damaged the credibility of the opposing party. Be aware of this possibility.

PARENTING APPS

In family law cases, there are now apps that can be used by trial lawyers for the effective presentation of messages as evidence. These apps are extremely easy to use and are thorough in keeping a complete record of communications between the parties. Apps such as OurFamilyWizard¹⁰ and TalkingParents¹¹ record a complete transcript of messages between the parties. The messages can be easily accessed on a phone, tablet or computer by not only the parties themselves but also the parties' counsel and staff and any third party involved in the case, such as a parenting coordinator or guardian *ad litem*. The messages are separated by topic and clearly marked with the date and time. These messages can be downloaded into a PDF format, and because the apps lay the perfect foundation, they can be properly and effectively used as admissible exhibits at trial.

CONCLUSION

Text messages have become an integral part of the evidentiary basis at trials in today's society. More and more people are now choosing to communicate through electronic means – in particular, text messaging. The advantage of this evolution in communication for a trial attorney is that it allows counsel to overcome our bias as human beings and present to the court complete conversations between parties. Attorneys can then use these

complete records to better articulate the facts of a case. For example, by referencing a particular text message exchange, the trial lawyer can help explain why a party may have acted the way they did or show the bad acts of the opposing party.

Charles Dickens wrote, "Electric communication will never be a substitute for the face of someone who with their soul encourages another person to be brave and true." There may never be a more authentic and effective form of communication than a face-to-face exchange, but when properly and efficiently presented, text messages can be used by trial lawyers "for the win" at family law trials.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



M. Shane Henry is a trial lawyer and partner at Henry + Dow + Masters + Aycock, with offices in Oklahoma City, Tulsa and Norman. He practices in the areas of personal injury and family law.



Ashley D. Rahill is the founder of and a trial attorney at the Rahill Law Firm PLLC in Oklahoma City. Her practice is focused on the area of family law.

ENDNOTES

1. Ege Avci: <https://bit.ly/3SkUJnH>.
2. <https://bit.ly/3SjXOVf>.
3. <https://bit.ly/3WgQwTb>.
4. <https://bit.ly/3ShZMVY>.
5. <https://bit.ly/3zRxzPn>.
6. <https://bit.ly/3YbgbPF>.
7. <https://bit.ly/3AbCWcw>.
8. 12 O.S. §2302.
9. 12 O.S. §2801(B)(2)(a).
10. www.ourfamilywizard.com.
11. <https://talkingparents.com/home>.



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This continuing legal education course offers an analysis of the Loper decision and its impacts on the Chevron deference doctrine. Chevron has long been a cornerstone in administrative law, guiding how courts defer to administrative agencies' interpretations of statutes they administer. However, the Supreme Court's recent ruling has altered this landscape, introducing new challenges and opportunities for legal practitioners.

ABOUT OUR SPEAKER:

Kerry Maye received his undergraduate degree in Business Administration from OSU in 1982 and JD with honors from OU in 1985.

Kerry practices law with his wife, Leslie, in Edmond.

Kerry has authored numerous articles in the Oklahoma Bar Journal, the Oklahoma City University Law Review and the Oklahoma County Bar Association Briefcase.

From 2003 to 2020, Kerry has been on the faculty of OCU Law School where he has taught Professional Responsibility, Evidence, Texas Civil Procedure, Federal Jurisdiction, Commercial Paper, and Current Topics in Constitutional Law. He has also been on the faculty of numerous seminars, speaking on various topics related to legal ethics and constitutional law.

Since 2008, Kerry has been a featured presenter at the Oklahoma Judicial Conference. This meeting is an annual meeting of the Oklahoma Judiciary. Kerry's annual presentation summarizes the significant cases decided by the United States Supreme Court during the prior term, identifies developing trends and looks at the cases to be decided by the Supreme Court during the next term.

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The Last Resort: Title 30 Adult Guardianship

By Melissa Brooks



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THE DECISION TO PURSUE guardianship of a vulnerable adult or senior is a big decision and often mired in complicated feelings and familial relationships. A common scenario that leads to guardianship includes, but is not limited to, caring for a disabled adult child or a senior with cognitive impairment. The requirements for a finding of incapacity, documentation requirements, who can be a guardian, the distinction between general and limited guardianship and more are governed by Title 30, codified as the Oklahoma Guardianship and Conservatorship Act.

Guardianship is trending upward in general, thus the need to protect vulnerable disabled adults and seniors continues to be an urgent issue. According to the 2022 Annual Report of the Community Aging, Living and Protective Services (CAP), Adult Protective Services (APS) completed 6,288 investigations with 3,078 substantiated allegations. Each of these referrals represents Oklahomans at risk whose families or loved ones may seek guardianship.

While an adult's vulnerability may stem from any number of conditions, such as childhood

disability or injury, one of the most common causes of incapacity for seniors is cognitive impairment in the form of Alzheimer's disease. The Alzheimer's Association estimates that 6.7 million Americans are living with Alzheimer's, with an estimated 67,000 persons in Oklahoma alone.^{1,2} Additionally, they estimate that between 2020 and 2025, Oklahoma will have experienced an increase of at least 6.7% in the number of people with Alzheimer's.³

DETERMINING INCAPACITY

Issuance of a general guardianship order for adult guardianship requires a finding that the proposed ward is incapacitated or lacks the capacity to make executive decisions for themselves. An incapacitated person is a person 18 years or older who is impaired by reason of one of the following:

- (1) mental illness as defined by Section 1-103 of Title 43A of the Oklahoma Statutes,
- (2) intellectual or developmental disability as defined by Section 1430.2 of Title 10 of the Oklahoma Statutes,
- (3) physical illness or disability,
- (4) drug or alcohol dependency as defined by Section 3-403

- of Title 43A of the Oklahoma Statutes, or
- (5) such other similar cause, *and*

The proposed ward's "ability to receive and evaluate information effectively or to make and to communicate responsible decisions is impaired to such an extent that the person" either:

- (1) lacks the capacity to meet essential requirements for physical health or safety, or
- (2) is unable to manage financial resources.⁴

DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

Allegations of incapacity contained in both emergency and general (nonemergency) pleadings must be proven by evidence attached to a petition. If the situation is not an emergency, the petitioner should obtain medical documentation that proves the alleged medical condition exists. This documentation can include a letter from a doctor on their letterhead or routine medical paperwork with diagnoses, such as discharge paperwork. Routine medical reports, such as annual

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exam results, should be dated recently if possible. If the petitioner is asking for *ex parte* special guardianship letters, they should allege with as much specificity as possible and should seek to obtain a medical examination and/or records as soon as possible.

SPECIAL VERSUS GENERAL GUARDIANSHIP

Special Guardianship

A guardian appointed on an *ex parte* emergency basis of an adult is called a special guardian rather than a temporary guardian. The court may appoint a special guardian if:

There is imminent danger that the health or safety of said person will be seriously impaired or that the financial resources of said person will be seriously damaged or dissipated unless immediate action is taken; and [n]o other person appears to have authority to act in the circumstances or the guardian previously appointed is unable to or refuses to take action.

It is important to remember the request to appoint a special guardian may be included in the general petition or separately, but it must be filed along with the petition for general guardianship.⁵

General Guardianship

A general guardian is “a guardian of the person or of all the property of the ward within this state or of both such person and property.”⁶ If the judge believes the guardianship should continue beyond the emergency, the special guardianship will be converted to a general guardianship at the show-cause hearing, which must be set within 30 days.⁷



WHO CAN BE A GUARDIAN?

Title 30 O.S. §4-105 provides a list of disqualifiers a proposed guardian must not meet to be eligible to serve as a court-appointed guardian. A guardian should not:

- be a minor *or* have been found to be incapacitated or partially incapacitated,
- be convicted of any criminal charges, be subject to any protective order or have any pending criminal cases (this applies to the applicant and any adult living in the household),⁸
- be insolvent or have filed for bankruptcy within the last five years,
- be indebted to the ward *or*
- be party to “a conflict of interest which would preclude or be substantially detrimental to the ability of the person to act in the best interest of the subject of the proceeding if such person is appointed.”⁹

Additionally, 30 O.S. §3-104 outlines a list of persons who have priority to be appointed as guardians. Topping the list is the person(s) who is nominated by the proposed ward in the proceeding, followed by their current guardian and then the person(s) nominated in their previously executed trust or power of attorney.

THE LEAST RESTRICTIVE ALTERNATIVE

Guardianship of an adult should only be used as a last resort. It is best practice to determine whether guardianship is appropriate in the circumstances and, more importantly, is the least restrictive alternative. The least restrictive alternative means:

meeting the needs of an individual that *restricts fewer rights* of the individual than the appointment of a guardian or conservator including, but not limited to, supported decision making, appropriate technological assistance, appointment of a representative

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payee, and appointment of an agent by the individual including under power of attorney for health care or finances.¹⁰

Examples of alternative solutions to guardianship are:

- Limited guardianship (limited to either person or estate, allowing the ward to keep their decision-making authority in the other area)
- Durable power of attorney (either combined health care and estate or separate)
- Limited power of attorney (for limited or specific circumstances)
- Irrevocable trust
- Representative payee (for certain state and federal benefits)
- Case management through social services agencies to work on life skills, addiction, mental health or other applicable circumstances

The alternative solutions described above can be used for planning for known or unknown incapacity, but the most important distinction is that the alternatives require capacity on the part of the grantor. Therefore, if an alternative solution is no longer an option, guardianship may be explored.

When guardianship is appropriate in the circumstances, there are solutions for pro se individuals and attorneys who may be less familiar with this area of law.

ADULT GUARDIANSHIP HANDBOOK

The Oklahoma Legislature authorized a handbook to be prepared by the OBA Estate Planning, Probate and Trust Section and

distributed by the Administrative Office of the Courts.¹¹ This handbook “shall be written in clear, simple language and shall include information about the laws and procedures which apply to adult guardianships and conservatorships and the duties and responsibilities of such guardians and conservators.” The most current version of the handbook (as of July 2023) includes plain language definitions, a guide to fiduciary duties and pro se resources, instructions and templates for both emergency and general pleadings for adult and minor guardianship.¹²

PRO SE GUARDIANSHIP CLINIC

The Oklahoma County Guardianship Clinic is a volunteer-run clinic that assists with the preparation of forms and advice for pro se guardians with minor and adult guardianship in Oklahoma County. Litigants can request assistance from attorneys over the phone or by meeting with a volunteer attorney in the clinic office at the Oklahoma County Law Library. Since its inception in 2019, the clinic has helped more than 930 clients through in-person assistance or by phone.

LEGAL AID SERVICES

Finally, Legal Aid Services of Oklahoma may assist the client through representation and/or legal advice and counsel, depending on the local office’s capacity.

CONCLUSION

Guardianship will continue to be an emerging and important area of law for everyday Oklahomans. It is often a last resort that results from bigger issues and can complicate other existing legal issues in very substantial ways. Attorneys

can answer the call to assist their community by volunteering at a clinic, taking on a limited scope representation by helping to assist with the preparation of forms or even just sharing the handbook with a friend or colleague.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Melissa Brooks is a solo practitioner who focuses on guardianship, basic estate planning and Section 18 expungement. Ms. Brooks earned her J.D. at the OCU School of Law with a certificate in estate planning with taxation.

ENDNOTES

1. Alzheimer’s Association. 2023 Alzheimer’s Disease Facts and Figures. *Alzheimer’s & Dementia*. 2023; Page 23, ¶2.
2. Alzheimer’s Association. 2023 Alzheimer’s Disease Facts and Figures. *Alzheimer’s & Dementia*. 2023; Page 24.
3. Alzheimer’s Association. 2023 Alzheimer’s Disease Facts and Figures. *Alzheimer’s & Dementia*. 2023; Page 23, ¶2.
4. 30 O.S. §1-111(A)(12).
5. 30 O.S. §1-110 and 30 O.S. §3-115(A) & (B).
6. 30 O.S. §1-109(A).
7. 30 O.S. §3-115(F).
8. If any of these are met, the individual must disclose the case number to the court and may be ordered to do a background check.
9. *Id.* at (A)(5).
10. Page 4 of July 2023, *Adult Guardianship Handbook*, available at www.okbar.org/a2j/guardian (*emphasis added*).
11. See 30 O.S. 1-124 for the statutory authorization.
12. Find the forms at www.okbar.org/a2j/guardian.



PHOTO HIGHLIGHTS

This year's Annual Meeting, held in conjunction with the Oklahoma Judicial Conference on July 10-12 in Norman, was a memorable and successful event, bringing lawyers and judges together to learn and connect. Check out some of the photos from the event! More photos can be found on the OBA Facebook page at www.facebook.com/okbarassociation.



Above: During the Annual Luncheon on Thursday, July 11, speakers Burns V. Hargis, John R. Hargrave and Tom J. McDaniel share stories and experiences during their times as presidents of colleges and universities in Oklahoma during their panel discussion, "Tales from the Principal's Office."

Right: The OBA celebrated several award winners this year, with awards presented throughout the three-day meeting. From left Judges Jon K. Parsley, Richard C. Ogden, Sheila D. Stinson and Donna L. Dirickson received President's Awards from OBA President Miles Pringle for "fostering, maintaining and promoting integrity, learning, competence and public service and improving the forum for legal discussion."





President Pringle and his wife, Andrea, dance to the local 90s cover band, My So Called Band, during the Barristers' Ball on Thursday evening.



Left: OBA Vice President Amber Peckio tries her hand at dunking 2024 OBA President Miles Pringle. Proceeds from the dunk tank benefited the Lawyers Helping Lawyers Foundation.



Below: Annual Luncheon attendees had the opportunity to hear Andrew M. Coats, this year's recipient of the Joe Stamper Distinguished Service Award, talk about his late colleague, Joe Stamper, in whose honor the award was named.



The John E. Shipp Award for Ethics was presented posthumously to Oklahoma County Public Defender Bob Ravitz, who died in January. President Miles Pringle presents the award to Mr. Ravitz' widow, Diane Ravitz, who attended the OBA Annual Luncheon to celebrate his remarkable legacy with his friends and colleagues in the legal profession.



Above: The first OBA conference dedicated to artificial intelligence in the legal profession was held on Friday, July 12, in conjunction with the OBA Annual Meeting. During this one-day conference, attendees had the opportunity to learn about emerging artificial intelligence tools for the legal world and how to implement them in their practices.

Left: Kicking off this year's Annual Meeting was Osage Nation Principal Chief Geoffrey Standing Bear with his session, "Exploring the Flower Moon: The Osage Murders and Indian Law Today."

Right: OBA Annual Meeting attendees joined Oklahoma's judges for a joint plenary session featuring Dr. Karen Korematsu discussing "Korematsu v. United States: What are Civil Liberties?" Dr. Korematsu discussed the experiences of her father, Frank Korematsu, during the WWII Japanese internment and how his bravery and perseverance shaped civil liberties today.



Far left: Congratulations to Kate Dodoo, Oklahoma City, newly elected to the Board of Governors as member at large, and Amber Peckio, Tulsa, elected as the OBA's next president-elect. Their terms begin Jan. 1, 2025.

Left and below: President-Elect D. Kenyon Williams Jr. presides over this year's House of Delegates, where delegates conducted association business.



On Wednesday, July 10, TU, OU and OCU hosted their annual law school luncheons, celebrating alumni and honoring award winners.





OBA Annual Meeting Co-Sponsor OAMIC hosted the Welcome Reception on Wednesday, July 10. Attendees enjoyed heavy hors d'oeuvres and live music throughout the evening.

HOUSE OF DELEGATES ACTIONS

Bar business matters were considered Friday, July 12, when the House of Delegates convened at the Oklahoma Bar Association's 120th Annual Meeting at the Embassy Suites Conference Center in Norman.

RESOLUTION RELATING TO PROPOSED DUES INCREASE

The House of Delegates voted to adopt a resolution recommending an amendment of Article VIII, Section 1 of the Rules Creating and Controlling the Oklahoma Bar Association, relating to a change in the amount of dues to be paid by active members of the association. The amendment, if approved by the Supreme Court, would increase membership dues from \$275 to \$400 for those who have been members for more than three years and from \$137.50 to \$200 for those who have been members for three years or less. This dues increase, the first in 20 years, would go into effect Jan. 1, 2025.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Results of the annual election of officers and new Board of Governors members were announced. New officers and Board of Governors members will take office Jan. 1, 2025.



Attorney D. Kenyon Williams Jr. of Sperry will serve as the Oklahoma Bar Association's 2025 president after serving as president-elect in 2024.



Amber Peckio of Tulsa, who currently serves as the association's vice president, was elected to serve as president-elect for 2025.



Richard D. White Jr. of Tulsa was elected to serve as vice president.



Oklahoma City lawyer Miles Pringle, who serves as the 2024 OBA president, will remain on the Board of Governors for one year as the immediate past president.



Kate N. Dodoo of Oklahoma City was elected to serve a three-year term as a member at large.



Elected to represent Supreme Court Judicial District 4 was Benjamin J. Barker of Enid.



Elected to represent Supreme Court Judicial District 5 was Lucas M. West of Norman.



Taylor C. Venus of Enid will serve a one-year term as OBA Young Lawyers Division chairperson.



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Oklahoma Women in Law: Continuing to Lead the Way in 2024

By Janet Johnson

THIS ISSUE OF THE *Oklahoma Bar Journal* contains many interesting articles that focus on women in the law. When I think back on the history of women entering the practice of law, I think of a pioneer story. Nothing transpired overnight. It is a tale of resilience and gradual transformation. To be a woman practicing law is an honor that signifies much more than personal success. It represents a historical breakthrough, a commitment to making a change, a source of inspiration for future generations and a dedication to overcoming ongoing challenges.

I encourage you to visit “In re Lady Lawyers: The Rise of Women Attorneys and the Supreme Court,” an online exhibition hosted on the U.S. Supreme Court website.¹ While the journey of women in the law began in the late 19th century, the most notable strides that caused significant change occurred in the latter half of the 20th century. The feminist movement of the 1960s and 1970s played a crucial role in addressing institutional discrimination and promoting equal opportunities in various professions, including law. Landmark legislation, such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964 in the U.S.,



Oklahoma women lawyers on the move! Executive Director Johnson and OBA YLD Chair Laura Talbert recently traveled to Chicago to meet with bar leaders from around the country. They took a timeout to root for the Cubbies.

helped to challenge discriminatory practices and opened doors for women in many fields, including the legal profession.

Throughout this period, notable female legal figures emerged who made substantial contributions to the field. Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, appointed to the U.S. Supreme Court in 1993, is a prime example. Her career, which began with her work as an advocate for gender equality, significantly influenced legal thought and practice. If you haven't read the book *Dinners with Ruth* by NPR correspondent Nina Totenberg,² I highly recommend and encourage you to read it. I finished it on a single Saturday afternoon.

The history of women in law is a testament to their perseverance and the gradual evolution of societal attitudes toward gender roles. From the early pioneers who broke barriers to the contemporary trailblazers shaping the future of legal practice, women have significantly impacted the legal profession. Our ongoing efforts continue to inspire and pave the way for future generations.

I am honored to be a member of this groundbreaking group. Challenging the norms

of longstanding tradition is no easy feat. In fact, as my years as a lawyer grow, I am always thrilled to see more and more women take on prominent roles in the legal community. Within our own association, I am impressed daily by our peers. We have amazing woman lawyer representation and leadership in our courts, our Board of Governors and Young Lawyers Division. I hope that this small trip down memory lane continues to inspire women to enter the practice of law. Becoming a change agent is not easy, but the reward can be immeasurable.



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

ENDNOTES

1. <https://bit.ly/3SS40nC>.
2. <https://amzn.to/3AtPkVg>.

Takeaways From This Summer's OBA Artificial Intelligence Conference

By Jim Calloway and Julie Bays

THIS SUMMER'S PROGRAM, "Artificial Intelligence: Shaping the Future of Law Practice," was held in conjunction with the OBA Annual Meeting. It had good attendance and featured several experts who provided excellent educational content.

First impressions are important. The first impression many lawyers had of generative AI tools was learning that a lawyer in New York got into a lot of trouble using ChatGPT to research and write a brief for him. This was followed by several similar reports of other lawyers having the same issues. Even though the headlines stated that these lawyers were sanctioned for using AI, a deeper look reveals that the lawyers' conduct also involved cover-ups and false statements to the court.

New York lawyer Steven Schwartz used ChatGPT to find some court opinions supporting his client's claim that he had been unable to locate. When opposing counsel filed for sanctions, saying the cases didn't exist, Mr. Schwartz went back to ChatGPT, which assured him the fictitious cases were valid law. He filed his response without checking another legal research service.

Even more problematic was the case of Colorado lawyer Zachariah Crabill. When the judge asked him about possible inaccuracies in a brief, he blamed his legal intern. Six days after that hearing, he filed an affidavit stating he used ChatGPT to draft the brief. The lawyer's conduct resulted in a suspension.

THE MOST IMPORTANT TAKEAWAY

Ben Schorr, a senior content program manager from Microsoft, discussed Microsoft AI tools, focusing on Copilot. He also provided the best advice about properly using generative AI when he said, "Never show anything generated by AI to a client or court without first carefully reviewing it."

Now that we can all appreciate that generative AI tools can sometimes hallucinate facts and provide quotations from nonexistent written court opinions, it seems like this is the most important rule. As we have noted before in this space, one transformation of our work that AI and other automation tools will likely cause is reducing the amount of drafting by lawyers and increasing the time proofreading drafts, as first drafts are created by

AI, automated document assembly or a trusty intern.

DON'T COMPROMISE CLIENT CONFIDENTIALITY WITH YOUR PROMPTS

AI tools are voracious consumers of data. Your search queries with AI are called prompts. Some AI systems ingest your prompts and add them to their database, generating a remote possibility that they will be used again in a response to another user. Even though the risk is low, lawyers should understand how their prompts are retained and used. For example, ChatGPT will reuse prompts, but it also provides a setting where you can restrict it from reusing any of your content. Lawyers will want to turn that setting on.

MICROSOFT COPILOT IS USEFUL AND FITS INTO EVERY LAWYER'S BUDGET

We are fans of Copilot, as it is an affordable AI tool for the many lawyers already using Microsoft 365. Plus, it is designed to keep important information confidential because many businesses require secrecy, not just in the legal profession.

A Copilot for Microsoft 365 subscription is \$360 per user for



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one year of service. A business class Microsoft 365 subscription is required to qualify. You can limit Copilot subscriptions to those who will use them. While there is no free trial, a chatbot on the Microsoft website told me that any Microsoft license can be canceled within the first seven days for a full refund.

Microsoft Copilot will provide answers based on everything contained in your Microsoft graph. This means everything in OneDrive, Word documents, Outlook emails and files, PowerPoint presentations and Excel spreadsheets. Microsoft guarantees that none of your queries will be used to train the system or allowed to leave your system. This is important for preserving client confidentiality, and that makes it one of the safest tools to use. One should appreciate that

Microsoft 365 already houses billions of dollars of personal and corporate data, much of which should be kept confidential.

Microsoft also labels its free browser-based AI service Copilot. So that can be confusing. But, while the service can be useful and a good way to experiment with AI, one should not rely on it for confidential treatment of your prompts.

FOR MANY LAWYERS, THEIR PRACTICE MANAGEMENT SOLUTION'S EMBEDDED AI TOOLS MAY BE THEIR BEST OPTION

Many lawyers subscribe to an online practice management tool that manages client information. It is not an exaggeration to say that all these providers are working on adding AI functionality

to their offerings. AI features integrated within the practice management solution means there is already access to all the client information and documents stored in the solution. This makes them more convenient and simpler than using separate AI tools or services, particularly for automated document assembly.

Jordan Turk, an attorney and legal technology advisor for Smokeball, discussed Smokeball's AI-powered features that help lawyers automate tasks and streamline workflows. All attendees can now appreciate the benefits of AI within their practice management solution. The AI tools demonstrated had not yet been released to users, but they have been released since. To her credit, she also noted the status of various competitors' AI development.

THERE ARE MANY AI TOOLS TO PLAY WITH TO ACQUIRE AI FAMILIARITY

The key takeaways from the AI tools presentation by Catherine Sanders Reach, director of the North Carolina Bar Association Center for Practice Management, and Julie Bays centered on the critical importance of hands-on experience with AI tools for lawyers. It was emphasized that to grasp the capabilities and limitations of AI, attorneys need to actively engage with these technologies. Our “learn by doing” approach is crucial as AI rapidly evolves and integrates into various aspects of legal work. To facilitate this, we introduced several user-friendly AI platforms lawyers can easily begin experimenting with, such as ChatGPT, Google Gemini and Claude.

We intended to make AI tools more approachable by emphasizing their accessibility, reducing the reluctance lawyers might have toward integrating AI into their work. We also explained the distinctions between AI-augmented search engines and specialized AI instruments to offer lawyers a clearer picture of the array of AI options they can employ in various legal tasks.

We also discussed Descript, an AI-powered video editing tool that allows for editing through text transcripts. Clearbrief was highlighted as a powerful subscription tool for strengthening legal writing by finding relevant evidence to support arguments. For content creation, we noted Copy.ai, which can assist with writing blog posts and website copy. Microsoft Designer was presented as a free multimedia graphic design tool that leverages AI to generate and manipulate images.

‘Never show anything generated by AI to a client or court without first carefully reviewing it.’

COURTS AND COUNSEL WILL HAVE TO DEAL WITH AI FAKES

However, while AI can be a powerful tool for lawyers, it can also pose a serious threat to the integrity of the legal system. AI can create fake documents, pictures and other evidence that can fool courts and counsel alike. As we have seen, AI fakes (aka deep-fakes) can manipulate or synthesize digital content to make it look realistic and authentic. Right now, tools to create convincing deep-fakes are still emerging. There is no doubt they will become more common and easier to use.

Even if your client has no ill intentions, many people routinely edit images to improve appearances or remove distracting background images or people. We recall a certain British royal who created controversy by inexpertly editing a photo of herself and her children. Lawyers will probably want to advise clients who take pictures that might be entered into evidence to never edit them in any way. We will leave it to the litigators to argue about whether and when an “enhanced” photo is admissible.

AI MEANS BUSINESS

From the OU College of Law, we heard from Kenton Brice, director of the Donald E. Pray Law Library, and Sean Harrington, director of technology and innovation, on the business impacts of AI.

Their presentation highlighted the current state and the future of AI in the legal industry, emphasizing several key points. They discussed the integration of AI in major legal research platforms, noting that Lexis+ is set to release a new AI platform by the end of the summer, which will require an additional subscription. Similarly, Westlaw is integrating CoCounsel by Casetext into their platform, enhancing remote task initiation capabilities through apps. They also pointed out the rise of new startups and companies, like vLex Fastcase, which are challenging the traditional dominance of Lexis and Westlaw.

They emphasized the significant economic and productivity impacts of generative AI, suggesting it could add between \$2.6 trillion to \$4.4 trillion annually. AI agents, capable of automating complex legal tasks – such as drafting documents, performing legal research and managing client communications – were highlighted as a major advancement. They also addressed ethical concerns, particularly regarding AI agents pretending to be human to complete tasks.

ETHICAL CHALLENGES WITH AI

Despite the number of lawyers who have received sanctions associated with improper AI use, AI isn’t particularly ethically challenging if proper care is exercised.

It is new and different, so study is required. OBA General Council Gina Hendryx and Jim Calloway discussed various ethical issues associated with AI. Ms. Hendryx noted that as some courts now require AI usage affidavits, if you are practicing in an unfamiliar court, you should determine in advance any requirements.

Just remember that most lawyers who ran into trouble violated one of our profession's most cherished and timeless values: candor with the court.

If you missed it in a recent *Courts & More*, two ethics committees (ABA and Pennsylvania/

Philadelphia) have issued detailed opinions about ethical compliance with AI. Links to both opinions are available at <https://bit.ly/46QPDFW>.

CONCLUSION

Most observers believe AI will produce transformational changes in many business operations. Because the nature of much legal work involves the creation, management and analysis of documents, many believe it will particularly affect the legal profession. As we see AI tools being incorporated into everything we use, it will be interesting to see how things evolve over the next few years.

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

Ms. Bays is the OBA practice management advisor, aiding attorneys in using technology and other tools to efficiently manage their offices.

MANDATORY CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION CHANGES

OK MCLE RULE 7, REGULATION 3.6

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



A Cautionary Tale

ABA Formal Opinion 512

By *Richard Stevens*

LATELY, THERE HAS BEEN A great deal of publicity, information and misinformation about the use of generative artificial intelligence (GAI) by lawyers. While there is no one definition of artificial intelligence (AI), lawyers have used AI-based technologies in their practices for years. Lawyers use AI-assisted review in electronic discovery, contract analytics, basic research and other purposes.

Recently released ABA Formal Opinion 512 discusses ethical considerations in the use of GAI, which creates various types of new content in response to questions posed by a user. The opinion attempts to identify ethical issues with the use of GAI tools, which it describes as “a moving target – indeed, a rapidly moving target.” The opinion is segmented into broad categories of ethics issues within single rules and groups of related rules.

COMPETENCE: RULE 1.1

Rule 1.1 requires that a lawyer “provide competent representation to a client. Competent representation requires the legal knowledge, skill, thoroughness and preparation reasonably necessary for the representation.” Comment 6 makes clear that a lawyer must also “maintain the requisite knowledge and skill ... including the benefits and risks associated with relevant technology.” To do

so, a lawyer “should either acquire a reasonable understanding of the benefits and risks of the GAI tools that they employ in their practices or draw on the expertise of others who can provide guidance about the relevant GAI tool’s capabilities and limitations.”

Lawyers must also understand that GAI may produce inaccurate content. GAI tools create content taken from the internet or other proprietary sources. The GAI tool may produce inaccurate, unreliable, incomplete or biased results, depending on the quality of the source material the tool uses. The GAI tool may also lack the ability to understand the meaning of information that is used and may, as ABA 512 notes, also “combine otherwise accurate information in unexpected ways to yield false or inaccurate results.”

ABA 512 also recognizes a fact that has been the subject of numerous news reports recently. “Some GAI tools are also prone to ‘hallucinations,’ providing ostensibly plausible responses that have no basis in fact or reality.” Uncritical reliance on such information may violate the duty to provide competent representation to a client under Rule 1.1.

CONFIDENTIALITY: RULE 1.6

Under Rule 1.6, a lawyer is required to keep confidential all information relating to the representation of a client unless the client gives informed consent, disclosure is impliedly authorized to carry out the representation or disclosure is permitted by an exception. Self-learning GAI tools pose a risk that confidential information may be disclosed improperly.

While a determination of the requirements of Rule 1.6 may be heavily fact-dependent, ABA 512 suggests that a lawyer consider the likelihood of disclosure or unauthorized access of confidential information along with the sensitivity of that information before inputting information relating to a client into a GAI tool. If informed consent is required, the lawyer must disclose specific information about the risk, client information to be disclosed, how that information may be used against the client’s interests and a clear explanation of the benefits of using the GAI tool.

COMMUNICATION: RULE 1.4

ABA 512 provides guidance about the extent to which communication about the use of GAI may be necessary to comply with Rule 1.4. The opinion clarifies that the determination of whether and what to disclose will depend on the circumstances of each case.

Obviously, when informed consent is required, the lawyer must disclose the use of GAI. When disclosure is not required under Rule 1.4, a lawyer may wish to make such disclosure anyway. The most logical and effective place to make that disclosure would be in the lawyer's employment contract.

MERITORIOUS CLAIMS AND CONTENTIONS AND CANDOR TOWARD THE TRIBUNAL: RULES 3.1, 3.3 AND 8.4(C)

Rule 3.1 states, in part, "A lawyer shall not bring or defend a proceeding, or assert or controvert an issue therein, unless there is a basis in law and fact for doing so that is not frivolous." Rule 3.3 prohibits making any false statement of fact or law to a tribunal. Rule 8.4(c) prohibits lawyers from engaging in "conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit or misrepresentation."

When a GAI tool "hallucinates" or cites to nonexistent cases or otherwise provides inaccurate information, the use of that information in pleadings or arguments may violate any of the above rules. ABA 512 notes:

Some courts have responded by requiring lawyers to disclose their use of GAI. As a matter of competence, as previously discussed, lawyers should review

for accuracy all GAI outputs. In judicial proceedings, duties to the tribunal likewise require lawyers, before submitting materials to a court, to review these outputs, including analysis and citations to authority, and to correct errors, including misstatements of law and fact, a failure to include controlling legal authority, and misleading arguments.

SUPERVISORY RESPONSIBILITIES: RULES 5.1 AND 5.3

ABA 512 makes clear that lawyers with managerial duties must establish clear policies regarding the permissible use of GAI and supervise both lawyers and nonlawyers to ensure compliance with these policies. Supervisors must also make sure that both lawyers and nonlawyers are adequately trained in the ethical and practical uses of GAI. Training should also include the application of implicated rules. Supervisory responsibility extends to contractors or other providers outside of the law firm.

FEES: RULE 1.5

ABA 512 also addresses the effects of using GAI tools or services in the representation of a client. A lawyer must explain the reasoning behind and the basis for charging the client for the use of

GAI tools or services. Lawyers may also wish to take into consideration how they bill when using those services. Flat or contingent fees may be more suitable for the lawyer and more affordable for the client.

CONCLUSION

Technology has transformed the practice of law during my career. Technology will transform the practice of law well into the future. As Rule 1.1 reminds us, lawyers have a duty to understand the benefits and risks associated with technology. I encourage all practitioners to read ABA 512 as an introduction to the ethical issues associated with GAI.

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

Meeting Summaries

The Oklahoma Bar Association Board of Governors met April 19.

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

President Pringle reported he worked on communicating legislative issues through articles, emails, meetings, phone calls and interviews, attended OBA Day at the Capitol and authored his president's article for the May issue of the *Oklahoma Bar Journal*. He worked on dues increase issues, including answering attorneys' calls and reading their comments, attended the Law Day student contest awards ceremony and discussed ongoing building issues with Executive Director Johnson. He worked on the upcoming Annual Meeting and appointments. Additionally, he attended a meeting with the strategic planner to determine timelines and the joint reception with the OBA and the Oklahoma County Bar Association.

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT-ELECT

President-Elect Williams reported he attended and met with his district representatives during OBA Day at the Capitol. He participated in multiple work sessions with the new OBA Professionalism Committee Chair Richard D. White Jr. regarding the committee's 2024 activities and attended the Oklahoma Attorneys Mutual Insurance Co. Board of Directors meeting. He drafted correspondence regarding issues for

review by the Strategic Planning Committee, participated in a virtual organizational meeting with President Pringle, Executive Director Johnson and a third-party vendor and worked on appointments for the Budget Committee. He received and drafted correspondence to encourage attorneys' participation in the rally at the Capitol to support the Judicial Nominating Commission and contacted representatives regarding the rally. He attended the rally and met with his representatives to request opposition to SJR 34, legislation aimed at dismantling the JNC. He also attended the Tulsa Lawyers Luncheon for the Indian Nations Council, Boy Scouts of America and the joint reception with the OBA and the Oklahoma County Bar Association.

REPORT OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

Vice President Peckio reported she worked on communicating legislative issues, which included phone calls and meetings with attorneys and legislators. She attended OBA Day at the Capitol, a rally at the Capitol to support the Judicial Nominating Commission and the March meeting of the McIntosh County Bar Association, where she presented two 50-year milestone membership pins on behalf of the OBA. She also attended the Lawyers Helping Lawyers Assistance Program monthly meeting and discussion group in Tulsa and the joint

reception with the OBA and the Oklahoma County Bar Association.

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Executive Director Johnson reported she attended OBA Day at the Capitol, CLE movie night and a CLE planning lunch with the Oklahoma City Zoo. She spoke with Chief Justice M. John Kane IV about the proposed dues increase vote and upcoming processes, which include a comment period and a public hearing. She reviewed legislative editorial content as well as numerous JNC and SJR 34-related content, which she worked on as well. She attended the Law Day student contest awards ceremony, an Annual Meeting planning meeting at the venue and a plenary speaker discussion with the Oklahoma Judicial Conference and Dr. Karen Korematsu. She prepared for a consultation for strategic planning, attended the Strategic Planning Committee meeting to determine timelines and discussed the Chief Justice Colloquium free CLE program and other matters with Justice Dana Kuehn. She met with a possible project manager to discuss roof and entryway projects and with the Office of Management and Enterprise Services to discuss work on plumbing issues at the Oklahoma Bar Center. She discussed and finalized the free movie night CLE program on June 4 with Justice Yvonne Kauger and the speaker panel and attended the

rally at the Capitol to support the Judicial Nominating Commission and the joint reception with the OBA and the Oklahoma County Bar Association.

REPORT OF THE IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT

Immediate Past President Hermanson reported he discussed legislative issues with his state representatives and attended and participated in the rally at the Capitol to support the Judicial Nominating Commission. He attended the District Attorneys Council board meeting, the Oklahoma District Attorneys Association board meeting, the Kay County Bar Association meeting and the joint reception with the OBA and the Oklahoma County Bar Association.

BOARD MEMBER REPORTS

Governor Ailles Bahm reported she attended the Lawyers Helping Lawyers Assistance Program meeting, the Bench and Bar Committee meeting and the joint reception with the OBA and the Oklahoma County Bar Association. **Governor Barbush** reported he attended and spoke at OBA Day at the Capitol at the Oklahoma Bar Center and then met with local representatives for appointments after the CLE program. He volunteered at an expungement clinic at the Donald W. Reynolds Community Center & Library in Durant, which was a Legal Aid Services of Oklahoma co-sponsored event with other charities, where

he focused on assisting veterans and others in need. He attended and spoke at the Bryan County Bar Association meeting, where a 60-year milestone member was pinned. He had multiple meetings and phone calls with local representatives in southeast Oklahoma and Oklahoma County regarding SJR 34. He discussed with countless OBA members throughout District 2 and the Ardmore area to ask them to reach out to their representatives regarding SJR 34. He had multiple calls with Executive Director Johnson, President Pringle and Clay Taylor regarding the OBA's opposition to SJR 34 and spoke with representatives from southeast Oklahoma about meeting at the Capitol prior to the rally to support the Judicial Nominating Commission, which he attended and participated in. Additionally, he coordinated and attended lunch with OAMIC President Phil Fraim, Executive Director Johnson, Director of Education Programs Gigi McCormick and President Pringle to discuss the Annual Meeting and an OAMIC sponsorship. He wrote a Law Day editorial article for circulation to southeast Oklahoma papers regarding the JNC's role in protecting the voices of democracy and attended the joint reception with the OBA and the Oklahoma County Bar Association. **Governor Bracken** reported he attended the joint reception with the Oklahoma County Bar Association. **Governor Dow** reported she attended the

Cleveland County Bar Association meeting, the Family Law Section meeting, the Mary Abbott Children's House board meeting and the joint reception with the OBA and the Oklahoma County Bar Association. **Governor Hixon** reported he attended OBA Day at the Capitol and the Tulsa County Bar Association Executive Committee and Board of Directors meetings. **Governor Knott** reported she attended the Canadian County Bar Association meeting. **Governor Locke** reported he attended the Muskogee County Bar Association's 40th annual chili cookoff. **Governor Oldfield** reported he attended OBA Day at the Capitol and worked on communication about SJR 34. **Governor Rogers** reported by email he attended the Clients' Security Fund Committee meeting and the Lawyer's Luncheon in Tulsa for the Boy Scouts of America. **Governor Thurman** reported he attended the Civil Procedure and Evidence Code Committee meeting, the Pontotoc Technology Center grant allocation meeting presented by Sen. Tom Cole, the multidisciplinary team meeting to discuss current child abuse and child-related criminal matters and the joint reception with the OBA and the Oklahoma County Bar Association. **Governor Trevillion** reported he attended the Oklahoma County Bar Association monthly meeting and OBA Day at the Capitol. He met with legislators regarding the Judicial Nominating Commission and

participated in the ABA Section of Taxation virtual settlement week.

REPORT OF THE GENERAL COUNSEL

A written report of PRC actions and OBA disciplinary matters for the month was submitted to the board for its review.

BOARD LIAISON REPORTS

President-Elect Williams reported the **Investment Committee** will be meeting soon. Vice President Peckio reported the **Strategic Planning Committee** will have a robust meeting schedule later this year following its planned upcoming retreat. Governor Oldfield reported the **Legal Internship Committee** is actively engaging via email. Governor Barbush reported the **Cannabis Law Committee** and the **Lawyers Helping Lawyers Assistance Program Committee** are meeting regularly. Governor Ailles Bahm added that the LHLAP Committee will soon begin advertising in the Oklahoma County and Tulsa County bar associations' monthly publications. Governor Conner reported the **Awards Committee** recently met to determine its recommendations for annual awards. Governor Hixon reported the **Law Day Committee** was very active in its preparations for the annual Ask A Lawyer event, and first-place awards for the statewide art and writing contests had recently been presented during a ceremony at the state Capitol. Governor Thurman reported the **Civil Procedure and Evidence Code Committee** met and discussed issues relating to e-filing. Governor Knott reported the **Law Schools Committee** has met with all three law schools. Governor Ailles Bahm reported the **Bench and Bar Committee** is meeting regularly and offering CLE and

discussion on how best to communicate professionalism standards.

PROPOSED CHANGE TO MCLE RULES

The board approved a motion to approve three proposed changes to the rules, including a permanent MCLE exemption for members of the *Oklahoma Bar Journal* Board of Editors, a housekeeping change related to compliance and adding CLE that is related to the practice of law and includes diversity, equity and inclusion material to the types of CLE content that meet the ethics requirement.

APPROVAL OF AWARDS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The board approved a motion to approve the Awards Committee's recommendations for the 2024 OBA Awards.

2024 PRESIDENTIAL APPOINTMENT

The board passed motions to approve the following appointment.

Professional Responsibility Tribunal (PRT): President Pringle appoints Sarah Green, Oklahoma City, to complete the unexpired term of William C. Kellough, Tulsa. Term begins March 24, 2024, and expires June 30, 2025.

The Oklahoma Bar Association Board of Governors met May 24.

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

President Pringle reported he responded to comments and worked on communication regarding the proposed dues increase, authored an article for the *Oklahoma Bar Journal* and met with state legislators. He recorded an episode of "Oklahoma Appeals – The Podcast," helped coordinate the 2024 and 2025 annual meetings and

welcomed new members at the new admittee swearing-in ceremony. He attended the Oklahoma County Law Day Luncheon, spoke at and attended the Seminole County Bar Association's Law Day event and attended the Oklahoma Chief Justice Colloquium on Civility and Ethics. He met with the strategic planning coordinator multiple times and conducted a hearing on the proposed dues increase.

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT-ELECT

President-Elect Williams reported by email he worked on appointments for Budget Committee members, attended the Professionalism Committee meeting and assisted the Professionalism Committee chair in organizing the committee and coordinating the next meeting. He attended the Tulsa County Bar Foundation Annual Law Day Luncheon and the Oklahoma Bar Foundation Board of Trustees meeting. He mentored a Tulsa-area Boy Scout troop member regarding civics in conjunction with his work on rank and merit badges, virtually attended the subcommittee meeting of the Strategic Planning Committee and virtually met with Executive Director Johnson and President Pringle regarding planning for the 2025 Annual Meeting.

REPORT OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

Vice President Peckio reported she attended the Lawyers Helping Lawyers Assistance Program meeting and the monthly discussion group in Tulsa, which she organized. She attended the Tulsa County Bar Association Law Day Luncheon and volunteered for Ask A Lawyer. She attended the Pittsburg County Bar Association Law Day CLE and dinner and presented pins to 50-year-milestone members.

The board approved a motion to approve three proposed changes to the rules, including a permanent MCLE exemption for members of the *Oklahoma Bar Journal* Board of Editors, a housekeeping change related to compliance and adding CLE that is related to the practice of law and includes diversity, equity and inclusion material to the types of CLE content that meet the ethics requirement.

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Executive Director Johnson reported she attended the April YLD meeting, worked on communication about the proposed dues increase and attended the new admittee swearing-in ceremony. She attended daily meetings and worked on communication, administrative actions and logistics for OBA network issues. She planned, coordinated logistics for and attended the Oklahoma Chief Justice Colloquium on Civility and Ethics, continued working on planning for the 2024 and 2025 annual meetings and began working on plans for a possible 2025 Solo & Small Firm Conference. She attended the Oklahoma County Bar Association Law Day Luncheon, attended and presented at the Seminole County Bar Association's Law Day event and met with building maintenance individuals. She reviewed the architectural proposal for roof and entryway work and worked

on coordinating a meeting with the Bar Center Facilities Committee. She met with the insurance company to review rate proposals for the next renewal period and met with Strategic Planning Consultant Marcy Cottle to discuss the next steps and the discovery phase. She attended the Membership Engagement Committee meeting and the Disaster Response and Relief Committee meeting. She worked on various projects regarding the proposed dues increase, including reviewing mailed and emailed comments, attending the public hearing and working on the draft resolution for publication.

REPORT OF THE IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT

Past President Hermanson reported he attended the Tonkawa Chamber of Commerce Legislative Breakfast, the Kay County Bar Association's Ask A Lawyer event and board meetings for the District Attorneys Council and the Oklahoma District Attorneys

Association. He reviewed OBA litigation issues, met with individuals to discuss the proposed OBA dues increase, corresponded with state legislators concerning pending legislation and met with a U.S. congressman on pending issues.

BOARD MEMBER REPORTS

Governor Ailles Bahm reported she attended the Lawyers Helping Lawyers Foundation meeting and the Lawyers Helping Lawyers Assistance Program meeting. She attended the Oklahoma County Bar Association Law Day Luncheon and volunteered for Ask A Lawyer. **Governor Barbush** reported he wrote an op/ed titled "JNC Ensures Rural Oklahoma's Inclusion in the Process of Selecting Competent, Fair and Impartial Judges" and submitted it for publication to all newspapers in District 2. In his capacity as the Bryan County Bar Association Law Day chair, he presented to five different government classes at Durant High School on Law Day on the topic of Oklahoma's court system, the JNC and the scandal that resulted in the system we have in place, as well as a discussion of careers in the legal field. He attended the Choctaw Nation Bar Association meeting and the Lawyers Helping Lawyers Assistance Program Committee meeting and worked on the Southeastern Oklahoma Summit, which is to be scheduled for the fall. He communicated with Executive Director Johnson and lawyers impacted by the tornado, as well as with the Cannabis Law Committee chair regarding inviting state agencies to attend the cannabis program at the Annual Meeting. He discussed with local attorneys about their attendance or reasonings for not attending the Annual Meeting and shared the input with Executive Director Johnson. He communicated with

the Bryan County Bar Association president regarding the Annual Meeting and submission of delegate(s), as well as with Executive Director Johnson regarding the network issues that occurred. **Governor Bracken** reported he attended a Military Assistance Committee meeting and a Family Law Section meeting, where he discussed the Oklahoma Lawyers for America's Heroes program and ways to improve it. He attended the Oklahoma Bar Foundation Trustee meeting, the Oklahoma County Bar Association Law Day Luncheon and a Canadian County Bar Association event. **Governor Conner** reported he attended the Garfield County Bar Association meeting. **Governor Dow** reported she attended the Family Law Section meeting, the Disaster Response and Relief Committee meeting, the Oklahoma County Bar Association Family Law Section meeting and the Mary Abbott Children's House Board of Directors meeting. She assisted Lucas West with his application to fill her seat. **Governor Hixon** reported he attended the Tulsa County Bar Association Executive

Committee meeting and Board of Directors meeting and approved the TCBA Golden Rule Award winner for the third quarter. **Governor Knott** reported by email she attended the Canadian County Bar Association meeting and presented a CLE program to the Estate Planning, Probate and Trust Section. **Governor Oldfield** reported he attended the Professionalism Committee meeting and the Kay County Bar Association meeting. **Governor Rogers** reported he attended the Tulsa County Bar Association Law Day Luncheon and accepted a nomination to serve on the TU College of Law Alumni Board of Directors. **Governor Thurman** reported he attended the Seminole County Bar Association's Law Day event, a luncheon at the Pontotoc County Technology Center to promote enrollment and support and a meet and greet with the new city of Ada city manager. He also had a meeting with the Pontotoc County Bar Association officers. **Governor Trevillion** reported he attended the Oklahoma County Bar Association Board of Directors meeting and Law Day Luncheon,

the Federal Bar Association White Collar Committee meeting and the ABA Midyear Tax Meeting.

REPORT OF THE YOUNG LAWYERS DIVISION

Governor Talbert reported she and other OBA YLD officers recently attended the ABA YLD conference in Omaha, Nebraska, where they met with other state bars' YLD members from across the country.

REPORT OF THE GENERAL COUNSEL

General Counsel Hendryx reported the Professional Responsibility Commission met in April, and she presented highlights from the written PRC report. A written report of PRC actions and OBA disciplinary matters for the month was submitted to the board for its review.

BOARD LIAISON REPORTS

Vice President Peckio reported Marcy Cottle, the facilitator who has been engaged by the **Strategic Planning Committee**, is holding conversations with OBA directors and reviewing recent membership surveys. A strategic planning retreat is planned for August. Governor Oldfield reported the Professionalism Committee met recently and is considering collaborating with tribal bar associations on professionalism matters. Governor Barbush said the **Cannabis Law Committee** is reaching out to relevant state agencies with the goal of greater involvement between them and the committee regarding activities and issues. Governor Ailles Bahm said the **Lawyers Helping Lawyers Assistance Program Committee** is continuing its work to better collaborate with leaders within the LHL Foundation and is planning to meet with them in June. Governor Bracken said John Cannon has

Governor Dow reported the Disaster Response and Relief Committee is actively responding to current severe storm-related disasters within the state. She said 13 counties were recently impacted, with at least one more expected to be added to that list.

been appointed as chair of the **Military Assistance Committee**, and he is continuing to analyze the Oklahoma Lawyers for America's Heroes program to determine how to successfully accomplish the program's goals. Governor Dow reported the **Disaster Response and Relief Committee** is actively responding to current severe storm-related disasters within the state. She said 13 counties were recently impacted, with at least one more expected to be added to that list. She discussed many of the specific measures that are being taken at the federal, state and local levels to respond to those impacted. Governor Hixon reported the **Law Day Committee** successfully planned and executed the annual Ask A Lawyer public service event, which was held in conjunction with Law Day on May 1. Governor Locke reported the **Membership Engagement/Member Services Committee** recently met and is continuing its work developing relationships with law schools to better engage future bar members. Governor Rogers reported the **Clients' Security Fund Committee** is meeting regularly.

APPLICATION TO SUSPEND FOR FAILURE TO PAY 2024 DUES

Executive Director Johnson explained the process of suspension, advising that notice to show cause is mailed, followed by very diligent efforts to contact each person on the list before the application is filed with the court. The board passed a motion to approve the application to suspend.

APPLICATION TO SUSPEND FOR FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH 2023 MCLE REQUIREMENTS

The board passed a motion to approve the application to suspend.

APPLICATION TO STRIKE FOR FAILURE TO REINSTATE AFTER SUSPENSION FOR NONPAYMENT OF 2023 DUES

The board passed a motion to approve the application to strike.

APPLICATION TO STRIKE FOR FAILURE TO REINSTATE AFTER SUSPENSION FOR NONCOMPLIANCE WITH 2022 MCLE REQUIREMENTS

The board passed a motion to approve the application to strike.

DISCUSSION ON PROPOSED DUES INCREASE POST-COMMENT AND PUBLIC HEARING

President Pringle discussed emails he received, attendance at the May 20, 2024, hearing and social media comments observed. President Pringle encouraged board members to continue to engage with lawyers in their districts and local county bar associations to educate them on the necessity of an increase at this time.

The Oklahoma Bar Association Board of Governors met June 14.

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

President Pringle reported he worked on messaging and communication related to the proposed dues increase. He also continued to work on legislative issues with the OBA's legislative liaison, and he reviewed a recent analysis of the OBA's social media outreach conducted by the OBA's strategic planning facilitator. He attended the recent Sovereignty Symposium, a Bar Center Facilities Committee meeting regarding building renovations and the joint reception with the Ottawa and Delaware county bar associations.

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT-ELECT

President-Elect Williams reported he virtually attended the Investment Committee meeting, the OBA strategic planning facilitator's social media analysis presentation and the Oklahoma Bar Foundation Development Committee meeting. He reviewed OAMIC's materials for the Annual Meeting and attended the joint reception with the Ottawa and Delaware county bar associations.

REPORT OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

Vice President Peckio reported she helped organize and promote the Lawyers Helping Lawyers women's discussion group for June and attended the joint reception with the Ottawa and Delaware county bar associations.

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Executive Director Johnson reported she worked on planning for the 2024 and 2025 annual meetings and the 2025 Solo & Small Firm Conference. She also worked on applications to suspend and strike those members who are delinquent for MCLE and dues, as well as relevant proposed orders and updated exhibits for the Supreme Court. She reviewed record-retention business processes, continued work on dues communications and worked on legislation review with the legislative liaison. She attended meetings for the Investment Committee, the Bar Center Facilities Committee, the Bar Association Technology Committee and the Disaster Response and Relief Committee. She also attended the social media analysis meeting with strategic planning consultants, had her one-on-one meeting with Marcy Cottle about strategic planning and met with the MCLE Department

about upcoming staffing changes. She met with judge advocate general officers about their Annual Meeting involvement and other outreach opportunities, as well as with the IT Department about existing projects and tracking. She attended the joint reception with the Ottawa and Delaware county bar associations.

REPORT OF THE IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT

Past President Hermanson reported he met with several legislators and discussed the spring legislative session. He also moderated a forum of candidates for county offices in Noble County and presented a CLE on the “Special Role of the Prosecutor” at the Oklahoma District Attorneys Association Prosecutor’s Bootcamp, serving as an adjudicator for the trial advocacy portion. He also attended the joint reception with the Ottawa and Delaware county bar associations.

BOARD MEMBER REPORTS

Governor Barbush reported he assisted the Durant High School wrestling team with its community service project at the Magnolia Festival, spoke with various members of the bar association about serving in leadership roles and attended the joint reception with the Ottawa and Delaware county bar associations. **Governor Bracken** reported by email he attended the Oklahoma County Bar Association Board of Directors meeting and the Oklahoma Bar Foundation Developmental Committee meeting. He communicated with the veteran representative regarding Sooner Stand Down. **Governor Dow** reported by email she attended meetings for the Cleveland County Bar Association, the Oklahoma County Bar Association Family Law Section, the Disaster Response and Relief Committee and the

Mary Abbott Children’s House special meeting. **Governor Hixon** reported he attended the Tulsa County Bar Association Executive Committee meeting, chaired a meeting of the Bylaws Committee for Morton Comprehensive Health Services and attended the joint reception with the Ottawa and Delaware county bar associations. **Governor Knott** reported by email she spoke at the Kay County Bar Association meeting and attended the joint reception with the Ottawa and Delaware county bar associations. **Governor Locke** reported he attended the Muskogee County Bar Association meeting and the joint reception with the Ottawa and Delaware county bar associations. **Governor Oldfield** reported he attended the Kay County Bar Association meeting and toured the Kay County Courthouse after recent renovations. He also attended the Legal Internship Committee meeting and the joint reception with the Ottawa and Delaware county bar associations. **Governor Trevillion** reported he attended the Oklahoma County Bar Association Board of Directors meeting, the Federal Bar Association White Collar Committee meeting and the joint reception with the Ottawa and Delaware county bar associations.

REPORT OF THE YOUNG LAWYERS DIVISION

Governor Talbert reported she attended the Access to Justice Committee meeting and the joint reception with the Ottawa and Delaware county bar associations.

REPORT OF THE GENERAL COUNSEL

General Counsel Hendryx reported on the status of pending litigation involving the OBA. A written report of PRC actions and

OBA disciplinary matters for the month was submitted to the board for its review.

BOARD LIAISON REPORTS

President-Elect Williams reported the **Investment Committee** met recently. On its agenda this year is reviewing the association’s investment policy. Vice President Peckio reported the **Strategic Planning Committee** will meet soon to discuss the OBA’s current strategic planning process. Governor Oldfield reported the **Legal Internship Committee** and the **Professionalism Committee** are meeting regularly. Governor Barbush reported the **Cannabis Law Committee** is working to more effectively engage state agencies in committee activities. He also said discussion has taken place regarding whether there is interest in transitioning that committee to an OBA section. Governor Ailles Bahm reported the **Lawyers Helping Lawyers Assistance Program Committee** will be holding a joint meeting with the LHL Foundation during the Annual Meeting. Governor Hixon praised the **Law Day Committee** for its recent successful event and noted the Tulsa County Bar Association *Briefcase* recently published an article about this year’s successful Ask A Lawyer activities. He also congratulated Tulsa lawyer Dan Crawford, who has volunteered to coordinate the Tulsa activities for the past 35 years and is retiring. Governor Locke reported the **Membership Engagement Committee** has an upcoming meeting scheduled. Governor Knott reported the **Bar Center Facilities Committee** is continuing its planning for urgently necessary renovations to the Oklahoma Bar Center. Governor Talbert reported the **Access to Justice Committee** met recently.

ANNUAL MEETING UPDATE

Executive Director Johnson provided general planning information and updates. A dunk tank will be added to the event schedule at the conclusion of the meeting aimed at raising funds for the LHL Foundation.

2025 SOLO & SMALL FIRM CONFERENCE AND ANNUAL MEETING UPDATES

Executive Director Johnson described the status of planning for the 2025 meetings, noting that several options are being explored.

The Oklahoma Bar Association Board of Governors met July 9.

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

President Pringle reported he worked on Annual Meeting preparations, promoted the upcoming dues increase through messages and meetings, attended the Oklahoma County Bar Association Delegates Caucus and reviewed building renovation proposals.

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT-ELECT

President-Elect Williams reported he worked on various OBA committee appointments, prepared for the Annual Meeting and virtually attended the June meetings of the Membership Engagement Committee and the Oklahoma Bar Foundation Development Committee.

REPORT OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

Vice President Peckio reported she attended the Sheep Creek reception and golf tournament in Ada. She hosted the Tulsa Lawyers Helping Lawyers women's group meeting and planned the next one.

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Executive Director Johnson reported she met with auditors and a mold testing group for the Oklahoma Bar Center, continued 2025 meeting planning and met with OKANA Resort staff. She attended the Membership Engagement Committee meeting, the YLD meeting and the

preconference meeting for the Annual Meeting. She coordinated a staff wellness clinic, attended the Annual Meeting and worked on materials for the Legislative Monitoring Committee CLE presentation, nominations for the Oklahoma Court on the Judiciary and security for the Annual Meeting.

REPORT OF THE IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT

Immediate Past President Hermanson reported he attended the District Attorneys Council Technology Committee meeting and board meeting, the Oklahoma District Attorneys Association board meeting and the swearing-in ceremony and reception for the newly appointed Kay and Noble counties Special Judge Thomas Griesedieck.

BOARD MEMBER REPORTS

Governor Ailles Bahm reported she attended the Lawyers Helping Lawyers and Legislative Monitoring Committee meetings as well as her first Council on Judicial Complaints board meeting (as a nonmember.) She also attended

Governor Barbush reported the Cannabis Law Committee is working to more effectively engage state agencies in committee activities. He also said discussion has taken place regarding whether there is interest in transitioning that committee to an OBA section.

Governor Ailles Bahm added the committee will meet this week and has coordinated with the Oklahoma County Bar Association and Tulsa County Bar Association to advertise LHL in the *Tulsa Lawyer* and *OCBA Briefcase*. She also said meetings with mental health services provider A Chance to Change are regularly occurring in efforts to continue improving services.

the Oklahoma County Bar Association Delegates Caucus to support Board of Governors member at large candidate Kate Doodoo and a celebration of life for notable Oklahoma City-area attorney Ed Abel. Additionally, she visited with the OBA auditors and accepted the audit governance letter. **Governor Barbush** reported he attended the Sheep Creek golf tournament and dinner hosted by Governor Thurman for the Pontotoc County Bar Association. He virtually attended the Lawyers Helping Lawyers Assistance Program meeting and reviewed Cannabis Law Committee communications concerning speakers and panel participants for the meeting during the Annual Meeting. He met with the Bryan County Bar Association president to discuss delegate attendance at the Annual Meeting. He also had conversations with multiple District 2 judges and attorneys regarding the Annual Meeting

and the Oklahoma Attorneys Mutual Insurance Co. reception and with various OBA officers and OAMIC regarding the Annual Meeting and OAMIC's reception. **Governor Bracken** reported he attended the Oklahoma County Bar Association Meeting, the OCBA Delegates Caucus and the Oklahoma Bar Foundation Developmental Committee meeting. He worked with the Military Assistance Committee chair on recruitment and planned for the Annual Meeting. **Governor Hixon** reported he attended the Tulsa County Bar Association Executive Committee meeting and the Morton Comprehensive Health Services Finance Committee and Board of Directors meetings. He provided a legal review of a vendor agreement for the Will Rogers Memorial Foundation. **Governor Knott** reported she is attending the Annual Meeting and will present during the Oklahoma Judicial Conference. **Governor Oldfield**

reported he reviewed the annual report for the Legal Internship Committee and attended the swearing-in ceremony for Kay and Noble counties Special Judge Thomas Griesedieck. **Governor Thurman** reported he organized and attended the Sheep Creek event for the Pontotoc County Bar Association and attended the annual fundraiser and golf tournament for Mount St. Mary Catholic High School. **Governor Trevillion** reported he attended the Oklahoma County Bar Association Board of Governors meeting, the Oklahoma County delegates meeting and the Credentials Committee meeting.

REPORT OF THE YOUNG LAWYERS DIVISION

Governor Talbert reported she attended the YLD meeting, reached out to several individuals who were delinquent in paying bar dues and prepared for the ABA and OBA annual meetings.

She assisted an individual who was interested in running for the Board of Governors and attended the Access to Justice meeting.

BOARD LIAISON REPORTS

Governor Oldfield reported the **Legal Internship Committee** recently met. Governor Barbush said the **Cannabis Law Committee** has successfully engaged state agency leaders and is planning its upcoming CLE, which will be open to all lawyers. He said the **Lawyers Helping Lawyers Assistance Program Committee** is working on defining its mission and ensuring funding mechanisms are sound. Governor Ailles Bahm added the committee will meet this week and has coordinated with the Oklahoma County Bar Association and Tulsa County Bar Association to advertise LHL in the *Tulsa Lawyer* and OCBA *Briefcase*. She also said meetings with mental health services provider A Chance to Change are regularly occurring in efforts to continue improving services. Board members are encouraged to attend a fundraiser for the LHL foundation that is being planned. It was discussed that the LHL Foundation needs some sort of internet presence to enable the sharing of information and allow online donations. Governor Ailles Bahm also reported the **Legislative Monitoring Committee** recently met and will present the annual Legislative Debrief this week titled "Statute Symposium." Governor Bracken reported the **Military Assistance Committee** will meet during the Annual Meeting. Governor Conner said **Awards Committee** chair LeAnne McGill will be presenting as OBA Award winners are recognized during various events at the Annual Meeting. Governor Hixon reported the **Law Day Committee**

will meet this week. Governor Locke reported the **Membership Engagement Committee** recently met and continues its work in engaging law schools and planning events for newly admitted OBA members. They will also meet during the Annual Meeting. Governor Thurman reported the **Civil Procedure and Evidence Code Committee** will meet soon.

ACTION PERTAINING TO RULES GOVERNING DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDINGS

The board passed a motion to approve a three-member commission appointed by President Pringle in conformance with Rule 3.3 (b)(2) of the Rules Governing Disciplinary Proceedings pertaining to a grievance received against a member of the Professional Responsibility Commission. The three appointed members are Angela Ailles Bahm, S. Shea Bracken and James R. Hicks.

2024 LAW DAY REPORT

Law Day Committee Chair Ed Wunch submitted a written report that was presented with the board agenda for its review.

2024 PRESIDENTIAL APPOINTMENTS

The board passed motions to approve the following appointments.

Board of Editors: President Pringle appoints retired Judge Becky R. Baird, Miami, District 1, to a three-year term starting Jan. 1, 2024, and expiring Dec. 31, 2026.

Professional Responsibility Tribunal: President Pringle appoints Kelly Kavalier of Stillwater to a three-year term expiring June 30, 2027, filling a vacancy left by Melissa DeLacerda of Stillwater, who is rotating off.

2025 PRESIDENTIAL APPOINTMENTS

The board passed motions to approve the following appointments.

Budget Committee: President-Elect Williams appoints members as set forth below.

- Members of the House of Delegates: Jana Knott, Anthony L. Bonner Jr., Jeff Trevillion, Michael E. Esmond and Ashley R. Webb.
- Board of Governors: Philip D. Hixon, Angela Ailles Bahm and Miles Pringle

2025 SOLO & SMALL FIRM CONFERENCE

Executive Director Johnson reviewed the various venue options available and provided updates on planning and dates to be determined for the 2025 event.

NEXT BOARD MEETING

The Board of Governors met in August, and a summary of those actions will be published in the *Oklahoma Bar Journal* once the minutes are approved. The next board meeting will be held virtually on Friday, Sept. 20.

Oklahoma Bar Foundation Awards \$267,497 in Grants for Courtroom Technology

THE OKLAHOMA BAR Foundation is excited to announce the allocation of \$267,497 in grants to support courtroom technology advancements. This funding is aimed at equipping courtrooms with the latest audio-visual components, which will significantly reduce technical issues that often cause court delays. Additionally, these improvements will enhance accessibility for individuals with hearing and visual impairments.

By addressing these technological needs, the Oklahoma Bar Foundation continues its commitment to improving the efficiency and inclusivity of our legal system. The upgrades will not only streamline court proceedings but also ensure that all participants, regardless of their physical abilities, can fully engage in the judicial process.

“We are proud to support these counties in their efforts to modernize courtroom technology,” said Courtney Briggs, Oklahoma Bar Foundation vice president and Grants & Awards Committee chair. “These grants represent our ongoing dedication to fostering a more accessible and efficient justice system for all.”

The counties receiving these grants are in the table below.

Each of these counties has demonstrated a clear need for technological improvements and a commitment to leveraging these advancements to better serve their communities.

For more information about the Oklahoma Bar Foundation and its grant programs, please visit www.okbarfoundation.org/grants.

Court	Project	Grant Amount
Delaware County	Sound systems for three courtrooms	\$83,000
McIntosh County	Laptop, scanner and digital recorder	\$1,386
Oklahoma County	Seven interactive displays	\$28,050
Okmulgee County	Audiovisual equipment	\$76,089
Pittsburg County	Audio upgrades for four courtrooms Laptop and printer	\$32,055 \$1,954
Tulsa County	Sound systems for two courtrooms and digital recorders	\$44,964





BRINGING JUSTICE HOME: SUPPORTING OKLAHOMA FAMILIES

ADDRESSING LEGAL NEEDS IN OKLAHOMA

Did you know that more than 800,000 people in Oklahoma live with household incomes below 125% of the federal poverty level? For a family of three, this translates to trying to survive on just \$25,820 a year. These families often face significant legal challenges that can further jeopardize their stability and well-being. Alarming, 92% of legal needs go unmet among low-income families, leaving them vulnerable and without necessary support.

THE OKLAHOMA BAR FOUNDATION'S COMMITMENT

The OBF Board of Trustees invites all attorneys and law firms to join our 2024 Community Partners campaign, "Bringing Justice Home: Supporting Oklahoma Families." Your contribution will directly fund nonprofit legal programs that provide crucial support to those in need.

HOW YOUR SUPPORT CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Your partnership will help fund nonprofit legal programs that:

- **Protect Children:** Ensure babies are safe and that abused and neglected children receive legal representation
- **Aid Domestic Violence Victims:** Provide domestic violence victims with access to attorneys and court advocates
- **Support Vulnerable Populations:** Assist refugees, homeless people and families involved in court-ordered diversion programs with the help of attorneys and case managers

Additionally, your support will help fund:

- **Court Technology Upgrades:** Grants for technology upgrades in county courts, improving courtroom experiences for judges, attorneys and case participants
- **Law Student Scholarships:** Scholarships for Oklahoma law school students to support their education and future careers
- **Court Reporter Stipends:** Stipends to encourage court reporters to work in rural Oklahoma courts that lack reporter services

ENSURING JUSTICE FOR ALL OKLAHOMANS

These initiatives are essential for carrying out our vision to ensure justice is possible for all Oklahomans. We would greatly appreciate your partnership, advocacy and commitment. Together, we can bring justice home for Oklahoma families.

More information about the partners giving programs is available on the next page.

Partners Programs

Bring Justice Home for over 66,000 Oklahoma families. Here's how:



Partners

You can join as a Partner for Justice. Support starting at \$100/year.

Legacy Partners

Join as a Legacy Partner by making a planned gift to the OBF.

Community Partners

Your law firm or organization can join as a Community Partner. Support starting at \$1,000/year.

Scan to *give!*

Scan the code to give today!



Contact Candice Pace at 405-416-7081 or candicej@okbar.org for more information.

MORE WAYS TO *support* THE OBF

1. CY PRES

Leftover monies from class action cases can be designated to the OBF's Court Grant Fund or General Fund.

2. MEMORIALS AND TRIBUTES

Make a gift in honor of someone. OBF will send a handwritten card to the honoree or family.

3. UNCLAIMED TRUST FUNDS

Contact the OBF if you have unclaimed trust funds in your IOLTA Account. (405) 416-7070 or foundation@okbar.org.

Thank you TO OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS

\$5,000 DONORS

Bob G. Burke



Benjamin Russ

\$2,500 DONORS



\$1,000 DONORS

- Appellate Practice Law Section
- Bank of Oklahoma
- Bass Law
- Beyond Square One
- Cheek & Falcone, PLLC
- Deanna Hartley-Kelso
- Energy & Natural Resources Law
- Fellers Snider
- Financial Institutions & Commercial Law Section
- Government & Administrative Law Section
- Health Law Section
- McAfee & Taft
- Real Property Law Section
- Shiny Rachel Mathew
- Tisdal & O'Hara
- University of Oklahoma College of Law
- Whitten Burrage
- Workers' Compensation Section



Give online at *any time*
www.okbarfoundation.org/donate



OKLAHOMA BAR FOUNDATION
 Law. Education. Justice.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

(continued from page 4)

Laura has also contributed to the legal community. She was an adjunct professor who taught banking law at both the OU College of Law and the OCU School of Law. She helped found and chaired the OBA Financial Law Section and then helped merge it with the Commercial Law Section. She has published numerous articles in many periodicals. Her career has taken her from courtrooms (having argued before the Oklahoma Supreme Court) to classrooms to boardrooms to an invitation to the White House.

Laura's career is one that any child would be proud of. I had the good fortune to practice with both of my parents for nine years before becoming general counsel for The Bankers Bank. To say she has influenced my legal career is an understatement.

We attorneys are more than our resumes, and I am very grateful for Laura's nonprofessional life. As a son, she has given me (and my sister and all her grandchildren) unwavering love and support. She has picked me up at my weakest moments. She has shown me that listening and speaking softly is often more powerful and persuasive than being loud and boisterous. While she has run a successful business, she has always given back to the causes she believes in and served on several nonprofit boards.

Strength is not a masculine quality. Laura showed strength to persevere and thrive in the male-dominated legal and banking fields. She showed strength to fight off cancer while barely missing a day of work. She showed strength to stand up against things she believed to be wrong.

Thank you to all the women in law. You make a difference. And a special thank you to my mother.

Thank you to all the women in law. You make a difference.



ONE ASSOCIATION ★ MANY OPPORTUNITIES

JOIN AN OBA COMMITTEE TODAY!

Get more involved in the OBA, network with colleagues and work together for the betterment of our profession and our communities. More than 20 active committees offer you the chance to serve in a way that is meaningful for you. Now is your opportunity to join other volunteer lawyers in making our association the best of its kind! To join, visit www.okbar.org/committees/committee-sign-up.

Summertime With the YLD

By *Laura R. Talbert*

THE SPIRIT OF SUMMER IS closing in on us. Whether you spent it going to outdoor barbecues, spending lazy weekends at the lake or taking road trips, saying goodbye to summer is just different than the other seasons. Reflecting on the passing season, the Young Lawyers Division had an active summer, chock-full of activities from beginning to end. Collectively, we wanted to make this summer one to remember, and we hit the ground running.

ABA ANNUAL MEETING

In early July, attorneys from all over the state made their way to Norman for summer school, also known as the OBA Annual Meeting. This year, the Annual Meeting and the Solo & Small Firm Conference were rolled into one. Additionally, for the first time in decades, the Annual Meeting and the Oklahoma Judicial Conference were held simultaneously, giving lawyers and judges opportunities for valuable interactions in a shared space. Of course, the YLD hosted the best hospitality suite, the “Summer Vacation” suite. Designed by the YLD’s Mary McCann, the Summer Vacation suite had it all: inflatables, games, music, food and drinks – you name it, we had it. For the first time, the YLD’s hospitality suite featured a mocktail bar courtesy of Lawyers Helping Lawyers. Needless to say, Summer Vacation was enjoyed by all this year.

During the Annual Meeting, the YLD was presented the Outstanding Service to the Public Award for the Wills for Heroes program. Caroline Shaffer Siex, the YLD’s immediate past chair, was also presented with the Outstanding Young Lawyer Award. Again, we thank the OBA for honoring both the Wills for Heroes program and Caroline.

BAR EXAM SURVIVAL KITS

The day after the Annual Meeting wrapped up, the YLD Board of Directors gathered to

prepare bar exam survival kits for each person taking the July bar exam. This year, that was no easy feat – there were over 400 people taking it! With bar results coming out soon, we wish each test taker the best of luck and look forward to you joining the YLD ranks in the near future.

ABA ANNUAL MEETING

In early August, the American Bar Association held its Annual Meeting. This year, it took place in Chicago. The ABA meeting provides a platform at the national



OBA YLD leaders attend the YLD Assembly at the ABA Annual Meeting. From left Alexandra Gage, Laura Talbert, Clayton Baker and Taylor Venus.

level for exchanging ideas on legal reforms, improving legal education and addressing ethical challenges in the practice of law. This engagement not only helps in shaping sound legal policies but also in ensuring that state laws remain aligned with national standards and evolving legal norms. Of course, in between the action, we had a few moments to check out Chicago.

WILLS FOR HEROES

A few weeks ago, the YLD had another Wills for Heroes event. Organized by YLD members Clayton Baker and Taylor Venus, we partnered with Southwestern Oklahoma State University for this year's event. Throughout the day, the YLD prepared and finalized wills for several public safety professionals, including law enforcement officers and veterans, and had a great time doing it. Between drafting, witnessing and notarizing, we had it all covered every step of the way. Big shoutout to our new friend, Hiba Jameel, for joining in and volunteering her time.

JOINT CLE AND DOG ADOPTION EVENT

For the first time, the YLD will partner with the Animal Law Section and the OBA Leadership Academy for a dog adoption event and CLE focused on key issues in animal law. Light snacks will be served, and dogs will be available for adoption on-site following the



YLD volunteers draft estate planning documents for emergency responders during the Wills for Heroes event in Weatherford on Aug. 10. Back row (from left): Bryan Goodpasture, Chloe Moyer, Randy Gordon and Taylor Venus. Front row: Hiba Jameel, Laura Talbert, Mary McCann and Liz Stevens. Also attending the event were Morgan Maxey and Janet Johnson.

CLE. Don't miss this unique blend of education, networking and an opportunity to find your new best friend! Please join us on Friday, Sept. 20, at 5 p.m. over at Bar K in Oklahoma City for this event. Your dog is invited, too!

WE WANT YOU TO GET INVOLVED!

Despite the intense heat, the YLD managed to make the most out of this summer, and we hope you did, too. From organizing engaging community outreach events, to co-hosting CLEs on legal issues, to party planning for hospitality suites, we strove to stay connected and active. Our team

has been busy creating opportunities for professional development, fostering collaboration among members and tackling important initiatives aimed at improving access to justice. As we transition into the fall, we look forward to building on this momentum, continuing our efforts to support and inspire young legal professionals and driving positive change within the legal community.

Ms. Talbert is a lawyer in Oklahoma City and serves as the YLD chairperson. She may be contacted at lrtaibert@gmail.com.

SAVE THE DATE



CLE & DOG ADOPTION EVENT

FRIDAY, SEPT. 20 | 5 P.M. | BAR K, OKLAHOMA CITY

Join the OBA Young Lawyers Division, Animal Law Section and Leadership Academy for their first joint CLE and dog adoption event. The one-hour CLE program will focus on key issues in animal law. Hors d'oeuvres will also be served, and dogs available for adoption will be on-site following the program. Don't miss this unique blend of education, networking and an opportunity to find your new furry friend! More information will be available soon.

Co-sponsored by the Kirkpatrick Foundation.

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Oklahoma Bar Association,
Oklahoma Access to Justice Commission
and American Bar Association

FOR YOUR INFORMATION



CODY J. COOPER APPOINTED TO OBA BOARD OF GOVERNORS

The OBA Board of Governors appointed Cody J. Cooper to a three-year term on the board representing Supreme Court Judicial District 3. His term begins Jan. 1, 2025.

Mr. Cooper is an experienced litigator and a licensed patent attorney who represents individuals and companies in a wide range of business litigation and intellectual property matters. His practice primarily concentrates on complex commercial litigation in state and federal courts.

He graduated from the OU College of Law with honors. He also has a general science and engineering background, which qualified him to become registered before the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office as a practicing patent attorney.

Mr. Cooper is actively involved in his community and has volunteered with several organizations, including NewView Oklahoma, the Salvation Army, various public schools throughout the Oklahoma City metro area and others.

Born and raised in Norman, he now lives in Oklahoma City with his wife, daughter, son and two dogs. In his free time, he enjoys spending time with friends and family, playing sports and attending Oklahoma City Thunder and Sooner sporting events.

OCU LAW FORMS TRIBAL SOVEREIGNTY INSTITUTE

Leaders from Oklahoma City University and the OCU School of Law announced the formation of the OCU Tribal Sovereignty Institute, established to advance tribal sovereignty. The new institute will be

housed at the OCU School of Law in Oklahoma City. The institute aims to create scholarship on the topic of sovereignty, elevate understanding about sovereignty, educate and train lawyers with expertise in American Indian law and pursue sovereignty initiatives beyond the legal realm through cultural preservation, language revitalization and economic development. For more information, visit <https://bit.ly/3YN2uXt>.



Photo courtesy of OCU



OPENING YOUR LAW PRACTICE

On Tuesday, Oct. 15, join the OBA Management Assistance Program for Opening Your Law Practice. This is a no-cost, semi-annual event for new lawyers, those returning to private practice or those venturing out on their own. This day-long program will address resources for starting a new law practice, professionalism, client management and so much more. Learn more at www.okbar.org/oyp.

SHOW YOUR CREATIVE SIDE

We want to feature your work on "The Back Page" and the *Oklahoma Bar Journal* cover! Submit articles related to the practice of law, or send us something humorous, transforming or intriguing. Poetry, photography and artwork are options too. Photographs and artwork relating to featured topics may also have the opportunity to be featured on our cover! Email submissions of about 500 words or high-resolution images to OBA Communications Director Lori Rasmussen, lorir@okbar.org.

OBA CRIMINAL LAW SECTION PRESENTS AWARDS

Congratulations to District 2 defense attorney Ryan Recker of Weatherford and District 5 District Attorney Kyle Cabelka of Lawton, who received awards from the OBA Criminal Law Section! The OBA Criminal Law Section event was held at the University of Central Oklahoma Forensic Science Institute.



From left David McKenzie presents Kyle Cabelka, District 5 district attorney for Comanche and Cotton counties, with the award for Professional Advocate Prosecutor of 2024.



From left District 2 Assistant District Attorney Gina Webb and defense attorney Ryan Recker. Ms. Webb nominated Mr. Recker for the Professional Advocate Defense Attorney Award. Photos courtesy of the OBA Criminal Law Section.

LHL DISCUSSION GROUPS TO HOST OCTOBER MEETINGS

The Lawyers Helping Lawyers monthly discussion group will meet Thursday, Oct. 3, in Oklahoma City at the office of Tom Cummings, 701 NW 13th St. The group will also meet Thursday, Oct. 10, in Tulsa at the office of Scott Goode, 1437 S. Boulder Ave., Ste. 1200. The Oklahoma City women's discussion group will meet Thursday, Oct. 24, at the first-floor conference room of the Oil Center, 2601 NW Expressway.

Each meeting is facilitated by committee members and a licensed mental health professional. The small group discussions are intended to give group leaders and participants the opportunity to ask questions, provide support and share information with fellow bar members to improve their lives – professionally and personally. Visit www.okbar.org/lhl for more information, and be sure to keep an eye on the OBA events calendar at www.okbar.org/events for upcoming discussion group meeting dates.

NEW LAWYER SWEARING-IN

The swearing-in ceremony for new bar members is scheduled for Oct. 8 in the Oklahoma state Capitol House Chambers. There will be three sessions: 9 a.m. for OCU, 10 a.m. for OU and 11 a.m. for TU and out-of-state graduates.



IMPORTANT UPCOMING DATES

The Oklahoma Bar Center will be closed Monday, Sept. 2, in observance of Labor Day.

CONNECT WITH THE OBA THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA

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



ON THE MOVE

Paul Hood has joined the Tulsa law firm of Pray Walker as an associate attorney. He received his J.D. from the Loyola University New Orleans College of Law. Mr. Hood practices in the areas of complex business and commercial litigation, employment and labor law, personal injury and insurance cases.

Daisy S. Borders has joined the Oklahoma City office of Phillips Murrah as an associate attorney. She practices in the areas of civil and family law, including litigation of relationships with domestic violence and abuse, high-conflict custody dynamics and complex property valuation. Ms. Borders received her J.D. with honors from the University of Montana Alexander Blewett III School of Law. During law school, she worked as a law clerk for Clapp, Peterson, Tiemessen, Thorsness LLC in Fairbanks, Alaska. She also interned with the University of Montana's legal counsel under the general counsel and in a Blackstone LaunchPad consultant capacity.

Viki Fariior has joined the Oklahoma City office of Ogletree Deakins as of counsel. Previously, Ms. Fariior served as a trial attorney with the Department of Justice Tax Division and as a special trial attorney with the IRS Office of Chief Counsel. Her practice has primarily focused on corporate, partnership and private equity tax matters, including complex financial transactions. Ms. Fariior received her J.D. *summa cum laude* from the American University Washington College of Law and

her LL.M. in taxation from the New York University School of Law.

Whitney Humphrey has joined the Tulsa office of GableGotwals as a transactional associate attorney. She advises clients in mergers and acquisitions, commercial lending and corporate finance, real estate transactions, securities, entity formation and restructuring and general corporate matters. Ms. Humphrey received her J.D. with highest honors from the TU College of Law, where she served as the notes and comments editor of the *Tulsa Law Review*. During law school, she earned four CALI Awards, was named a Holloway Scholar and completed externships at Oral Roberts University and a local nonprofit organization.

Allison Lee has been promoted to equity shareholder at the Tulsa law firm of Mullican & Hart PC. She joined the firm in 2021 after beginning her practice in railroad defense at another firm in 2015. Ms. Lee has experience in complex matters, including the interpretation of state and federal railroad regulations, the preemptive effect of the Federal Railroad Safety Act and the Interstate Commerce Commission Termination Act, as well as nuances of state and federal procedure.

Margaret White and **Morgan Lawson** have joined the Oklahoma City office of Hall Estill as associate attorneys. Ms. White's practice focuses on high net worth matrimonial and child custody actions, as well as complex commercial litigation. During law school, she served

as a domestic violence and family law unit intern at the Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia and as a legal intern for Judge Steven Wellner. As part of her practice, she has handled divorce litigation, complex property settlements, asset tracing, premarital agreements and divorce decree and settlement modifications. She received her J.D. with honors from the Georgetown University Law Center in 2020. Ms. Lawson's practice focuses on family law, civil rights, corporate and business services, employment litigation, Native American law, products liability and real estate. During law school, she served as an extern with the Oklahoma Juvenile Justice Court under Judge Trevor Pemberton. She received her J.D. from the OU College of Law in 2022.

Mariana Pitts has joined the Oklahoma City office of Spencer Fane as an associate attorney. She is a member of the Litigation and Dispute Resolution Practice Group and assists clients in a variety of complex litigation matters, specifically focusing on trust, estate and fiduciary litigation and resolving multifaceted disputes while preserving highly sensitive interests and relationships. Previously, Ms. Pitts worked primarily in business immigration law, aiding individuals and institutions in professional fields, including education, medicine and energy. She received her J.D. from the OU College of Law while working as a legal assistant.

Kathryn Taylor has joined the Oklahoma City office of Ogletree Deakins as of counsel. Her practice focuses on employment law; she has represented employers and governmental agencies at administrative and legislative hearings, conducted all facets of workplace investigations and advised entities on labor and employment issues for both employees and independent contractors. Her legal experience includes significant work in the health and welfare space, exclusively working with self-funded benefit plans, drafting and amending plan documents, evaluating and negotiating provider contracts, ERISA compliance and other federal laws relating to employee benefit matters. Ms. Taylor received her J.D. from the OU College of Law.

Chance Holland and **Jeremy Rowland** have joined the Oklahoma City office of Hall Booth Smith. Mr. Holland joined the firm as a partner. He defends healthcare professionals, transportation companies and national insurers. Previously, Mr. Holland was a partner at a trial firm where, for a decade, his practice focused almost exclusively on medical malpractice defense. He began his legal career with a mid-sized insurance defense firm, where he represented insureds in third-party personal injury cases and insurers in first-party actions brought by their insureds. Mr. Rowland joined the firm as of counsel, with more than two decades of litigation experience. He focuses on construction, general liability, health care

litigation, labor and employment and medical malpractice matters. Previously, he was a partner and co-manager with a civil litigation practice for more than 18 years, successfully handling issues related to medical malpractice, employment, personal injury, health care systems, insurance, civil rights, bad faith, residential and commercial construction and contract law. Before establishing his practice, he worked with two mid-size insurance defense firms in Oklahoma City.

Matthew B. Hickey and **Tony Mastin** have been elected shareholders of the law firm of McAfee & Taft. Mr. Hickey is a tax and business lawyer whose practice is primarily focused on providing clients with sophisticated tax analysis and advice as it relates to business entity selection and formation, complex business transactions, general operational matters and tax efficiency. His experience also includes helping high net worth clients achieve their estate planning objectives through advanced tax and business planning, as well as advising nonprofit organizations on the specific tax and regulatory requirements necessary for them to maintain their tax-exempt status. Mr. Mastin focuses his practice on advising individuals, high net worth families, tax-exempt organizations and businesses of all sizes on planning matters involving state and local taxation (SALT), including sales and use taxes, multi-state taxation, SALT controversy work and federal income taxation. He also serves as co-leader of the firm's

Economic Development, Tax Credits and Business Incentives Practice Group and devotes a portion of his practice to assisting developers, investors and businesses in obtaining and maximizing the use of business incentives, including tax exemptions and tax credits.

Cori H. Loomis has joined the Oklahoma City office of McAfee & Taft as of counsel. She is a member of the Healthcare Law Practice Group and primarily represents and counsels hospitals and health systems, physicians and medical practices and other health care providers on a broad range of transactional, operational, legislative, administrative and regulatory compliance matters. She currently serves as an adjunct professor at OCU, where she teaches a master's level course in health law. She has more than 30 years of experience in both private practice and public service. Her prior career experience includes serving as the compliance officer and HIPAA privacy official for OU and as the general counsel for the Oklahoma State Medical Association. Ms. Loomis received her J.D. from the University of Texas at Austin School of Law.

Arthur F. Hoge III has been elected a shareholder of Hall Estill. He practices in the Oklahoma City office, where he focuses on litigation, estate and charitable planning and fraternity and sorority matters. Within his estate planning practice, Mr. Hoge also assists clients with property tax matters and appeals (*ad valorem* tax matters) nationwide,

including manufacturing plants, malls, office buildings, warehouses, shopping centers and apartment complexes.

Kevin Freeman has been promoted to chief legal officer for Electrical Consultants Inc. in Billings, Montana. He graduated from the OCU School of Law in 1992 and has been an OBA member since 1993. He also maintains licenses in Montana and Wisconsin. He is responsible for all legal, risk, insurance, safety and IT security-related matters within the company.

John C. Gotwals has become a preferred shareholder of the Tulsa law firm of Barrow & Grimm PC. He practices in both litigation and generalized legal counseling. His litigation practice consists primarily of family law, paternity matters, probate/trust administration and litigation, guardianships, civil litigation, real estate and business disputes. Outside of the courtroom, he advises his clients on estate planning, entity structure, transactional matters and general corporate advising. Mr. Gotwals received his J.D. from the OU College of Law in 2017. Prior to joining Barrow & Grimm in 2021, he practiced at James R. Gotwals & Associates Inc.

Robert W. Hill has joined the Tulsa law firm of Barrow & Grimm PC as an associate attorney. He received his J.D. with honors from the TU College of Law in 2018 and began his practice with a local tax and estate planning firm. Mr. Hill focuses his practice on estate planning, probate and trust litigation, trust and estate administration, tax matters and general business matters.

Andie B. Netherland has joined the Tulsa law firm of Barrow & Grimm PC as an associate attorney. Her practice primarily consists of civil litigation on matters concerning business disputes, tax law and Indian law. She received her J.D. from the OU College of Law in 2021, where she served as the managing editor of the *American Indian Law Review* and on the Board of Advocates. Prior to joining Barrow & Grimm PC in 2023, she served as a law clerk in the Eastern District of Oklahoma for Magistrate Judge Jason A. Robertson.

Kasey K. Fagin has joined the Tulsa law firm of Barrow & Grimm PC as an associate attorney. He primarily focuses on general civil litigation, including contractual disputes, business torts, construction and real estate. Mr. Fagin received his J.D. from the TU College of Law in 2020, where he served as an editor of the *Tulsa Law Review*. He has experience in defending cases involving complex civil litigation.

Abigail E. Bauer has joined the Tulsa law firm of Barrow & Grimm PC as an associate attorney. She received her J.D. with honors from the TU College of Law in 2022 and practiced briefly with another firm in Tulsa. Ms. Bauer focuses her practice primarily on business litigation and contract disputes while representing clients in other civil litigation matters as well. Ms. Bauer also handles probate and trust administration and litigation.

Hannah Coker has joined the Oklahoma City law firm of DeBee, Clark & Weber PLLC as an associate attorney. She practices in the areas of tax-exempt organizations and business transactions. Ms. Coker received her J.D. from the OCU School of Law in 2022.

Margaret Hartman has joined the Tulsa office of CharneyBrown LLC as an associate attorney. Her practice will focus on energy transactions and oil and gas title opinions. She graduated from the TU College of Law in 2021.

Maxfield Malone has joined the Tulsa office of Pray Walker. He previously worked at the Tulsa County District Attorney's Office as an assistant district attorney. His experience there included work in the Juvenile and Criminal divisions, including cases of sex crimes, aggravated domestic violence and domestic homicide after joining the Special Victims Unit. Mr. Malone graduated from the OU College of Law, where he was active in the Student Bar Association and was a case editor of the *Oil and Gas, Natural Resources and Energy Journal*.

KUDOS

Amy Stipe has been selected as a fellow of the Litigation Counsel of America. The invitation-only organization is a trial lawyer honorary society composed of less than 0.5% of American lawyers. Ms. Stipe is the president of and a shareholder at GableGotwals. Her civil litigation practice includes a broad range of areas, including class actions, complex contracts, business torts, insurance bad faith, oil and gas and labor and employment. She has successfully tried cases in federal and state courts, as well as before arbitration panels.

Jake Krattiger received the 2024 Visionary of the Year Award from the Red River Region of the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society. The award celebrates community leaders raising funds for local blood cancer patients through a 10-week philanthropic competition. Mr. Krattiger spearheaded a campaign that raised more than \$90,000 out of the total \$200,000 raised during the competition.

Kelli J. Stump was installed as president of the American Immigration Lawyers Association on June 13. The association is an organization of members across the world dedicated to the practice of U.S. immigration law.

Arvo Q. Mikkanen received the Advocacy Warrior Award from the National Native American Bar Association. The award recognizes legal practitioners who have demonstrated exceptional excellence in the legal practice advocating for Native American justice, rights and tribal sovereignty. Mr. Mikkanen is president of the Oklahoma Indian Bar Association and has a legal career spanning more than 30 years. He has served as an assistant U.S. attorney for the Western District of Oklahoma since 1994 – handling over 750 criminal cases, including violent crimes and a variety of other crimes – and in the civil division.

AT THE PODIUM

Nicholas E. Thurman presented “Preparation and Presentation of a Marijuana Case in 2024 – From Charging to Conviction” at the Association of Oklahoma Narcotic Enforcers’ annual summer conference.

Kevin Kuhn made two presentations. He presented “Answering Written Discovery – Taking the ‘Ugh’ Out of It” to a Colorado defense lawyer audience at the law firm of Wheeler Trigg O’Donnell LLP, where he is a partner, and “Direct Examination” at the Colorado Bar Association’s CLE program “2024 Winning at Trial.”

Kimberly Lambert Love spoke at the Oklahoma Office of Civil Rights Enforcement 2024 Employment Law Symposium on employer dress codes and religious accommodations and advised employers on responding to employee requests for religious accommodations in the workplace. Ms. Love practices at the law firm of Titus Hillis Reynolds Love and focuses her practice on all areas of employment law.

HOW TO PLACE AN ANNOUNCEMENT:

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

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

Submit news items to:

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Oklahoma Bar Association
405-416-7018
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Articles for the November issue must be received by Oct. 1.

Edwin D. Abel of Oklahoma City died June 18. He was born Feb. 1, 1942, in Okemah. He graduated from OU and received his J.D. from the OU College of Law in 1966. In 1976, he founded the Abel Law Firm, formerly known as Abel, Musser, Sokolosky & Clark. Mr. Abel was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes when he was 8 years old, a condition that eventually robbed him of his eyesight. His fortitude led to an illustrious career wherein he broke records for obtaining the largest jury verdicts in several Oklahoma counties. He co-authored the *Oklahoma Evidence Code*, for which he received the Leo H. Whinery Distinguished Award. He was named Oklahoma Trial Lawyers Association Member of the Year and inducted into the prestigious fellowship of the American College of Trial Lawyers. He was honored with the OBA John E. Shipp Award for Ethics and the Earl Sneed Award. He has long shared a reputation for working with young lawyers and was viewed by many as a mentor in the legal profession. He frequently taught at the OU College of Law and was elected by the OU College of Law faculty as an honorary member of the Order of Barristers. He even taught the public in his "Law and You" series, in which he answered common legal questions. He held various leadership roles and board positions with the Oklahoma Association for Justice, American Association for Justice, The Law and You Foundation, Oklahoma Lawyers for Children and Mid-American Christian University. He served as president and director of the American Black and Tan Coon Hunters Association, was active

in the Oklahoma Federation of Coonhunters and wrote a monthly column named "The Legal Hound." He was also appointed by two governors to the Oklahoma Wildlife Conservation Commission, which he served for more than 16 years. Memorial contributions may be made to Camp Sweeney, a camp for children with Type 1 diabetes.

Howard K. Berry Jr. of Oklahoma City died May 15. He was born Oct. 8, 1931. Mr. Berry was a lifetime resident of Oklahoma City and a member of the St. Luke's Methodist Church since he was 11. He graduated from Classen High School and OU, where he was a member of Sigma Nu. **He served in the U.S. Air Force as a captain.** Mr. Berry received his J.D. with honors from the OU College of Law in 1958 and later made a generous donation to the school in appreciation of the value of education he received. Upon his graduation, he joined his father, who taught him the art of jury selection and persuasion. In honor of his father, Mr. Berry established the Howard K. Berry Sr. Award, which is presented each year at the Oklahoma County Bar Association Law Day Luncheon. His career included serving as a jury trial lawyer and lecturing and publishing articles on jury persuasion. He also served as president of various organizations, including the Oklahoma Bar Foundation, the Oklahoma County Bar Association and the Oklahoma Trial Lawyers Association (now known as the Oklahoma Association for Justice). Mr. Berry was elected by his peers to serve on the Judicial Nominating Commission, where he became chairman, and was a member of the American College of Trial Lawyers.

Christopher David Blockcolski of Broken Arrow died Feb. 23. He was born June 3, 1979. Mr. Blockcolski graduated with a bachelor's degree in business from Northeastern State University in 2001 and received his J.D. from the OU College of Law in 2004. He led a distinguished career representing the oil and gas industry with unwavering dedication, as well as exemplifying fairness and integrity while serving as the city judge for Holdenville.

Barrett Thomas Bowers of Oklahoma City died May 5. He was born Sept. 16, 1985, in Oklahoma City. Mr. Bowers attended the University of Central Oklahoma and received his J.D. from the OU College of Law in 2011. He embarked on a successful career as a litigation attorney. Memorial contributions may be made to the Oklahoma Humane Society.

Robert Olen Brooks Jr. of Pauls Valley died Aug. 8, 2023. He was born Feb. 12, 1955, in Wynnewood. He graduated from OSU with a bachelor's degree in animal science and was a member of the school's nationally recognized meat judging team. Mr. Brooks received his J.D. from the TU College of Law in 1982. He practiced for many years in Pauls Valley.

George Robert Carpenter of Oklahoma City died July 5. He was born June 10, 1951, in Fort Moore, Georgia. He attended Oklahoma City Community College and received his J.D. with honors from the OU College of Law in 1991. Mr. Carpenter practiced in the areas of corporate law, wills and trusts. He had a

passion for dogs, which included both loving and rescuing dogs. Memorial contributions may be made to Fetch Fido A Flight.

Larry G. Cassil of Oklahoma City died May 27. He was born Dec. 15, 1932, in Oklahoma City. Mr. Cassil graduated from Classen High School in 1951 and put himself through Cameron Junior College by earning athletic scholarships in football and boxing. He earned an associate's degree in 1953, then transferred to OSU, where he joined Sigma Nu and graduated with a bachelor's degree in 1956. He worked full-time while attending the night school program at the OCU School of Law and graduated in 1964. Mr. Cassil shortly worked for other attorneys before opening an office in downtown Oklahoma City. He became the municipal judge of Warr Acres, where he proudly served the community for more than 55 years. Memorial contributions may be made to the Red Andrews Christmas Dinner Foundation.

Delorus Irene Crawford of Tulsa died Nov. 25, 2023. She was born Aug. 27, 1967, in Kansas City, Kansas. She worked at UPC and the Maynard Ungerman Law Firm, juggling several jobs while putting herself through school. Ms. Crawford graduated with a bachelor's degree in science in 2000 and received her J.D. from the TU College of Law in 2003. She devoted her career to advocating for children who could not represent or speak for themselves.

Daniel Paul Dooley of Oklahoma City died Oct. 2, 2023. He was born Dec. 27, 1948, in Austin, Minnesota. He graduated from the University of Minnesota with a bachelor's degree in electro-mechanical engineering in 1972. Upon graduation, he worked as an engineer. While working, he graduated with an MBA in finance, *summa cum laude*, at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota, in 1976. Mr. Dooley was a merit scholar and received his J.D. from the OCU School of Law in 1999, then his LL.M. in intellectual property from the University of New Hampshire Franklin Pierce School of Law in 2000. He became a director at the law firm of Fellers, Snider, Blankenship, Bailey & Tippens in Oklahoma City and eventually left to become a shareholder at Hall Estill in Oklahoma City. He also worked with video game controller companies Gamevice and Wikipad as an intellectual property attorney and an inventor (listed as an inventor on over 20 U.S. patents). He ended his career as the corporate counsel and member of the Board of Managers at game controller manufacturer T2M.

Troy Harlan Ellis of Rock Island, Illinois, died March 9. He was born April 26, 1969. He graduated from the University of Iowa with a bachelor's degree in finance and political science in 1991. He was a member of Phi Gamma Delta and was recognized academically on the dean's list, the president's list and the honor society. Mr. Ellis received his J.D. from the University of Missouri – Kansas City School of Law in 1994. During law school, he was a member of the *UMKC Law Review* and

the Order of the Bench and Robe, a recipient of the Trans World Airlines Scholarship and in the top 5% of his graduating class. Mr. Ellis served as an attorney for Polsinelli White in Kansas City, Missouri, and Alston & Bird LLP in Atlanta, counsel for Koch Materials and INVISTA and general counsel for Road Science LLC in Tulsa. He continued in this role in Lakeland, Florida, before moving to work as a contract officer at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He was also a member of the bar associations in Missouri, Kansas and Georgia. Memorial contributions may be made to the Rock Island Parks & Recreation Foundation and Rock Island-Milan Education Foundation to help fund improvements to the Highlands Spring Golf Course and establish a scholarship for the Rock Island High School golf team in his honor.

James Richard Fletcher of Guymon died March 24. He was born March 9, 1946, in Webbers Falls. He graduated from Tulsa Central High School in 1964, earned his bachelor's degree from OSU and received his J.D. from the OU College of Law in 1975. **Mr. Fletcher served in the U.S. Army.** He practiced law in Guymon. Memorial contributions may be made to Caring Hearts & Hands.

Preston Gilbert Gaddis II of Oklahoma City died May 23. He was born Sept. 20, 1938, in Tulsa. He graduated from OU, where he was a member of Beta Theta Pi, with a bachelor's degree in 1960. Mr. Gaddis was a member of the *Oklahoma Law Review*

and the Order of the Coif at the OU College of Law, where he received his LL.B. in 1962. **From 1963 to 1965, he served as a captain in the U.S. Office of the Army Judge Advocate General in Washington, D.C.** During these years, he also received his LL.M. from Georgetown University Law Center in 1965. Mr. Gaddis returned to Oklahoma and joined Crowe & Dunlevy, where he primarily practiced commercial aircraft financing. He spoke at numerous conferences on topics in his expertise and authored the "Aircraft Financing" chapter of Matthew Bender's *Commercial Finance Guide* and many other articles in the *Airfinance Journal*. He served as an editor of the *Federal Bar Journal* and chair of the OBA Banking and Business Law Section. He served his community, holding positions such as trustee for the Oklahoma City Museum of Art and the Heart of Oklahoma Camp Fire Council and on the Board of Directors of OU's Bizzell Library Society. Mr. Gaddis was a member of St. Paul's Episcopal Cathedral and the Oklahoma City Golf and Country Club. Memorial contributions may be made to the Building & Grounds Endowed Fund at St. Paul's Cathedral.

Karl Robert Gray of Van Buren, Arkansas, died June 17. He was born Oct. 1, 1940, in Terre Haute, Indiana. Mr. Gray was an attorney and an elected district judge for Oklahoma County. He graduated from the OU College of Law in 1964.

Holly Hefton of Oklahoma City died May 25. She was born Feb. 18, 1964, in McAlester. She graduated from Westlake High School in Austin, Texas, and from OU with a bachelor's degree in letters in 1992. Ms. Hefton

worked her way through law school, owning a nail and tanning salon in Norman, and received her J.D. from the OU College of Law in 1995. She was admitted to practice before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 10th Circuit, U.S. District Court, Northern, Eastern and Western districts of Oklahoma and the courts of the Chickasaw Nation. She served as a municipal judge in Dickson from 2006 to 2008. She was recognized with the Mona Salyer Lambird Spotlight Award in 2017, Volunteer of the Year from Oklahoma Lawyers for Children and the 2022 Oklahoma County Bar Association Leadership Service Award. She played an instrumental role in forming the Downed Bikers Association and served on the Board of Directors of the Second Chance Animal Rescue and Oklahoma Lawyers for Children. She was slated to serve on the 2025 Board of Directors of the Oklahoma County Bar Association. Memorial contributions may be made to Oklahoma Lawyers for Children or the Oklahoma Humane Society.

Lee Marks Holmes of Oklahoma City died May 21. He was born March 28, 1939. Mr. Holmes graduated from the OU College of Law and practiced law in Oklahoma City from 1963 until this year. He was a founder of the National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys, where he served on the Board of Directors and was elected as a fellow. He served as district club president of the Exchange Club of Oklahoma City and president of Parent Promise and the Oklahoma Pilots Association. Memorial contributions may be made to the Oklahoma Pilots Association Scholarship Fund or Parent Promise.

Robert Monroe Hughes of Valley Center, Kansas, died June 14. He was born April 28, 1956, in Kansas City, Missouri. Mr. Hughes graduated from Shawnee Mission West High School in Overland Park, Kansas, and the University of Kansas, where he was a member of Alpha Tau Omega, with a bachelor's degree in accounting and business administration. He received his J.D. from the Washburn University School of Law in 1982 and his LL.M. from the Southern Methodist University Dedman School of Law. He was an attorney and partner at Bever Dye LC since 1983, practicing in the areas of taxation, trusts and estates, elder law, wills, probate, asset protection, succession planning and business planning. Mr. Hughes served as a trustee of the Dwane L. and Velma Hunt Wallace Charitable Foundation, a fellow of the Kansas Bar Foundation, a former board member for Senior Services Inc. of Wichita and a former trustee of the Wichita-Sedgwick County Historical Museum. Memorial contributions may be made to the Divers Alert Network Endowment, Kechi United Methodist Church or PBS Kansas Channel 8.

Thomas Gavin King of Claremore died March 9. He was born Nov. 2, 1933. He graduated from the University of Notre Dame, where he received a scholarship, and received his J.D. from the TU College of Law in 1960. During law school, he worked as a law clerk for Tulsa County Court Clerk Wes Fry. After graduation, he served as a junior partner for 21 years with his uncle, T. Austin Gavin. He continued the practice after his uncle's death in 1982. Mr. King helped organize a rural water district for the local area outside of Claremore and was instrumental

in organizing Meals on Wheels in Claremore.

Joe Carlos Lewallen Jr. of Oklahoma City died April 1. He was born July 17, 1960, in Tulsa. Mr. Lewallen graduated from OSU, where he was a member of the Lambda Chi Order, with a degree in English in 1982. During school, he worked as a bailiff in the Payne County Courthouse, which was his introduction to the practice of law. He graduated from the OU College of Law in 1985. Mr. Lewallen was a member of the All Souls' Episcopal Church for more than 30 years. He taught Sunday school with his wife and served on the church vestry and as an usher and lay reader. He served in leadership positions such as president of his fraternity, his law school class, Fellers Snider PLLC, the Board of Trustees at Heritage Hall, the Board of Trustees of Children's Health Foundation, as well as Executive Committee member at McAfee & Taft PLLC and senior warden at All Souls' Episcopal Church. He served as lead counsel for many of the largest real estate transactions in state history, and his efforts helped reshape his adopted hometown into the city it is today. Memorial contributions may be made to the Oklahoma Children's Health Foundation.

Kenneth David Lovell of Midway, Utah, died July 12. He was born Sept. 7, 1953, in Murray, Utah. He graduated from Sooner High School in Bartlesville and attended Brigham Young University before serving a mission in Spain for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He returned to BYU, where he graduated in 1978, and received his J.D. from the TU College of Law in 1981. For the majority of

his career, he worked for ONEOK Inc. until his retirement in 2006. Mr. Lovell held many positions of responsibility in his church, including bishop, high councilor, stake president and patriarch. After retirement, he and his wife were called to serve three additional missions in Chile and Spain.

Michael Mancillas of Edmond died April 22. He was born June 24, 1949, in Woodward. Mr. Mancillas graduated from OU with a bachelor's degree in business and received his J.D. from the OU College of Law. During his career, Gov. George Nigh appointed him to serve as the first Hispanic judge on the Oklahoma Workers' Compensation Court of Existing Claims. Later, he established his own law firm, where he worked until his retirement in 2019. Memorial contributions may be made to the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society or a charity of your choice.

James N. Posey of Bethany died June 29. He was born June 11, 1934, in Wellington, Texas. Mr. Posey graduated from Southern Nazarene University in 1955 and received his J.D. from the OU College of Law in 1957. He opened his law office in Bethany the following August, where he practiced for 67 years. He practiced in the areas of estate planning, trust administration, probates, real estate law and forming and servicing small business entities. He was one of the pioneers in the Oklahoma City area to utilize the revocable living trust. In 2021, he formed a professional association with Shelly A. Perkins, who plans to continue serving their clients and following the example of Mr. Posey. He served his community in various capacities, including president of the Southern

Nazarene University Alumni Association and the Bethany Kiwanis Club, a member of the Executive Committee of the Governing Board of Deaconess Hospital, the Board of Directors of Lamb's Theater in New York City and the Bethany First Church of the Nazarene. Memorial contributions may be made to the Shirley Joy Bell Posey Memorial Scholarship Fund at Southern Nazarene University.

Bruce W. Robinett of Bartlesville died May 1. He was born Feb. 18, 1943, in rural Garfield County and learned his hardworking ways by working on the farm from an early age. Mr. Robinett graduated from OSU in three years with a bachelor's degree in agricultural economics. He graduated from the OU College of Law in 1967, third in his class. While attending law school, he was a member of the *Oklahoma Law Review* Board of Editors from 1965 to 1967, the Phi Delta Phi legal fraternity and the Order of the Coif. Upon graduating, Mr. Robinett joined Chester A. Brewer and Jesse J. Worten Jr. in Bartlesville at the law firm established by Mr. Brewer in 1928, now commonly known as Robinett | King. He distinguished himself as an attorney in the areas of oil and gas, estate planning, commercial transactions, agricultural law and commercial litigation. Mr. Robinett was a long-serving Fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers and an active member of his community. He served Bartlesville as a Trustee for the Lyon Foundation and Parsons Foundation and in various civil organizations.

Ronald E. Worthen of Ardmore died June 16. He was born Nov. 12, 1943, in Yuba City, California. He graduated from high school in Forrest City, Arkansas, in 1962 and from the University of Arkansas, where he was a member of Alpha Tau Omega, in 1967. Mr. Worthen graduated from the University of Arkansas School of Law in 1968. He was admitted to practice law in Arkansas in 1968 and Oklahoma in 1970. After graduation, he worked as a law clerk for U.S. District Judge Oren Harris, chief judge of the Western District of Arkansas and judge of the Eastern District of Arkansas. He was licensed to practice in the state and federal courts of Arkansas and Oklahoma, the 10th Circuit

Court of Appeals and the Supreme Court of the United States.

Mr. Worthen served active duty in the Oklahoma National Guard, first as a communications specialist with a cryptographer's security clearance, then in the Judge Advocate General Unit as chief prosecutor. He was awarded the Oklahoma Commendation Medal. He entered private practice after his service and later became the first assistant district attorney. In 1974, he was appointed to serve as district attorney of the 20th District and was elected in 1974. He served in this role until Jan. 1, 1986, when he returned to private practice. Mr. Worthen served in various roles at the First Baptist Church of Ardmore, including as a deacon, Sunday

school department director, Sunday school teacher, Board of Trustees member and Personnel Committee member. He was a member of the Oklahoma District Attorneys Training Council for several years, a director of the Oklahoma District Attorneys Association, Legal Aid Services of Oklahoma and Oklahoma Wildlife Federation and vice chair of the Oklahoma Pardon and Parole Board. He also served as president of the Carter County Bar Association, as well as the association's secretary and treasurer for several years. Memorial contributions may be made to the Baptist Home for Girls in Madill or The First Missionary Baptist Church Ardmore Scholarship Fund.



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NOVEMBER

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Apply online at <https://bit.ly/4dukMkD> using job description for Assistant City Attorney III – Litigation (Prosecutor). HR will conduct initial interviews of selected candidates and review writing samples and transcripts, and then a short list of candidates will complete a personality assessment and have a final interview with the hiring managers. Don't miss this opportunity to grow a limitless career with the Tulsa City Attorney's Office.

POSITIONS AVAILABLE

THE LAW FIRM OF ATKINSON, BRITTINGHAM, GLADD, FIASCO & EDMONDS is currently seeking an associate attorney with minimum 5 years of experience in litigation, bad faith is a plus. The associate in this position will be responsible for court appearances, depositions, performing discovery, interviews and trials in active cases filed in the Oklahoma Eastern, Northern, and Western Federal District Courts and Oklahoma Courts statewide. Atkinson, Brittingham, Gladd, Fiasco & Edmonds is primarily a defense litigation firm focusing on general civil trial and appellate practice, insurance defense, medical and legal malpractice, and Native American law. Salary is commensurate with experience. Please provide your resume, references and a cover letter including salary requirements to dbrown@abg-oklaw.com.

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

MCDANIEL ACORD, PLLC IS RECRUITING A LITIGATION ASSOCIATE ATTORNEY for the firm's Tulsa office to assist our clients in civil litigation and family law within a strong team setting that focuses on client service and maximizing outcomes. Our practice includes challenging procedural and technical issues, and the successful candidate will possess strong analytical and advocacy skills. Our Firm provides excellent benefits and rewards performance. We are looking for the right attorney to join our team who will take pride in the service we deliver and fit within our family-oriented, friendly, and low-key firm environment. Candidates should have 2 to 5 years litigation experience that reflects skill in legal research, drafting memoranda, briefs and discovery, taking depositions, managing document production, and oral argument. Candidates should submit a recent writing sample and CV to smcdaniel@ok-counsel.com.

POSITIONS AVAILABLE

Assistant City Attorney – City of Lawton

Salary: \$79,584.04 - \$135,507.96 Annually

Dependent Upon Qualifications and Experience

Make a difference with a rewarding legal career in public service! This full-time position will defend and prosecute high-profile complex civil lawsuits; draft legal documents; advise City officials as to legal rights, obligations, practices and other phases of applicable local, state and federal law; draft resolutions, ordinances and contracts and prepare legal opinions.

Applicants for the position must have graduated from an accredited law school, be a member in good standing in the Oklahoma Bar Association and admitted to or eligible for immediate admission to practice in the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Oklahoma and the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals. Applicants must possess a valid Oklahoma driver's license. Interested applicants should apply and submit a resume, law school transcript, and two (2) samples of legal writing filed in legal proceedings. See job announcement at <https://bit.ly/3TYTPvF>. Open until filled. EOE.

LITIGATION ATTORNEY wanted for a dynamic and growing law firm based in Oklahoma City. Our team values respect, time, and attention as we craft comprehensive and thoughtful legal solutions for our clients. We are committed to creating a positive and motivating work environment for our staff. Benefits include a competitive salary, full health benefits, 401K match, full client support, and the opportunity for career advancement. Qualified candidates should have at least 2+ years of experience in Litigation. Please send your resume and references to office@ballmorselow.com. If you are ready for the challenge, please apply today.

BALL MORSE LOWE, A RESPECTED LAW FIRM IN THE METRO AREA with a multi-basin practice, is seeking to expand its dynamic Oil, Gas + Energy team in Oklahoma City. We offer a competitive salary, commensurate with experience, along with bonus opportunities, full health benefits, a 401(k) match, and comprehensive support for client management and practice growth. An Oklahoma license and 3-5 years of direct experience in oil and gas law are required. To apply, please send your cover letter, resume, and references to office@ballmorselow.com. Be prepared to provide a writing sample upon request.

POSITIONS AVAILABLE

PART-TIME (services as needed) – Administrative Hearing Officer for the Oklahoma Department of Education. Jury or bench trial experience a plus. Send a resume and writing sample to okserc@okstate.edu.

NEW POSITION OPEN WITH DISTRICT 17 DA'S OFFICE FOR AN ASSISTANT DISTRICT ATTORNEY. Located only a short drive from majestic Broken Bow State Park/Hochatown, an outdoorsman's paradise. Fastest growing area in Oklahoma! Requires a Juris Doctorate from an accredited law school. Salary based on level of experience. Must be admitted to the Oklahoma state bar and be in good standing. Submit a resume by email: tammy.toten@dac.state.ok.us. Office: 580-286-7611, Fax: 580-286-7613.

ATKINSON, BRITTINGHAM, GLADD, FIASCO & EDMONDS is seeking an associate attorney with zero to five years of experience who is proficient in research and writing. Atkinson, Brittingham, Gladd & Fiasco is primarily a defense litigation firm focusing on general civil trial and appellate practice, insurance defense, medical and legal malpractice, and Native American law. Compensation and benefits package will be commensurate with the applicant's experience. Applicants should submit a resume, writing sample and transcript to James N. Edmonds at jedmonds@abg-oklaw.com.

Law Practice Thoughts

By Rick Rodgers



As lawyers, we have unique training and the ability to influence and serve others in many capacities. I believe in encouraging other young people, especially lawyers, to give back by using their skills. We will all leave a legacy.

On June 5, 1965, I was admitted to my life's dream – the practice of law. I was privileged to serve our Oklahoma Bar Association with Hicks Epton, John Shipp, Joe Stamper, Neil Bogan, Justice Alma Wilson and others. I was taught by Dean Earl Sneed.

They were an example to me that our legal profession was to serve not only our clients but also our communities, churches and organizations that give back so as to make their lives better.

I live by that creed. You, as a lawyer, are blessed with a unique ability to serve in many ways. What legacy will you leave?

I believe in God, family and friends, and especially my wife, Carolyn.

Thank you for this honor and privilege. I look forward to my 60-year pin.

Rick Rodgers practices in Duncan, and he will receive his 60-year service pin in 2025. He received the OBA Award for Outstanding Pro Bono Service at the 120th Annual Meeting alongside his wife, Carolyn R. Rodgers. Other family members in attendance during the presentation were his granddaughter, Madison X. Vincent; great-granddaughters, Caroline Hoeft and Isabella Hoeft; and daughter, Sandy Zorn of Memphis, Tennessee.



OBA CLE
Continuing Legal Education

WEDNESDAY,

NOVEMBER 13, 2024

9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Emerson Hall, Oklahoma Bar Center

In-Person Only

MCLE 6/0

FEATURED SPEAKER



PAUL MELLOR

USA Memory Championship finalist,
Author



WINNING YOUR CASE WITH A BETTER MEMORY

COURSE TOPICS:

Deposition Demonstration

Introduction with a demonstration that displays the lightning speed of a trained memory. You will see the ease of remembering information from a deposition. Emphasis is placed on why we forget and how we remember.

How to Speak Without Notes to Jurors

Discover secrets on how to present a case without notes. Learn step-by-step techniques for how to draft your remarks, prepare your mind and deliver a powerful presentation. To keep the jury in the palm of your hand, you'll have to let go of your notes.

Cross-Examination with Confidence

Using the two-step formula in recall, you will acquire the skill of remembering to ask key questions during cross-examination. The use of examples and illustrations helps reinforce proficiency when dealing with those on the witness stand.

Remember Names and Faces of Jurors in Trial, Clients in the Presentations and in Other Professional Settings

You will learn the FACIAL Formula to quickly remember a name. Attention is placed on concentration techniques and focusing on recalling the name correctly. The use of pictures and examples creates a proven system for correctly matching a name to a face. You will learn how to remember first names, last names and groups of people

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