

CONNECTICUT
LEGAL
CONFERENCE



Connecticut Bar
Association

CBA Hosts First In-Person **CONNECTICUT LEGAL CONFERENCE** Since 2019

AFTER TWO YEARS OF BEING HELD VIRTUALLY, the Connecticut Legal Conference returned in person on June 13. More than 700 attorneys, judges, paralegals, and other legal professionals throughout the state gathered at the Connecticut Convention Center. The day began with a networking breakfast, as well as alumni breakfasts for Quinnipiac University School of Law and UConn School of Law.

This year's conference featured 39 CLE Seminars in 11 tracks. Topics covered at the conference were widely diverse in their focus. Various seminars included content on techniques for presenting trial cases; the latest topics in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; well-being practices; cryptocurrency and digital asset concerns; venture financing transactions; antitrust and trade regulation; and more.

During "Making the Case: Solving the Adversary's Dilemma," featured national CLE presenter, Jan Schlichtmann, provided a two-part interactive session where he taught attendees how to efficiently gather, analyze, and present their case, while avoiding the perils and pitfalls of an adversarial mindset. Attorney Karen C. Burgess, past CBA president Monte E. Frank, and author Elizabeth Williamson grappled with the rise of misinformation and rapid spread of conspiracy theories throughout the United States in "Sandy Hook, the Battle for Truth, and the Fabric of our American Society."

The CBA Annual Meeting and Luncheon recognized judges taking trial referee status and also marked the installation of the

2022-2023 officers. Daniel J. Horgan, the 99th president of the CBA, had already rose to the position of president at the start of May when his predecessor, Hon. Cecil J. Thomas, resigned prior to being sworn in as a Connecticut Superior Court judge. President-elect Margaret I. Castinado, Vice President James T. Shearin, Secretary J. Paul Vance, Jr., Treasurer Sharad A. Samy, and Assistant Secretary-Treasurer Joshua J. Devine were installed during the annual meeting.

The Annual Meeting and Luncheon began with a performance of "God Bless America" from 2021-2022 Treasurer David M. Moore. After CBA President Daniel J. Horgan took to the stage, he held a moment of silence for all those within the legal community who have passed away over the course of the last year. Attendees heard remarks from Senator Richard Blumenthal; Attorney General William M. Tong; Probate Court Administrator Judge Beverly Streit-Kefalas; Appellate Court Chief Judge William H. Bright, Jr.; Connecticut Supreme Court Chief Justice Richard A. Robinson; and U.S. District of Connecticut Chief Judge Stefan R. Underhill. U.S. Attorney for the District of Connecticut Vanessa R. Avery provided the keynote speech, which focused on her office's efforts in addressing the issues of gun violence, fentanyl and opioid overdose deaths, and civil rights violations and hate crimes. "We will ensure that every case is handled with fairness in accordance with the rule of law and the ends of equal justice under law. But we also know that we simply cannot prosecute our way out of many of the challenges facing our state," Attorney Avery noted. "Meaningful success will require active community engagement and collaboration."

The 2021-2022 president, Hon. Cecil J. Thomas, spoke regarding the initiatives he helmed during his leadership of the association. He emphasized his successful efforts to increase CBA membership and expand the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiatives of the association.

ING THE CASE

The Adversary's Dilemma
Jan Schlichtmann, Esq.
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Session B 10:15AM - 12:15PM
Session C 2:30PM - 4:30PM

June 13, 2022



Featured national CLE presenter,
Jan Schlichtmann, environmental lawyer,
author, and subject of the film, A Civil Action.



2022-2023 President Daniel J. Horgan thanks Hon. Cecil J. Thomas for his service as president during the 2021-2022 bar year.



Annual Meeting and Luncheon keynote speaker, Vanessa R. Avery, U.S. Attorney for the District of Connecticut.



Daniel J. Horgan during his incoming presidential speech.

CBA President Daniel J. Horgan presented his vision for the upcoming bar year, emphasizing civility and well-being for legal professionals. "How we treat each other, not just with our words, but with our actions, by not using litigation to harass an opposing party, not filing baseless objections or motions, or agreeing to fair extensions of time is the Hallmark of professionalism which we all must strive to meet," stated President Horgan. "...before you get into the weeds of your case, start out conversations on a personal note; especially coming out of the pandemic where we all have had common struggles and losses in our practices and personal lives."

Following the final session of seminars, the President's Reception, sponsored by Liberty Bank, was held for all attendees to mingle with colleagues and discuss the day's event as well as the year to come. Cocktails and an assortment of appetizers were served while live jazz music was provided by Hartt and Soul Trio.

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 Sponsors CATIC and Liberty Bank.

2022-2023 President Daniel J Horgan's CBA Annual Meeting speech



The following is a reprint of 2022-2023 President Daniel J Horgan's CBA Annual Meeting speech.

Thank you for that warm reception— makes me feel 6ft tall. It made my day.

What a performance by Dave Moore; maybe you can sing my remarks, sound better. It is my privilege to serve as the CBA's 99th president. We have a wonderful organization, and I've always been proud to be associated with it in any capacity. As you know, CBA presidents typically serve for one year. But in my case, it's a little different. When our past president, Cecil Thomas, resigned at the beginning of May to become a superior court judge, I moved up to finish the last two months of his term before beginning mine.

We hired Keith Soressi in 2018 as our executive director. Keith had tried malpractice cases while in private practice in California and earned his stripes as an effective executive director with the Nassau New York County Bar Association. Keith has done a remarkable job leading the CBA through the pandemic, keeping the staff energized, focused and healthy. Thank you, Keith! To have the CLC in person again with outstanding CLE programming and dynamic and knowledgeable presenters is truly a blessing. None of this would be possible without the dedication and leadership of our Director of Continuing Legal Education, Attorney Thomas Genung. He, Chanie Rosenfeld, Carol DeJohn, and the rest of the CBA staff deserve all the credit for this event.

Let me tell you a bit about myself.

I made sure to wear a green tie today, not for the Celtics, but as a reminder of how lucky I have been in my life and career. It's like the old adage, "Better to be lucky than good"—that's me. Lucky to have three loving and supportive siblings; lucky to be born to parents from South Boston who taught me right from wrong, to always give your maximum effort because that really is the only thing you can control in life, to treat others the way you want to be treated, and for showing me by example the importance of giving back to your community. Although my father passed away a few weeks after I graduated from law school, my mother's perseverance through difficult times, her zeal for life and unwavering support of my siblings and I, has been a constant inspiration to me. So happy my mom Jean can be here today—I promised her I would not reveal her age.

My law career has also been blessed with luck and good fortune. From selling woman's shoes in a mall after college when law school was never on my radar—a pair of Gloria Vanderbilts to a girl I had gone to middle school with who was a legal secretary and suggested I send a resume to her boss who hired me as a glorified Go-For. That led to law school at WNEC. While studying for exams at the end of my first year, I ran into a graduating third year student who asked what I was going to be doing for the summer. I told him I didn't have anything lined up and didn't really know

what I was going to do. He fixed that problem by making a call to his former summer employer, the New London State's Attorney's Office, and getting me a job there. Not only did I have a job, but I also had the opportunity to watch and learn from one of the best in our business, Kevin Kane.

My luck would continue in my 2nd and 3rd year when I interned for RisCassi & Davis. To be mentored and learn from that crop of litigators led by the late great Bill Davis, opened up so many opportunities for me in Connecticut. I guess you could say that what I learned at RisCassi & Davis laid the foundation for me to run a small litigation firm in New London. By the way—my office is located within a stone's throw from the historic New London courthouse built in 1784. It's the oldest continuously operating courthouse in New England and 11th in the country. I've had my fair share of trials in that old courtroom and can tell you that it's a special experience to walk into that room knowing that I'm following in the footsteps of attorneys who have tried cases there for more than 230 years. If you haven't been there, I hope you will find the time to visit. If you are assigned to that courtroom as defense counsel for an insurance company and I happen to represent the plaintiff, please let me win. I will need the money after my presidency is up.

It seems that my 30-year career as an attorney has passed in a blink of an eye. As I look back today, I realize the important role the CBA has played in my life. Seminars, workshops, and other CLE programs have made me a better lawyer. Social events have made it possible for me to meet many people in our profession, establish helpful connections with colleagues, and develop enduring friendships with members I might never have gotten to know otherwise. I owe a lot to the CBA. I hope that each of our members will enjoy the same positive experiences that I have.

Just as I was heading to the back nine of my career, looking forward to having a lot more time to play golf, spending time with friends and family,

and maybe doing a little traveling, I got a call from Jonathan Shapiro about applying for the CBA executive track. At that point, I figured my luck had just run out!—but I was wrong. Jonathan was offering me the opportunity to serve the profession and association that had been so good to me. I was lucky, yet again, to have the chance.

Mohammed Ali once said, “Service to others is the rent you pay for your room here on earth.” During the past few years, I’ve found it immensely rewarding to serve the CBA under Judge Moses, Amy Lin Myerson, and Judge Thomas. I applaud them for their strong leadership in confronting the extreme challenges that we and our courts faced during the darkest days of the Covid pandemic. As difficult as the nearly two-year crisis was for all of us, it would have been far worse without their extraordinary efforts.

The CBA was formed in 1875, three years before the ABA. Like all associations then, the CBA was white male dominated for over 100 years until a three-year period from 1989 to 1992 delivered us our first three female presidents, beginning with Marilyn P. Seichter (1989-1990), Carolyn P. Kelly (1990-1991), and Susan W. Wolfson (1991-1992). These three intelligent and determined lawyers didn’t ask to have a seat at the table, they simply pulled up a chair and led the CBA with distinction. They opened the door to a more diverse and stronger CBA that would later bring us tremendous presidents like Karen DeMeola, Judge Ndidi Moses, and Amy Lin Meyerson. While Marilyn and Susan are no longer with us having passed much too early, I am happy to have Attorney Carolyn Kelly here today, who still has an active practice in New London at the firm of Suisman Shapiro. Thank you, Carolyn for your strength and leadership.

History has shown that as we become more diverse in our membership, we become stronger. We become more capable of recognizing problems affecting discrete communities, and more effective in addressing those problems as we pursue the association’s goals

We are in part a member services driven association! Our membership has grown to over 9k members and we have an area of specialty and interest for everyone, with 43 sections and 27 committees; full time lobbying efforts to support or oppose legislation consistent with the interests of the public good and our members; a robust and active YLS; and offer extensive CLE programming. We form task forces to study and address daunting issues facing our profession, like last year’s State of the Legal Profession Task Force who studied and suggested remedies to begin to shrink the serious problem of access to justice.

thought I said, it really isn’t my bar year we are talking about, but our bar year—there is no “I” in “team.” When you work together in a cooperative spirit, you can accomplish anything. We will continue to collaborate with the affinity and local bar associations to enhance the profession. I also thought about how productive lawyers are in such a stressful and adversarial environment, and the role civility plays. Civility among lawyers does not mean that either lawyer lacks aggressiveness or vigorous advocacy. Each lawyer in fact has an ethical obligation to zealously represent his or her client. Zealously does not mean being

“...there is no “I” in “team.” When you work together in a cooperative spirit, you can accomplish anything. We will continue to collaborate with the affinity and local bar associations to enhance the profession.”

We will continue to work with Judicial in finding practical solutions while fulfilling our by-laws, which state that the CBA shall aid its members in the development and maintenance of their respective practices and to facilitate the delivery of competent legal services to the public and particularly to those in greatest need.

Our country is going through a very tumultuous time. The rule of law and individual rights and equality, especially for the most vulnerable members of our society are under attack. And while we are not a political association, make no mistake, the CBA will continue to stand up against acts of hate and bigotry aimed at our Asian, Black, Latino, and LGBTQ+ brothers and sisters, among other positions.

I had been asked as I approached the year of my presidency what theme would I be focused on. I said theme? “Keep it simple stupid, don’t screw up” came to mind. But when I gave it more

uncivil, abrasive, rude, condescending, or demeaning. Zealous means full of energy, effort, and enthusiasm. How we treat each other, not just with our words, but with our actions, by not using litigation to harass an opposing party or not filing baseless objections or motions or agreeing to fair extensions of time. This is the hallmark of professionalism which we all must strive to meet. I read recently where CBA member Chuck DeLuca received the Civility and Professionalism Award from the Fairfield Bar Association. I called Chuck who has had that kind of reputation throughout his 45-year career and asked him—what is the secret to being a successful attorney while being civil and professional in dealing with your colleagues? He said to get to know your colleagues on a personal level, which was easier back in the day when we had things like short calendar or dormancy call, or he would often take a new associate and have them sit in his

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would be happy to help you connect with others within the Bar Association who might be.

I would be remiss if I did not take the time to thank my family and the unyielding support I am so very fortunate to have at home. My wife, Kristina, has supported me and my volunteering in organizations such as the Connecticut Bar Association for as long as we have been together. And now with three children at home and her own very busy and successful career, she continues to support and encourage me to push myself. I know with certainty that I would not have been able to serve in the capacity I have without her loyal partnership in all of this. Thank you, Kristina, for all that you do to support me and care for our family while also driving your own professional success.

Lastly, the Connecticut Bar Association and the Young Lawyers Section provided me with the opportunity to network and meet with colleagues throughout the



state, many for whom I would not have otherwise had the opportunity to meet. I am and will remain forever grateful for this opportunity and time in my career. Thank you, to all of you at the Connecticut Bar Association.

I hope you have taken some of the challenges and insights I've provided throughout the year to push yourself far-

ther outside of your comfort zone, or to maybe set loftier goals, and find someone to hold you accountable. If you did, I'm sure you have recognized the professional growth and development that comes with intentional self-reflection and self-development.

I'm certain our paths will continue to cross. —Josh ■

CBA Annual Meeting Speech

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office while he made calls to opposing counsel. It is much harder to do that now. So, before you get into the weeds of your case, start out conversations on a personal note, especially coming out of the pandemic where we all have had common struggles and losses in our practices and personal lives. Compassion and empathy need to replace anger and apathy. And yes, it is true, you do get more with honey than vinegar!

I also want to address the importance of lawyer wellbeing! Lawyer burnout is a serious problem. While legal work can be incredibly fulfilling, it can also, by nature, be stressful and downright exhausting. Industry-wide, ultra-competitive professional cultures and excessive hours are leading to overworked lawyers and widespread wellness and mental health struggles. Consider the following

lawyer burnout statistic: A 2020 ALM study revealed that 31 percent of lawyers feel depressed; 21 percent have a problem with alcohol; 28 percent suffer from depression; and 20 percent struggle with chronic anxiety. Now add two years of dealing with the pandemic and we have a profession in crises.

We had these CBA wellness wristbands made up for each participant. If only we could tap it three times and be healthy physically and mentally. No, it is a reminder of activities and thoughts of wellness and calm to help combat our stressful days. Our Lawyer Well-Being Committee has grown in numbers, ideas, and programs offered, led by co-chairs Tanyee Cheung and Sara Bonaiuto. Check out our well-being webpage, which contains articles on healthy daily habits.

We also started a law firm well-being

pledge last year led by CBA member, Dr. Traci Cipriano. The pledge seeks a commitment from legal employers to promote lawyer well-being and healthy work environments. While the legal community has gradually been tuning-in to the value in promoting lawyer well-being, the pandemic and a multitude of other stressors arising since March 2020 have accelerated this recognition by necessity. If your firm has not signed up for the pledge, please visit our website and join the cause. Let's make a concerted effort to focus on the well-being of lawyers and our staff in this bar year and beyond.

Finally, a gifted lawyer, former President of CBA, and personal friend of mine, Ralph Monaco, was only 54 when he passed last July after giving so much to our profession and the CBA. His many accomplishments during a life caught short are a reminder that the light that burns twice as bright burns half as long. He will be missed. ■