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IN REVIEW**

**2025
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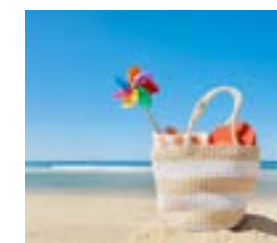
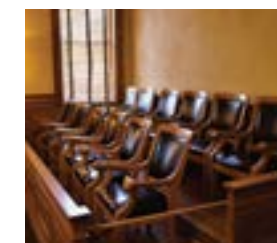
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Reflections on a Year of Progress and Purpose

By JAMES T. (TIM) SHEARIN

I wrote my first column nearly a year ago. A lot has happened since then. We have moved into our new office in Meriden, which is more centrally located and convenient for all of our members to visit when required. We hired a new executive director, Lina Lee, who has brought energy and fresh ideas to the association. By the time you read this, we will have started a year-long celebration of our 150th anniversary. The CBA is one of the oldest state bar associations in the country. Over the course of the year, we offered 187 CLE programs, including 12 conferences and retreats, servicing 4,706 attendees. This year's Connecticut Legal Conference has seen the largest growth of in-person attendees since the COVID-19 pandemic, with over 750 registrants. We revitalized our member benefits, accessible on our website at ctbar.org/Benefits, to enhance our members' experience. We launched a video series, *Legally Brief*, presented by our Fair and Impartial Courts Committee. You can view the first three episodes, "The Importance of an Independent Judiciary Bound Only to the Rule of Law," "How Judges are Appointed and Reappointed," and "How Judges Rule" at ctbar.org/LegallyBrief. Our goal is to use them as educational tools to deliver concise, accessible insights into legal topics that impact both the legal community and the public. We maintained our vibrant committee and section structure that allowed our members to come together and share experiences in different practice areas. We reinvigorated our Solo and Small Firm Section thanks to Scott Schwefel and Sylvia Ho and presented 14 seminars on subjects relevant to those members. Our six

James T. (Tim) Shearin is the CBA's 101st president. Attorney Shearin is the immediate past chairman of Pullman & Comley LLC. He has wide-ranging experience in federal and state courts at both the trial and appellate levels, and before arbitration and mediation panels. He represents clients in a wide variety of litigation matters.



standing pro bono programs have helped approximately 2,000 people this past bar year. We published six editions of the *CT Lawyer* and nine articles in two editions of the *Connecticut Bar Journal*.

"The success is solely the result of the CBA's hard-working staff, the House of Delegates, the Board of Governors, the section and committee leaders, and my fellow officers. Together, they make this organization a stand-out among others in the country."

We also had a successful session at the General Assembly lobbying on behalf of the causes unique to our clients and the profession as a whole. The CBA was a key supporter of adopting the Uniform Mediation Act in CT and amendments to modernize the Uniform Commercial Code; both initiatives passed both chambers of the CT legislature. In addition, the CBA continued to lead efforts to enact

laws allowing associations to pool their members to negotiate for better quality and lower priced health insurance. A proposal submitted by the CBA would commission a task force on studying the

viability of the bar association and other professional, trade, and non-profit organizations sponsoring healthcare insurance. The CBA made more progress on that issue than ever before, with the CT House of Representatives voting in favor of the CBA's proposal. Unfortunately, the Senate ran out of time before the end of the session to have a vote on the bill. We will continue our efforts next year with

the goal of passing and implementing that legislation to bring significant savings to our member firms.

I have listed the above not to claim success. Hardly. The success is solely the result of the CBA's hard-working staff, the House of Delegates, the Board of Governors, the section and committee leaders, and my fellow officers. Together, they make this organization a stand-out among others in the country. I offer this list because it is important to step back and take stock of the importance of the CBA. I am proud of who we are. You should be proud too.

In terms of the CBA's role, I would also point out the mantle we accepted to be the spokesperson for the profession in defending the rule of law, our judges, and our profession. At last year's annual meeting, I observed that we were reaching a point where politics were shaping the rule of law in a way that ignored the role of justice in our society. I also cautioned that the growing attacks on our courts would, if left unchecked, undermine the tripartite form of government our founders established.

Image credit: Brian Jackson/Getty Images



And, I reminded all of us that as lawyers, we must defend the rule of law and our courts.

Little did I know last summer that the very essence of our democracy would come under attack. Little did I know then that threats of impeachment of judges by those who disagree with their decisions would become commonplace. Little did I know then that parts of our society would call for ignoring court orders with which they disagree. Little did I know then that judges would be physically threatened. Little did I know then that law firms would be targeted for the clients they represented, the lawyers they hired, or the positions they advocated. Little did I know then that a firm's efforts to foster diversity, equity, and inclusion would make it the subject of government investigation.

I wish I did not know any of it. I wish we were not immersed in this chapter of our history when the threat to our courts, the rule of law, and our profession were not the subject of daily headlines. But we are, and I am glad that our association has become

one of the leading voices responding to those attacks. Our stance has been adopted by other bar associations. Our words have motivated them and others besides the organized bar to respond. Ad hoc groups of lawyers have rallied to the cause. Attorneys have heeded the call and returned to schools to teach civics education to explain what the rule of law is and why it matters. Amicus briefs have been filed. We are fulfilling our role.

Still, more must be done. We cannot let our guard down. The attacks are real; the consequences irreparable. In the words of United States District Judge John D. Bates: "In our constitutional order, few stars are as fixed as the principle that no official 'can prescribe what shall be orthodox in politics.' *W. Va. State Bd. of Educ. v. Barnette*, 319 U.S. 624, 642 (1943). And in our constitutional order, few actors are as central to fixing the star as lawyers." *Jenner & Block, LLP v. United States Department of Justice*, 2025 WL 1482021 (D. D.C. May 23, 2025) at p.13.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as your president. ■

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CONNECTICUT BAR ASSOCIATION

News & Events

CBA Co-Hosts Justice for All Symposium

On March 21, the Connecticut Bar Association (CBA), Connecticut Bar Foundation (CBF), the James W. Cooper Fellows of the CBF, and the University of Connecticut School of Law hosted the symposium Justice for All: The Present and Future Impact of Legal Aid in Connecticut at William F. Starr Hall on the UConn School of Law campus. The symposium was held as a continuation of the Connecticut Bar Foundation's 2014 symposium, Justice for All: The History and Future of Legal Aid in Connecticut. Over 100 attendees from the legal community attended this year's symposium, including representatives of legal aid organizations, bar associations, law firms, and law schools.

In this year's event, a series of panels were held that explored the progress made in addressing the civil access to justice gap in Connecticut since 2014 and the current efforts of Connecticut's legal aid programs to advance access to justice, including the impact and outcomes achieved through Connecticut's two current right to counsel programs. The symposium's final panel considered the future of legal aid in Connecticut, including anticipated challenges, and opportunities for innovation and collaborative partnerships.

UConn School of Law Dean Eboni Nelson, Connecticut Bar Foundation President Hon. Victoria Chavey, and 2024-2025 CBA President James T. (Tim) Shearin welcomed attendees with remarks highlighting the urgent need to close the civil justice gap. "I want to thank all of you for being on the frontlines of this work for decades," stated Dean Nelson. "As legislators, jurists, attorneys,



The symposium's first panel, "Civil Access to Justice in Connecticut: Where Have We Been, Where are We Now?" consisted of (From L to R) Moderator and Statewide Legal Services Director of Housing Advocacy Moses Beckett; Connecticut Supreme Court Justice and Chair of the Connecticut Judicial Branch Access to Justice Commission William H. Bright, Jr.; Connecticut Bar Foundation Deputy Director and Chief Operating Officer Ashleigh Backman; 2024-2025 CBA President-Elect Emily Gianquinto; Connecticut Legal Services Litigation and Advocacy Director Nilda Havrilla; and Chair of the American Bar Association Standing Committee on Legal Aid and Indigent Defense Robert Weiner.

advocates, policymakers, leaders, and community members you have helped to ensure the most vulnerable among us have access to freedoms, rights, benefits, dignity, justice, and opportunity, all while preserving the rule of law which serves as the cornerstone of our democracy." In his remarks, President Shearin asserted "If nothing else comes out of this program, and I suspect a lot will, I want you all to know that you have the support of the Foundation and the Bar Association and our respective members. We are there for you and we will continue to support your efforts."

The day began with the panel "Civil Access to Justice in Connecticut: Where Have We Been, Where Are We Now?", moderated by Moses Beckett of Statewide Legal Services. The panel consisted of Connecticut Supreme Court Justice and Chair of the Connecticut Judicial Branch Access to Justice Commission William H. Bright, Jr.; Connecticut Bar Foundation Deputy Director and Chief Operating Officer Ashleigh Backman; 2024-2025 CBA President-Elect Emily Gianquinto; Connecticut Legal Services Litigation and Advocacy Director Nilda Havrilla; and Chair of the American Bar Association Standing Committee on Legal Aid and Indigent Defense Robert Weiner. The panelists addressed



2024-2025 CBA President James T. (Tim) Shearin provided opening remarks during the symposium.

lingering disparities in access to legal services and assessed how Connecticut compares to other states in providing civil legal representation to those in need. When asked how judicial innovations addressing access to justice over recent years have affected pro bono engagement through the CBA, President-Elect Gianquinto noted how the CBA has followed the court in adopting virtual platforms. “Our quarterly free legal advice clinics used to be in person,” stated President-Elect Gianquinto. “They are now by Zoom. We’re serving three times as many people and pretty much every quarter attendance increases.”

The next panel of the symposium consisted of a discussion on Connecticut’s right-to-counsel initiatives. The panel, which featured Connecticut Legal Services Managing Attorney Lorraine Carcova, Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence Director of Legal Advocacy Shauna Harrington, and New Haven Legal Assistance Association Director Alexis Smith, explored the state’s eviction defense program and the expansion of legal services for domestic violence victims seeking restraining orders. Moderated by Angela Schlingheyde of the Connecticut Bar Foundation, the conversation highlighted how these programs have delivered tangible results for vulnerable residents while pointing to the need for their continued growth and expansion.

The symposium’s luncheon panel brought in state lawmakers for a bipartisan dialogue on the legislature’s role in expanding access to justice. Connecticut State Senators Stephen Harding and Matthew Lesser shared personal experiences and policy perspectives on the barriers residents face when legal assistance is out of reach. Moderator Kirk Lowry of the Connecticut Legal Rights Project guided the discussion, asking the panelists about their views on practical legislative solutions to expand access to justice.

The final panel of the symposium, “Legal Aid in the Future,” looked ahead at challenges and expectations for civil legal access in Connecticut. The panel, moderated by Connecticut Bar Association Executive Director Lina Lee, included Greater Hartford Legal Aid Attorney Kelsey Bannon, Quinnipiac University School of Law Dean Brian Gallini, Court Management Consultant for the National Center for State Courts Aubrie Souza, and Connecticut Veterans Legal Center Executive Director Alison Weir. The panelists explored innovative approaches to legal aid being taken in other states, ways to increase law student engagement in addressing the civil access to justice gap, and technology-enhanced service models that widen public access.

Connecticut Legal Services Executive Director of Deborah Witkin provided the event’s closing remarks, thanking the attendees for their time and efforts focusing on this important cause. The Justice for All symposium reaffirmed the critical role that legal aid plays for Connecticut’s most vulnerable residents and reinforced the commitment of the participating legal organizations to bridging the access to justice gap. ■



The symposium’s second panel, “Connecticut’s Developing Right to Counsel Programs,” included (From L to R) moderator and Connecticut Bar Foundation Executive Director Angela Schlingheyde, Connecticut Legal Services Managing Attorney Lorraine Carcova, Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence Director of Legal Advocacy Shauna Harrington, and New Haven Legal Assistance Association Executive Director Alexis Smith.



The luncheon panel “Perspectives from the Legislature” included (From L to R) moderator and Connecticut Legal Rights Project Legal Director Kirk Lowry and State Senators Stephen Harding and Matthew Lesser.



The symposium’s final panel, “Legal Aid in the Future: Facing New Challenges, Promoting Innovation and Collaboration” consisted of moderator and CBA Executive Director Lina Lee, Greater Hartford Legal Aid Attorney Kelsey Bannon, Quinnipiac University School of Law Dean Brian Gallini, National Center for State Courts Court Management Consultant Aubrie Souza, and Connecticut Veterans Legal Center Executive Director Alison Weir.

CBA Delegation Attends 2025 ABA Day

The CBA and ABA are working hard to advocate for our members. On Apr. 8-10, a delegation of bar leaders from the CBA traveled to Washington, D.C. to attend the American Bar Association (ABA)’s 2025 ABA Day event. Each year, during ABA Day, leaders of the ABA and state and local bars from around the country come together to advocate at the capital on issues of importance to the legal profession. Along with advocacy, this year’s event also included guest speakers, presentations, and a reception at the United States Botanic Garden.



(L to R) Connecticut United States Senator Richard Blumenthal, ABA Day State Captain Daniel A. Schwartz, legislative staff members, and ABA Delegate Scott Schwefel

ABA Day State Captain, Daniel A. Schwartz, along with the CBA’s Delegates to the ABA, Steve Curley, Amy Lin Meyerson, and Scott Schwefel met with U.S. Representative Joe Courtney and U.S. Representative Jahana Hayes. In addition, the CBA delegation met with the legislative staff of Connecticut’s U.S. Senators Chris Murphy and Richard Blumenthal and U.S. Representatives Rosa DeLauro, Jim Himes, and John Larson. Our delegation pushed for greater support for funding the Legal Services Corporation, which provides legal assistance to people with limited income, and support for the rule of law and safety of judges. The CBA is proud to be making a difference for its members.



(L to R) ABA Day State Captain Daniel A. Schwartz, and the CBA’s ABA Delegates Scott Schwefel, Steve Curley, and Amy Lin Meyerson

CBA Celebrates Law Day 2025

The CBA Civics Education Committee hosted its annual Law Day Celebration at the Connecticut Appellate Court in Hartford on May 2. Law Day is a national celebration held annually to celebrate the role of law in our society and to help encourage a deeper understanding of the legal profession. The theme that the American Bar Association chose for this year’s Law Day was “The Constitution’s Promise: Out of Many, One.”

Chief Judge Melanie L. Cradle of the Connecticut Appellate Court opened this year’s event, welcoming the students and guests to the Law Day celebration and thanking those who had organized the



(Back Row L to R) Eilish Thompson, Judge John D. Boland, and John R. Weikart
(Front Row L to R) Lawrence Morizio, 2025 Ralph J. Monaco Civics Education Award Recipients Ava Kennedy and Jayaditya Rajan, Dina Monaco, 2025 Ralph J. Monaco Civics Education Award Recipient Gabriella Bois, Jonathan Weiner, and 2024-2025 CBA President-Elect Emily A. Gianquinto

event's activities. 2024-2025 CBA President-Elect Emily A. Gianquinto provided an introduction for this year's event to the attendees. She spoke about the history of Law Day and the CBA's current activities to promote the defense of the rule of law. "The CBA has a long history of working on rule of law initiatives, particularly access to justice initiatives, because equal access to the courts is a critical part of the rule of law," stated President-Elect Gianquinto. She referred to recent programs held by the CBA, including last fall's Rule of Law Conference, mock trial programs, and the legally brief video series, and remarked, "We're hoping that some of those efforts will further serve the laudable goals of Law Day, which is really to promote civics education, to teach citizens about the importance of their role in our system and how things are supposed to work."

Following President-Elect Gianquinto's introductory remarks, Connecticut Secretary of the State Stephanie Thomas spoke to the students and other attendees about the importance of public civic engagement and support for rule of law as necessary for the proper functioning of our government. "As Secretary of the State I consider it a part of my work to remind everyone that our democracy only works if we engage and participate in it on a regular basis," stated Secretary Thomas. "Because this constitution of ours is demanding, it requires that we do so much more than just vote. We have to take up the challenge that it gave us

and engage fully in this work of building a better community, whether it's your school, your neighborhood, your state, or your country."

Retired Superior Court Judge John Boland introduced the student program portion of the event, which consisted of several orations presented by groups of students from Hartford's Classical Magnet School to the judges of the Connecticut Appellate Court. The students spoke about topics related to the concept of unity in America, responding to questions asking whether the nation is currently divided, is a divided nation able to progress and thrive, how can our divisions be healed, and what challenges can unite us.

Following the student program, this year's Ralph J. Monaco Memorial Civics Education Awards were presented to three Connecticut High School students by Dina Monaco, the wife of past CBA President Ralph J. Monaco, who the award was posthumously named after. During her remarks, she noted her late husband's commitment to educating students about law and government, stating, "As a lawyer, Ralph was an enthusiastic advocate for civics education. He recognized that a strong foundation in legal principles would lead to a brighter future for our society and our legal system."

This year's winners of the Ralph J. Monaco Memorial Civics Education Awards

were Gabriella Bois of Classical Magnet High School, Ava Kennedy of Robert E. Fitch High School, and Jayaditya Rajan of Weston Public Schools. The awards were provided to these students based on their demonstration of a significant commitment to advancing civics engagement, civics education, and/or the rule of law. Along with the award, the three students each received a \$1,000 grant.

At the end of the event, all of this year's attending students were given the chance to meet with the judges of the Appellate Court and members of the CBA Civics Education Committee before enjoying lunch inside the state capitol building. Thank you to all those who participated in this year's Law Day celebration and congratulations to the winners of this year's Ralph J. Monaco Civics Education Awards!



Connecticut Secretary of the State Stephanie Thomas spoke to the event's attendees about the importance of public civic engagement and support for rule of law.



(L to R) 2025 Ralph J. Monaco Civics Education Award Recipients Ava Kennedy and Jayaditya Rajan, Connecticut Secretary of the State Stephanie Thomas, and 2025 Ralph J. Monaco Civics Education Award Recipient Gabriella Bois



2024-2025 CBA President-Elect Emily A. Gianquinto provided introductory remarks at this year's Law Day event.

CBA Hosts 2025 Well-Being Summit

On May 7, over 30 Connecticut Bar Association (CBA) members gathered at the CBA offices in Meriden for the 2025 Well-Being Summit, hosted by the CBA Lawyer Well-Being Committee. The Summit, which has been held annually since 2023, consists of a free-to-attend half day of wellness presentations focused specifically on well-being issues commonly experienced by attorneys. Attendees at this year's event heard from two wellness practitioners, boundaries coach Barb Nangle and licensed professional counselor Tamar Draughn.

The Summit began with a brief welcome from the CBA Well-Being Committee Co-Chairs Sara Bonaiuto and Joan R. Wilson. They thanked the attendees for taking time out of their professional schedules to focus on their own well-being.

The first of the Summit's two presentations, "Stop Over-Giving: Repair Your Life from the Inside Out Boundaries for Attorneys," was presented by Barb Nangle. She spoke about her personal journey struggling through years of substance abuse and unhealthy habits before joining a 12-step recovery

program at the age of 52. Drawing from her experiences pre and post-recovery, she discussed how self-imposed limitations and ineffective communication in a person's professional life can lead to chronic stress and depression. She emphasized the importance of focusing on yourself, setting effective boundaries



Boundaries coach Barb Nangle presented the first program of the Well-Being Summit, "Stop Over-Giving: Repair Your Life from the Inside Out Boundaries for Attorneys."

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CBA Well-Being Committee Co-Chairs (L to R) Joan R. Wilson and Sara Bonaiuto provided a welcome to attendees for this year's Well-Being Summit.



During the sound healing session, attendees wrote positive affirmations and the names of loved ones on clay pots and planted leaf cuttings in the pots.

in your work, and providing clear and direct communication with others when you begin to feel overwhelmed. “I tend to think of boundaries as standards for your life, they are limits for you and for other people that let you uphold your own standards,” stated Nangle, before explaining that setting up healthy boundaries is essential to avoiding burnout and ensuring the ability to fulfill professional responsibilities.

Following the Summit's initial program, CBA Lawyer Well-Being Committee Co-Chairs Bonaiuto and Wilson led a brief discussion about general well-being practices and answered various questions from audience members.

For the second and final Summit presentation, Tamar Draughn, president and director of integrative medicine at Phoenix Professional Services LLC, provided attendees with a sound healing session. During the session, she utilized mallets and singing bowls while leading attendees through a guided meditative practice focused on plants. She encouraged the audience to write positive affirmations and the names of loved ones on clay pots that were given to each participant. She continued by asking everyone to add soil to their pot and then plant leaf clippings that she had provided, emphasizing the connection between people and nature.

After the second program, CBA Lawyer Well-Being Committee Co-Chairs Sara Bonaiuto and Joan R. Wilson closed the summit, thanking everyone who attended and encouraging them all to advocate for an increased focus on well-being in the legal profession.

Image credit: BPO Vector/Getty Images

Three CBA Members Recognized with 2025 CLABBY Awards

Attorneys Thomas Sansone, Nancy Bohan Kinsella, and Olivia Benson received CLABBY awards from the Connecticut Bar Association's Commercial Law and Bankruptcy Section on May 13 during a section meeting held in New Haven. The CLABBY awards, established in 2016, are presented by the section each year to honor the professional achievements of section members.

Thomas Sansone received the 2025 Career Achievement Award, which is presented to a member of the section who has been practicing for 35 years and has an exemplary record in the field of bankruptcy law. “Tom conducts himself as the consummate gentlemen attorney, acting respectful and courteous to colleagues and litigation adversaries alike,” stated Commercial Law and Bankruptcy Section Chair Kevin McEleney. “Tom takes time to mentor young attorney both at his firm of Carmody & Torrance and beyond.” Over the course of his forty year career, Attorney Sansone



(From L to R) Attorneys Olivia Benson, Thomas Sansone, and Nancy Bohan Kinsella

Image credit: fotograia/Getty Images



Recognize *Excellence* in Connecticut's Legal Community

Nominate a Colleague Who's Made a Difference

From public service and pro bono work to legal education and community impact, the CBA Awards honor those who go above and beyond.

Charles J. Parker Legal Services Award is presented to a CBA member who has a deep and abiding interest in and dedication to the delivery of legal services to the disadvantaged in Connecticut.

Citizen for the Law Award is presented to a person who is not employed in the legal area but has made a significant contribution to the institution of justice and the law on a voluntary basis.

Citizen of the Law Award is presented to a CBA member who has made a significant contribution to a charitable or public service cause that does not involve professional legal skills.

Distinguished Public Service Award is given to a Connecticut resident, or a person with a meaningful relationship to Connecticut, who has made a significant contribution to society and is distinguished in his or her profession.

Henry J. Naruk Judiciary Award is presented to members of the state and federal judiciary who have made substantial contributions to the administration of justice in Connecticut.

John Eldred Shields Distinguished Professional Service Award is presented to a CBA member who has performed outstanding service through or on behalf of the CBA, for the benefit of the legal community and the community at large.

Tapping Reeve Legal Educator Award is presented to a CBA member who is a faculty member or instructor at one of Connecticut's Law Schools or Western New England School of Law who has made a significant contribution to the cause of legal education in the state.

The Honorable Anthony V. DeMayo Pro Bono Award is presented to CBA members who are not salaried employees of a legal aid or similar nonprofit organization that have demonstrated dedication to the provision of legal services without expectation of payment to those in need.



Know someone who deserves the spotlight?

Submit your nomination today at

ctbar.org/awards

by August 15



has tried more than 100 cases in the Connecticut Superior Court, United States District Court, and the United States Bankruptcy Court. He also works with several charitable and community organizations including serving as president of the Clifford Beers Community Health Partners, president of the Graduate Club Association, and having been a past president of WIKS-USA, a non-profit supporting the operation of a residential school for orphaned children in Kenya.

Nancy Bohan Kinsella received the Service to the Profession Award, which is presented to a member of the section who has been practicing for at least 10 years and has undertaken significant efforts to develop and implement educational programs, pro bono policies, and/or public service initiatives, which elevate the profile of the profession, while also promoting the general public good. Section Chair Kevin McEleney praised Attorney Kinsella for her stewardship of the section's annual bankruptcy conference. "Not only did Nancy provide outstanding leadership for this section, she also mentored numerous other lawyers on the committee to ensure the ongoing success of our conference for years to come

even after she passed the torch from her leadership role in the conference," stated McEleney. Attorney Kinsella has practiced commercial law and bankruptcy with Neubert, Pepe & Monteith since joining the firm in 1993. She is a member of the American Bankruptcy Institute and the Connecticut Chapter of the International Women's Insolvency and Restructuring Confederation. She has also served on the faculty of Post University in Middlebury, teaching classes in business law and bankruptcy.

Olivia Benson received the Rising Star Award because of the notable impact she has made upon the section in her three years practicing as an attorney. "Olivia is part of a very impressive group of newer lawyers that have joined our section post-COVID and bonded together to support each other and this section as a whole." Stated Section Chair McEleney. "Our future remains bright because of the contributions of active young members like Olivia." Attorney Benson serves on the Commercial Law and Bankruptcy Section Executive Committee and planned and hosted the section's annual joint meeting with the Young Lawyers Section.

CBA Launches Legally Brief Video Series to Educate Members and Public on Key Legal Topics



To commemorate its 150th Anniversary, the Connecticut Bar Association (CBA) is proud to announce the launch of *Legally Brief*, a new video series designed to deliver concise, accessible insights into legal topics that impact both the legal community and the public. From the rule of law and judicial independence to access to justice, ethics, and legal innovation, each video will spark conversation and connect the CBA's mission to the broader community.

"*Legally Brief* is part of our commitment to not only support our members with timely and relevant content but also to demystify the law for the public," said Lina Lee, Executive Director of the CBA. "This series is part of our effort to mark 150 years of advancing the legal profession by connecting with the public in new and meaningful ways. By making legal information more approachable and understandable, we hope to bridge the gap between the legal system and the community it serves."

The first episode, "The Importance of an Independent Judiciary Bound Only to the Rule of Law," features insights from distinguished attorneys John Logan (Logan Vance Sullivan & Kores LLP), Wesley Horton (McElroy, Deutsch, Mulvaney & Carpenter LLP), and Stanley Twardy (Day Pitney LLP), who explore the role of courts and our system of checks and balances.

The series' second episode, "How Judges Are Appointed and Reappointed," features insights from past CBA President Livia DeFilippis Barndollar (Pullman & Comley LLC) and distinguished attorneys Leander A. Dolphin (Shipman & Goodwin LLP) and Moy N. Ogilvie (McCarter & English LLP), who explore the process of how individuals become state court judges in Connecticut.

New episodes of *Legally Brief* will be released monthly through the CBA's YouTube Channel. The CBA invites attorneys, educators, the media, and the general public to tune in, subscribe, and share this valuable resource. For more information about the *Legally Brief* series or the CBA's 150th Anniversary initiatives, please visit ctbar.org/150Years.

New Attorneys Sworn into the Connecticut Bar on June 6, 2025

During a ceremony on June 6, a group of 30 new attorneys were sworn into the Connecticut Bar inside the State Supreme Court chambers. Connecticut Supreme Court Chief Justice Raheem L. Mullins and Associate Justices Joan K. Alexander; William H. Bright, Jr.; Nora R. Dannehy; Gregory T. D'Auria; Steven D. Ecker; and Andrew J. McDonald presided over the ceremony.

Chief Justice Mullins provided the ceremonies' welcome remarks before Associate Justice William H. Bright, Jr. gave a speech recognizing and congratulating the new admittees on their notable achievement. During his speech, Justice Bright spoke about the importance of maintaining a reputation for civility and respect in your practice and participating in pro bono work. "You will find few representations more personally rewarding than pro bono matters," stated Justice Bright. "You will have the opportunity to have a direct and meaningful impact on the life a person who is facing immense personal difficulties."



(L to R) Connecticut Supreme Court Associate Justice Nora R. Dannehy, Associate Justice Steven D. Ecker, Associate Justice Andrew J. McDonald, Chief Justice Raheem L. Mullins, Associate Gregory T. D'Auria, Associate Justice Joan K. Alexander, and Associate Justice William H. Bright, Jr.



2024-2025 CBA President James T. (Tim) Shearin provided a welcome speech to the new attorneys.

After the motion to admit the successful candidates to the bar, Senior Associate Justice Andrew J. McDonald administered the Oath of Attorney to the new admittees, and Connecticut Supreme Court Chief Clerk Carl Cicchetti administered the Oath of Commissioner of Superior Court. Then each inductee individually presented themselves as attorneys before the court. 2024-2025 CBA President James T. (Tim) Shearin subsequently presented a welcome speech to the new attorneys. President Shearin noted to the newly admitted attorneys that the law is a rewarding, but challenging career with important responsibilities, stating "This is a noble profession, and it carries with it an obligation to protect the rule of law."

Following the admission of the new attorneys, all the event's attendees were invited to attend a reception held in the Museum of Connecticut History, where they were able to meet with representatives from the Connecticut Bar Association Young Lawyers Section and other bar associations from across Connecticut.



(L to R) Young Lawyers Section Chair-Elect Paige Vaillancourt, Kevin F. Brignole, Jr., CBA Executive Director Lina Lee, and Young Lawyers Section Chair Vianca T. Mallick



Former CBA intern Allan Quade was among the attorneys admitted to the Connecticut Bar at the ceremony.

The CBA Kicks Off Its 150th Anniversary at the 2025 Connecticut Legal Conference

On June 13, over 750 attorneys, judges, law students, and paralegals gathered at the Connecticut Convention Center for the 2025 Connecticut Legal Conference (CLC), the largest annual gathering of legal professionals in the state. This year's conference held special significance as it also marked the 150th anniversary of the Connecticut Bar Association (CBA), which was founded in 1875.

The conference featured a rich schedule of 38 continuing legal education (CLE) seminars, various networking opportunities, and special anniversary celebrations. Attendees had the opportunity to choose from a wide range of CLE programs that addressed current legal developments across a variety of practice areas. Four of the conference's seminars were also livestreamed, allowing remote attendees to participate in the event.



(L to R) Past CBA President Amy Lin Meyerson and Judge Douglas S. Lavine (Ret.) served as moderators for the seminar "Combating Hate Crimes in Connecticut"

The day began with an exhibitor showcase and breakfast, including exclusive alumni breakfasts for Quinnipiac, UConn, and Seton Hall University alumni. The exhibitor showcase featured 35 legal industry vendors who offered demonstrations, materials, and information to attendees. The showcase also included special 150th anniversary raffles for gift cards and an iPad, a slideshow presentation on the 150-year history of the CBA, complimentary professional headshot photography, and a photo booth where attendees could snap a picture of themselves with their friends to commemorate the occasion. In between seminars, attendees could also take a break and watch episodes of the CBA's new video series, *Legally Brief*, which were on display throughout the day.

The conference's Featured National Speaker Seminar, "SCOTUS: What's

Next?," explored several of the Roberts Court's recent decisions that have overturned or significantly changed Supreme Court precedent. Moderated by retired Connecticut Supreme Court Justice Joette Katz, Yale Law School Visiting Lecturer and Senior Research Scholar G. Eric Brunstad, Jr. and George Mason University Professor of Law Ilya Somin discussed the court's decisions, where the court may be headed in the future, and how the current presidential administration's changes to the federal government are affecting the court.

The other conference seminars provided substantive coverage of a diverse range of current topics as well as annual reviews of case law and legislation in several practice areas. In "The Constitution at a Crossroads," Yale Sterling Professor of Law and Political Science Akhil Reed Amar presented a deep dive into the changing legal norms resulting from the actions of the current presidential administration and its expansion of executive power. During another popular seminar, "AI Tools for Lawyers: Available Tools, Practical Applications, & Policy Issues," attendees viewed demonstrations of various AI tools available to lawyers for legal research, document automation, client-facing solutions, and more.

At midday the CBA Annual Meeting and Luncheon was held in the convention center's ballroom. CBA Executive Director Lina Lee welcomed the attendees and emphasized the importance of the association's 150th anniversary, noting, "The CBA has withstood the times and stands at the intersection of both tradi-



The 2025-2026 CBA Officers sworn-in at the luncheon (L to R) President Emily A. Gianquinto, Secretary David M. Moore, Immediate Past President James T. (Tim) Shearin, and Vice President Rowena A. Moffett with Executive Director Lina Lee

tion and transformation." During the annual meeting, several state and federal dignitaries spoke, including Lieutenant Governor Susan Bysiewicz, Secretary of the State Stephanie Thomas, Connecticut Supreme Court Chief Justice Raheem L. Mullins, Federal District Court Chief Judge Michael P. Shea, Connecticut Ap-

pellate Court Chief Judge Melanie L. Cradle, and Connecticut Probate Court Administrator Beverly K. Streit. After the dignitaries' remarks, outgoing 2024-2025 CBA President James T. (Tim) Shearin thanked CBA Immediate Past President Maggie Castinada, Treasurer Sharad A. Samy, and Assistant Secretary-Treasur-

er Sara O'Brien, who will complete their terms as CBA officers this bar year.

The annual meeting also featured the installation of the 2025-2026 CBA officers: President Emily A. Gianquinto; President-Elect J. Paul Vance, Jr.; Vice President Rowena A. Moffett; Treasurer



Conference attendees chose from a selection of 38 CLE seminars that were split into four sessions taking place over the course of the day.



Presenters G. Eric Brunstad, Jr. (pictured second from right) and Ilya Somin (pictured far right) explored recent decisions made by the Roberts Court in the conference's Featured National Speaker Seminar "SCOTUS: What's Next?"

Audrey D. Medd; Secretary David M. Moore; Assistant Secretary-Treasurer Vianca T. Malick; and Immediate Past President James T. (Tim) Shearin. After being installed and having the ceremonial gavel passed to her, incoming President Emily A. Gianquinto presented her vision for the CBA during the 2025-2026 bar year. During her speech, she addressed current political tensions, noting how the CBA’s history has been marked by periods where the membership was divided over certain contentious political and social issues. “The CBA, like our nation, made it through those challenges, and we did so by engaging in healthy debate and staying true to our core principles,” stated incoming president Gianquinto. She defined the theme for the bar year as “Connecting our Community,” stating, “Our Association’s mission, our val-



President’s Reception attendees received commemorative CBA 150th Anniversary fleece-lined pullovers.



Yale Sterling Professor of Law and Political Science Akhil Reed Amar presented during the conference seminar “The Constitution at a Crossroads.”



Attendees enjoyed live jazz at the conference’s President’s Reception.



(L to R) Incoming 2025-2026 CBA President Emily A. Gianquinto and Outgoing 2024-2025 CBA President James T. (Tim) Shearin



(L to R) 2024-2025 Immediate Past President Maggie Castinada, Assistant Secretary Treasurer Sara O’Brien, and Treasurer Sharad A. Samy were presented with plaques by 2024-2025 CBA President James T. (Tim) Shearin

ues, our stated purpose, and our by-laws, they all included consideration of working for and with communities beyond our own members and it is by design. We have never been solely focused on members or occupational concerns.” To reinforce this theme, she emphasized two upcoming fall CBA events focused on giving back to the community, a statewide day of community service on September 20 and the CBA 150th Anniversary Gala supporting access-to-justice programs on October 16.

Following the CBA Annual Meeting and Luncheon, the conference continued with two afternoon CLE sessions. After the end of the day’s seminars, conference attendees gathered for the President’s Reception to enjoy a live jazz band, refreshments, and appetizers before heading home. During the reception, incoming President Gianquinto announced the winners of the raffles held during the conference as well as special giveaway of CBA 150th Anniversary fleece-lined pullovers.

Thank you to the attendees, presenters, sponsors, and exhibitors who helped make this the most well-attended Connecticut Legal Conference of the past several years. ■



(Top Row L to R) Connecticut Lieutenant Governor Susan Bysiewicz, Connecticut Secretary of the State Stephanie Thomas, (Center Row L to R) Connecticut Supreme Court Chief Justice Raheem L. Mullins, U.S. District of Connecticut Chief Judge Michael P. Shea, (Bottom Row L to R) Connecticut Appellate Court Chief Judge Melanie L. Cradle, and Connecticut Probate Court Administrator Judge Beverly K. Streit

2025-2026 President Emily A. Gianquinto Annual Meeting Speech



Thank you to officers moving on—Maggie, Sharad, Sara—serving takes time and dedication and the commitment is key to our success. Thank you to the work of the CBA staff—this is the biggest in-person CLC since COVID.

Thank you to all speakers before me for taking the time to share your thoughts.

Thank you to McCarter & English and to my colleagues who are here today for their support and for modeling the way for service to the profession through both firm-wide and individual commitments. Along with me, we have a current president of HCBA, an officer of FCBA, the next SABAC president—and that's just in our Connecticut offices. I realize every day how lucky I am to be at a firm that values bar service.

I am honored to accept this position. As we reflect on our association's history today, I note that I am only the 13th woman to serve in this role. Thirteen out of 102. A lot has changed since our 58 founding members—all men, all white—started this association. A lot of change is still to come.

I'm honestly surprised to be here at this stage of my career—bar president has always seemed like such a heavy responsibility. Watching Tim this past year has not changed that assessment. But the fact is that I love this association. I have grown up here, personally and professionally, beginning with joining the Young Lawyers Section in my first year of practice, when I was all but dragged to a YLS event by Jon Weiner. (Thanks, Jon!)

I have made friends, met coworkers, developed relationships with judges, with lawyers from all over the state, from practice areas very different than mine. I've met Supreme Court justices, listened to nationally renowned speakers, attended and helped organize programming on all kinds of different topics totally unrelated to my practice. I was a member of the first class of Presidential Fellows, a program that is designed to train our next generation of bar leaders. Mission accomplished.

Being a CBA member has made me not just a better lawyer, but a better citizen and a better person. So, it was not a difficult decision for me to take on this role.

If you had asked me what my career goals were 25 years ago, lawyer was not on my radar. I was a journalism major. I was going to work for the *New York Times* as a political reporter.

For many, many reasons, I'm glad that didn't work out. Instead, after a few years in the working world after college, I decided to go back to school to get a graduate degree. I chose law school because it was a good match for my journalism training. Clear, concise writing. Interviewing people. Asking questions and gathering facts to get to the truth and to piece together a narrative. Learning something new with each assignment, whether a case or an article.

Being a lawyer has one other thing in common with being a journalist that I didn't

understand at the time but have come to appreciate more and more each year.

When done well, when done right, when done with integrity, both are noble professions. Both are central to our system of government. Both ultimately serve the public good.

While noble, ours is not an easy profession, and that has unfortunately probably never been more true than today. We all know the challenges we face, including competition with technology, increasing costs of doing business, the fact that new lawyers are not joining us as fast as older lawyers are retiring, the ever-growing access to justice gap, and now—threats to the rule of law itself, including physical threats to those who serve on the bench and legal threats from our own government directed towards lawyers, law firms, and bar associations.

But learning about our association's history, as we turn 150 years old, has helped me put these daunting challenges and our diverse opinions on them into perspective. The fact is that we have faced turbulent times before. We have been divided before. We were divided in 1930 over whether to speak out in favor of repealing the 18th Amendment, meaning ending Prohibition. We were divided about speaking out on the rights of protesters of the Vietnam War and participating in the Civil Rights movement to engage in acts of civil disobedience. And we were divided in the 1950s, torn between speaking out against Communism and also speaking out about the need for Communists charged with conspiring to overthrow the government to receive fair trials, including being represented by competent defense counsel.

The CBA, like our nation, made it through those challenges. And it did so by engaging in healthy debate and remaining true to its



core principles. It stayed on the right side of history. For example, in the 1950s, after extensive debate, association leaders voted to impose a special assessment on members to raise funds to help compensate the six lawyers who were appointed by a federal district court to defend those accused Communists. Those efforts resulted in the CBA later lobbying for the federal public defender system.

We continue to follow that tradition and example today.

This section of our program is usually where the new president introduces a theme for the bar year. I wasn't planning to have a theme. They're not always sustainable, as each new leader may have very different ideas. In 1971, a president likened being in this position to running a relay—I accept the baton from my predecessor, carry it just a quarter of a mile, and then turn it over to my successor—making it impossible to accomplish everything I hoped to do and leaving unfinished projects in his lap.

But working over the past year with our slate of officers, with our fantastic new executive director, with chairs of committees and sections and especially in focusing on our 150th anniversary, I have—despite my best intentions—landed on a theme of connecting our community.

Our CBA community, yes—but really the Connecticut and broader legal community, and our own physical communities. The places we live and play, where our kids go to school, where we worship and volunteer and serve beyond our work as lawyers.

The CBA's mission, our values, our stated purpose in our bylaws—they all include consideration of and working for and with communities beyond our membership.

That's by design. We have never been solely focused on members or on occupational concerns alone.

Our 150th anniversary initiatives and events, which you have hopefully heard about today and will be hearing more

about as the year progresses, reflect that theme. Some highlights include:

- We've planned a campaign to get members to engage in 150 minutes of community service—kick off with events in September, which we expect to be in every one of our districts and where we hope to be joined by members of other bars and by your families and friends. These efforts are intended to benefit organizations beyond the legal sphere—those that people in this room already devote time to. If you volunteer with a nonprofit, a place of worship, a food pantry, a dog rescue—sign up to organize a service event to benefit that group on September 20.
- Our gala celebration is planned for October 16, where we will come together in a way we don't typically do here at the CBA—meaning in black tie. This event will raise money to benefit our access to justice efforts, which are more important than ever to more communities than ever.
- We're continuing to expand the

Continued on page 36 →



TAKE YOUR NEXT STEP IN LEADERSHIP

Become a CBA Presidential Fellow

The CBA Presidential Fellows Program is geared toward increasing the active involvement of early- and mid-career lawyers in the leadership and activities of CBA sections.

Presidential Fellows:

- ◆ Are matched with a CBA section aligned with their interests and experience and invited to serve on its executive committee
- ◆ Get involved in or lead a key section project
- ◆ Are invited to educational and leadership development events at no charge



Learn More and Apply at
ctbar.org/Fellows

Applications are Due by Friday, August 15

Protecting the Most Vulnerable: Our Mission to Hold Nursing Homes Accountable.

This is personal.

For decades, we've exposed abuse, neglect, and wrongdoing in Connecticut's nursing homes. We literally *pioneered* this practice. Long before others saw the elder care crisis, we were in court, fighting for justice — and we're not stopping.

The system is broken.

Nursing homes should provide care, safety, and dignity. Too often, they don't.

Understaffing. Neglect. Cost-cutting at the expense of human lives. Preventable falls, untreated bedsores, medication errors, outright abuse. *These aren't accidents — they're failures.*

And we refuse to let them go unpunished.

New policies, same excuses.

Regulations are changing. The federal government is cracking down on understaffing. But bad nursing homes will always find ways to game the system — cut corners, hide the truth, make excuses.

That's where we come in. We don't just file lawsuits — we expose systemic failures. We uncover the real story and fight for families who trusted a nursing home, only to discover neglect and inexcusable harm.

We make them pay.

If your client or loved one has suffered abuse, neglect, or a preventable injury in a Connecticut nursing home, **you are not alone**. We've spent years holding these facilities accountable — **and we do not back down**.

To our fellow lawyers: You know our track record. If you have a nursing home injury case that needs fierce advocacy, send it to the firm that practically wrote the book on these cases.

To the nursing home industry: We are watching. We are fighting. We will hold you accountable.

We fight for the elderly because they deserve better. We fight because it's right. We fight because no one else will.

If your client or a loved one has been hurt in a nursing home, call us now. It's time to fight back.

Contact D'Amico & Pettinicchi.

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2025-2026 CBA Officers

The 2025-2026 CBA Officers were installed at the CBA Annual Meeting, which was held during the Connecticut Legal Conference on June 13. These officers will lead the CBA for the current bar year and took office on July 1.

President



Emily A. Gianquinto will serve as the CBA's 102nd president. Attorney Gianquinto is special counsel at McCarter & English LLP, where she counsels employers on day-to-day employment matters and represents them before federal and state courts, administrative agencies, and mediation and arbitration panels. Her experience includes litigating all manner of business disputes.

President-Elect



J. Paul Vance, Jr. will serve as president-elect. Attorney Vance is a partner at Logan Vance Sullivan & Kores LLP where he focuses his practice on personal injury, workers' compensation, and medical malpractice. He formerly served as the Claims Commissioner and has represented clients across the State of Connecticut in federal and state court and before several administrative bodies.

Vice President



Rowena A. Moffett will serve as vice president. She is co-managing partner of Brenner Saltzman & Wallman LLP. Attorney Moffett graduated with high honors from the University of Connecticut Law School and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. After her clerkships with U.S. District Judge Dominic Squatrito and U.S. Magistrate Judge Thomas Smith, she joined Brenner, Saltzman & Wallman LLP in 2000 and became a principal in 2005.

Secretary



David M. Moore will serve as secretary. Attorney Moore is a solo practitioner at The Law Offices of David M. Moore, where he practices in the areas of personal injury, family and general litigation, dissolution and general mediation, and residential real estate closings.

Treasurer



Audrey Medd will serve as treasurer. She is a trial attorney with over 20 years of experience, currently a senior associate at Wilson Elser Moskowitz Edelman & Dicker LLP. She earned her B.A. from the University of Delaware in 2000 and her J.D. from Quinnipiac University School of Law in 2003. Audrey also serves as Secretary on the Board of Directors for OCD CT, the state affiliate of the International OCD Foundation.

Assistant Secretary-Treasurer



Vianca T. Malick will serve as Assistant Secretary-Treasurer. She is an Assistant Attorney General in the Infrastructure and Economic Development Section of the Connecticut Office of the Attorney General where she primarily handles defensive litigation on behalf of several state agencies.

Immediate Past President



James T. (Tim) Shearin will serve as immediate past president. Attorney Shearin is the immediate past chairman of Pullman & Comley LLC. He has wide-ranging experience in federal and state courts at both the trial and appellate levels, and before arbitration and mediation panels. He represents clients in a wide variety of litigation matters.

A Look Back on Connecticut's 2025 Legislative Session

By MELISSA BIGGS

The State of Connecticut's 2025 Regular Legislative Session officially adjourned at midnight on Wednesday, June 4th. While the session has concluded, discussions are underway regarding the potential need for a special session this fall to address potential budget shortfalls that may arise as a result of the proposed federal budget. Convening a special session would enable the Connecticut General Assembly to take timely action in response to any emerging fiscal challenges ahead of the next regularly scheduled legislative session in February 2026.

This legislative session resulted in the successful passage of several important initiatives. Chief among them were HB 7287, the state's Biennial Budget for Fiscal Years 2026 and 2027, and HB 7288, the Bond and School Construction Bill. The \$55.2 billion biennial budget demonstrates a strong commitment to advancing education, health care, and social equity across the state. It includes increased funding for public schools, expanded Medicaid eligibility, nursing home care reforms, and targeted support for Connecticut's most vulnerable populations. The budget passed the House by a vote of 99 to 49 and the Senate by a vote of 25 to 11.

The General Assembly also advanced two major education-related bills. HB 5001 introduces broad reforms to Connecticut's special education system by expanding eligibility, standardizing cost structures, increasing oversight and

transparency, and enhancing accountability at the state level. SB 1 is focused on strengthening early childhood education through the creation of a permanent endowment to expand preschool access and affordability. It also supports early childhood educators and improves school oversight and student support services by establishing new administrative roles.

Connecticut's General Assembly continues to be controlled by a Democratic majority, with a composition of 102 to 49 in the House and 25 to 11 in the Senate. The

upcoming November election marks the beginning of a gubernatorial cycle, with some Republicans already announcing their intentions to run. While Governor Ned Lamont has not formally stated what he plans to do next, he indicated following the close of session that he is leaning toward running for a third term.

To recap, this year the Connecticut General Assembly introduced approximately 3,800 bills covering a wide range of topics across more than 25 legislative committees. Of those, over 900 advanced out of committee to continue through the



On March 6, CBA President-Elect Emily Gianquinto and Vice President J. Paul Vance, Jr. were among the CBA leaders who provided in-person testimony in support of state legislation to allow association health plans at a public hearing of the CT General Assembly's Insurance and Real Estate Committee. If passed, such legislation would make health insurance available to CBA members at a lower cost and higher quality.



On Monday, March 3, Tom Walsh testified at a legislative public hearing on behalf of the CBA in support of adopting amendments to the Uniform Commercial Code in CT. Similar amendments have already been adopted by 25 states and would help Connecticut attract and maintain businesses. The amendments provide clarity about when electronic signatures can be used and modernize the Uniform Commercial Code to address digital assets. The same day, CBA members Charles Pilsbury and Doug Mintz, on behalf of the CBA Alternative Dispute Resolution Section, testified in support of passage of the Uniform Mediation Act in CT. If passed in CT, the Uniform Mediation Act will provide certainty and clarity about the rules in CT mediations, codify a mediation confidentiality privilege, and promote uniformity.

legislative process. Following extensive debate in both chambers, 286 bills were ultimately passed by the House and Senate and sent to Governor Lamont for consideration. While the governor retains the authority to veto legislation, most bills that reach his desk are signed into law, completing the final step of the legislative process.

Throughout the session, the Connecticut Bar Association maintained a strong and active presence. Numerous members traveled to Hartford to testify in person, while others took advantage of virtual opportunities to participate in the public hearing process. One of the association's key advocacy efforts was in support of a proposal to establish association health plans, which was ultimately called on the House Floor as a study under HB 6999. House Chair of the Planning and Development Committee, Representative Eleni Kavros DeGraw, took the bill out on the House floor during the last week of

legislative session where it passed with a bipartisan vote of 116-32. We extend our thanks to all members who submitted testimony and contacted their legislators; your efforts were instrumental in helping us reach this stage.

In terms of legislative successes, this session marked a strong showing for the Bar Association, with key victories reflecting the effectiveness of our team's advocacy and collaboration. We played a central role in the successful passage of three significant uniform acts: the Uniform Collaborative Law Act, the Uniform Mediation Act, and important amendments to the Uniform Commercial Code. In addition, our efforts helped advance and secure passage of the Validating Act, which now extends legal validation to real property documents recorded prior to January 2, 1997, addressing long-standing issues and reinforcing legal certainty in property transactions. These accomplishments underscore our continued leadership and influence in

shaping sound, practical legal policy.

With legislators currently midway through their two-year term, we expect continued legislative activity throughout the summer and fall. Several work groups and study committees were established during the recent session, and we will be closely monitoring their progress to stay informed on potential developments and areas of impact. In the coming months, we encourage each section to review its approved legislative positions to assess whether any updates or renewals are necessary. The Connecticut Bar Association will convene a meeting to assist sections in preparing for the upcoming legislative session and to provide guidance on developing and submitting proposals for consideration. ■

Melissa Biggs serves as the Connecticut Bar Association's lobbyist. She is a partner at DePino, Nuñez, & Biggs, LLC (DNB), a trusted Connecticut bipartisan government relations firm.



Jury Duty

By JAMES H. LEE

At a recent college reunion my classmate Alan Blum, a professor of family medicine, shared a story about sitting in an auditorium in the Harris County courthouse in Houston with 500 other individuals who'd also been summoned for jury duty.

In a deep Texas drawl, the judge instructing the venire kept referring to "all you jurors," but Dr. Blum misheard him. When he finally realized what the judge was saying, he laughed out loud, earning a glare from the bench. After the proceedings concluded he apologized to the judge and explained the reason for his outburst. The judge thought it was hilarious, and they became friends.

As a result, for the next 13 years Blum would be invited by the judge to bring each new group of 12 family medicine residents to the courthouse on a day in

July to observe a criminal trial, so they could "see how the law works." For most of these doctors, it was the first time they had been in a courtroom. Blum considered this an essential part of their education.

I matched his story with one of my own, about how the Fairfield Bar Association's 1990 Law Day project won an ABA Public Service Award.

It had fallen to me to devise a Law Day program for one of the local high schools, the one I had once attended. I was

teamed with Fred Bellaria, a classmate at that school and now teaching there. We quickly agreed that the common format of a man in a suit lecturing a few hundred adolescents for an hour needed to be improved upon. It is a well-documented fact that high school students don't get enough sleep, but solving that problem, even for a day, was probably not what the organized bar had in mind.

Fred came up with the winning idea: We would stage a mock criminal trial in the auditorium. The audience would not be limited to sections of his pre-law type

classes such as "Youth and the Law" or "Crisis at the Bench," but could include sections of English and US History if the teachers were interested. Many were. The typical audience was about 200 students. Here's how it worked.

In a week consisting of four teaching days, the participating classroom teachers would orient their students on the first day. The case is about this, the *dramatis personae* are these, and you will be the jury. Importantly, the exercise was to be a hands-on simulation of a jury at work (think: *Twelve Angry Men*), and not an academic examination of principles of justice, or legal issues, or the merits of capital punishment.

On day two, there was an "in-school field trip" in the auditorium for about two hours. On stage were a working felony prosecutor, an experienced defense attorney, a sitting Connecticut Superior Court judge (who brought his or her own robes), and witnesses. The witnesses usually included an attorney who had previously been a police officer, an amateur thespian as the defendant (who needed to testify for reasons of dramatic compression), and me as the tie-breaker witness. I was surprised at how easy it was to recruit these participants. My role was to avoid handing either side a game-ending smoking gun. There was no script, as such. Rather, the attorneys and witnesses had worked out a scenario of the historical facts of the case (for instance, the last person to see Aunt Matilda alive was the defendant, her nephew and sole heir), and everyone ad-libbed in character. Then the judge would charge the jury.

On day three, each class section would deliberate as a jury, and at the end of a single 50-minute period they would reach a verdict by majority vote.

On day four, the legal professionals in the cast would return to the school, each visiting at least one of the classes, for a mutual debriefing where the students' questions, and ours, were answered.

For us, this experience reinforced just how important the composition of the jury was to the result. One year, the case was about a fatal drug overdose, which at the time was the only capital offense that did not require an intent to cause death as one of its elements. The charge gave the jury three options: guilty of the capital offense, guilty of manslaughter, or not guilty. At least one student jury rendered each of the three possible verdicts. That struck us: All of the juries had heard the same witnesses, the identical testimony, the identical summations, the identical charge—everything. The only variable was the composition of the jury, and in

that particular case, that made the difference between life and death.

For the students, they had had that hands-on simulation, as realistic as an all-star cast could make it. And whether they were destined to serve on a future jury or not, all of them, as future citizens, would have had an inside view of a jury trial. This, we hoped, would give them a better understanding of the work juries actually did, as one trial after another would be in the news for the rest of their lives. ■

James H. Lee is an appellate lawyer, and the editor-in-chief of the Connecticut Bar Journal.



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Summer Strategies for Lawyer Well-Being

By JOAN REED WILSON AND SARA BONAIUTO

As summer settles in and court dockets and client meetings may begin to thin (at least a little), lawyers have a unique opportunity to reset, recharge, and refocus on their well-being. The legal profession is notoriously demanding with long hours, high stakes, and constant deadlines, making it all too easy to neglect physical health, mental clarity, and emotional balance.

Here's how you can use the summer months not just to survive, but to thrive with research-backed strategies proven to support both performance and peace of mind.

1. Get Outside: Leverage the Power of Nature

Spending time outdoors isn't just a pleasant break from the office, it's a proven way to reduce stress and improve cognitive function. In fact, research published in *Scientific Reports* shows that people who spend at least 120 minutes per week in nature report significantly better health and well-being.

Take advantage of longer daylight hours by scheduling walking meetings, taking calls in the park, or stepping out for a midday stroll. Even if brief, consistent time outside can improve focus and elevate mood.

2. Protect Your Time (and Your Calendar)

With colleagues on vacation and court

schedules often less intense, summer offers a rare chance to take ownership of your time. Blocking out focus hours or planning personal time off before the calendar fills up can create space for both rest and strategic thinking.

This is more than time management; it's a well-being imperative. The American Bar Association's 2021 study on lawyer mental health found that nearly three out of four lawyers who reported poor mental health also cited inadequate work-life boundaries as a contributing factor. Guarding your time is one of the simplest ways to improve your well-being and health.



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3. Hydrate, Move, Rest: The Fundamentals Matter

In the summer heat, it's easier than ever to become dehydrated, fatigued, or sleep-deprived, all of which directly affect cognitive performance. According to the CDC, even mild dehydration (just 1–2% of body weight) can impair concentration, decision-making, and mood.

Movement also pays off: a Stanford study found that walking (even indoors) boosts creative thinking by as much as 60%. And prioritizing consistent, quality sleep reduces burnout risk and sharpens judgment; two things every lawyer needs.



Simple changes make a difference: keep a water bottle nearby, block off 15 minutes for a daily walk, and give yourself time to wind down in the evenings, ideally away from screens and emails.

4. Unplug Without Guilt

Many lawyers hesitate to fully disconnect, but doing so is not only restorative, it's strategic. Research in *Harvard Business Review* reveals that professionals who regularly unplug from work experience 23% higher engagement and 50% greater job satisfaction.

Summer offers a socially acceptable reason to unplug, whether it's a long weekend, a full vacation, or just one screen-free day per week. Set an out-of-office message, delegate urgent matters, and give yourself permission to fully rest. You'll return more focused and productive and far less burned out.

5. Reconnect with Joy In and Outside the Law

Beyond rest, summer invites us to re-

visit what brings us joy in life and in our legal careers. This matters more than you might think: a 2022 survey by the Institute for Well-Being in Law found that lawyers who regularly engage in meaningful, personally fulfilling activities are twice as likely to report high life satisfaction and significantly less likely to experience chronic burnout.

So say yes to a barbecue, a music festival, or a weekend road trip. And within your practice, notice what energizes you (i.e., mentoring a junior associate, solving a tough legal issue, or handling a pro bono matter). Purpose protects you from burnout. Summer can help you reconnect to it.

Final Thought: Self-Care Isn't a Luxury. It's a Strategy.

Lawyers face rates of depression nearly four times higher than the general population, according to the *Journal of Addiction Medicine*. That makes well-being more than a personal goal; it's a professional necessity.

So this summer, protect your time, move your body, take a real break, and allow yourself to find joy in and out of the office. Your clients, your firm, and (most importantly) you will benefit from the investment.

Take the time. You've earned it. ■



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Fuerza en la Unidad: Supporting Our Community and Creating Real Change

By ENELSA DIAZ AND KEAN ZIMMERMAN

The Connecticut Hispanic Bar Association (CHBA) was established in 1993 by a coalition of Hispanic attorneys from various practice areas with important goals in mind: to enhance the visibility of Hispanic lawyers throughout the state, to facilitate communication and sharing of resources among our members, to serve as mentors to new lawyers and law students, and to assist the public and private sectors in achieving diversity in their law firms and legal departments. Since then, for over three decades, the CHBA has worked diligently to increase the diversity of our profession, while simultaneously supporting the practicing Hispanic attorneys and the Hispanic community at large.

Community Work

As a community forward organization, we are always looking for ways to support not only our members, but also the broader coalition of people that our membership represents. The CHBA has always placed a premium on having a place at the table to advocate for issues that impact our community.

We have had multiple members actively participate in working groups that support causes benefiting our membership. Some of our board members were active on the Police Accountability Task Force for the Connecticut Bar Association, which provided recommendations to the Connecticut legislature in the aftermath of George Floyd’s death. We’ve also had members participate in the Connecticut Bar Association’s Pan-

demec Recovery Task Force, which provided recommendations to the Judicial Branch on long-term and short-term use of technology for the purposes of supporting the public’s access to the courts.

The CHBA was also a strong advocate in 2018 for changes to the Connecticut Practice Book which allowed for DACA recipients to be admitted to the state bar. At the time, Connecticut was only one of ten states that allowed for DACA recipients to practice law. The first DACA recipient was a CHBA student member that had been active in the CHBA, as well as her school’s Latino Law Student Association. Although she was the first, she paved the way for other DACA recipients to practice law in Connecticut going forward.

Elevation of Members and Member Achievements

Over the years, our roster of members has continued to accumulate accolades and recognition in the legal profession. Three decades ago, the number of Hispanic attorneys in law firm partnership roles and on the bench was meager as compared to today. It was once virtually unheard of for a Hispanic attorney to be appointed to the bench, but now our constituents represent many distinguished members of the judiciary, both state and federal.

Law firm rosters have made strides in diversifying their overall membership. However, only recently have we begun to see those changes reach the partner-

ship levels. This change has been crucial as those of our members who are law firm partners are granted more decision-making authority, placing them in a better position to advocate for others within our community.

In 2022, CHBA past President Margaret Castinado became the first Hispanic person to ever hold the position of President of the Connecticut Bar Association in the organization’s 150-year history. Maggie’s work has been exemplary, but more importantly, she has made it her mission to lift other attorneys by providing mentorship and support. That is why in 2023, Attorney Castinado’s trailblazing was recognized during the CHBA’s Annual Dinner. As an organization, we use our annual dinner as an opportunity to highlight the accomplishments of our membership.

Of course, none of the achievements of our members would be possible if we as an organization did not promote the development of the next generation of attorneys.

Pipeline Efforts

The advancement of legal professionals does not start after attorneys are admitted to the bar. Rather, the CHBA prides itself on building and strengthening the pipeline of students that feeds into the profession. To that end, the CHBA has spent years partnering with Junior Achievement to connect with middle school and high school students interested in the law. The CHBA has also supported CBA’s Law Camp to provide

opportunities for high school students to interact with attorneys, judges, and other legal professionals that might look like them, that they otherwise would not have met.

Several years ago, the CHBA began fostering a moot court program that supports teams from Connecticut law schools to participate in the National Hispanic Bar Association’s annual moot court competition, and our Board members coach those teams. Prior to its efforts, no Connecticut school had put forth a team to participate in that same competition.

Yet nothing has exemplified its dedication to pipeline building quite like the CHBA scholarship program, which

has awarded scholarships to multiple recipients every year at the organization’s annual dinner. What began as a simple desire to give back, and some provide financial support to aspiring law students, has evolved into a thriving scholarship program. Our Scholarship Committee has provided scholarships to many deserving students over the years, with the total amount in the tens of thousands to date. We cannot grow our community without first watering the seeds of our future. Every day we focus our efforts with this in mind.

Moving Forward

The CHBA is not a monolith, rather we are an organization of diverse and

dedicated individuals who come together with a purpose to ensure that talent, hard work, authenticity, and drive are not overlooked in our profession because of the way a person looks or speaks. Our members work with a common goal to uplift diverse students and attorneys and that is what makes our collective work impactful. We are incredibly proud of how far we have come, and how far we will go. ■

Enelsa Diaz is a managing attorney at Greater Hartford Legal Aid and the president of the Connecticut Hispanic Bar Association (CHBA).

Kean Zimmerman is a claims counsel at Tokio Marine HCC - D&O Group and past president of CHBA.

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With Bad Intent

By CHARLES D. RAY

A jury brings back a guilty verdict against a criminal defendant. The defendant appeals, arguing that his conviction was tainted by some improper action undertaken by the prosecutor. The Supreme Court agrees, reverses the conviction and orders a new trial. Before that new trial can begin, the defendant moves to dismiss the charges, claiming that retrying him would violate the double jeopardy clause of the United States constitution. The basis of that claim is his assertion that the prosecutor committed the improper action during his first trial with the intent to avoid an acquittal by the jury. The trial court denies the motion to dismiss and the defendant appeals again. How will the Supreme Court resolve that new appeal?

The answer, based on the Supreme Court’s recent decision in *State v. Patrick M.*, 352 Conn. 54 (2025) is, pretty much, “it depends.” Let’s see why. For those of you hoping to choose “Potent Potables” for \$2,000, we should start with a bit of review. The double jeopardy clause, contained in the Fifth Amendment to the U.S. constitution, tells us: “nor shall any person be subject for the same offence to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb” In general, double jeopardy will prevent a defendant’s retrial after an acquittal or a retrial after a conviction. But it will also preclude a retrial after certain mistrials, one of which is where a prosecutor engages in impermissible behavior at the first trial with the intent to prevent an acquittal that he or she believed was imminent. Put another way, did the prosecutor misbehave in an effort to goad defense counsel into to asking for and obtaining a mistrial?

The Supreme Court tackled a closely-related issue in *Patrick M.*, in which the defendant’s retrial resulted not from the granting of a mistrial but, instead, from the Supreme Court reversing his conviction based on the prosecutor having improperly commented, during trial, on the defendant’s silence after having been advised of his *Miranda* right to remain silent. See *State v. Patrick M.*, 344 Conn. 565 (2022). The defendant moved to dismiss the retrial, but did not seek an evidentiary hearing in support of that motion. Instead, he asked the trial court to infer the prosecutor’s bad intent based on the record from the first trial, including transcripts from that trial. The trial court denied the motion and the defendant filed an interlocutory appeal from that decision.

But before the Supreme Court could reach the main event, a number of preliminary issues captured the Court’s attention. First, the State asked the Court to overrule its prior decision in *State v. Colton*, 234 Conn. 683 (1995), in which the Court first held that double jeopardy protections bar a new trial where prosecutorial shenanigans were undertaken in a prior trial with the intent to prevent an acquittal that would have barred retrial altogether. The State argued that a retrial should be barred only if the defendant’s conviction was reversed on the basis of insufficient evidence or if the defendant’s motion for mistrial was granted. In short, the State claimed that Patrick M. should not have been eligible for double jeopardy protection because there was no mistrial granted in his first trial and the evidence for conviction was found to be sufficient in his first appeal.

Justice D’Auria, writing for a unanimous Court, rejected the State’s efforts to limit the *Colton* rule. First, Justice D’Auria noted that the State had made the same request in previous cases and had been rebuffed. Second, those cases demonstrated that the Court “has sought to avoid different outcomes based on the precise manner in which a defendant responds to a prosecutor’s impropriety because allowing for such outcomes would dilute the double jeopardy protection that the federal constitution provides and, in [the Court’s] view, would not sufficiently deter prosecutorial impropriety.”

The defendant also asked the Court to do some overruling, arguing that the justices should disavow *State v. Michael J.*, 274 Conn. 321 (2005), in which the Court held that the Connecticut constitution, which does not contain a double jeopardy clause, does not provide broader double jeopardy protection than the federal constitution. The Court declined the defendant’s invitation, noting that the absence of a double jeopardy clause in Connecticut’s constitution appeared to have been a deliberate choice, based on our state having “historically afforded defendants far less protection against double jeopardy than the federal constitution.” And while some states have adopted a broader approach to the issue, based on specific language in their state’s constitutions, the Court was of the opinion that society’s interest in enforcing its criminal laws “would be compromised in those cases in which the prosecutorial [impropriety] was not sufficiently egregious to implicate truly the defendant’s double jeopardy rights.”

Next, the Court addressed the state’s argument that the defendant waived his double jeopardy claim by failing to request a mistrial when confronted with the prosecutor’s impropriety. In the State’s view, dismissal of a subsequent trial can occur in only two instances: 1) where a defendant is aware of the prosecutor’s intent and moves for a mistrial; or 2) where the defendant is unaware of the prosecutor’s intent and offers evidence of that intent in support of a motion to dismiss a retrial. In the end, the Court rejected the State’s waiver argument, finding little difference between counsel requesting a new trial after the jury verdict or requesting a mistrial prior to conviction. “The fact that defense counsel moved for a new trial, rather than a mistrial, does not change the fact that his reason for doing so was because of a claimed constitutional violation by the prosecutor”

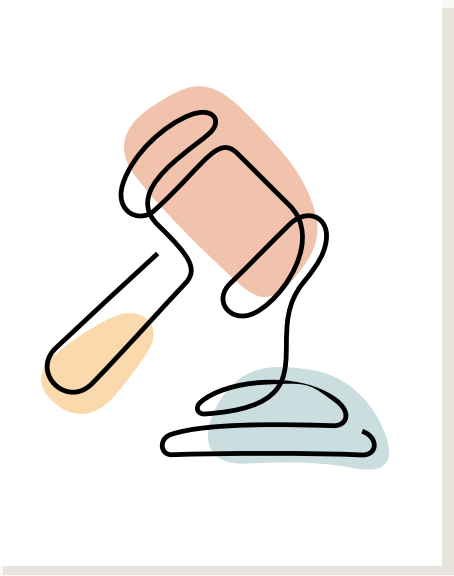
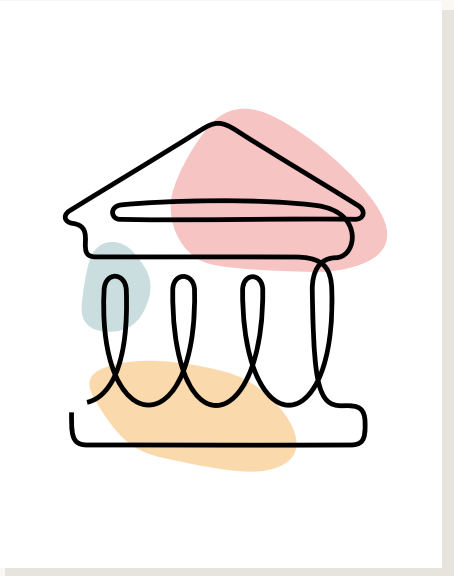
With a brief stop on the standard of review, we arrive, finally, at the main event – the defendant’s claim that his retrial should have been dismissed. In addressing the issue, Justice D’Auria noted that comparable cases were hard to come by, as nearly all involved rejection of a defendant’s claim that prosecutorial misbehavior was undertaken with the intent to prevent an acquittal. Indeed, review by the Court “found minimal case law nationally and none from [Connecticut], that demonstrates the type of circumstances that *would* bar a new trial based on *Colton*.” In a Wisconsin case, a prosecutor brought false criminal charges against a defense attorney the night before trial, and in a Michigan case a prosecutor asked a witness a clearly improper question and had no response to the defendant’s motion for a mistrial.

But nothing like that occurred here, and the Court articulated that the “main point” is that a defendant’s argument that a prosecutor intended to prevent an acquittal “must not arise from strict conjecture.” And while the State’s evidence was not “iron-clad,” it was “hardly on the downward slope” that was present in the Michigan case. The prosecutor successfully poked holes in the defendant’s testimony and also pointed out that he had committed prior felonies. The prosecutor also asked the jury to consider who had the motive to kill the victim and whether the defendant’s testimony made sense in light of other evidence. This evidence and argument, even including the improper statements of the prosecutor, did not “on their face paint the picture of a prosecutor who is purposely engaging in impropriety to goad the defendant into moving for a mistrial because the prosecutor believed that, absent that extreme step, the jury would find the defendant not guilty.”

Hopefully the day will never come where a Connecticut prosecutor misbehaves with the intent to avoid an acquittal. Based on *Patrick M.*, the prospect of a defendant prevailing on such a claim is slim at best. ■



Charles D. Ray is a partner at McCarter & English LLP, in Hartford. He clerked for Justice David M. Shea during the Supreme Court’s 1989–1990 term and appears before the Court on a regular basis. Any views expressed herein are the personal views of the author.



Protecting the Rule of Law

By VIANCA T. MALICK

“He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good. . . . He has endeavoured to prevent the population of these States; for that purpose obstructing the Laws for Naturalization of Foreigners . . . He has made Judges dependent on his Will alone. . . . He has erected a multitude of New Offices, and sent hither swarms of Officers to harrass our people, and eat out their substance.”¹

Over 250 years ago, the thirteen United States of America listed the various acts of tyranny that led to their fight for independence from the king’s rule. In April, Connecticut legislators quoted the Declaration of Independence while announcing their support of the American Bar Association’s call to protect the rule of law.² But what is the “rule of law”? It is a phrase that is often used, but rarely defined.

The “rule of law” is an ideal that many governments strive to achieve. This ideal, however, is often defined by the circumstances surrounding its use thereby making a uniform definition impossible. The American Bar Association’s World Justice Project proposed a working definition that could be used to measure how “nations around the world are—or are not—following the rule of law.”³ The four principles of the proposed definition are:

- 1. A system of self-government in which all persons, including the government, are accountable under the law;
- 2. A system based on fair, publicized, broadly understood and stable laws;

Vianca T. Malick is chair of the CBA Young Lawyers Section for the 2024-2025 bar year. She is an Assistant Attorney General in the Infrastructure and Economic Development Section of the Connecticut Office of the Attorney General where she primarily handles defensive litigation on behalf of several state agencies.



- 3. A fair, robust, and accessible legal process in which rights and responsibilities based in law are evenly enforced;
- 4. Diverse, competent, and independent lawyers and judges.⁴

On February 10, 2025, William R. Bay, president of the American Bar Association, criticized the current administration for actions that violate the rule of law and many of our constitutionally protected rights—the elimination of birthright citizenship, widespread firings of federal employees, institution of a federal funding freeze, dismantling of federal agencies, attempts to criminalize DEI programs—just to name a few.⁵ President Bay, on behalf of the American Bar Association, called on elected officials and attorneys to insist that our government adhere to the rule of law.⁶ “That means holding governments, including our own, accountable under law . . . [and] stand[ing] for a legal process that is orderly and fair.”⁷ In response, over one hundred bar organizations, including the Connecticut Bar Association,

issued a joint statement in support of the American Bar Association’s call.⁸

A year ago, I called on our legal community to be leaders in the face of adversity. Unfortunately, over the past year, this has been more important than ever, especially as attacks on the legal profession continue to escalate. Judges are being criticized for their decisions upholding the law. Lawyers and law firms are being targeted for the clients they represent. Legal programs attempting to make our legal system more accessible to those in need are being defunded. As lawyers, the responsibility falls on us to protect the rule of law by ensuring the scales of justice will not be manipulated by bias and intimidation.

“There are clear choices facing our profession. We can choose to remain silent and allow these acts to continue or we can stand for the rule of law and the values we hold dear.”⁹

As the bar year comes to a close and my time as chair of the Young Lawyers Sec-

“As lawyers, the responsibility falls on us to protect the rule of law by ensuring the scales of justice will not be manipulated by bias and intimidation.”

tion comes to an end, I hope to remind young lawyers to be empowered in their status as “young lawyers.” We are the future of the legal profession. We have the power to shape the legal profession for future generations and ensure the ideals of justice and fairness that have underlined our legal system for over 250 years survive.


Thank you to my fellow Young Lawyers Section officers, directors, and committee chairs for all your hard work and dedication in making this a successful bar year! It has been an honor to serve as your chair. Together we hosted numerous CLE and networking events; organized the annual pro bono golf event and fair; raised funds for Connecticut Foodshare and the Feedings Families Foundation; provided outreach and network opportunities to Connecticut law students; hosted the YLS Diversity Dinner, which discussed the current state of DEI in our country; provided hundreds of pro bono and community service hours to communities statewide—and so much more! I would also like to thank the CBA officers and staff for their continued support of our efforts to engage young lawyers throughout Connecticut. ■

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NOTES

1 THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE para. 5,

11, 13-14 (U.S. 1776).
2 Donald Eng, *Democratic Legislators Back Rule Of Law, Quoting Declaration Of Independence*, CT NEWS JUNKIE (Apr. 9, 2025, 5:00AM), <https://ctnewsjunkie.com/2025/04/09/democratic-legislators-back-rule-of-law-at-capitol-gathering-quoting-declaration-of-independence/>.
3 *What is the Rule of Law*, AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION, <https://www.americanbar.org/advocacy/global-programs/who-we-are/rule-law-initiative/what-is-rule-of-law/> (last visited June 6, 2025).
4 *See id.*
5 William R. Bay, *The ABA Supports the Rule of Law*, AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION (Feb. 10, 2025), <https://www.americanbar.org/news/abanews/aba-news-archives/2025/02/aba-supports-the-rule-of-law/>.
6 *See id.*
7 *Id.*
8 AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION ET AL., *Bar Organizations’ Statement in Support of the Rule of Law*, AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION (Mar. 26, 2025), <https://www.americanbar.org/news/abanews/aba-news-archives/2025/03/bar-organizations-statement-in-support-of-rule-of-law/>.
9 *Id.*




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reach of our civics education work by presenting an adult civics program with the goal of better preparing educators to talk to their students about rule of law issues that so regularly make the news.

- We're also working with local and affinity bars to make collaboration and cross-promotion of our events a priority. One of our stated purposes in our bylaws is to "coordinate the activities of the several bar associations within Connecticut." Again, our community includes the bar as a whole. There is simply no reason we should view each other as competition or as anything other than organizations with intersecting and aligned missions. Many of us in this room belong to more than one bar association, and that benefits all of us. Coordination of our many efforts will make all bar associations stronger.
- With incoming President-Elect Paul Vance, who is on a very poorly-timed European vacation today, we will also be launching a mentoring taskforce, with the goal of developing a much more robust, statewide mentoring program that will be aided significantly by the use of technology. Our mentoring efforts have been inconsistent over the years, because they have required so much manual labor—collecting forms, matching pairs, helping set up meetings. All of that can be done with technology, which should increase participation by both mentors and mentees. This is intended to be a joint effort with our sister bars and will hopefully build on the mentoring programs currently being run by our YLS and by several other bars, including the Crawford Black Bar.

This work and our theme are not unrelated from the rule of law challenges we currently face, that we will continue to address, and that we must speak out about at every opportunity. Community is more important than ever today. Our personal connections are a key part of how we protect the rule of law. We explore and acknowledge our common interests, experiences, beliefs, values. We speak up together, we show up together.

I learned a lot of this from my parents, who I'm thrilled to have here with me today. They served their communities on various town committees and boards throughout my life. They showed me what it means to show up for and connect with their communities.

My boys, Malcolm and Nathan, are also here today. Nathan has literally grown up with the CBA, attending a lot of BOG and HOD meetings as a baby. I hope seeing me up here explains why mom misses dinner sometimes and encourages them to show up for their communities as they get older.

Shout out to my husband Steve as well, who shows up for me by manning the home front and allowing me to miss those dinners and wearing suits against his will while attending occasional lawyer events with me.

There are so many ways for each of you to show up at the CBA.

If you're willing and able to devote the time to leading a section or committee or serving as an officer, consider yourself recruited. If you aren't able to offer that level of commitment, choose your own adventure. You can serve on a section executive committee. Attend a CLE or a social event twice a year. Come to this conference. Sign up for our legal clinics or answer questions online. Volunteer at one of our community service events. Take on a mentee. Help plan the gala, a CLE, a happy hour. Work on an episode of our *Legally Brief* video series. Come to our DEI Summit. Participate in our civics education work.

All of it matters, to our association, to the bar, to our larger communities. Call me, email me—tell me what you want to do, what skills and interests you have, what you're passionate about, and I will find a place to put you.

One final word to our law students in the room, many of whom are here on scholarships via our sections and are shadowing members of those sections. Welcome—to this event, to our association, to the legal profession. I hope you find a home here like I did. Make those connections today and going forward. And if I can help you in any way moving forward, please don't hesitate to reach out.

To everyone else here, I look forward to connecting with more of you this year and to continuing to show up for our community.

Thank you. ■

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