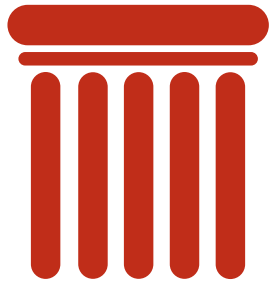


CBA Hosts

Largest Annual Gathering of Legal Professionals in Connecticut



CONNECTICUT LEGAL CONFERENCE



HUNDREDS OF LEGAL PROFESSIONALS GATHERED FOR THE 2023 CONNECTICUT Legal Conference on June 5 at the Connecticut Convention Center in Hartford. The conference's wide selection of educational content made it easy for attorneys from throughout the state, from solo practitioners to associates at large firms, to find informative content relevant to their area of practice.

The day began with a networking breakfast, including alumni breakfasts for Quinnipiac University School of Law and UConn School of Law, where attendees caught up with colleagues and friends and made new connections. Also available throughout the day was the exhibitor showcase, which featured a variety of companies and organizations offering legal research, technology solutions, law practice management services, and more.

This year's conference featured 43 CLE seminars, which provided substantive coverage of a diverse range of topics such as DE&I issues, wellness and self-care, representation of non-profits, guardians ad litem, PFAS regulations, best practices for interacting with the media, and more. Presentations regarding specific pivotal state laws also took place covering the Connecticut Unfair Trade Practices Act, the Connecticut Parentage Act, and the Connecticut Data Privacy Act. During the seminar "Stare Decisis and the New Roberts Court," Yale's Sterling Professor of Law, Akhail Reed Amar, shared his perspectives on how the current United States Supreme



The 2023-2024 CBA officers (L to R): Secretary Jeffrey A. Zyjeski, Assistant Secretary-Treasurer Christopher A. Klepps, Vice President Emily A. Gianquinto, President Margaret I. Castinada, Immediate Past President Daniel J. Horgan, Treasurer Sharad A. Samy, and President-Elect James T. Shearin



Connecticut Lieutenant Governor Susan Bysiewicz



Featured National CLE Presenter Paulette Brown

Court approaches the concept of stare decisis and the role it has played in the decisions the court has issued in recent years.

This year's featured national CLE presenters were Michelle Behnke, chair of the American Bar Association Commission on Racial and Ethnic Diversity, and Paulette Brown, American Bar Association past president. Attorney Behnke presented the seminar "Roll Up Your Sleeves and Get to (net)Work," in which she focused on networking strategies for solo and small firm practitioners, while Attorney Brown's seminar, "Back in the Saddle: Networking and Business Development Beyond the Pandemic," provided networking and business development lessons appropriate for attorneys working in mid and large sized firms.

The CBA Annual Meeting and Luncheon was a chance for attendees to take a break and mingle with



Yale University Sterling Professor of Law, Akhil Reed Amar



Featured National CLE Presenter Michelle A. Behnke

2023-2024 President Margaret I. Castinado's CBA Annual Meeting Speech



Margaret I. Castinado will serve as the CBA's 100th president and will be the first Hispanic leader of the association. Attorney Castinado is a senior assistant public defender at the Office of the Public Defender in New Haven. She has defended thousands of clients with criminal matters since 1999.

It is unbelievable to me that this small-town girl from Nebraska stands on this stage before you today. Coming from humble beginnings, despite this or maybe because of this, my father taught me at an early age to always give back. He volunteered his time to many community efforts and particularly in working with migrants who traveled to Nebraska to work the fields every summer. So, I grew up knowing I wanted to help people and that is what I pursued both in college and law school.

But I would not be here today without the support, encouragement, mentorship, and friendship of so many people, many of whom are here in the audience today. But I would like to give a special shout out to the guests seated at my table. You are my village, my CT family, my dearest friends. You all mean the world to me, and there are not enough words to express my appreciation for all you have done for me. Thank you!! Te quiero mucho!

So my vision for the CBA begins with an appeal to hope—hope for greater understanding of the importance of creating and maintaining a diverse and inclusive legal community; hope for our communities as our marginalized communities continue to struggle with challenges, including food insecurities and housing, both at home and in our colleges and law schools; hope that we continue to fight the systemic racism and disparities in our criminal justice system; hope that we continue to welcome, support, and protect the humanity of people of color, the LGBTQ+ community, women—now encompassing 63 percent of our incoming and graduating law students—and the disabled; hope that we continue to recognize the importance of wellness in our profession and that we can eliminate the stigma associated with mental health, substance issues, and other members with disabilities, so our membership will seek help. (As we all know, attorneys have the highest rates of suicide of any other profession in our country.) Hope that, with your help, we can continue to bridge the access to justice gap.

My hope towards achieving this:

Engage, Educate, and Empower.

Engage

Engage by reaching out to our sections and committees that have been dormant to see what we can do to re-engage; Engage by

Building bridges not only among our sections, committees and members, but with our affinity, local, and specialty bars—past president of the CHBA and board member for almost 20 years, it has been par for the course for our affinity bars to collaborate and support each other—as such it is real easy for us to be a village to each other. Expanding that engagement/collaboration to more organizations.

For example:

The new admittee reception for those new attorneys from 2020 through fall 2022 who did not receive an in-person reception due to the pandemic. The CBA, through the Connecticut Council of Bar Presidents, collaborated with the affinity bars, including the Connecticut Hispanic Bar Association, South Asian Bar Association of Connecticut, George W. Crawford Black Bar Association, and Connecticut Italian American Bar Association; local bar associations, including New Haven County, Hartford County, Fairfield County, and Tolland County; and the specialty bars, including the Connecticut Trial Lawyers Association—all of whom attended and offered information on their various organizations. Additionally, Chief Justice Robinson, Chief Judge of the Appellate Court Judge Bright, Chief Judge Elizabeth Bozzutto, and Superior Court Judge Ndidi Moses all spoke to the new attorneys. They remained afterwards and supped and conversed with the new admittees who found it a unique and rewarding experience.

Educate

Returning Civics education to our schools and at an earlier age; pipeline growth; promoting higher education among our

young students and minorities. Continuing to advance the legal profession with professional and leadership development; ensuring our members, pursuant to the Rules of Professional Conduct, are up-to-date with and educated on the advancement of technology, i.e. artificial intelligence and other new and changing areas.

Empower

Empower our communities, especially our marginalized communities, with not only pro bono legal services but also education on the basics—what is an attorney and in what ways can they help, what are my rights, learning basic financial concepts, how to open a bank account, how to balance a checkbook, etc.

Empower our women to continue to seek equity in the profession; empower our diverse attorneys to continue to advance equitably in this profession.

Yesterday, my dear friend/sister, Marilyn Diaz, sent me an affirmation which brought me perspective—as the nay-sayer words come back to me—and support and confidence as these words reminded me who I am: *mujer, latina-y, luchadora*. I don't and won't negotiate who I am. As my idol, Justice Sonja Soto-Mayor, once said, "The Latina in me is an ember that blazes forever!"

I have hope, with hard work, for a better tomorrow. I recognize and accept the awesome responsibility this position holds and thank you for your trust in me.

Thank you.



colleagues while listening to remarks from Connecticut dignitaries: Connecticut Attorney General William M. Tong; Probate Court Administrator, Judge Beverly K. Streit-Kefalas; Appellate Court Chief Judge William H. Bright, Jr.; Supreme Court Chief Justice Richard A. Robinson; U.S. District of Connecticut Chief Judge Michael P. Shea; and Connecticut Lieutenant Governor Susan Bysiewicz. Outgoing 2022-2023 CBA president, Daniel J. Horgan, emphasized the strength and growth of the association during his tenure, remarking, “The state of the CBA two years removed from the pandemic is strong. We are a member services association delivering more live and innovative CLEs. Our pro bono efforts and programs continue to grow, which allows us to meet the needs of our most vulnerable citizens. Our membership is robust and includes the faculty and student populations

of UConn, Yale, Quinnipiac, and Western New England University’s law schools.”

Margaret I. Castinado was installed as the CBA’s 100th president during the luncheon, along with the other 2023-2024 CBA officers. Incoming President Castinado shared that her vision for the upcoming bar year was an appeal to hope within the legal community, which would be accomplished through the principles of engage, educate, and empower. She emphasized that important collaborative efforts between the CBA and other state and local organizations will continue to develop through her presidency.

The day ended with afternoon CLE sessions and the President’s Reception, which featured the Latin musical ensemble Goza. ■