

News & Events

CBA Hosts 2024 Presidential Fellows Dinner

On December 3, the annual CBA Presidential Fellows Dinner took place at Grassy Hill Country Club in Orange, where Association leaders and past fellows introduced and discussed the program with the current class of fellows.

At the dinner, the 2023-2025 and 2024-2026 presidential fellows as well as additional attendees enjoyed a panel presentation moderated by CBA President James T. (Tim) Shearin. The panel consisted of three past presidential fellows: CBA Presidential Fellows Committee Chair Yamuna Menon, CBA Membership Committee Co-chair Kyle LaBuff, and Johnny Ross III.

The dinner marked the first in-person event for this year's new fellows: Chelsea Donaldson, Danielle A. Erickson, Kara Newell, Benjamin B. Paholke, and Jasjeet Sahsani. CBA Presidential Fellows Committee Chair Yamuna Menon and CBA President James T. (Tim) Shearin began the event by welcoming the new fellows to the program. "These are the folks that define the profession," stated Shearin, referring to various past presidents and other leaders of the Association attending the event. "What

I would encourage all of you, as fellows, to do is to aspire to these folks who really represent people who have become ambassadors to the profession and help it move forward."

During the panel discussion, President Shearin asked each of the panelists about the reasons they had for applying for and participating in the Presidential Fellows program. Attorney Menon noted that the program helped her to connect with other members of the bar and develop as a leader. Attorney LaBuff explained that the fellows program helped him to "build relationships, learn the craft, and see what the CBA does." Attorney Ross pointed out that the program provided great opportunities to network with Connecticut attorneys when he was a new member of the CBA who had attended law school outside of the state.

The CBA Presidential Fellows Program was launched in 2015 as a prestigious leadership development program for the future leaders of the Connecticut legal profession. New Presidential Fellows are selected each year and assigned to the executive committee of a sponsoring CBA section. Graduates of the



The current CBA Presidential Fellows were joined by the program's alumni during the event. The 2024-2026 Presidential Fellows are the 10th class of fellows since the program's initiation in 2015.

program have gone on to hold prominent leadership positions within the Connecticut Bar Association and the Connecticut legal community at large.

The CBA congratulates all the current Presidential Fellows and looks forward to seeing their development and achievements within the association. ■



(L to R) CBA Presidential Fellows Committee Chair Yamuna Menon; 2024-2026 Presidential Fellows Danielle A. Erickson, Kara Newell, Jasjeet Sahani, Benjamin B. Pahalke, Chelsea Donaldson; and CBA President James T. (Tim) Shearin



Free Legal Advice Clinic 2025 Schedule

January 21 & 22
April 22 & 23
July 22 & 23
October 21 & 22

Learn More and Register at
ctbar.org/FreeLegalAdviceClinics



Do You Have 30 Minutes? *Volunteer Today*

Volunteer attorneys for the CBA's Free Legal Advice Clinic will answer legal questions in their area of practice during a 30-minute virtual session. Paralegals and law students can volunteer to complete client intake forms.

The CBA is looking for volunteers in any of the following practice areas:

- Bankruptcy
- Employee Rights/Unemployment
- Family Law
- Fraudulent Business/Debt Collection
- Immigration Law
- Landlord/Tenant
- Other Civil Law
- Pardons
- Tax Law

IN MEMORIAM

Paul Litman passed away on January 7, 2025. He earned his B.A. from American International College and his J.D. from Boston University Law School. After graduating from law school, Attorney Litman moved to the greater Hartford area. He spent the majority of his 40+ year career working for the firm of Clayman, Markowitz, Litman and Tapper in Bloomfield, CT before retiring in the early 2000s and later relocating to Florida.



Hon. Jeffrey Alker Meyer passed away on January 12, 2025. In 1985, he graduated with a B.A. from Yale University majoring



in economics and history and was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship to continue his studies on communities in poverty and rural development in Ecuador. Judge Meyer graduated with his J.D. from Yale University Law School in 1989, afterwards serving as a law clerk for United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit Chief Judge James L. Oakes and United States Supreme Court Associate Justice Harry A. Blackmun. Following these clerkships, he spent a year working for Vermont Legal Aid, representing people in mental health commitment cases. Judge Meyer then served as an Assistant U.S. Attorney in New Haven for nine years, becoming appeals chief and earning Department of Justice Director's Awards in 1999 and 2002 for his excellent work investigating and

trying difficult document-intensive environmental and white-collar cases. In 2004, he left the US Attorney's Office to serve under then Chair of the Federal Reserve Paul Volcker as senior counsel to the United Nations' global investigation of bribery and corruption in its oil-for-food program. He later entered academia, teaching international law, legal ethics, criminal procedure, and environmental law at Quinnipiac Law School and co-teaching the Supreme Court Advocacy Clinic at Yale University. He was confirmed to the federal district court bench in 2014, where he served for the remainder of his life. Additionally, he served as an ex-officio member of the CBA Federal Practice Section's Executive Committee.

Support the Judge Herb Gruendel Memorial Fund

On December 17, 2024, retired Connecticut Appellate Court Judge F. Herbert Gruendel passed away. In addition to an extensive judicial career, Judge Gruendel was known for his lifelong passion for learning and teaching. He earned his BA from Drew University in 1969, and three Master of Arts degrees: one from the University of Maryland in 1971, another from the University of Pennsylvania in 1974, and a third from Rutgers University in 1976. He also held a certificate in theology from Hartford Seminary, where he studied middle eastern religions. Before attending law school, Judge Gruendel began his career as a public school teacher and principal for 12 years.

In 1984 Judge Gruendel graduated with honors from the University of Connecticut School of Law and began his career as a litigator in New Haven at the law firm of Jacobs, Grudberg, Belt & Dow. In May 1998, he was appointed to the bench as a superior court judge working in the family court division in the Hartford Judicial District. Deeply respected as a family court judge, he was then appointed as the chief administrative judge for the Family Division of the Superior Court in 2001. In 2005, Governor M. Jodi Rell nominated Judge Gruendel to the appellate court, where he served with

distinction until his mandatory retirement from the bench at 70. Afterwards, he continued to serve as a judge trial referee.

The Gruendel Fund at the Connecticut Bar Institute was endowed in 2023 by the Honorable F. Herbert Gruendel, his wife, Janice Gruendel, Ph.D., and their family and friends in honor of Judge Gruendel's outstanding career as an educator and jurist for the state of Connecticut. The Gruendel Fund supports the CBA's commitment to Connecticut schools by providing assistance for necessary expenses such as transportation and registration costs associated with participation in the CBA's mock trial program. Being an educator fostered his passion for mock trial competition so that students can experience and learn about the rule of law.

Please consider making a donation to the fund at ctbar.org/Gruendelfund.



Upcoming Education Calendar

Register at ctbar.org/CLE

FEBRUARY

- 2/10** Connecticut Parentage & Unique Considerations for LGBTQ Clients ♦
- 2/11** Non-Compete Agreements: Navigating the Ever-Changing Landscape ♦
- 2/13** Lawyers Have Heart: The Importance of Cardiovascular Health for the Legal Profession ♦
- 2/18** State Privacy Laws Going into Effect in 2025 ♦
- 2/19** Drafting Effective Engagement Letters: Tools for the Ethical Lawyer ♦
- 2/25** LGBTQ+ ♦
- 2/27** Run an Efficient Law Practice by Making the Most of Technology ♦

MARCH

- 3/4** Education ♦
- 3/5** Lawyer Like an Athlete ♦
- 3/6** Mastering Financial Management for Law Firms: Essential Budgeting Skills for Success ♦
- 3/11** Appellate Law ♦
- 3/12** Ethics of Investigations ♦
- 3/27** Real Property ♦
- 3/27** Annual Advanced Labor and Employment Law Symposium ♦
- 3/31** Health Law ♦
- 4/1** Intellectual Property ♦

APRIL

- 4/23** HR Law Basics for Solo and Small Firms
- 4/27** Real Property ♦
- 4/28** Commercial Law and Bankruptcy

MAY

- 5/1** Arbitration Institute
- 5/2** More Effective Writing Makes More Effective Lawyers
- 5/6** Elder Law ♦
- 5/7** Succession Planning ♦

CLE PASS ELIGIBLE: For more information about the CLE Pass, visit ctbar.org/CLEPass.

PEERS AND CHEERS

Marisa M. Engel has joined the law firm of Nuebert Pepe & Monteith PC as an associate. Attorney Engel represents clients in the areas of commercial finance and banking as well as real estate law.

Berchem Moses PC recently elevated Rebecca Goldberg, Matthew L. Studer, and Paul A. Testa to partners at the firm. **Rebecca Goldberg** joined the firm as an associate in the Milford office in 2014 and was promoted to senior counsel in 2023. She partners with human resources professionals and business managers to counsel them through the most challenging workplace situations.

Matthew L. Studer joined the firm as an associate in 2014. Attorney Studer practices in the Westport office in the areas of civil litigation, land use and zoning, and municipal law. **Paul A. Testa** joined the firm as senior counsel in the firm's Labor & Employment practice group in 2020. He has practiced labor and employment law in Connecticut since 2007 and advises both public and private sector employers on an array of personnel, labor, and employment matters.

McCarter & English announced on October 16 that the attorneys and staff of Harrington & Smith have combined with their firm. Among those joining McCarter & English is named partner **Mark Harrington**, and associate **Monica Laskos**.

Lawyers for Children America (LFCA) celebrated its 30th anniversary in November. LFCA recruits and trains committed lawyers from premiere law firms and corporate legal departments, whose

legal counsel ensures the child client's desires are made known to the court.

Cummings & Lockwood LLC is pleased to announce that **Brianna L. Marquis**, an attorney in the firm's Private Clients Group based in its West Hartford office, has been elected to principal. Attorney Marquis joined Cummings & Lockwood in 2017 and counsels high net worth individuals in the areas of trust and estate planning, charitable giving, tax-efficient wealth transfers, and related residential real estate transactions.

Shipman & Goodwin LLP announced the relocation of its Stamford office to a modern, 17,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art space at 400 Atlantic Street in the heart of Stamford's business district.

Kahan Krensky Capossela LLP, now operating as KKC Law, is pleased to announce the addition of **Jennifer M. Vincenzo** as an associate attorney to their firm focusing on estate planning, probate, elder law, and family law.

BGM Law Group LLP has announced that **Kristen Zaehring** has joined their firm as a partner. Attorney Zaehring is a commercial litigator whose practice focuses on commercial litigation and arbitration, employment law counseling and disputes, contract negotiation and litigation, and appellate work. Her clients span a broad range of industries, including healthcare, manufacturing, communications, and entertainment.