



THE BATON ROUGE LAWYER

THE MAGAZINE OF THE BATON ROUGE BAR ASSOCIATION

2024 BRBA PRESIDENT
Luke Williamson

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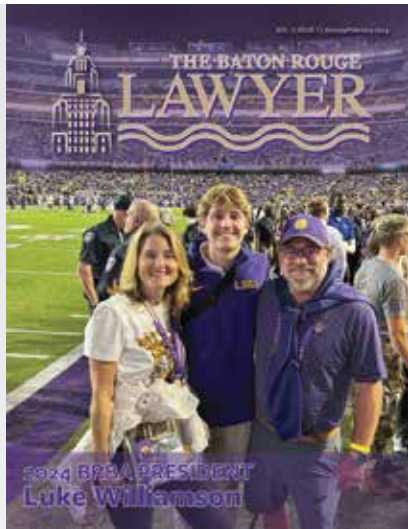
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On the Cover

On the cover of the January/February 2024 issue is a photo of 2024 BRBA President Luke Williamson and his family captured during the Georgia Southern vs. Louisiana State University game in Tiger Stadium. Photographed are (L to R) Kati, Cooper and Luke Williamson. Cooper, the youngest Williamson, works for LSU Football Recruiting and surprised his parents with field passes. The two not photographed Williamson children are Everitt Williamson, who is in his Swamp Phase of Ranger School, and Zoe Williamson, who works in communications in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Cover photo was taken by Dr. Chip Bankston.

- 5 Letter from the President: Get Involved
by Luke Williamson
- 6 Contributors
- 7 President's Awards *by Melanie Newkome Jones*
- 7 Editor's Note: One Year Wrap *by John Fenner*
- 8 In My Opinion: About Judge Papillion *by Ed Walters*
- 9 Bar News
- 12 What I've Learned: Craig S. Watson
by Pamela Labbe
- 16 The Use of Rap Lyrics in a Post-RAP Act Era:
A Critical Look at Louisiana's 'Restoring Artistic
Protection Act of 2023' *by Tanner C. Woods*
- 18 Personal Branding:
Advice for Lawyers from a Marketing Professional
by Collin LeBlanc

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Inside

- 20 Q&A with the 2024 Bench Bar Conference
Committee Co-Chairs *by Pamela Labbe*
- 22 Eye On Evidence: Use of Summaries to Distill Voluminous
Information at Trial *by Mary E. Roper*
- 24 Judicial Interview: Interview with Judge Michael A.
Crawford, Chief Judge, United States Bankruptcy Court,
MDLA *by Art Vingiello*
- 27 25th Annual BRBF Belly Up with the Bar Brings the Heat
- 29 Gaps in Legal Aid: Helping Low-Income Individuals Find
Legal Representation in Civil Law Matters (Part 3)
by Cornelius Troy Hall
- 30 Foundation Footnotes
- 30 Gail's Grammar *by Gail S. Stephenson*
- 31 Duty Court Schedule & Important Dates

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Letter from the President

by Luke Williamson

Get Involved

“Tell me and I forget; teach me and I may remember;
involve me and I learn.” —*Benjamin Franklin*

I am honored and humbled to have the opportunity to serve as the 2024 President of the Baton Rouge Bar Association. It goes without saying that in this position, I stand on the shoulders of giants who preceded me in this honor.

I am extremely fortunate to have had a number of people who played a role in my life guide me toward serving as president of the BRBA. Their collective guidance and example taught me about service, professionalism and how to be a Baton Rouge Lawyer.

When I was in high school, my best friend was Eddie Walters. As the child of a single mom, I spent much time standing around the Walters’ family’s kitchen island with Ed and Norma, talking about politics, fishing, the practice of law and helping others. This was extremely fortunate, as I played a primary role in throwing a legendary “Project X”-style high school party in their under-construction house that led to no small amount of damage. When the cops came the second time, I had been the one to call them from a pay phone. (We were running out of beer.) Mr. Ed inspired me to become a lawyer who served others. Ed, thank you for those Saturday morning conversations and involving a teenaged boy in the warmth of your family.

In my first year of practice, I received a phone call from Eugene Groves, then president-elect of the BRBA. He asked me to serve the following year as chair of the BRBA’s Mock Trial Committee. Little did I know that Gene had decided, as president of the Bar, to begin cultivating a new crop of young lawyers to get involved with the bar. Thank you, Gene, for entrusting a young lawyer with a responsibility that had not yet been earned and getting me involved. I intend to do the same.

As a young lawyer, during my brief tenure as an insurance defense attorney, I was extremely fortunate to have Mike McKay assigned as my mentor. In early October 1996, Mike walked into my office and gave me 30 minutes to prepare for taking my first deposition. Perhaps this is not unusual, but I was not anticipating it as I had not been sworn in yet. Talk about being thrown into the fire. However, I can never thank Mike enough for the things he taught me about practicing law and how to conduct myself as a lawyer. From maxims like “your word is your bond” to “extend every courtesy,” Mike taught me professionalism, even before it was a mandatory legal-education requirement. Mike, thank you for providing me with the foundational principles on which I practice law to this day—how to be a Baton Rouge Lawyer.



Luke Williamson

I do not think it is a coincidence that all three of these lawyers, lions in their own right, also served as president of the Baton Rouge Bar Association, and each had a real impact on me as a lawyer. However, the single most influential person in my life is my bride, best friend and wingman—Kati Meaux Williamson. Having you by my side these 35 years has made life all the sweeter. Thank you forever, Blondie.

We are all extremely fortunate to practice law in Baton Rouge. Not only is there a high standard of professionalism in our legal community that you do not encounter in all venues, we also have the Baton Rouge Bar Association backing our members. No matter your area of interest—volunteering for the less fortunate, assisting first responders, developing skills and knowledge for the practice of law or having a good time—the Baton Rouge Bar Association has a program for you. Over the years, I chaired Mock Trial, ran the annual softball tournament (an event where beer, home runs and camaraderie ruled on the hottest day of the year), helped plan the Bench Bar Conference and chaired the 90th Anniversary Celebration and the two recent Gavel Gala events. All these events bring us together as a bar and make us better. Through my involvement with the bar I learned life lessons that serve me every day. I encourage you to do the same.

Speaking of the Bench Bar Conference, this signature event is scheduled for April 3-6, 2024, at the newly renovated Perdido Beach Resort. Planning is well underway. If you are a young lawyer, I highly encourage you to become involved in this conference. Along with the mentors mentioned above, few things guided my development as a lawyer more than annually attending this event. I promise you will pass a good time.

To my partners, Robb Campbell, Chris Whittington and Dustin Flint, thank you for giving me the flexibility to serve. To my kids—Zoe, 25; Everitt, 23; and Cooper, 20—thank you for making me proud every day.

If you have suggestions, email luke@lawyerbatonrouge.com. Now get involved.

Contributors



John Fenner is the editor-in-chief of *The Baton Rouge Lawyer* and is vice president and corporate general counsel/chief ethics & compliance officer at Turner Industries.



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January/February 2024

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President's Awards

by Melanie Newkome Jones

It is so hard to narrow down all of the people who were so instrumental in last year's success of the Baton Rouge Bar Association, but I cannot give awards to the entire organization.

The first award goes to **Judge Jay Zainey**. He graciously agreed to speak the 2023 Bench Bar Conference, and he kept that commitment even though a close friend's funeral was the same day as his seminar. He drove straight to the conference, did his amazing CLE, then immediately drove back to Louisiana. It would have been completely understandable if he had canceled, but he went above and beyond for us.

Second is **John Fenner**. John joined the BRBA Board of Directors as chair of the In-House Counsel Section. He has attended our monthly dinner meetings faithfully, although he is not a voting member. He originated the In-House Counsel Section and was instrumental in propelling that section to being one the first to become active after the pandemic. He organized informative meetings and successful CLE seminars, inviting both section and general members of the BRBA. He graciously assumed the role of editor-in-chief of our award-winning magazine, *The Baton Rouge Lawyer*. Thanks for all you do for our organization.

The third award goes to **Scott Gaspard**. A solo practitioner who volunteers regularly at Pro Bono Project functions, Scott volunteered over 900 hours to the project and is always willing to help the disadvantaged. Scott is known to be a softie whenever an attorney volunteer is needed. Thanks, Scott, for providing access to justice for so many.

The fourth award goes to the **Young Lawyers Section's 2023 officers**. Kelsey C. Luckett stepped up mid-year to chair the

section while pregnant and on bed-rest. Under her capable leadership, this group hosted many social and educational functions in 2023, including Thirsty Thursdays, Cocktails with the Court, sidebar luncheons and, of course, the Holiday Star Project. Additionally, their support with Belly Up with the Bar was outstanding. Her fellow officers included Brad Cranmer (chair-elect) and Quinn Brown (secretary). Council member Cornelius Troy Hall deserves to be recognized for his hard work organizing law school and court outreach events and Belly Up with the Bar. Their efforts contribute so much to the bar.

Fifth, the **Family Law Section** has always been one of the most active sections, and this year was no exception—monthly CLE luncheons, social gatherings and, of course, the always well-attended holiday party. Thanks to the section leadership of Amy Poindexter, Priscilla Ray and Brienne Griffin-Bice for continuing the tradition of offering activities that combine educational opportunities along with fostering camaraderie among its members.

Finally, the **2023 Bench Bar Committee** is to be thanked for planning this wonderful event. Our chair, Valerie Bargas; co-chairs, Anthony Gambino and Hayden A. Moore; and the whole planning committee went above and beyond to make this a memorable and informative conference. High marks were received from all of the attendees. Thanks for making this the great event that it was.

Thanks to everyone who volunteered throughout the year. Of course, we could do none of this without Ann and our wonderful staff at the Bar Office. It is a group effort to provide valuable services and benefits to our members and the public. It has been an honor to serve as president of the BRBA.

Editor's Note

by John Fenner

As we embark on Year Two of my stewardship as editor-in-chief of *The Baton Rouge Lawyer*, I can't help but reflect upon Year One. I promised our readership a year ago continued excellence in writing and in staying in touch with issues germane to our bar.

I believe we have delivered. We have an incredible staff that is dedicated to providing an outstanding publication. And to top it off, we've been recognized for our efforts.

I'm proud to report that *The Baton Rouge Lawyer* is the recipient of the National Association of Bar Executives 2023 Luminary Award for Excellence in Regular Publications (small bar category). The award nomination is open to NABE Communications Section members, of which BRBA Executive Director Ann K. Gregorie and Communications Director Pamela Labbe are members. Pamela nominated *TBRL* for this award, providing samples of our first three



issues of 2023 with the award nomination form. At the October 2023 NABE Conference, winners were presented their trophies during an awards banquet. Photographed (center) is *TBRL*'s most recent honor.

This recognition was well earned and reflective of the selfless efforts of many, not the least of which is Pamela, who designs the magazine and coordinates the efforts of the committee—as well as Managing Editor Gail S. Stephenson, our editing backbone who provides the foundation for polishing the final product. And, of course, this also is a testament to our editors, cite checkers, writers and other volunteers who contribute to the success of our publication. Additionally, I must thank Kent Moroux for his photographic contributions.

To our readers and advertisers—thank you for your support. We look forward to continuing this rollicking journey together.

Year One Wrap

We are all very happy to see that our 2013 Baton Rouge Bar Association president has been elevated to serve as a federal district court judge for the Eastern District of Louisiana. On June 1, 2023, he took the oath and officially became a federal judge.

Aside from being our president, he was the president of the Louisiana State Bar Association in 2016, the Baton Rouge Rotary Club president in 2013, and on the boards of the Louisiana Bar Foundation, Friends of Louisiana Public Broadcasting and many others.

Many of us don't know that Judge Papillion grew up in a small community near Eunice called Swords, in rural St. Landry Parish. His grandparents lived nearby, but spoke little English. Because of their closeness, Judge Papillion is bilingual. Because of this talent, he served as a French-language disc jockey while in high school and college on the radio station KEUN, with the moniker "Darrel James."

After graduating from Eunice High School, Judge Papillion served as student-body president at LSU-Eunice before attending LSU's main campus, where he graduated in 1990.

After law school, he clerked for Justice Catherine (Kitty) Kimball and then spent four years as an associate at McGlinchey in New Orleans, defending products-liability cases. Then he came to Baton Rouge to work at what was then Moore, Walters & Thompson, now Walters, Thomas & Cullens.

Judge Papillion was one of my students at LSU Law School. I knew then what we all know now: that he would be an excellent lawyer who sets an example to which all of us should aspire, an excellent person whom we should all admire, and now, an excellent federal judge. He was my associate, partner and friend for 30 years. I was sad to see him go, but I am delighted that the U.S. Senate recognized

his talent and that the federal bench has him. He will make a difference, as he has in any organization to which he has belonged and usually led.

Because he was such a great trial lawyer, he was inducted into the prestigious American College of Trial Lawyers and the International Academy of Trial Lawyers. Not many people get there.

The Advocate, the Federal Bar Association's Summer 2023 edition, published this from Judge Papillion:

"I want the lawyers and parties to know I am here to serve them. It is my job to follow the law and procedural rules to secure the just and speedy determination of their legal matter. They can expect courtesy, fairness, and a court focused on moving its docket efficiently. I would remind everyone that while they can expect to be greeted with a smile and with warmth and

compassion, it is still 'federal court,' and that all the usual rules and customs will apply, but we will work to try and get everyone through the process as gently as possible while maintaining academic rigor and focus. I very much look forward to serving the legal community and the public."

Judge Papillion, the Baton Rouge Bar Association wishes you the best, and we look forward to your future accomplishments.



Honorable Darrel J. Papillion

Bar News

Opening of Court, New Member & Memorial Ceremony to be held Jan. 31 at 19th JDC

On Wednesday, Jan. 31, 2024, please attend the BRBA Opening of Court, New Member & Memorial Ceremony, which will be held at the 19th Judicial District Courthouse in the 11th Floor ceremonial courtroom. Help us honor lawyers we have lost in the last year and recognize new members of the Bar.

Need a New Headshot? We Can Help!

RCL Portrait Design will be offering photo sittings at the Middleton Bar Center (BRBA office, 544 Main St.) in February. See the BRBA weekly e-newsletter for more information.

Volunteer with a Youth Education Committee

BRBF Youth Education Coordinator Reagan Haik is seeking new committee members to assist with various youth education projects, including the regional Mock Trial competition (March 8-9), Teen Court and Law Day. To join any of these committees or to assist with any of these on-going projects, please contact Reagan at reagan@brba.org or 225-214-5556.

Join the Bench Bar Conference Committee!

Consider joining what some BRBA members consider to be the most fun committee—the Bench Bar Conference Committee. The 2024 event will be held at Perdido Beach Resort in Orange Beach, Alabama. Committee co-chairs are Anthony Gambino and Brad Cranmer. To join the committee or to sponsor this event, please contact Ann K. Gregorie at ann@brba.org or 225-214-5563.



Gordon McKernan Injury Lawyers contributing a big check to the 2023 BRBF Holiday Star Project gift distribution drive for children in need. Photographed above are (L to R) Michael Montalbano of Gordon McKernan, BRBF Youth Education Coordinator Reagan Haik, BRBA Executive Director Ann K. Gregorie and Chris Melancon of Gordon McKernan.



Kelley Dick Jr. and Brad Cranmer from Mansfield, Melancon, Cranmer & Dick dropped off a bike they purchased on behalf of their Holiday Star Project recipient.



Photo courtesy of Steve Sanoski, LSU Law

Melanie Newkome Jones, 2023 BRBA President, stands with November Bar Luncheon speaker Alena Allen, dean of LSU Law, and 2024 BRBA President Luke Williamson. Dean Allen presented a 1.0-hour CLE seminar Thursday, Nov. 30, 2023, during the bar luncheon at the City Club of Baton Rouge.



Volunteering to help load Holiday Star Project gifts on the truck for gift distribution (Dec. 5, 2023) are (L to R, standing) Brooke Ydarraga, Stanley Bordelon, Emily LaCerte, Alexis Bratton, Mary Catherine Joiner, Gabrielle Lewis, Valerie A. Black; (L to R, kneeling) Elizabeth Ferrier; Heidi Thompson; and Reagan Haik, Holiday Star Committee staff liaison. Special thanks to Diesel Driving Academy for donating use of its big truck and employees.

Holiday Star Project Delivers Gifts

Youth Education Coordinator Reagan Haik organized the 2023 Holiday Star Project, and Kennedy Maya Rose with Irwin Fritchie Urquhart & Moore LLC chaired the 2023 Holiday Star Committee. This year the project provided gifts to approximately 570 underprivileged children from seven social service agencies. Three law firms—Kean Miller, Phelps Dunbar and Taylor Porter—coordinated the collection, storing and distribution of gifts for their assigned agencies, while gifts benefiting all other agencies arrived at the Middleton Bar Center. Special thanks to Diesel Driving Academy for use of their big truck for the BRBF's Dec. 5, 2023, gift distribution day.



Family Service of Greater Baton Rouge was excited to receive gifts for the children in its program. Everyone pitched in to help unload the gifts.



Photo courtesy of Jeanne Burns Dempster

Volunteers of America South Central Louisiana posed in front of the VOA Christmas tree after gift delivery. Photographed (L to R) are volunteer Chanita Vazquez, VOA Marketing & Development Coordinator Melanie Boone, BRBF Youth Education Coordinator Reagan Haik and Tashanna Carlross, VOA executive assistant to the chief operating officer.

In photo (right), Head Start YWCA Greater Baton Rouge presents thank you cards from teachers at the gift drop off. Photographed are (L to R) volunteer Chanita Vazquez; Holiday Star Committee member Valerie A. Black; BRBF Youth Education Coordinator Reagan Haik; YWCA Early Head Start Assistant Program Director Myra Beals; and YWCA Education Specialist Charlene Jenkins.



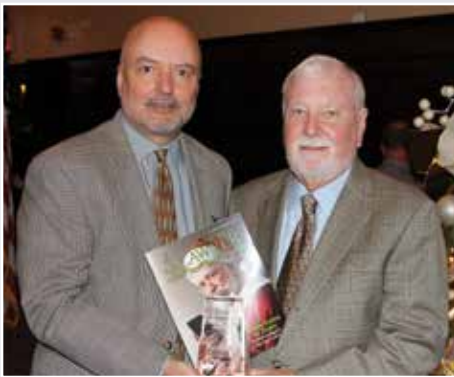
Open Health Care Clinic was the first stop during Holiday Star gift distribution day. Photographed (L to R) are Director of Social Services Suzanne Metoyer, Case Manager Tanya Cain, Program Manager Victoria Raby and Patient Navigator Chantal Brock.



Dropping off Baker Donelson's Holiday Star Project wrapped gifts to the Middleton Bar Center are (L to R) Allison Record and Sandy Roubique.



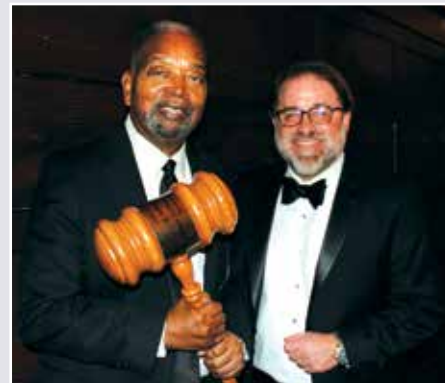
Shannon Rabbitt (left) coordinated Saunders & Chabert's Holiday Star Project participation. Law firm runner Murphy "Jay" Arcemont and Rabbitt deliver gifts to the BRBA in late November 2023.



The Baton Rouge Lawyer's recent honor, receipt of a luminary award from the NABE Communications Section, was highlighted through an announcement at the BRBA November Luncheon. In photo above are John Fenner, editor-in-chief of TBRL, and Ed Walters, the first editor of Around the Bar, now dubbed TBRL. Joseph J. Cefalu III (not pictured) was the 2019-2022 TBRL editor-in-chief.



At Gavel Gala 2023, the Young Lawyers Section Council surprised Josef P. Ventulan with the 2022 Judge Joseph Keogh Memorial Award. Photographed (L to R) are Ventulan with 2023 YLS Chair Kelsey C. Luckett.



Luke Williamson, Gavel Gala co-chair, presented the second annual Gregorie Gavel Lifetime Achievement Award to Judge Freddie Pitcher Jr. (left) during the 2023 Gavel Gala in honor of his dedication to the legal field. The award's namesake, BRBA Executive Director Ann K. Gregorie, was the inaugural winner of the award at the 2022 Gavel Gala.



The BRBA Veterans Day event, held Monday, Nov. 6, 2023, at the River Center Branch Library, featured a CLE titled "Lessons in Leadership: The Code of Professionalism. How Military Lessons Apply to Life." Speakers included Gov. John Bel Edwards, the Honorable Gail Grover and Rear Admiral Robert Ryland Percy III. Jay Dardenne served as the moderator. Special thanks to Johnny Joubert for chairing the Veterans Committee, which planned this event. In photo (left), Louisiana Gov. Edwards (center) stands with members of the Zachary High School Army JROTC, which presented the colors under the direction of Lt. Col. (Ret.) Darren T. Spears (not pictured).

BRBF Gavel Gala Finds Success Again

On Thursday, Nov. 9, 2023, members of the Baton Rouge Bar Association attended a black-tie affair at the City Club of Baton Rouge to raise funds for the Baton Rouge Bar Foundation. Jay Dardenne served as the guest auctioneer for the live auction, and the Gavel Gala silent auction was a hit. Thanks to the hard work of event chairs Luke Williamson, Stephen Babcock and Hayden A. Moore, the event was a success, bringing in much-needed funds.



Photographed (L to R) are Judge Pitcher, Jonathan C. Rose Sr., Judge Eboni Johnson Rose and Judge Tarvald Smith. Gavel Gala was a festive occasion that brought judges and lawyers together.



Gavel Gala guests include (L to R) Judge Kelly and Berry Balfour; Bridget and Paul Laborde; and Wendy Edwards.



Photographed (L to R) at the Gavel Gala are Loren Shanklin Fleshman, Antwinette Epps, Jamie Flowers and Judge Louise Hines. Fleshman played an active role in this year's Gavel Gala auction.

VITAL STATISTICS

Profession:

Attorney since 1984

Age: 65

Born and Raised:

Detroit Michigan;
Boca Raton, Florida

Father's Occupation:

Mechanical engineer/
architect

Mother's Occupation:

Housewife, secretary

Siblings: Three, all
with college degrees

Name of Spouse:

Dawn R. Watson,
attorney and executive
director of the
Louisiana Senate

Children: None

High School: Gulf
High School in Florida

College: University of
New Orleans, 1981

Law School:

LSU, 1984

Law Practice:

Law Offices of
Craig S. Watson



What I've Learned: Craig S. Watson

TBRL: *Tell us why you run.*

CW: I lost my left eye in 1995 and became overweight (202 pounds). I began running in February 1996 and ran my third marathon in November 1996; I had previously run two marathons in law school.

TBRL: *I've heard you've run 300 marathons. Is that true?*

CW: Presently, I am at 301 marathons. I ran 9 in 17 weeks during the spring of 2023. I felt that since I had run almost 40 marathons in less than three years, it was time for a short break (two months of no running). I am tentatively scheduling my 302nd marathon for Jan. 6, 2024.

Running 300 marathons was not initially a goal, nor was 200 or 100. I started out wanting to run a marathon in all 50 states, and it just blossomed into where I am now. The next goal will be finishing the 50 states for a fifth time. I am 12 marathons short. [He needs marathons in Alaska, Connecticut, Iowa, Idaho, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Nebraska, North Dakota, New Mexico, Rhode Island, South Dakota and West Virginia to meet that goal.]

TBRL: *Tell us about your marathon training.*

CW: Prior to 1996, I had run two marathons in New Orleans and had been running off-and-on since approximately 1970. Since I have run so many marathons, I have been in a constant state of training from 1996 until now. I have taken two breaks during that 25 or so years, but it is essentially running three to five times a week.

TBRL: *Why did you start running marathons?*

CW: Primarily to stay fit. I went from 202 pounds to 165 pounds.

TBRL: *Why do you think you continued running marathons, even after reaching your original goal?*

CW: Running marathons keeps me "level" and provides me with a constant goal to accomplish. Running is relatively stress-free and gives me an opportunity to participate in marathons numerous times a year.

TBRL: *Will you continue now that you've reached 300?*

CW: I will continue to run marathons until I am physically unable to do so. After the fifth "50 states" is completed, the next goal will be 350 marathons.

TBRL: *How many pairs of running shoes have you worn out with this hobby?*

CW: I keep a pair of running shoes for approximately 350-400 miles before I change them out. I have run in the same shoe brand since 1996 (ASICS) with a pair of orthotics in them; these orthotics help protect me against injury. I would say

in my running career (since 1972), I have likely gone through 100-125 pairs of running shoes.

TBRL: *Do you train alone?*

CW: All of my marathon buddies have succumbed to injuries or other maladies. I am the last one standing.

TBRL: *What do you think about while running?*

CW: Zero. All I think about is finishing and the next mile.

TBRL: *Have you incurred and overcome injuries?*

CW: Yes, and yes. I have had two running-related injuries since 1996. The first one was when I began running in 1996 or 1997 and suffered a stress fracture of my right hip. I took 6-8 weeks off and went back to running. In 2011, I partially tore my right Achilles tendon, but I recovered from it.

TBRL: *Favorite marathon?*

CW: A marathon called the Medoc Marathon north of Bordeaux, France (in Pauillac); it featured 23 wine stops. The marathon was run through the vineyards, from vineyard to vineyard.

TBRL: *Have you run overseas?*

CW: Yes. Thailand, Canada, Brazil, France, Sweden, Germany, South Africa and Australia.

TBRL: *How many road races do you think you have run?*

CW: Hard question, but my guess would be approximately 650-750 races.

TBRL: *What would you have been able to do if you did not run so many races?*

CW: I probably could have retired years ago and worked more on my golf game.

Marathon running is not hard; it is all between the ears. You just have to be somewhat physically fit and convince your mind that you can complete it.

Growing up I always wanted to be: in politics.

The best advice I ever gave was: never quit.

One of the jobs I had as a kid was: cutting grass ad nauseam.

If you really want to get me angry: be disrespectful.

My parents taught me: to always be respectful.

I think more people should: attempt to stay fit and not let themselves decline as they get older.

The older I get: the fewer rules I have.

I have never been able to: break three hours for a marathon.

I'd like to be 26 again because: I could run faster.

I have the most fun: on vacations where I can run in new places.
In 2023, I ran in Ireland.

The best movie ever produced was: "The Godfather."

I like: quiet.

TBRL: *What do people not know about Craig Watson?*

CW: Although I have three sisters from the union between my parents, in total I have three sisters, two half-siblings and two foster sisters. I met one of my half-siblings for the first time in 2022. Thanks Ancestry.com!

TBRL: *Anything else you'd like to add?*

CW: Marathon running is not hard; it is all between the ears. You just have to be somewhat physically fit and convince your mind that you can complete it.

TBRL: *What advice do you have for our readers?*

CW: Keep trying and never quit.

Interview by Pamela Labbe, Ph.D., communications director of the Baton Rouge Bar Association and staff liaison of the Publications Committee.

FREE HEADSHOTS IN FEBRUARY

The BRBA will host a **photographer** in February 2024. BRBA members can make an appointment for a *free portrait sitting*. *Photos are by appointment only and will be taken at the Middleton Bar Center, 544 Main Street.* A representative from the portrait studio will contact you to schedule. While no purchase is required, photo packages will be available for purchase. *Professional or business attire required.* The BRBA will contact all members with more information in the weeks to come.

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Meet Pat Ottinger

■ Patrick Ottinger is an experienced arbitrator and mediator in oil and gas matters, having completed training through Pepperdine University. He has spoken at numerous continuing legal education seminars on oil and gas in Texas and Louisiana and served as Chair of the Advisory Council of the Institute on Mineral Law. He has served as an adjunct professor of law at the LSU Law Center since 1996, where he teaches courses in mineral law. He is the Reporter of the Mineral Law Committee of the Louisiana State Law Institute.

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Opening of Court, New Member & Memorial Ceremony

Please join us at
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19th Judicial District Court
(11th floor ceremonial courtroom)
as we introduce new members of the bar
and honor BRBA members we lost in 2023.

Please join us in remembering:

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Mr. Andrew J. Bennett, Jr.

Mr. Eugene A. Booth

Hon. William H. Brown

Mr. Robert B. Butler III

Ms. I. J. Clark-Sam

Mr. William H. Cooper, Jr.

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The Use of Rap Lyrics in a Post-RAP Act Era: A Critical Look at Louisiana's 'Restoring Artistic Protection Act of 2023'

by Tanner C. Woods

Artistic expression, including music and lyrics, has historically been a platform for marginalized communities to voice their experiences and perspectives. Music has long served as a means of self-expression, often delving into personal experiences, societal issues and sometimes even criminal activities. However, the use of song lyrics in criminal prosecutions was exceedingly rare prior to the development of the rap and hip-hop genres.¹ In recent years, the increasing use of lyrics as evidence in criminal prosecutions has raised concerns about the blurring line between creative expression and legal accountability. At the heart of the issue lies the question of artistic intent versus literal meaning. While rap lyrics are a form of creative expression that often draw from real-life experiences, they are also artistic constructs meant to convey emotions, perspectives and stories.

Stepping beyond simple debates over the merits of rap as a musical genre or moralistic judgments over certain subject matter, a legal analysis of this issue requires striking a balance between preserving the integrity of rap as an art form and ensuring a fair, just legal system. Recently, Louisiana became one of the first few states to attempt to codify such a balance

into evidentiary law with the passage of the Restoring Artistic Protection Act of 2023 (RAP Act),² codified as La. Code of Evidence article 404(b)(1)(b)(ii). The law was introduced by Rep. Tanner Magee and became effective Aug. 1, 2023.

This article will outline the limitations of the RAP Act by contrasting the protections that would have been offered under the language of the initially proposed House Bill 475 with the protections offered under the language of Act 354 as enacted. Finally, this article will briefly explore the potential applications of this law to other forms of artistic expression, such as social media posts.

The RAP Act does not radically change the way in which a prosecutor's attempt to introduce rap lyrics would have been handled prior to its passage. Act 354 simply added language to article 404(b) largely mirroring the language of the already existing paragraph but clarifying that "creative or artistic expression" should be subject to the same scrutiny traditionally applied to evidence of "other crimes, wrongs, or acts." Prior to this clarification, the introduction of lyrics as anything other than direct evidence of a crime (i.e., a confession) would have already required the application of the La. C.E. article 404(b) admissibility test.

Following the passage of the RAP Act, article 404(B)(1)(b)(ii) now provides:

Except as provided in Article 412 or as otherwise provided by law, creative or artistic expression is not admissible in a criminal case to prove the character of a person in order to show that he acted in conformity therewith, provided that the accused provides reasonable notice to the prosecution in advance of trial asserting that the evidence is creative or artistic expression. Evidence of creative or artistic expression may, however, be admissible for other purposes, such as proof of motive, opportunity, intent, preparation, plan, knowledge, identity, absence of mistake or accident, provided that upon request by the accused, the prosecution in a criminal case shall provide reasonable notice in advance of trial, of the nature of any such evidence it intends to introduce at trial for such purposes, or when it relates to conduct that constitutes an integral part of the act or transaction that is the subject of the present proceeding.

While any protection for artistic expression is certainly progress in the right direction, the limitations of the recently enacted RAP Act and the room for further improvement are highlighted by looking at what was removed from the bill as it was originally introduced. Rep. Magee initially proposed creating a new article in the Louisiana Code of Criminal Procedure, article 718.2, as opposed to amending Code of Evidence, article 404. The effect of this change is profound in that courts must now consider the preexisting precedent interpreting La. C.E. article 404(b) in their evaluation as opposed to a new article with its own standards that courts would have been able to apply with a clean slate.

The proposed bill would have required courts to engage in a systematic evaluation of any creative or artistic expression prior to its introduction. Analysis would have started with the general rule that all evidence of a creative or artistic expression was not admissible against a defendant in a criminal action. In order for such an expression to be admitted, the State would have had the burden of proving by clear and convincing evidence that the expression (1) was intended by the artist, whether original or derivative, to have a literal meaning; (2) referred to the specific facts of the crime alleged; (3) was relevant to a disputed issue of fact; and (4) had a distinct probative value not provided by other admissible evidence. The proposed bill would have required courts to issue their rulings on the record and articulate their findings of fact. If the expression was deemed admissible, courts would have been required to redact the expression to only those portions passing the admissibility test and issue appropriate limiting instructions to the jury.

A key difference between the proposed bill and the enacted law is that the enacted law allows for the introduction of creative or artistic expressions as long as the court finds that the expression relates to proof of motive, opportunity, intent,

preparation, plan, knowledge, identity, absence of mistake or accident. The requirement that the State prove by clear and convincing evidence that the expression actually relates to the specific facts of the crime charged is nowhere to be found. The proposed bill would have placed a much higher burden on prosecutors who sought the introduction of such evidence and required courts to specifically address the question of whether the artist or musician intended for the work to have a literal meaning. Without the requirement that the expression be relevant to a disputed issue of fact, the enacted law could arguably allow a prosecutor to introduce a rap music video in a self-defense case to show that the defendant possessed the gun, even though the defendant had never denied that fact. Similarly, without the requirement that the expression have a probative value not provided by other admissible evidence, the enacted law could arguably allow a prosecutor to introduce song lyrics referring to another individual as a friend in order to prove their association, even though the same facts could have easily been established with other evidence, such as cell phone records.

On a positive note for defense attorneys, the application of the RAP Act is not limited exclusively to music or lyrics. By its language, it can be applied to a wide range of artistic expressions. The Rap Act, as codified in article 404(B)(1)(b)(i), defines “Creative or Artistic Expression” as “the expression or application of creativity or imagination in the production or arrangement of forms, sounds, words, movements, or symbols, including music, dance, performance art, visual art, poetry, literature, film, and other such objects or media.” While the opportunities for application of this law to prosecutions involving anything other than rap lyrics will undoubtedly be limited, it will be interesting to see how courts handle cases involving social media videos where the defendant argues that the videos are artistic expressions designed to create a particular online persona. Drawing the line to determine which videos qualify as artistic expression will be difficult when guided by inherently ambiguous language such as “the expression or application of creativity or imagination.” The language is broad enough that the majority of the arguments will likely hinge on the State’s ability to adequately articulate one of the nine permissible purposes for introducing the creative or artistic expression.

Whether prosecution or defense, attorneys across the state need to be prepared to address and argue the issues associated with the introduction of song lyrics under the framework of the RAP Act and explore practical applications of this law to artistic expressions other than music.

¹ Jaeah Lee, *This Rap Song Helped Sentence a 17-Year-Old to Prison for Life*, N.Y. TIMES (Mar. 30, 2022), <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/30/opinion/rap-music-criminal-trials.html>; Kelly McGlynn, Jacob Schriner-Briggs & Jacquelyn Schell, *Lyrics in Limine: Rap Music and Criminal Prosecutions*, COMM’NS LAW. (Jan. 11, 2023), https://www.americanbar.org/groups/communications_law/publications/communications_lawyer/2023-winter/lyrics-limine-rap-music-and-criminal-prosecutions/.

² Act. No. 354, La. Acts 2023, Reg. Session.

Personal Branding: Advice for Lawyers from a Marketing Professional

by Collin J. LeBlanc



Tommy J. Karam, Ph.D.

In preparation for this article, I had an opportunity to meet with Tommy J. Karam, Ph.D., at his office in LSU's Business Education Complex. It is one of many offices he has occupied in his multiple decades at LSU, but this was not my first time to meet the affable Dr. Karam.

Years ago, I worked under Karam as a tutor for the LSU football team and was assigned to much larger and more athletic students and began to make my introductions. During this process, Karam intervened and gave my new assignees a snapshot of my academic background. He gave a history so loquacious, so impressive, that one of my students was compelled to ask on his departure, "So, you're like Einstein?" Well, no.

The picture Karam painted of me was expanded, embellished and glossed to an embarrassing degree. But it was effective. From that moment forward, my charges never once questioned my ability to guide them. Looking back, I now realize his approach was brilliant and effective. His insight into human interaction provided a real-world solution for student athletes that allowed them to overcome the hesitancy that distanced them from what they needed to learn. He has offered similar insights in the years since and has knowledge every attorney needs to know.

Karam teaches marketing, sports marketing and negotiation with the E.J. Ourso School of Business, Department of Marketing. Recently, he received a commendation as "Distinguished Instructor," and his class on Professional Communication was approved for the School of Business. His career has enmeshed him into the world of sports. A gaze around his office shows his deep connection to sports and LSU. His favorite athlete is LSU and Saints great Eric Martin. On prominent display in his office are at least five photographs of the legendary wide receiver. He said the principles he espouses apply to all endeavors, business or personal.

Karam, who has worked with many attorneys and firms over the years, said all attorneys are smart and skilled. Therefore, there is a tight margin between attorneys, and people skills are needed to stand out. The core of his message of personal branding is one of "likeability." Improved likeability

should lead to improved results, improved relationships and even a better quality of life. Yet, the concept is not as simple as it might seem.

Karam defined likeability as "the emotional impact you have upon others." But he said that he would be the first to concede that communication is not always an exact science, and research can fall on either side of many issues. Likeability is the key, and that likeability comprises many elements to prominently include vocal delivery and visual communication, Karam said.

When it comes to vocal delivery, tone matters. He relayed a story of a prominent surgeon who consistently received negative reviews despite world-class results. Stereotypically, the doctor's bedside manner needed to improve. Even this genius-level professional needed assistance to address likeability. The concept of a bedside manner is not reserved for doctors, Karam said. It applies to all facets of life and sectors.

With vocal delivery, there is inflection, intonation and other aspects, but tone is the most important. Karam advised that one should "speak clearly, in a way that embraces your personality." Genuine. He explained tone by identifying the negative attributes that follow when one's tone is poor. A poor tone can lead to a view that one is condescending, arrogant, boring, droning or any of a laundry list of other pejoratives. He added that tone is not just measured when one is speaking publicly, like to a jury or judge. A sharp contrast between an

attorney's public tone and the tone used outside the bar can be devastating. He said, "You are being evaluated before you present, when you present and after you present, and one negative can eliminate the other positives. Your tone needs to be managed to have the desired impact."

All communication is not oral. Karam said visual communication is almost as important. Perhaps because his paths have crossed with Michael Jordan, Karam uses a quote from His Airness: "The camera never blinks." Your facial expressions are often just as critical as your tone—and your face always has an expression. On this point, he asks that we consider our "default look," which is the look you make when you believe no one is watching. If you are warm and affable with the jury, but present a cold and calculating look while away, your

"You are being evaluated before you present, when you present and after you present, and one negative can eliminate the other positives. Your tone needs to be managed to have the desired impact."

messaging has been defeated. Ignoring your default look could lead to an expression of incompetence, rudeness, arrogance and all the rest.

Everyone has a default look, even Karam. He said one of LSU's NFL-bound players once shared with him: "Everyone's scared of you." Mystified as to how a hulking soon-to-be millionaire could be scared of a man with his personality and normal frame, Karam considered the matter and concluded that his own default look was broken. From athletes to hedge fund managers to doctors and lawyers, Karam has helped people tweak their default look. Understanding that one cannot entirely reset, he works to find that one effective adjustment. Although words struggle to capture what is or is not a proper default look, generally, he said to "look like you are listening" and "look like you are thinking."

We also discussed nervousness. "There is no cure for nervousness," Karam said. However, one can control the effects of nervousness. When nervous, people "should make sure that the pressure does not radically impact their tone, their visual communications or trigger a return of the dreaded and unadjusted 'default look.'"

To cement his message, Karam shared a story. He was asked by LSU to speak in New York City. His first session began at 7 a.m. As he spoke, one individual appeared to negatively react to his speech. The man's facial expressions portrayed the epitome of negativity. By all outward signs, the man felt Karam's message was rubbish. However, contrary to all outward indications, the man had concluded there was truth in Karam's talk. In fact, he later insisted that a high-ranking member of his organization attend the following session. Then, that executive asked Karam to speak to an entire gathering of Ivy-league educated traders and analysts. They, too, concluded Karam had something of great value to say. He still does.

The danger with the default look is that it can send a message one did not intend. From this, Karam concludes that one's default look is not a proper gauge in many circumstances. Therefore, it is something on which one should not overly rely. He cautioned against overreacting to someone's default look, as he did in the above anecdote. The person who appears disinterested may be hanging on your every word. The person who nods and smiles may entirely disagree with your position. By reacting too severely, one can misjudge that individual and lose focus on the larger group, such as a jury.

Now go tweak that default look.

2024 BRBA Board of Directors

Congratulations to the newly elected 2024 BRBA Board: **Luke Williamson**, president; **Monica Vela-Vick**, president-elect; **Loren Shanklin Fleshman**, treasurer; **Hayden A. More**, secretary; and **Melanie Newkome Jones**, past-president. The 2024 directors-at-large are **Valerie A. Black**, **Kelley R. Dick Jr.**, **Kellye R. Grinton**, **Lori E. Palmintier**, **Marcus J. Plaisance** and **Vincent "Trey" Tumminello III**.



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2024 YLS Officers & Council Members

Congratulations to the 2024 Young Lawyer Section leaders: **Brad Cranmer**, chair; **Quinn Brown**, chair-elect; **Kolby Marchand**, secretary/treasurer; and **Kelsey C. Luckett**, past-chair. Serving as YLS Council members are: **Candace B. Ford**, **Cornelius Troy Hall**, **Emily A. Lindig**, **G. Patrick Riley** and **Josef P. Ventulan**.



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Q&A

with the 2024 Bench Bar Conference Committee Co-Chairs

Co-chairing the 2024 Bench Bar Conference are Anthony Gambino and Brad Cranmer. This article is the result of a brief discussion we had about what conference registrants can expect from this year's event.

TBRL: When and where will this year's conference take place?

The 2024 conference is April 3-6, 2024. It is at Perdido Beach Resort in Orange Beach, Alabama. We have not had the conference at Perdido in quite some time, so we are excited to return to the resort.

Due to hurricane damage in 2020, the resort underwent extensive renovations. The guest rooms, meeting space and ballroom were all upgraded.

TBRL: Tell us about the continuing legal education seminars that are planned for the event.

Our CLE Subcommittee, lead by Chris Billings, has been working on the curriculum for months. We intend to have a wide variety of CLE seminars, including judge panels. We also have a few that are thought-provoking and should elicit good discussion.

TBRL: What else can Bench Bar Conference attendees expect?

We will have plenty of entertainment

First-time registrants have a discounted rate, and if you register early, you can get a discount.

this year, and Hayden A. Moore, our Social Subcommittee chair, has worked hard with her committee to plan fun events. For the dinner/dance, the band will be Phat Hat. We will also have karaoke. And because we are so close to the Flora-bama, we will have a shuttle on one of the nights.

We also have a hotel room block, which will fill up. So make sure you get your room!

For call-in reservations, attendees should use the toll-free number below and identify themselves as participants of the Baton Rouge Bar Association - Bench Bar Conference, Booking ID #19649 to

receive the special group rate.

For online reservations, attendees can go to the Perdido Beach Resort's website and type in the Group Booking ID (19649) to access the special rates.

The information conference registrants will need is as follows: Baton Rouge Bar Association, 2024 Bench Bar Conference, Booking ID #19649.

Call In Reservations:
(800) 634-8001

Online Reservations:
<https://www.perdidobeachresort.com/>

TBRL: Are there any special discounts for first-time registrants?

Yes. First-time registrants have a discounted rate, and if you register early, you





Anthony Gambino



Brad Cranmer

can get a discount. If you are a young lawyer or a government lawyer, you will also receive a discount.

TBRL: *What does serving as co-chair of the Bench Bar Conference Committee mean to you?*

We are very excited to give back to our association. We have witnessed great chairmen and chairwomen who put on successful conferences in the past, and we look forward to building on their success.

TBRL: *Tell us a little about yourself.*

AG: I practice commercial litigation with an emphasis on construction disputes. I have been practicing for seven years, with the last five years at Phelps Dunbar. I am originally from New Orleans, and I attended LSU for law school and undergrad.

BC: I am a founding member of Mansfield, Melancon, Cranmer & Dick. I devote much of my practice to family law matters, including divorce, custody, visitations and community property. I was born and raised here in Baton Rouge, and I attended LSU for law school as well as undergrad.

TBRL: *Provide any additional information you think is important.*

Our sponsorship subcommittee is looking for sponsors for this year's conference, so if you are interested in sponsoring, please reach out to either of us.

Interview by Pamela Labbe, Ph.D., communications director of the Baton Rouge Bar Association and staff liaison of the Publications Committee.

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Eye on Evidence: Use of Summaries to Distill Voluminous Information at Trial

by Mary E. Roper

When you have a document-intensive trial, involving hundreds or even thousands of pages of documents, or one involving a multitude of recordings or photographs, an effective presentation requires that you organize and distill the information to an easy-to-understand format for the judge or jury. Fortunately, both the federal and Louisiana rules of evidence allow a litigant to introduce a summary of evidence under such circumstances.¹

The written summarization of evidence is an effective tool that can have a powerful impact if used properly. Charts and summaries can be useful to present a summary of medical treatment by pulling out only the most essential information, such as the treatment provider, dates of treatment, treatment received and result or prognosis. Likewise, they can be used to show crime data, environmental changes or even the pattern of and increase in phone calls to a particular number during the commission of a crime. The state has used the rule to present a record of phone calls between a victim, a defendant and a third party in a murder trial instead of introducing hundreds of pages of phone records.²

Cases involving financial matters often involve the need to calculate the data contained within tax documents, bank statements, business records, accounting ledgers or financial databases, for example, to isolate and compare figures, cumulate them or perform calculations to reflect whether

there is a surplus or deficit, depending on the proof needed.³ Presenting this information in a short summary of figures or visual charts, depending on what needs to be proven, is much more effective than handing over stacks of documents for the trier of fact to wade through with a calculator.

Other types of cases have also used electronic spreadsheets to calculate and demonstrate essential time periods. For example, in *Oubre v. Louisiana Citizens Fair Plan*, plaintiffs effectively used electronic Excel files with an embedded hyperlink to the underlying documentation to show the elapsed time from the report of loss by the claimants to the date of the initiation of the adjustment of the claim.⁴ These files were deemed to be proper summaries under Louisiana Code of Evidence article 1006.

The rule allowing the introduction of a summary of evidence is found in Federal Rule of Evidence 1006 and Louisiana Code of Evidence article 1006. The provisions are essentially the same, although the wording varies slightly.

Louisiana Code of Evidence article 1006 provides:

The contents of otherwise admissible voluminous writings, recordings, or photographs which cannot conveniently be examined in court may be presented in the form of a chart, summary, or calculation. The originals, or duplicates, shall be made available for examination or copying, or both, by other parties

at a reasonable time and place. The court may order that they be produced in court.

Similarly, Federal Rule of Evidence 1006 provides:

The proponent may use a summary, chart, or calculation to prove the content of voluminous writings, recordings, or photographs that cannot be conveniently examined in court. The proponent must make the originals or duplicates available for examination or copying, or both, by other parties at a reasonable time and place. And the court may order the proponent to produce them in court.

It is imperative to provide the opposing side with an opportunity to examine the documents before trial to prevent such an objection.

Further, the best practice is to bring your documents to trial, whether the court requires it or not, to have them available in the event a question arises as to the accuracy of the information set forth in the summary, chart or calculation.⁶ Summaries that are not based on admissible underlying documents have been denied,⁷ as they should be.

In sum, no matter what kind of case you are handling, you should consider using summaries to organize and present your case. Your presentation will be more streamlined, and the judge and jury will thank you for making their job easier.

In either case, the underlying documentation must be made “available for examination or copying, or both, by other parties at a reasonable time and place.” Further, the court may require that the source documents from which the summaries, charts or calculations were derived be produced in court. If the source documents are not made available to the opposing side, you may be prohibited from introducing a summary, chart or calculation unless there is no objection.

It is imperative to provide the opposing side with an opportunity to examine the documents before trial to prevent such an objection. In two First Circuit cases, *Lange v. Parish* and *Delahaye v. Delahaye*, the summaries were not allowed due to counsel’s failure to timely provide the other side with the opportunity to examine the underlying records, even in the unusual circumstance where the data was unavailable to either side until mid-trial, which was the case in *Lange*.⁵

¹ La. C.E. art. 1006; Fed. Rule of Evid. 1006.

² See *State v. Smith*, 10-0830 (La. App. 3 Cir. 2/9/11), 58 So. 3d 964, 974, writ denied, 11-0503 (La. 9/30/11), 71 So. 3d 279.

³ See *U.S. v. Whitfield*, 590 F.3d 325 (5 Cir. 2009), cert. denied, 131 S.Ct. 136 (2010).

⁴ 11-0097 (La. 12/16/11), 79 So. 3d 987, 1003. The plaintiffs also supplied affidavits of the persons who compiled the spreadsheets, although that is not necessary. Legislative comment (a) to article 1006 indicates that it is not required that the person preparing the chart, summary or calculation be available for cross examination on the witness stand, except in the case of a criminal trial, where the evidence is being offered against the accused.

⁵ *Lange v. Parish*, 08-1371 (La. App. 1 Cir. 3/27/09), 2009 WL 839106; *Delahaye v. Delahaye*, 04-0310 (La. App. 1 Cir. 12/30/04), 936 So.2d 822, 835, writs denied, 05-0906 (La. 5/20/05), 902 So. 2d 1054.

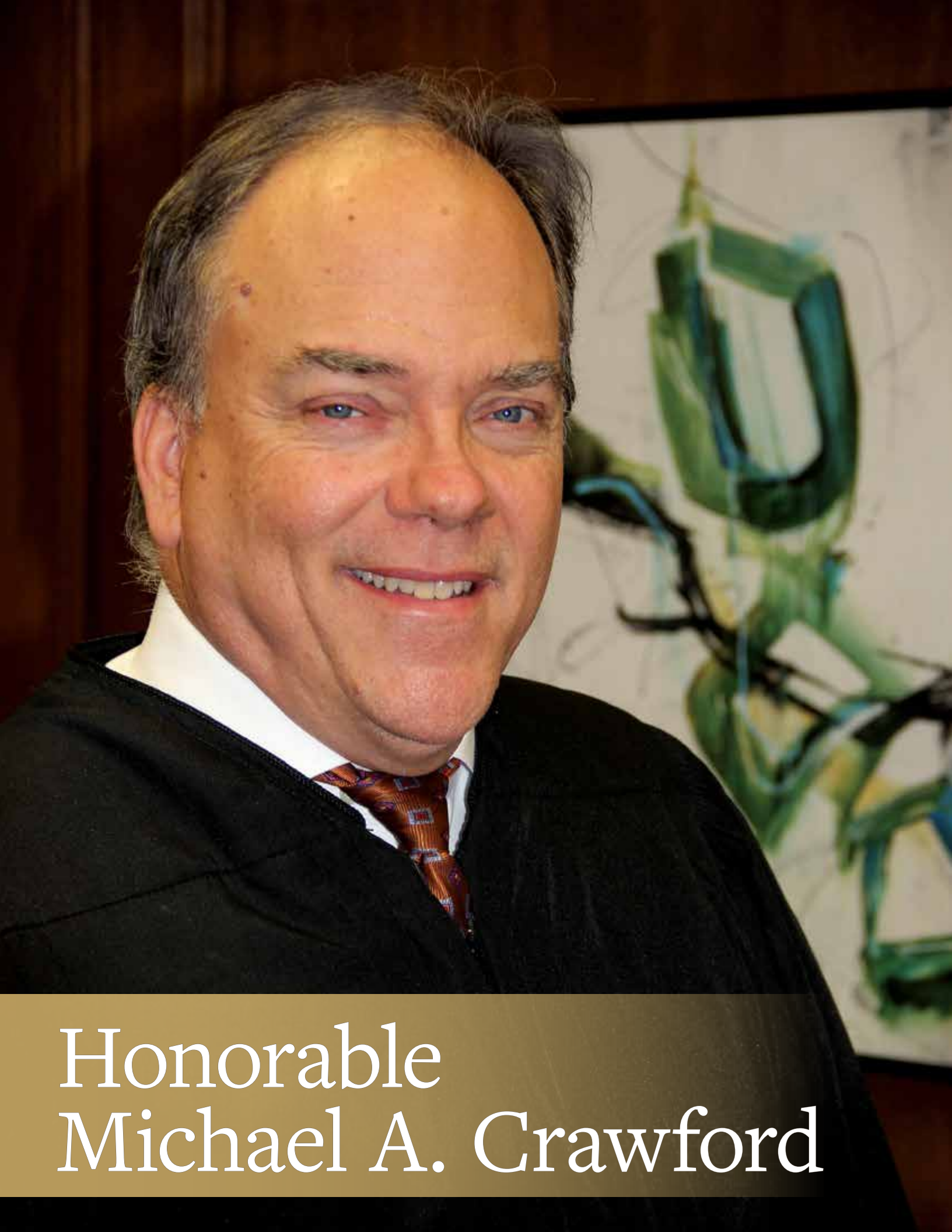
⁶ See, e.g., *Carmouche L. Firm v. Pias*, 04-0130 (La. App. 3 Cir. 7/21/04), 880 So. 2d 49, 55.

⁷ See *Weiss v. Allstate Ins. Co.*, 512 F. Supp. 2d 463, 477-78 (E.D. La. 2007) (defendant’s listing of all representatives assisting with the claim was held to be inadmissible as it did not accurately summarize a portion of plaintiff’s claim file, which it purported to summarize).

Please join us at the
U.S. District Courthouse, Middle District of Louisiana,
for the Admission to the Courts Ceremony,
BRBA Leader Installation Ceremony,
and FBA Admission Ceremony

3:30 - 5:30 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 11, 2024

Contact Ann K. Gregorie for more information: 225-214-5563 or ann@brba.org



Honorable
Michael A. Crawford

Interview with Judge Michael A. Crawford

Chief Judge, United States Bankruptcy Court, MDLA *by Art Vingiello*

TBRL: Please tell us where you were raised and a little about your time before law school.

MAC: I was born in Shreveport but raised in Winnfield, Louisiana. I came to LSU in the early '80s and graduated from LSU with an undergraduate degree in finance in 1984. At the time, I thought I was going to go to Dallas to become an investment banker because that was all the rage back in the mid-1980s, dealing in mergers and acquisitions and the like. But my dad, who was a long-time wholesale distributor for Exxon, was being pressured to expand the family business. So, he asked me if I would help him, and I did for roughly five years. I started a branch of the family business in Ruston, which was a great experience. There, I obtained my MBA from Louisiana Tech while working full time. But, at some point, I decided that it was his vision more than mine; I wanted to make my own mark. That decision resulted in me going to law school at LSU in 1990.

TBRL: After law school, did you go directly to clerking?

MAC: Yes. I got a one-year clerkship with the highly respected and beloved bankruptcy judge in Opelousas at the time, Gerald Schiff, now retired. It was a one-year clerkship, and it was a great choice for me because, not only was he a great mentor, but I learned a lot and made a lot of contacts. The clerkship led to a job here in Baton Rouge. First with Breazeale, Sachse & Wilson, then I moved to Taylor Porter in June 2000. I remained at Taylor Porter for 22 years before being appointed as a bankruptcy judge.

TBRL: Shifting to your family, what would you like to tell us about your family?

MAC: Well, I've been married to Becky for 30 years. We met in law school, and we actually got married in that one-week period between finishing final exams and starting to study for the bar exam. We had that one-week window and, with no money whatsoever, there was no need to squeeze in an elaborate honeymoon. She got a job in Lafayette and, of course, I got the clerkship with Judge Schiff in Opelousas, so we lived in Lafayette. I actually commuted for two years from Lafayette to Baton Rouge as a new associate.

Becky and I have two grown children—Lauren, 28, who is an equity trader on Wall Street with Barclays, and our son, Zack, 25, who got married recently and is a 3L at LSU. Zack has accepted an associate offer from Phelps Dunbar in Baton Rouge when he graduates. We're very proud of both of them.

TBRL: Do you have any hobbies?

MAC: I would say golf is probably my number one hobby. I don't get to play as much as I would like, and I'm not very good, but I do punish myself four or five times a month, if I can.

TBRL: Do you read for pleasure?

MAC: I do. Right now, I'm on a Richard Russo kick. He's a wonderful writer. I'm reading "Nobody's Fool," but I've read several of his books. Before that, I read several Roy Grace novels by Peter James. I would say my favorite book is "Lonesome Dove."

TBRL: Do you listen to podcasts?

MAC: Not so much podcasts—I listen to a lot of music; I like music.

TBRL: Besides Dire Straits, who do you like?

MAC: I am admittedly a Knopfler fanatic—Knopfler was in Dire Straits—but I like a lot of music. It ranges all the way from that kind of stuff, to Bruce Springsteen and some of the older stuff, all the way to some more modern music—Brandi Carlile, Amos Lee. I like the Killers and a group with a really interesting name that came to Baton Rouge recently called the Heartless Bastards. I really like them. Even though it's funny because I'm certainly not in their demographic, but I've been listening to a lot of this group called Catfish and the Bottlemen. I like finding obscure music.

TBRL: Do you have any advice that you would give to non-bankruptcy practitioners who have bankruptcy issues?

MAC: No matter what kind of practice you have, sooner or later you're going to come up on a bankruptcy issue, whether you want one or not. So, my advice has always been to know your limitations. Bankruptcy is not something to dabble in, but

it's great to have a friend that you can call. And I always encouraged people to call me. Now I have to make sure that it's not something that's coming up before me, but I've always been willing to give people free advice about that sort of thing.

TBRL: Is there advice that you would give bankruptcy practitioners that come before you besides being prepared?

MAC: I'm concerned about the loss of collegiality that the bankruptcy bar has always had in my 30 years of doing this. By and large, the commercial bankruptcy bar statewide was always friendly and cordial. I don't know if the younger group coming up has that same attitude. What

No matter what kind of practice you have, sooner or later you're going to come up on a bankruptcy issue, whether you want one or not. So, my advice has always been to know your limitations.

we're doing as bankruptcy attorneys is important. But you don't have to take it so seriously that it gets personal. You can advocate for your client without being a jerk. And I learned that lesson very early on from Judge Schiff. I heard stories before he took the bench. He was a relatively new judge, but he had been a pretty prominent practitioner for quite a while in the bankruptcy field, and everybody, to a person, always talked about how he was just a delight to practice against. He might beat you, but it wasn't going to be nasty. It was going to be above board and professional. I'm not saying that younger lawyers are unprofessional, but I don't know if I'm seeing the same level of collegiality there. So, my advice would be: don't lose sight of that. If you're really going to be a bankruptcy lawyer, and committed to it, you are going to spend the better part of 20-30 years coming up against the same folks, over and over again. The quicker you realize that the world is round and you should play well in the sandbox with others, the more enjoyable the practice of law is going to be. And your clients will actually benefit from it.

TBRL: I seem to recall that you were involved with the Special Olympics. Can you tell us about that?

MAC: Right. Community involvement is very important to me. I started off volunteering in the late 1990s. The associates at the firm were tasked with picking an organization to volunteer for, and we picked Special Olympics. We started off working the basketball tournament at the state indoor games. One thing led to another, and I was asked to be on the state board, which I did for nine years. I served as the legal advisor to the state board (pro bono, of course) and then became, ultimately, the chairperson. And I'm humbled to have been inducted into the Special Olympics Louisiana Hall of Fame. After my time on that board, I took a break to live vicariously through my children's activities. Then, when the youngest went off to college, I looked for another avenue for my volunteer work. That has led to several years with the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank board. I served as the 2023 chair of the Food Bank—another great cause, obviously.

TBRL: Do you have any final comments about being a judge?

MAC: It's been everything that I hoped it would be. I have really enjoyed the job, the intellectual challenge. As much as I loved my time at Taylor Porter, and I really did, I was not disgruntled by any means. But, after practicing law for almost 30 years, having the good fortune of a new opportunity and new challenges has energized me.

TBRL: What surprises have you had?

MAC: I guess the biggest surprise would be how much behind-the-scenes administrative work is associated with the job. I joke about it, but I'm the chief judge because I'm the only judge. With being chief judge, however, there are all kinds of additional administrative responsibilities: dealing with budgets for the Clerk's Office, our court security and any number of things that I really didn't think about as being part of the job. But that is OK; I always like learning new things.

TBRL: Some of the judges in this area, in Texas particularly, act as mediators. Do you anticipate doing any of that?

MAC: I mediated a case the other day. Yes, I've always been interested in mediating. I wouldn't say it was a large part of my practice, but I did attend the St. John's University/ABI Mediation Training in 2014 and enjoyed mediating. In bankruptcy, there aren't a lot of opportunities around here for lawyers to mediate cases because the bankruptcy judges will frequently mediate other bankruptcy judges' cases for free. And I have let the other bankruptcy judges in the state know that I would be more than willing to do that. I had a mediation in a New Orleans case less than a month ago. It didn't settle, but I certainly enjoyed the experience and would welcome doing that in the future.

TBRL: Is there anything else you'd like to add?

MAC: We were talking about hobbies, and I should have mentioned my passion for LSU football. I've been a season ticket holder for maybe 27 years. I grew up with it. I used to go to the home games with my dad. I have carried on that tradition with our children.

Please join us at the
19th Judicial District Courthouse,
11th Floor Ceremonial Courtroom
for the
Investiture of Judge Colette M. Greggs
3 - 5 p.m. Monday, Jan. 18, 2024

Contact Ann K. Gregorie for more information: 225-214-5563 or ann@brba.org

25th Annual BRBF Belly Up with the Bar Brings the Heat

The 25th annual Belly Up with the Bar, held Friday, Oct. 27, 2023, at the LSU John M. Parker Coliseum, raised funds for the Baton Rouge Bar Foundation while helping to create fun memories for all in attendance. Special thanks to the generosity of our event sponsors and the competitive spirit of our cooking teams, who braved the warm temperatures and helped make this year's Halloween-themed event a success.

Chairing this year's event were Ben Treuting (chair) and Cornelius Troy Hall (vice chair). Pamela Labbe, who coordinated the event, is the staff liaison to the committee. Special thanks to this year's Belly Up with the Bar Committee members who worked hard to make this event happen.

Winning this year's People's Choice Award categories were the cooking team from Hannis T. Bourgeois for the "Best Mocktail"; and the cooking team from Breazeale, Sasche & Wilson for both "Best Drink" and "Best Food."

The following award categories were judged by local celebrity chefs:

- "Best Theme" went to Kean Miller for its Barbie theme.
- "Best Grub - First Place" went to The Tadda Law Firm for its Potstickers; "Best Grub - Second Place" went to Taylor Porter for its Pulled-Pork Sliders; and "Best Grub - Third Place" went to Jones Walker for its Crawfish Etoufee.
- "Best Dessert" went to the team from LSU BLSA for its Peach Cobbler.
- The Belly Up with the Bar Committee judged the "Best Law School" category, and the award went to Southern University Law Center.

We appreciate the chefs and local celebrities who served as this year's competition judges: Johnny Ashyen, WAFB & Stirrin' It Up; Chef Celeste Gill, Celeste's Bistro; Chef Justin Fortin, formerly with Louisiana Culinary Institute and Trader Joe's; Chef Justin Lambert, BLDG5; and Chef Jordan Ramirez, founder of Zee Zee's and Chow Yum Phat.

Special thanks to our door prize donors: CC's Coffee House; Capital City Grill; Cecelia Creole Bistro; Chow Main; Jason's Deli; Jolie Pearl Oyster Bar; LaMadeline; Mike Anderson's Seafood; Serop's Express; Stroube's; and Town Square Pizza.

Additionally, Belly Up with the Bar would not be as successful without our event sponsors. This year's premier sponsors were Barczyk Spine & Joint; Butler Snow; Elite Chiropractic; Geaux Chiro; Hammonds, Sills, Adkins, Guice, Noah & Perkins LLP; Palmintier Law Group; and PMIC.



Belly Up with the Bar 2023 Committee members include (L to R) Cornelius Troy Hall (vice chair), Linnea Brailsford, Juan Moreno, Chris Vidrine and Ben Treuting (seated in front). Treuting chaired the committee.



The Tadda Law Firm won "Best Grub - First Place" at the 2023 Belly Up with the Bar Cooking Competition for its dish entry of potstickers.



Taylor Porter's cooking team, Taylor Porter Out West, took home the "Best Grub - 2nd Place" trophy for its dish entry of pulled pork sliders.

Sponsoring Belly Up with the Bar at the Five Spoons level were Belumbra; Capitol Spine & Rehabilitation; HMR Servicing; Jones Walker LLP; Plaisance Law, LLC; The Olivier Group, LLC; and Tiger Trimlight.

Our Four Spoons sponsors were Breazeale, Sachse & Wilson, LLP; Fabre Group; Hannis T. Bourgeois LLP; Mansfield, Melancon, Cranmer & Dick, LLC; and MoveDocs.

Coming in at the Three Spoons sponsorship level were Anchor Point Consulting; AYLA; Campus Federal Credit Union; Gaudin Law Group; Harris, Deville & Associates; Insperity; Southpoint Volkswagen; Thomson Reuters FindLaw; Tomeny | Best Injury Lawyers; Wampold Companies; and Williamson Cosmetic & Perenack Aesthetic Surgery.

Our Two Spoons sponsors were DeCuir, Clark & Adams, L.L.P.; Diamond Paralegal Services, LLC; Gauthier Amedee, APLC; Perry Dampf Dispute Solutions; RizeUp Media; The Spine Center at Bone & Joint Clinic of Baton Rouge; Total Care Injury and Pain Centers; TWRU CPAs & Financial Advisors; and V&L Consultants LLP. And thanks to Coca-Cola Bottling Company United - Baton Rouge for donating bottled water and soft drinks for the event.



Members of the Black Law Students Association (BLSA) from LSU Law took home the "Best Dessert" category trophy for their Peach Cobbler from the 2023 Belly Up with the Bar event. The team, The Boo Krewe, also served Wicked Sliders & Mac-o-lanterns with Ghoul-Aid.



Hannis T. Bourgeois won the People's Choice "Best Mocktail" award for its Tiki Tea. This is the first time a non-alcoholic drink category has been added to the competition. Hannis T. Bourgeois, which sponsored at the Four Spoons level, creatively named its cooking team HTB Island.



Winning the 2023 trophy for the "Best Theme" was the cooking team from Kean Miller, aptly named "Ken Miller's Barbie-Q." Decked out in pink, team members served Barbie's Slip-n-Sliders (Pulled Pork Sliders) with a Barbie Dream-Tini (Pink Gin Martini). As a mocktail, the team served its Ken's Cooler (Sprite and Blue Coconut). Photographed (L to R) are team co-captains Sydney J. St. Pierre and Dylan T. Scully.



Winning two 2023 People's Choice Awards ("Best Food" and "Best Drink") was the cooking team from Breazeale, Sachse & Wilson, which followed a Jimmy Buffett tribute theme serving cheeseburger sliders and margaritas. Photographed (L to R) are Mitchell Fillinger, Robert Schmidt, Mary Katherine Loos, Christopher Vidrine and Bri'Yana Anderson.

Gaps in Legal Aid:

Helping Low-Income Individuals Find Legal Representation in Civil Law Matters (Part 3) *by Cornelius Troy Hall*

This is the final installment of a series of articles on the challenges of providing legal representation to low-income individuals. Part 1 identified low-income families, the gaps in legal services available to them and the “why” behind the gaps. Part 2 analyzed the unmet needs of Louisiana’s low-income families and the consequences of those gaps.

Existing Programs

Structured legal aid programs for low-income communities began in 1863 with the founding of the Working Women’s Protective Union in New York, which consisted mainly of female non-lawyers.¹ The creation of this and similar programs led to the creation of the Legal Aid Society in 1876, which is a large organization of volunteer lawyers that still operates today.² This evolution resulted in legal aid programs in almost every major U.S. city by 1965.³ A list of those current legal aid services designed to address the civil legal needs for low-income individuals follows.

National⁴

Legal Services Corporation (LSC) (Phone 202-295-1500) Formed in 1965 as the Office of Equal Opportunity Legal Services Program, the Legal Services Corporation was established by Congress in 1974 to promote equal access to justice. LSC operates as an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation and currently serves as the nation’s single largest funder of civil legal aid for low-income individuals. More than 90% of LSC’s total funding is distributed to 132 independent non-profit legal aid programs with 877 offices across the country. Its mission is to help provide high-quality civil legal aid to low-income people, and it provides direct legal services in every state.

American Bar Association’s Free Legal Answers Service (<https://www.abafreelegalanswers.org/>) A virtual legal advice clinic. Volunteer attorneys do not answer criminal law questions.

Louisiana

- Acadiana Legal Services Corporation (ALSC) (318-221-8104)
- Baton Rouge Bar Foundation Ask-A-Lawyer (225-344-4803)
- Baton Rouge Bar Foundation Pro Bono Project (225-344-4803)
- Catholic Charities of Baton Rouge Immigration Legal Services (225-336-8700)
- Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New Orleans Immigration Services (504-310-6938)
- Central Louisiana Pro Bono Project, Inc. (318-449-9778)
- IRIS Domestic Violence Center (225-389-3001 or 800-541-9706)
- Lafayette Volunteer Lawyers (337-237-4700)
- Louisiana State Bar Association’ Modest Means Directory: (<https://www.lsb.org/Public/FindLegalHelp/ModestMeans.aspx>)
- New Orleans Family Justice Center (504-592-4005)
- North Shore Pro Bono Project (985-893-0076 ext. 519)
- Northwest Louisiana Family Justice Center (318-584-7171)
- Sexual Trauma Awareness & Response Center (STAR) (225-615-7093)

- Shreveport Bar Foundation Pro Bono Project (318-221-8104)
- Southeast Louisiana Legal Services (SLLS) (<https://slls.org/contact-us/>)

Proposed Solutions

While identifying the who, what, when, why and how of gaps in legal aid is a daunting endeavor for any individual, proposing practical and structured solutions to solve them is equally challenging. Such solutions are designed to aid the low-income individual and family in acquiring civil legal representation as well as the lawyer. The following suggestions derive from peer-reviewed reports that discuss recognized best-practice programs designed to offer effective ways to reduce the gaps.⁵

- Increase both state funding and program eligibility for legal aid service programs.
- Enact policies to improve access to legal services for the elderly and persons with physical, mental and emotional disabilities.
- Design legal aid services geared toward addressing the most prevalent and recurring unmet civil legal needs low-income individuals and families face. Support organizations working to protect and advance the interests of individuals the justice gap affects the most.
- Implement technological tools and advances in the legal profession that simplify legal processes and promote access to justice technology—such as educational applications—to make it easier for individuals to navigate the legal system.
- Promote management and oversight evaluations designed to ensure those legal aid service programs are fulfilling their mission and abiding by whatever applicable local, state and federal regulations they are required to follow.

The issue of bridging the gaps in servicing unmet civil legal needs for low-income individuals involves identifying the gaps as well as advancing and funding logical and sound solutions to reduce them. This is a challenge because the data illustrates that the gaps, even with the pre-existing pro bono programs, are growing larger and more layered, while the resources designed to address them are dwindling.

¹ Katsiaryana Stsepaniuk, *The Justice Gap Problem Solving: History and Innovation*, 44 CAMPBELL L. REV. 65, 68 (2021).

² *Id.*

³ *Id.*

⁴ See generally LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION, 2022 ANNUAL REPORT, https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/ufses94ussb4wl3jvzb5o/h?preview=LSC29+2022_AR_layout_MECH2.pdf&rlkey=k9unmybarjex1f8rudohpjs5f&dl=0; Lane Anderson, *Why Fair Legal Representation Remains Elusive for the Poor* (July 30, 2015), <https://www.deseret.com/2015/7/30/20569173/why-fair-legal-representation-remains-elusive-for-the-poor>; Stsepaniuk, *supra* note 1.

⁵ Rebecca Buckwalter-Poza, *Making Justice Equal*, CTR. AM. PROGRESS (Dec. 8, 2016), <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/making-justice-equal/>; LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION, *supra* note 4; Yael Cannon, *Unmet Legal Needs as Health Injustice*, 56 U. RICH. L. REV. 801 (2022).

Foundation Footnotes

Pro Bono Reports — October 2023

Teen Court Volunteers

In October, five hearings were held. Volunteers were **Monica Vela-Vick**, *Phelps Dunbar*; **Candace B. Ford**, *Breazeale, Sachse & Wilson, L.L.P.*; **Tiffany Carriere**, *First Circuit Court of Appeal*; and BRBF law student interns **Skylar Dean**, *Southern University Law Center*, and **Eric Roshak**, *LSU Law Center*.

Attorneys Accepting Cases

Accepting pro bono cases in October were: **Ed Atebara**, *The Law Office of Edward R. Atebara*; **Michelle Crosby**, *attorney at law*; **Deanna Johnson**, *attorney at law*; **Cynthia Reed**, *Southern University Law Center*.

Self Help Resource Center Volunteers

Carlesia Bibbins, *attorney at law*; **Nicole Hazey**, *attorney at law*; **Derrick McCorey**, *attorney at law*.

Summer/Fall Pro Bono Project Interns

Whitney Graham and **Destiny Singleton**, *Southern University Law Center*; **Eric J. Roshak**, *LSU Law Center*.

Legal Hotline Volunteers

Volunteering to assist with the BRBF Legal Hotline were **Scott Gaspard**, *attorney at law*; **Willie Stephens**, *attorney at law*;

James Word II, *attorney at law*; **James “Jimmy” Zito**, *attorney at law*.

Presentation

Professor Cynthia Reed, *Southern University Law Center*, made a special presentation at SULC during Pro Bono Week to emphasize the importance of providing this much needed service to the indigent in our communities.

Ask-A-Lawyer Volunteers

Volunteering with the Ask-A-Lawyer program were **Thomas Acosta**, *attorney at law*; **Michele Crosby**, *attorney at law*; **Jasmine Delco**, *Southeast Louisiana Legal Services*; **Todd Gaudin**, *Gaudin Law Group*; **Lykisha Vaughan**, *Southeast Louisiana Legal Services*; **Whitney Peters** (law student), *Southern University Law Center*; **Theophile Kadia** (law student), *Southern University Law Center*.

Teen Court is made possible in part by grants from the Louisiana Bar Foundation. The Pro Bono Project is financially assisted by the Interest on Lawyers' Trust Account (IOLTA) Program of the Louisiana Bar Foundation; Southeast Louisiana Legal Services; Family, District and City Court Fees; and the Baton Rouge Bar Foundation.



GAIL'S GRAMMAR

Two words that are sometimes confused are *erroneous* and *errant*. They both start with *err*, which comes from the Latin *errare*, meaning “to stray or wander,” and they both mean something that is not quite right. *Errant* keeps that original meaning, to stray from the proper course, while *erroneous* has come to mean wrong or incorrect. *Errant* should not be confused with *arrant*, which means notorious, complete or utter, with a negative context.

Error is a noun—a mistake that is committed. *Err* is a verb, and its past tense is *erred*—not “errored.”

CORRECT EXAMPLE:

The court’s finding that the **errant** driver caused the accident was **erroneous**.

The plaintiff argued that the defense asserted was **arrant** nonsense with no legal basis.

Thanks to Jeff McAlpin for suggesting this topic. Send suggestions for future Gail’s Grammar columns to Gail Stephenson at GStephenson@sulc.edu, or call Gail at (225) 926-1399.

IMPORTANT DATES

January

- 1-2 Office Closure - New Year's Day Holiday
- 8 Teen Court Hearings, via Zoom at 6 p.m.; Inauguration Day (19th JDC & Family Court closed)
- 11 Installation of BRBA Board, FBA Board and Admission Ceremony, U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Louisiana
- 15 Office Closure - Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- 16 Mock Trial Informational Meeting, via Zoom at 3:30 p.m.
- 18 Judge Colette Gregg's Investiture, 19th JDC, 3 p.m.;
LSBA Mid-year meeting, Renaissance Baton Rouge Hotel, 8 a.m. (Jan. 18-Jan. 20)
- 23 Mock Trial workshop, 3:30 p.m.
- 26 Publications Committee meeting via Zoom, 8 a.m.
- 31 Opening of Court, New Member & Memorial Ceremony, 19th JDC, 11th Floor ceremonial courtroom, 3 p.m.

February

- 5 Teen Court Hearing via Zoom, 6 p.m.
- 13 Office Closure - Mardi Gras Holiday
- 19 RCL Portrait Design, photo sittings at the Middleton Bar Center (Feb. 19 - March 1); Teen Court Hearing via Zoom, 6 p.m.
- 20 Workers' Compensation meeting & CLE, Mike Anderson's Seafood, noon
- RCL Portrait Design photo sittings
- 21 RCL Portrait Design photo sittings
- 22 RCL Portrait Design photo sittings
- 23 RCL Portrait Design photo sittings
- 24 RCL Portrait Design photo sittings
- 25 RCL Portrait Design photo sittings
- 26 RCL Portrait Design photo sittings
- 27 RCL Portrait Design photo sittings
- 28 RCL Portrait Design photo sittings
- 29 RCL Portrait Design photo sittings

JANUARY 2024

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
	1	*	2	3	4	5
7	8	*	9	10	11	12
14	15	*	16	17	18	19
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

FEBRUARY 2024

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
				1	2	3
4	5	*	6	7	8	9
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	*	20	21	22	23
25	26	*	27	28	29	

DUTY COURT SCHEDULE

19th JDC Civil Duty Court

1/02 - 1/12	Judge Moore
1/15 - 1/26	Judge Foxworth-Roberts
1/29 - 2/09	Judge Fields
2/12 - 2/23	Judge R. Johnson
2/26 - 3/08	Judge D. Johnson

19th JDC Criminal Duty Court***

12/29 - 1/05	Judge Ray
1/05 - 1/12	Judge Myers
1/12 - 1/19	Judge Johnson Rose^
1/19 - 1/26	Judge Smith
1/26 - 2/02	Judge Jorden
2/02 - 2/09	Judge Hines
2/09 - 2/16	Judge Pro Tem
2/16 - 2/23	Judge Crifasi
2/23 - 3/01	Judge Johnson Rose^

Baton Rouge City Court*

1/01 - 01/07	Judge Temple
1/08 - 1/14	Judge Matthews
1/15 - 1/21	Judge Alexander
1/22 - 1/28	Judge Moore Vendetto
1/29 - 2/04	Judge Marcantel
2/05 - 2/11	Judge Temple
2/12 - 2/18	Judge Matthews
2/19 - 2/25	Judge Alexander
2/26 - 3/03	Judge Moore Vendetto

Juvenile Court

January	Judge Grover
February	Judge Haney

Family Court**

1/01	HOLIDAY
1/02	HOLIDAY
1/03	Judge Baker (Div. A)
1/04	Judge E. Green (Div. B)
1/05	Judge Russ (Div. D)
1/08	HOLIDAY
1/09	Judge Russ (Div. D)
1/10	Judge Baker (Div. A)
1/11	Judge E. Green (Div. B)
1/12	Judge Baker (Div. A)
1/15	HOLIDAY
1/16	Judge Russ (Div. D)
1/17	Judge Baker (Div. A)
1/18, 1/19	Judge E. Green (Div. B)
1/22	Judge Day (Div. C)
1/23	Judge Russ (Div. D)
1/24	Judge Baker (Div. A)
1/25	Judge E. Green (Div. B)
1/26, 1/29	Judge Day (Div. C)
1/30	Judge Day (Div. C)
1/31	Judge Baker (Div. A)
2/01	Judge E. Green (Div. B)
2/02	Judge Russ (Div. D)
2/05	Judge Day (Div. C)
2/06	Judge Russ (Div. D)
2/07	Judge Baker (Div. A)

Family Court (Continued)

2/08	Judge E. Green (Div. B)
2/09	Judge Baker (Div. A)
2/12, 2/13	HOLIDAYS
2/14	Judge Baker (Div. A)
2/15	Judge E. Green (Div. B)
2/16	Ad Hoc Judge (Div. D)
2/19	HOLIDAY
2/20	Judge Russ (Div. D)
2/21	Judge Baker (Div. A)
2/22	Judge E. Green (Div. B)
2/23, 2/26	Judge Day (Div. C)
2/27	Judge Russ (Div. D)
2/28	Judge Baker (Div. A)
2/29	Judge E. Green (Div. B)

Court Holidays

Monday, Jan. 1	New Year's Day
Tuesday, Jan. 2	Day After New Year's Day
Monday, Jan. 8	Inuguration Day
Monday, Jan. 15	Martin Luther King Jr. Day
Monday, Feb. 12	Lundi Gras ¹
Tuesday, Feb. 13	Mardi Gras
Monday, Feb. 19	Presidents' Day

NOTE: Duty Court changes at 5 p.m. each Friday unless otherwise specified.
*City Court's Duty Court judge is on duty from 8 a.m. on the Monday beginning his/her week of duty until 8 a.m. the Monday ending his/her week of duty.

**Family Court's Duty Court schedule is completely different each day, rotating on Fridays.

***19th JDC Criminal Court changes each Friday at noon.

¹Section IV is currently the only section conducting Saturday callout.

¹Family Court will be closed on Monday, Feb. 12, 2024, for Lundi Gras.

Baton Rouge Bar Association

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LA-23-15274

Attorney David Abboud Thomas is responsible for this ad.