

# THE PROMULGATOR

*The Official Magazine of the Lafayette Bar Association*



*GIDEON V. WAINWRIGHT AT 63: THE PROMISE  
OF COUNSEL AND THE WORK THAT REMAINS*

APRIL 2026 | VOLUME 39 | ISSUE 2



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**THE PROMULGATOR** is the official magazine of the Lafayette Bar Association, and is published six times per year. The opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the views of the Editorial Committee.



**ON THE COVER**

In this April issue of *The Promulgator*, we highlight the 63<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of *Gideon v. Wainwright*. Pictured on the cover is Frank X. Neuner, along with Blake David, when Frank was honored at the Stand for Justice Acadiana event hosted by Innocence & Justice on March 4, 2026. In recognition of Neuner's contributions, the organization announced the creation of the Frank X. Neuner Jr. Legal Fellowship, which will support a recent law graduate working on post-conviction cases aimed at freeing innocent individuals from prison.

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**UPCOMING EVENTS**

**RUNNING IN HEELS**

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The Wetlands  
June 12

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# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Fellow Members of the Lafayette Bar Association:

Springtime is here (or so they say), and for some of us, the Easter season has begun as well. This is a time for renewal, growth, and celebration. The Bar is here to help you fulfill all three of these themes.

First, we kicked off the season with spring cleaning for a great cause. Our Lafayette Bar Cares Committee worked hard to put together a highly successful clothing donation drive for the benefit of UL Lafayette's Career Closet program. The Bar collected a wealth of suits and other gently used professional clothing to help UL students dress their best as they begin their careers. Kudos to Maggie Simar and Jared Nelson for a job well done!

The Bar remains steadfast in its commitment to our members' professional growth and has already hosted quite a few CLE opportunities and events this year. The Young Lawyers Section and Family Law Section, respectively, recently held successful CLEs on MSJs and Judge Blanchet's Practice Pointers and Pet Peeves. Another successful installment of our Bench Bar Quarterly was held with Judge Michelle Breaux. Special thanks to Judge Breaux and Judge Blanchet for giving up their time and engaging in lively

discussion on the matters of the day facing our community's judges and practitioners.

Be on the lookout for our upcoming CLE opportunities and events as well, particularly the Running in Heels CLE, which is scheduled for May 15, and the Child in Need of Care Court Basics CLE, hosted by the Young Lawyers Section, on May 22. Plans are also in the works for another installment of the highly successful Bench Bar Quarterly.

As for celebrations, the Bar is no stranger to hosting socials for our members to gather in fellowship. The Bar hosted its annual Mardi Gras gathering at the Bar building, which was another successful event. Kudos to Jan and her team for ordering up perfect weather for the occasion! The Young Lawyers Section recently hosted a happy hour at La Fonda, which surely tested a few Lenten penances.

On the horizon, the Family Law Section is hosting its annual crawfish boil. Be on the lookout for more details regarding that fun event. We also have the annual Birdie with the Bar golf tournament scheduled for June 12 at The Wetlands. Chris Ortte and his committee are planning yet another fun opportunity to hit the links for the benefit of our many great pro bono programs offered through the



**Trey Hightower**

Lafayette Bar Foundation.

Finally, we are excited to announce that the 2026 Bench Bar Conference will be returning to the Grand Hotel Golf Resort and Spa in Point Clear, Alabama, from August 20–22, 2026. Our Bench Bar Committee—Jennifer Ardoin, Judge Roya Boustany, and Kenny Hebert—as well as our Fifteenth Judicial District Court committee representative, Judge Cynthia Spadoni, are hard at work to make this year's event the best (and most affordable) one yet.

**Registration is open online**, and you can contact the Association directly to sign up. The Bench Bar Conference is the Bar's signature event and a rare opportunity for our community's judges and lawyers to get away from the hustle and bustle of heavy court dockets and busy practices, to have meaningful discussion, and to break bread together. I hope to see everyone there at the end of the summer!

# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

As we move into April and welcome the signs of spring, I find myself reflecting on the generosity and professionalism that define our legal community. Spring is a season that naturally encourages thoughts of renewal and growth, and I have been especially reminded of those themes through the kindness I have witnessed from our members in recent weeks.

Many of you participated in our Lafayette Bar Cares drive to donate professional clothing to the UL Lafayette Career Center. What may seem like a small gesture can make a meaningful difference for students preparing to enter the professional world. Having appropriate attire for interviews, internships, and early career opportunities helps build confidence and removes barriers as people begin their professional journeys. Your willingness to contribute reflects something important about our profession: a shared understanding that supporting the next generation is part of our responsibility as members of this community. Small acts of generosity can create opportunities that extend far beyond the moment. And small acts add up: I delivered seven separate truckloads of clothing to the Career Center during our drive!

We hosted the Regional Mock Trial Competition on March 14 and presented several CLE programs through the Lafayette Bar Foundation, Young Lawyers Section, and Family Law Section in the past few weeks. Many of you took the time to strengthen your understanding of the professional and ethical

obligations that guide our work and to volunteer to ensure that our programming was successful.

In my role as executive director, I continually witness a precious commitment to maintaining the competence, integrity, and professionalism that our legal clients and community expect from us.

The practice of law carries with it both responsibility and opportunity. Our clients depend on us during some of the most important and challenging moments of their lives. Remaining centered in our purpose and serving with knowledge, integrity, and compassion helps ensure that we continue to meet those responsibilities thoughtfully and well.

The generosity shown through the clothing drive and the dedication demonstrated through our recent programming reflect the same guiding principle: the legal profession is at its best when it is grounded in service. Thank you to everyone who contributed, participated, and supported the mission of the Lafayette Bar Association and Foundation. And thank you to all who support me in my role as your executive director. It is an honor.



**Jan Swift**

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# ACCESS TO JUSTICE

A report of the Lafayette Bar Foundation, provided by Foundation Chair Dean Cole



I am happy to report that our initiative to provide expungements for City Court offenses is off to a fast start. At our initial informational session on February 26, we reached, and in fact surpassed, capacity for the event, and the enthusiasm among our volunteer lawyers was palpable. We thank Judge Doug Saloom and representatives from Access to Justice and the Acadiana Legal Service Corporation for leading the session. Now we are ready to begin providing expungements to the large number of community members who qualify for expungements and desperately need them for employment, educational, and other opportunities but are unable to afford the necessary fees. We have initiated this expungement program in honor of the late Judge Jules D. Edwards III, and I know he is proudly watching.

The first opportunity to provide expungements is now set. It will take place at the Lafayette Bar Association office beginning at 2:00 p.m. and continuing until 4:00 p.m. on April 23, 2026. The Lafayette Bar Foundation is looking for volunteers to provide assistance in filling out the Lafayette City Court expungement form and submitting the paperwork to the courts on behalf of the attendees. Volunteers will also need to be available for individual questions following the clinic. The individuals provided

with legal services will have already been prescreened for expungement eligibility with Lafayette City Court offenses, financial eligibility, and whether the expungement need is related to employment or education. **Link to volunteer:** [www.signupgenius.com/go/4090C4BABAE2DA6FE3-62308386-expungement](http://www.signupgenius.com/go/4090C4BABAE2DA6FE3-62308386-expungement) **or email** [marilyn@lafayettebar.org](mailto:marilyn@lafayettebar.org)

As we approach the Easter season, the Lafayette Bar Foundation is once again collaborating with Faith House of Acadiana for our 3rd annual Easter Basket Drive. The Foundation is gathering items for Easter baskets to ensure that every child at the shelter receives one. Suggested items for donation include small toys, coloring books, crayons/markers, toothbrushes, candy, children's Bibles, and Easter baskets. Additionally, we have created an Amazon wish list for those who prefer to shop online at [www.amazon.com/registries/gi/guest-view/2QUU67E5YI4D9](http://www.amazon.com/registries/gi/guest-view/2QUU67E5YI4D9). Firms and individuals are also welcome to contribute pre-made baskets. We are accepting donations until **April 1, 2026**. Please deliver the collected items to the Lafayette Bar Office at 2607 Johnston Street.

We had great participation last year and put smiles on many faces! Let's keep it up!



# YOUNG LAWYERS SECTION

AN UPDATE FROM PRESIDENT

J.P. GRAF

If you are reading this, congratulations—you survived Mardi Gras.

Now that the beads have been swept up and the king cakes have (mostly) disappeared, the Young Lawyers Section has been back at work with a busy and successful March.

On March 12, we had a great CLE and social at La Fonda. Thank you to Michael Dalman of Savoy & Delahoussaye for presenting with me on Motions for Summary Judgment. We had a strong turnout, a great discussion, and we were especially glad to

welcome several guests from the St. Landry Parish Bar Association. It is always a pleasure to have our friends from neighboring Bars join us, and we appreciate their making the trip.

Just two days later, on March 14, we hosted another successful High School Mock Trial event. This program continues to be one of the most rewarding things we do each year. It gives students the opportunity to sharpen their public speaking, critical thinking, and advocacy skills while also giving them a firsthand look at the legal profession. A very special thank-you goes to Ani

Boudreaux and Mary Claire Hollier for their hard work in organizing the event and helping make it run so smoothly. We are also deeply grateful to the many local attorneys

and judges who generously volunteered their time to support the program. Events like Mock Trial only happen because members of our Bar are willing to invest in the next generation.

We also want to extend our sincere thanks to all of the generous sponsors who supported both of these March events. Your continued support makes it possible for the Young Lawyers Section to offer meaningful programming for our members and for the community. We are grateful for your investment in the work of the Bar.

Looking ahead, the Lafayette Bar Foundation's Birdie with the Bar Golf Tournament is tentatively scheduled for June 12—weather permitting. So dust off the clubs, hit the range, and start preparing whatever version of your game you plan to unveil.

As always, thank you for your support of the Young Lawyers Section. We look forward to seeing everyone in the coming months.



# FAMILY LAW SECTION

AN UPDATE FROM PRESIDENT

LOGAN ISTRE

The Family Law Section has been quite lucky this year with our selection of CLEs. So far, we've had the following presentations:

- Jonathan Jarrett's presentation on constitutional issues relating to present paternity statutes
- Andrew Mims' presentation on estate law as it relates to the family law practice area
- Andrea Manrique's presentation on Our Family Wizard
- The Honorable David A. Blanchet's presentation on practice pointers for family law attorneys based upon his forty-five years of experience in the area.

First, we would like to thank these presenters, as they have provided us with some very informative presentations, but we would also like to thank our vice president, Brittany LaCombe, who has done an exceptional job of lining up our speakers so far this year.

On May 9, 2026, we will be having our annual crawfish boil. We plan to host a joint CLE with the Young Lawyers

Section of the Lafayette Bar Association in August, and on September 18, 2026, we will be having a three-hour CLE opportunity, with topics ranging from community property and mental health evaluations to the potential legal ramifications of sexually transmitted infections.

We are excited to continue providing both educational and entertaining CLE opportunities for our Section members, as well as general members of the Lafayette Bar Association. We are also hoping that, with our upcoming social events, we will be able to provide our Section members with an opportunity to strengthen our camaraderie with our colleagues practicing family law, as well as with our colleagues from other areas of practice.

As always, if any of our members would like to reach out to our executive committee about CLE topics, interesting updates in our area of law, or events around the area that our Section members may be interested in, we are more than happy to try to line up presenters or disseminate the information to our members.



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AUGUST 20-22, 2026

## It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year—Bench Bar is Back!

Mark your calendars for the Lafayette Bar Association's Bench Bar Conference, happening August 20-22, 2026, at the Grand Hotel in Point Clear, Alabama!

This beloved event blends top-tier CLEs, networking with colleagues and judges, and family-friendly fun at a world-class resort. Whether you're catching up at 1847 Bar, perfecting your golf game, or unwinding at the spa, there's something for everyone.

To register for the conference, visit [LBA's Events Page](#).

# GIDEON AT 63

## The Promise of Counsel and the Work That Remains

In March 1963, the United States Supreme Court decided *Gideon v. Wainwright* and reshaped the American criminal justice system. The Court held unanimously that the Sixth Amendment guarantees the right to counsel for defendants who cannot afford a lawyer in state criminal prosecutions. In doing so, the Court recognized a principle that now feels fundamental to the rule of law: a fair trial cannot exist if a person must face the power of the state alone.

The case began with an unlikely figure. Clarence Earl Gideon, a drifter with an eighth-grade education, was charged in Florida with breaking and entering. Unable to afford a lawyer, Gideon

asked the trial court to appoint one. The request was denied because Florida law at the time required appointment of counsel only in capital cases. Gideon represented himself at trial, was convicted, and sentenced to five years in prison.

From his prison cell, Gideon handwrote a petition to the United States Supreme Court. The Court agreed to hear the case and ultimately ruled that the Constitution requires states to provide counsel to indigent defendants facing serious criminal charges. The decision overturned *Betts v. Brady* and established that the right to counsel is a fundamental component of due process.

When Gideon was retried with the assistance of appointed counsel, he was acquitted.

More than six decades later, the legacy of *Gideon* continues to shape the practice of law. The decision led to the creation and expansion of modern public defender systems across the country and affirmed that meaningful representation is essential to fairness in criminal proceedings. Yet

the promise of *Gideon* has always required more than a judicial opinion. It requires lawyers willing to ensure that the right to counsel remains real in practice.

### Stewardship of the System

Across Louisiana and the nation, public defenders carry the daily responsibility of giving effect to *Gideon's* promise. Their work often occurs under significant constraints, including overwhelming caseloads and limited resources. Even so, public defense remains one of the clearest expressions of the legal profession's commitment to justice.

Recently, the Acadiana legal community gathered to recognize and support that work at the annual Stand for Justice Acadiana event hosted by Innocence & Justice Louisiana. The organization investigates wrongful convictions and works to free innocent people who have been sentenced to life in Louisiana prisons.

The event honored Frank Neuner with the organization's Justice Award. Although Neuner did not practice criminal law, his leadership as president of the Louisiana State Bar Association during Hurricane Katrina revealed deep structural problems within Louisiana's indigent defense system. As the first chair of the Louisiana Public Defender Board beginning in 2008, he helped guide the transition to a statewide public defender system designed

to be more stable, coordinated, and resilient.

The evening also featured remarks from Calvin Duncan. Duncan spent twenty-eight years incarcerated for a crime he did not commit before ultimately securing his freedom. During his incarceration, he studied the law and assisted other incarcerated individuals with their legal claims, earning the nickname "the jailhouse lawyer." After his release, Duncan continued advocating for justice, eventually earning a law degree and being elected Clerk of Criminal District Court for Orleans Parish. His story—detailed in his book *The Jailhouse Lawyer*—illustrates both the failures that can occur within the justice system and the power of determined legal advocacy to correct them.

In recognition of Neuner's contributions, the organization also announced the creation of the Frank X. Neuner, Jr. Legal Fellowship. The fellowship will support a recent law graduate working on post-conviction cases aimed at freeing innocent individuals from prison.

### The Role of the Profession

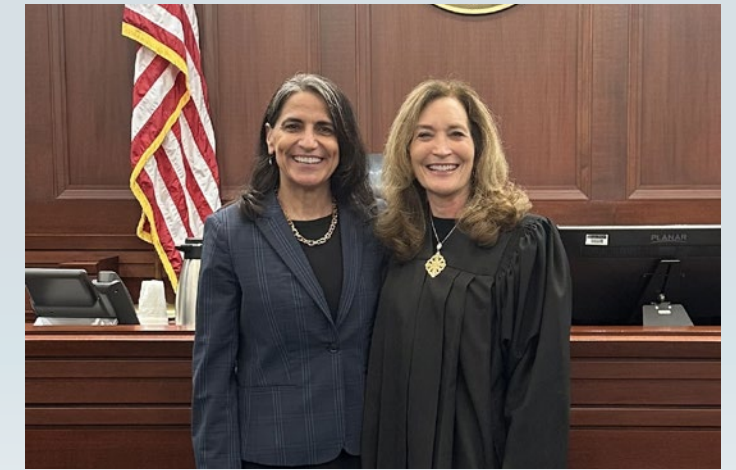
The anniversary of *Gideon* provides an opportunity to reflect not only on constitutional doctrine, but also on the professional obligations that accompany it. The right to counsel is ultimately sustained by lawyers who are willing to stand beside people at their most vulnerable moments.

That continuing responsibility is reflected in the next generation of public defense leadership. Cristie Gibbens, who was recently sworn in as the new Federal Public Defender for the Western and Middle Districts of Louisiana, was administered the oath by United States Magistrate Judge Carol Whitehurst—herself a former Federal Public Defender. The moment reflected both continuity and stewardship within the profession: lawyers carrying forward the responsibility to ensure that *Gideon's* promise remains meaningful in practice.

Gibbens described the work in deeply human terms: "I'm proud to be a federal public defender. I've spent my career fighting to protect the rights of people who are often at the most vulnerable moments of their lives. At the very least, every client deserves to know that their lawyer sees them, respects them, and recognizes their humanity."

Her words capture what *Gideon* ultimately represents. The right to counsel is not only a constitutional rule; it is a professional commitment to treat every person in the justice system with dignity and respect. Her swearing-in is a reminder that this work is not merely historical. It is ongoing, carried forward by lawyers who continue to answer the call of public service.

For many lawyers, stewardship of the system can take different forms. Some devote their careers to indigent defense. Others contribute through pro bono



*Cristie Gibbens is sworn in as the new Federal Public Defender for the Western and Middle Districts of Louisiana by U.S. Magistrate Judge Carol Whitehurst, a former Assistant Federal Public Defender. More than sixty years after Gideon v. Wainwright, the moment reflects the enduring commitment to the right to counsel.*

service, mentorship, policy work, or financial support for organizations working to address wrongful convictions and strengthen access to justice.

What remains clear is that *Gideon's* promise was never meant to rest solely on the shoulders of public defenders. It is part of the broader professional responsibility shared by all members of the bar.

### A Continuing Promise

More than six decades after the Supreme Court's decision, *Gideon* remains one of the defining moments in American legal history. The case established a constitutional guarantee that transformed criminal courts and expanded access to justice for millions of people.

Yet the work of fulfilling *Gideon's* promise continues. Public defender offices still struggle with limited resources. Wrongful convictions continue to be uncovered. And organizations dedicated to investigating those cases rely heavily on the support of lawyers and the broader community.

The lesson of *Gideon* is ultimately a simple one: the right to counsel is essential to fairness, and fairness depends on lawyers willing to stand in that role.

For the legal profession, the anniversary of *Gideon* is not merely a historical milestone. It is a reminder that the strength of the justice system depends on the willingness of lawyers to serve it—and on the profession's continued commitment to ensuring that every person, regardless of means, has a voice in the courtroom.

For the lawyers who continue this work today, that promise is not abstract. It is renewed every time counsel is appointed, every time a client is heard, and every time a lawyer stands beside someone who would otherwise face the system alone.



*Frank X. Neuner and Calvin Duncan*

# Just Here to Help: Getting to Know Gay Babin

Small town, big family. Small company, big practice. Small woman, big personality. Gay Babin is an enigma. One of seven siblings growing up in Houma, Louisiana, Gay had an idyllic childhood. She gushes with nostalgia for her big, happy family, nurturing parents, and life on a street filled with baby-boom families. But she's now built a thriving practice as a family lawyer, helping broken families through what is often the worst time in their lives.

Gay describes her stay-at-home mom as an awesome mother; her father, a businessman, supported her and spoiled her "bad" until his death when Gay was just 24 years old. After graduating from Terrebonne High School, Gay left the comfort of her childhood and joined the United States Air Force. She became an air traffic controller. She spent most of her tour at Laughlin Air Force Base in Del Rio, Texas, assigned to the pilot training facility. There she worked as a radar controller in the tower, receiving several commendations and setting the stage for a lifelong interest in gaming. She was responsible for safely managing arrivals, departures, and flights of new pilots in a program focused on aerobatics, navigation, and formation flying. It was an exciting, albeit highly stressful, environment.

Six years later, Gay moved to Lafayette and enrolled at USL, majoring in child development and playing briefly on the Ragin' Cajuns softball team. Her goal was to become a social worker. To that end, she began an internship at Faith House. It turned out to be a life-changing experience as she observed the work of the Faith House legal advocate. Gay had found her calling.



Before she could get to law school, however, Gay was sidelined by a serious



health crisis. She was diagnosed with systemic lupus and had to undergo years of dialysis treatments. Ultimately, she had a successful kidney transplant in 2007. Gay likes to say she put that crisis "in its place," never letting it define her life or stop her from reaching her goals.

***"The Lafayette legal community took her in 'like a daughter.'"***

Gay spent her years at LSU Law School focused on a family law career. She wanted to help people in crisis, as she had seen at Faith House. All her electives were in family law. She idolized Professor Katherine Spaht and other family law instructors. After graduating in 1999, Gay spent a year clerking for Judge John Conery on the 16th Judicial District Court. He helped foster her family law interest by sending her to seminars on domestic violence and protective orders. The early 2000s were a time of change, when the Legislature enacted new procedures to address violence in the home. In learning about the new statutes, Gay was able to help Judge Conery handle protective-order proceedings with care and diligence.

Staying true to her adventurous and independent self, Gay left her clerkship ready to embark on her own. She hung out her shingle in a small office in Lafayette, generously provided by an older lawyer for a pittance. The Lafayette legal community took her in "like a daughter," when she couldn't even afford a listing in the phone book! Everywhere she turned, judges, hearing officers, and other lawyers offered her advice and support. She followed the example of the seasoned family law experts she watched in



court. Judge Conery appointed Gay as the attorney for Child in Need of Care cases for the 16th JDC. In the early 2000s, Gay took the CINC children who had no family home and no foster home to her own family home, traveling to Houma for Christmas in order to give the children the joyful, festive holiday that she relished in her childhood. She kept up this tradition for several years, never knowing who enjoyed it more, her Houma family or the children.

But how was a Houma girl who spent years in Texas supposed to get clients in Lafayette? Diane Sorola offered the simplest advice: "Set up your telephone



**Written by:**  
Brenda Piccione, Partner  
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brenda@piccionelaw.com

came in with her mom. Gay was so impressed with the thorough notes the mom took, Gay offered her a job! To this day, Debbie Zumalt and Gay are "the perfect team." The practice took off from there, to the point where Gay, 26 years later, now has the luxury of taking cases only in the 15th Judicial District Court. Taking the solid advice of Judge David Blanchet, she became a board-certified Family Law Specialist in 2013. She is also a Certified Family Law Mediator.

On the home front, Gay always shied away from the idea of marriage. She "saw too much" in her practice. And what she saw was always the ending. But one day, at 60 years of age, Gay decided the time was right. She married her partner, Sybil Richardson, and became a stepmother to two young adult daughters. One lives in Baton Rouge, and the other is a student at Tulane University. Gay says she and Sybil have always been cognizant of the impact their relationship has on the girls, and she's proud of how they've handled it through the years. Happily married for five years, Gay muses that "it's better than I thought it would be."

Gay considers herself a homebody. She's still a gamer and loves a good movie and a good meal. When she does leave the house, it's to travel. She's happy to go pretty much anywhere in the world, but Italy and Greece top the list.

As a lawyer, Gay is motivated to help people. Her clients come in full of emotions, dealing with grief and confusion, and in transition. She encourages new clients to record her conversations with them so they can go back and hear it all again when they're alone . . . or calm . . . or confused. She remembers one client who signed her contract without even glancing at it. In jest, Gay told him he was signing away his firstborn. When the client responded, apparently not in jest, "Okay," Gay realized the power she has in that moment. She wants to use that power to educate her clients, to help them protect themselves and move forward from the situation that first brought them into her office. "I'm just there to help them."



### Kean Miller is proud to announce that Brian J. Lindsey has been named Partner.

Brian is a member of the firm's Offshore Energy and Maritime practice group. He represents industrial, transportation, energy, and maritime companies in complex civil defense litigation, including Jones Act claims, personal injury defense, property damage, ship collisions and allisions, contract disputes, and insurance coverage matters.

Before practicing law, Brian worked as an insurance adjuster handling national accounts and catastrophic losses, giving him valuable insight from investigation through resolution.

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## THE GRAPEVINE

Veazey Felder is pleased to announce that **Michael Sewell** is joining the firm as an associate attorney. After graduating from LSU Law School, Mike served as an assistant district attorney in Orleans Parish for three years and has experience in civil litigation. His practice will focus on family law, business transactions and litigation, and criminal defense.

**Hoai Hoang** has joined **Galloway Johnson Tompkins Burr & Smith**. Hoang brings decades of litigation and trial experience to Galloway, a premier corporate defense and litigation firm of 140-plus attorneys in 14 offices across seven states. Hoang comes to Galloway from Voorhies & Labbe PLC, where he represented businesses, government agencies, and insurers.

**Clare Roubion** has established the **Law Office of Clare Roubion**, a practice dedicated to advising lawyers and judges on legal ethics, discipline defense, and risk management. She has also joined Oak Grove Estate Planning, where she will work on estate planning matters.

Do you have a new member at your firm, a new edition to your family, or just any life updates that you'd like to share? Submit it for The Grapevine and you'll be featured in our next *Promulgator*! Email your submission to [marketing@lafayettebar.org](mailto:marketing@lafayettebar.org).

### A LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Spring has a way of inviting reflection. After the quiet of winter, the season asks us to notice what is beginning again—what is growing, what needs tending, and what may be ready for change. In the legal profession, where the pace rarely slows, we do not often pause to consider those questions. But the arrival of a new season offers a useful reminder that growth, renewal, and transition are part of every career.

This issue of *The Promulgator* highlights the anniversary of *Gideon v. Wainwright*—a case that has long been meaningful to me personally. Early in my career, I practiced as a public defender. That experience shaped how I understand the role of a lawyer and continues to influence the way I practice today.

Public defense teaches something essential about lawyering: the work is fundamentally about people. Clients arrive in moments of crisis—often confused, frightened, or overwhelmed by the system they find themselves in. A lawyer's role is not simply to manage a case file but to provide client-centered representation: listening carefully, explaining clearly, and advocating in a way that respects the dignity and humanity of the person sitting across the table. That approach has stayed with me throughout my

career and continues to guide the professional responsibility work I do today.

Spring also brings a moment of transition for me personally. After many meaningful years with Louisiana Legal Ethics, I will be continuing my professional responsibility practice independently while also practicing estate planning through Oak Grove Estate Planning. I remain deeply committed to the same work—advising judges, lawyers, and law firms on legal ethics, professional responsibility, and risk management—and I look forward to continuing to serve the profession in that capacity.

Over the years, I have had the opportunity to work across the table from many thoughtful and capable lawyers. I am genuinely grateful for the professionalism, collegiality, and integrity that so many members of our Bar bring to their work. Practicing law is challenging, and it has always meant a great deal to engage with lawyers who care about doing the job well and doing it the right way.

More than anything, this season of change has prompted me to reflect on the broader arc of a legal career. At different moments, we all face transitions—some chosen, some unexpected. Those moments

invite us to ask a few honest questions: What does our work give to us? What does it take from us? And what are we able to give to others through the positions we hold and the platforms we occupy?

Spring reminds us that renewal is possible, but it also requires intention. As you read this issue, I invite you to consider your own answers to those questions. Is your current work the right fit? Is it enough? Does it serve you—and, just as importantly, does it allow you to serve others?

The practice of law offers many paths. The challenge, perhaps, is making sure that the one we are walking is both meaningful and worthy of the profession we share.

Warm regards,  
Clare Roubion  
[clareroubion@roubionlawfirm.com](mailto:clareroubion@roubionlawfirm.com)  
337-258-0101  
Editor, *The Promulgator*



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# Book Talk: Estate Planning Made Practical

*The Promulgator* recently caught up with Andrew Mims, whose new book, *Don't Let the State Decide*, offers a practical guide to estate planning for lawyers and clients alike. We asked him a few quick questions about why he wrote the book and what lawyers should know.

**Q: What inspired you to write this book?**

Over the years, I have seen how often families face unnecessary stress, conflict, and expense simply because basic planning was never done. I wanted to create a practical guide that explains estate planning in plain language and helps people understand why these decisions matter long before a crisis occurs. I also noticed that most books and online resources on estate planning are written for common-law states and do not reflect Louisiana's unique civil-law system, so there was a real need for something written specifically for families here.

**Q: Who is the intended audience?**

The book is primarily written for everyday individuals and families who want to understand estate planning without having to sort through complicated legal language. It is meant to give people a clear picture of how planning works and what steps they should be thinking about. At the same time, many attorneys and other professionals have found it helpful because it provides a straightforward way to explain estate planning concepts to clients.

**Q: What is the biggest misconception people have about estate planning?**

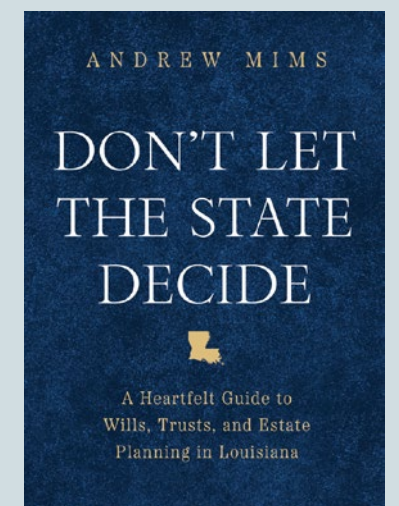
Many people believe estate planning is only for the wealthy or something to worry about later in life. In reality, anyone who owns property, has children, or wants to control how decisions are made if they become incapacitated can benefit from having a plan in place.

**Q: If readers take away only one lesson from the book, what should it be?**

If you do not make a plan, Louisiana law will make one for you. Our state has default rules that determine who inherits your property, who manages your assets, and who makes decisions if you become incapacitated. Those rules may not reflect your wishes or your family's circumstances, and they can force loved ones into court processes that create delay, expense, and sometimes conflict. Estate planning is simply about making those decisions yourself so your wishes are clear and your family is spared unnecessary stress.

**Q: Why should lawyers—even those who don't practice in trusts and estates—care about this topic?**

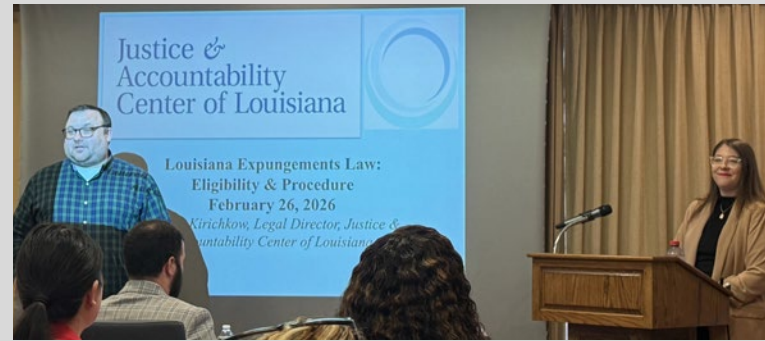
Estate planning issues arise in many areas of practice. Whether dealing with business owners, personal injury settlements, real estate, or family matters, lawyers frequently encounter situations where a lack of planning creates complications. Understanding the basics helps attorneys better serve their clients and recognize when planning opportunities exist.



Lafayette Bar Foundation

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On Saturday, March 14, 2026, four teams competed in Region 2's tournament for the 2026 Richard N. Ware IV State High School Mock Trial Competition, held at the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Louisiana in Lafayette. Participating schools included Northside High School and Carencro High School, both of Lafayette, along with two teams from A.M. Barbe High School in Lake Charles.

Two teams from each region advance to the state competition, which will take place on March 21, 2026, at the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Louisiana in Shreveport. Congratulations and best

wishes to Carencro High School and A.M. Barbe High School as they advance to represent Region 2 at the state level.

We extend our sincere gratitude to the teachers, team sponsors, and volunteers whose dedication and support helped make this regional competition a success. Additionally, special thanks to the judges, attorneys, and paralegals who generously shared their time and expertise, inspiring students and empowering the next generation of leaders to explore their potential within the justice system.

—Ani Boudreaux, NeunerPate



Ani Boudreaux, Brittany LaCombe, Judge Cynthia Spadoni, Judge Valerie Gotch Garrett, and Kaleb Delatte



Brittany LaCombe, Mary-Claire Hollier, and Ambrose Stearns at Mock Trial Competition March 14



James Klock, Brittany LaCombe, Kaleb Delatte, Ani Boudreaux and Brittany LaCombe

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# An Update from the Lafayette Bar Foundation

## PRO BONO HONOR ROLL

The following attorneys have volunteered with the Lafayette Bar Foundation in the past two months through various pro bono programs.

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*Law Office of Joshua S Barnhill*

**Dean Doherty**  
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*Wesley J. Galjour, Attorney at Law*

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**David Kaufman**  
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### Did You Know?



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#### Rule 6.1

Louisiana attorneys are encouraged to fulfill their professional obligations established by Rule 6.1 of the Rules of Professional Conduct, which set an aspirational goal of 50 hours of pro bono services per year.

#### CLE

CLE credits are available by providing pro bono legal services. **You can obtain 1 hour of CLE per 5 hours of pro bono representation** up to a maximum of 3 hours CLE for each calendar year.

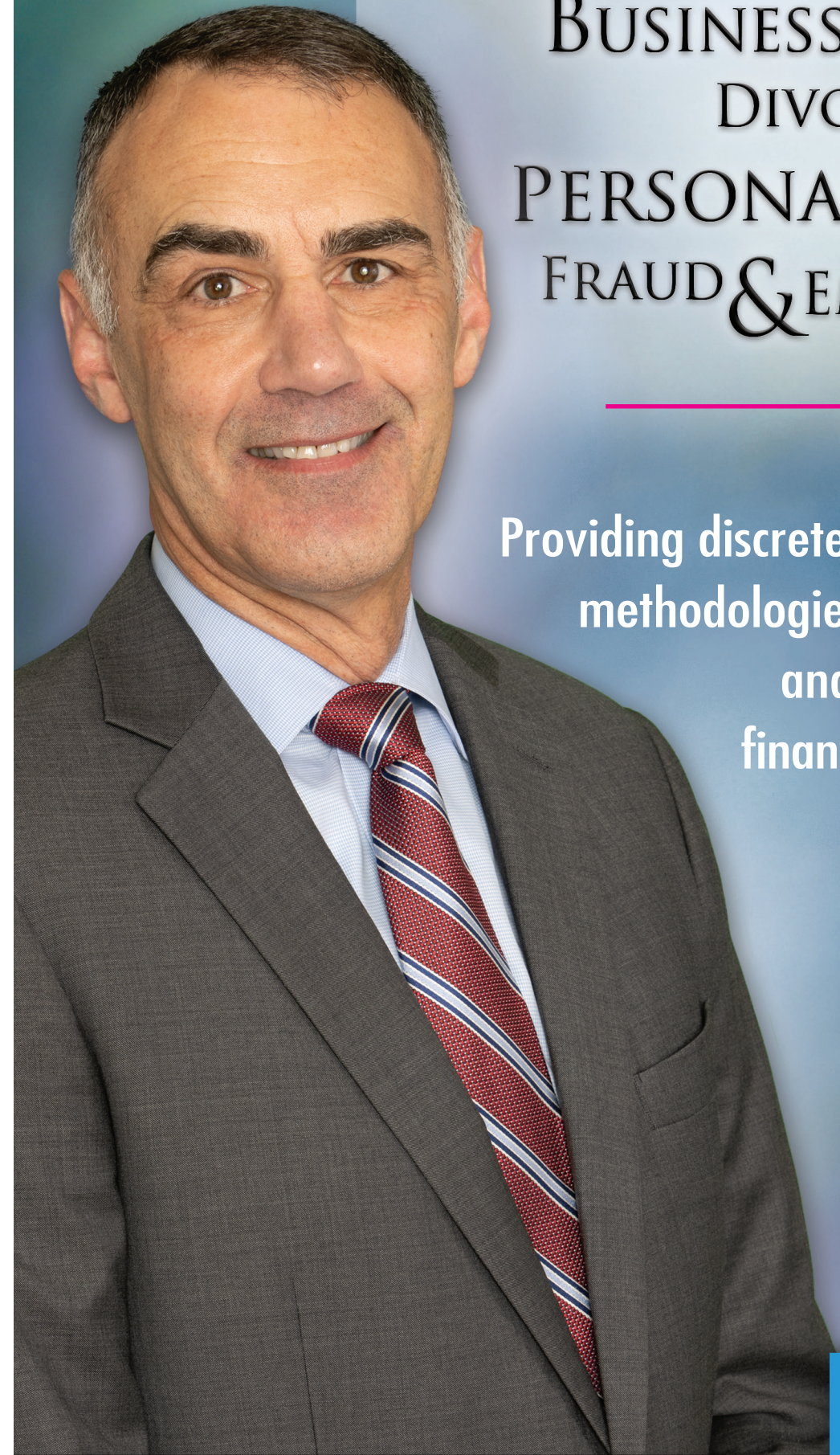
#### Career Development

Taking pro bono cases provides career development & trial experience. It can also show a different side of yourself to potential employers and clients. The Lafayette Bar Foundation has volunteer opportunities for any level of participation, ranging from one hour a week to full civil cases.

- ✓ Pro bono attorneys are generally elevated to the top of the docket at hearings.
- ✓ Support and guidance are offered to novice volunteer attorneys. Acadiana Legal Service Corporation (ALSC) will co-counsel on cases when needed.
- ✓ All cases are covered by the Professional Liability Insurance of either ALSC or the Lafayette Bar Foundation.
- ✓ You can use the Lafayette Bar Association meeting rooms to meet with your pro bono client.
- ✓ You can receive awards based on the number of cases and hours you volunteer.
- ✓ You are providing a valuable service to the community and helping someone less fortunate.

For more information, contact:  
**Marilyn Lopez, Director of Pro Bono Services**  
337-237-4700 ext 102 [marilyn@lafayettebar.org](mailto:marilyn@lafayettebar.org)

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