

CBA Hosts Largest Connecticut

By Leanna Zwiebel



Officers of the 2018-2019 bar year (L to R): Treasurer Vincent P. Pace, Immediate Past President Karen DeMeola, Secretary-Treasurer Aidan R. Welsh, President Jonathan M. Shapiro, President-elect Ndidi N. Moses, Vice President Amy Lin Meyerson, and Secretary Dahlia Grace.



Annual Meeting Luncheon Special Guest Speaker Aaron Keller.



Then-CBA President Karen DeMeola passing the gavel to President Jonathan M. Shapiro to serve as the 95th president of the CBA for the 2018-2019 bar year.



Pro Bono Appointments in Federal Court: Tips from the Trenches, Part 1.



Heidi Alexander discussing affordable technology for small firm productivity.

More than 1,300 attorneys, judges, paralegals, and other legal professionals from throughout the state gathered on June 11 at the Connecticut Convention Center in Hartford for the 2018 Connecticut Legal Conference. The day began with a networking breakfast, which included alumni receptions for Quinnipiac University School of Law, UConn School of Law, and Western New England University School of Law, giving attendees the opportunity to connect with colleagues and classmates before heading to the day's first education session.

This year's conference featured over 40 CLE seminars across eleven different tracks

with topics ranging from blockchain, mindfulness for lawyers, and diversity and inclusion, along with an entire track dedicated to legal technology.

Among the 11 seminars that began the day, Justice Maria A. Kahn, then-CBA President Karen DeMeola, Fred Lee, James G. Leipold, and Asker A. Saeed spoke to attendees on the strategies for achieving meaningful racial and ethnic diversity and inclusion within their law firms and organizations in their seminar, "Why 'One Size Fits All' Efforts Fail: Tackling the Biases That Still Frustrate Meaningful Racial and Ethnic Diversity and Inclusion." Attendees learned how stereo-

types and biases operate to keep racially and ethnically diverse individuals from succeeding in our profession as well as effective strategies for disrupting those hindrances to an organization's commitment to diversity and inclusion.

The CBA Annual Meeting Luncheon recognized the service of Attorney General George Jepsen, who will retire in the fall, and CBA Past President Donat C. Marchand, who served on the CBA House of Delegates since 1981 and the Board of Governors since 1985, as well as judges taking senior and referee status. Along with these recognitions, the 2018-2019 officers were in-

Legal Conference to Date



Bob Ambrogi discussing what the ethical duty of technology competence means for a lawyers practice.



Chief Justice Richard A. Robinson.



LegalTech/Law Practice Management Training with Barron Henley.



Platinum sponsor Kronholm Insurance Services.

stalled: 95th president of the CBA, Jonathan M. Shapiro; President-elect Ndidi N. Moses; Vice President Amy Lin Meyerson; Secretary Dahlia Grace; Treasurer Vincent P. Pace; Assistant Secretary-Treasurer Aidan R. Welsh; and Immediate Past President Karen DeMeola.

CBA executive director, Keith J. Soressi, welcomed guests to the luncheon, followed by remarks from Chief US District Judge Janet C. Hall and Connecticut Supreme Court Chief Justice Richard A. Robinson, in his first speech for the association in his role as chief justice.

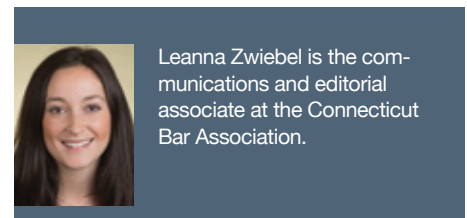
Keynote luncheon speaker, Aaron Keller,

discussed bridging the gap between law and journalism by analyzing the cases of Steven Avery and Brendan Dassey in the hit Netflix docuseries *Making a Murderer*, in which Attorney Keller appeared for his role as a local reporter during the trial. He also presented a seminar later in the day, "Access to Justice Confessions, Ethics, and High Publicity in *Making a Murderer*."

Immediately following the final session of seminars, the President's Reception, sponsored by Murtha Cullina LLP and Shapiro Law Offices LLP, was held for all attendees to mingle with colleagues and discuss the day's events as well as the year to come,

over cocktails and an assortment of appetizers.

The CBA thanks all those that helped make the Connecticut Legal Conference a great success—the attendees, exhibitors, and the sponsors, particularly Platinum sponsor Kronholm Insurance Services, and Gold sponsor CATIC. **CL**



Leanna Zwiebel is the communications and editorial associate at the Connecticut Bar Association.

The following is an abridged reprint from President Jonathan Shapiro's 2018 CBA Annual Luncheon Meeting Speech.



Jonathan M. Shapiro is the 95th president of the CBA. Attorney Shapiro is a partner at Shapiro Law Offices LLC in Middletown where he practices in corporate transactions, employment matters, and complex commercial and general litigation, as well as in arbitrations and mediations.

Over the past year, I had a lot of people come up to me and ask questions about the CBA and becoming president. I was typically asked: "Am I ready?" The next question was, "Why are you doing this?"—and maybe suggesting that I was a little crazy. Next, "How are you going to do this?" And finally, "What is your agenda?"

The reality is the answers to these questions overlap. I grew up in a family that was involved in my community. My parents, my grandparents, my aunts, my uncles—they all gave back to the community. No one ever lectured me about getting involved or being involved. They all lead by example.

This association is much more than the programs we put together. It is much more than the positions we lobby for. It is much more than the sections and committees we offer. For me, this association has been, and will always be, about the people. It is all about everyone in this room who I have had the pleasure of working with over the last 17 years.

It is hard for me to believe I was the chair of the YLS just five years ago. Many of the people I met during those years remain good friends today, and the people that I have

met over the last several years serving in other positions in the organization have become good friends. I have also been fortunate to have the esteemed past presidents of this organization welcome me with open arms. I cannot remember a time when I saw a past president where they didn't say, "Jon, if you need anything, we are here for you."

I could be here all day talking about the people that have influenced me, but the reality is it is because of all of you in this room that I am doing this.

How am I going to do this?

The answer is very similar. I am going to need support. I have a close family that has always been there for me.

To my kids, Lily and Ari, who are here today, thank you for always putting a smile on my face when I get home after a long day. When I have had a bad day, your endless love, hugs, and kisses can always make me smile.

And of course, you need a good, supportive spouse by your side. A special thank you to my wife, Sarah, without whom I could not possibly serve in this role. She bears the brunt when I am out at night to attend bar events. She takes care of the kids, she takes care of everything I have going on in my life. Thank you Sarah. I love you.

The bar does not stop because of what you have going on.

The great thing about this organization, about the people in this room is that if life gets in the way of something you have to do for the CBA, everyone remains committed to each other. That is what the CBA is about to me, and that is how I am going to be able to get done what needs to get done.

As for what is my agenda? Well, my main agenda is not to screw anything up.

The CBA is not about me. It is not about what I think. It is about our members and the mission of the CBA.

The CBA is in a great position. I want to continue down the path we are on.

In 2016, the CBA formed its diversity and inclusion committee to help enhance diversity and inclusion. We now have more than 30 firms and companies that have signed the Diversity and Inclusion Plan. Karen's establishment of a pipeline program is aimed at recruiting high school students from diverse backgrounds into the legal profession. This work will help plant the seeds to ensure our profession is as diverse as our population. None of this work can be completed in one or two years. It will only happen through our long-term commitment to the cause. And that is where we will be steadfast.

It is not just looking at the future of our profession. We must also ensure that we are taking care of the present members. We are the preeminent organization for providing CLEs, but that is not enough.

As Karen mentioned, she established a well-being task force. To be a good lawyer, you must be a healthy lawyer. Our profession is a demanding one. It is one of few professions where you have an adversary who is trying to prevent you from succeeding in your job. That can be a difficult road. At times, it can be lonely. But you do not have to be alone, and you are not alone. We are going to ensure that our members have the necessary resources to succeed throughout their careers—beginning, middle, and end.

While we have established many programs to aid those in the early stages of their careers, we have done comparatively little for our more senior attorneys. When you look at the demographics of our association and the bar, there are a lot of baby boomers nearing retirement. While law firms have established succession plans for their attorneys nearing retirement, solo and small firm practitioners often don't have the same options.

If you are a solo practitioner, what happens

if you become incapacitated or pass away? What happens to your files? What happens to your clients? Under Practice Book Rule 2-64, the state can appoint a trustee to take whatever actions are necessary to protect the interests of the clients. It focuses on the clients. But what about the lawyer? What about their needs and their families?

What if we allow our attorneys to plan for these issues ahead of time? What if a lawyer can designate a trustee to transition his or her practice upon disability, death, or discipline? What if the designated trustee is someone whom the older lawyer can guide and advise as they develop their own practice? What if the designated trustee becomes someone who the lawyer can transition or sell his or her practice?

We need to engage in these conversations. We need to educate our members on the importance of retirement and succession planning to ensure that they get value from their practice that they spent decades building. It can also be an opportunity for younger lawyers to learn from more senior

lawyers so that transition can take place. The CBA and our members need to continue to lead in the community on the many important issues facing our state and country.

We live in an interesting time. The political climate is unlike anything I have seen. The ability to have civil disagreements over political issues is waning. People seem to take the mentality that you are either with us or against us.

Social media brings about a mob mentality. Rather than engage in dialogue, we instead rush to judgment before any semblance of due process has played out. We as lawyers must stay above the fray.

Our judicial system has been under attack too. We saw unprecedented proceedings in our legislature this past session that cannot continue.

Social media and the mob mentality allow the voices of relatively few, unsatisfied people have influence far greater than their numbers. As the chief justice said, this is not to say the judiciary is infallible judges. It

is not to say they should not be challenged, but due process must win out.

As Caroline Kennedy once said, "The bedrock of our democracy is the rule of law and that means we have to have an independent judiciary, judges who can make decisions independent of the political winds that are blowing."

One of our jobs that we must do is to ensure that happens. We must not get swept away in emotion. We as attorneys must safeguard process and the rule of law. We remain a learned profession. We must act like it, and we must lead. Thank you everyone and I look forward to working with everyone over the next year.

Finally, I almost forgot, but how could I not mention my mother, Nancy Shapiro. She taught me more than anyone about giving of yourself to others. She never says no, she is a tireless worker, and has always been

Visit ctbar.org/PresidentShapiroSpeech for the complete speech.

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