

THE GBA NEWS DOCKET

VOLUME 69, NUMBER 8; APRIL 2020



Eric A. Richardson
*President of the
Greensboro Bar
Association*

Message from the President

“Necessity is the mother of invention.”

For sure, we are swimming in uncharted waters at this moment in time. We wait patiently (maybe anxiously) for the tide to turn and allow us to resume “normal” activities. But will the pressures of this moment leave lasting imprints on our lives? The quote above, taken from *The Republic* by Plato, comes to mind when I consider one potential impact that the COVID-19 pandemic may have on our lives. First and foremost, it is the intent of the Greensboro Bar Association to continue to support our members through this challenging time while keeping the safety of all at the forefront of every decision we make. For this reason, we have not only postponed or cancelled a number of events scheduled for mid-March and April, but also have pivoted to video meetings and online events where possible. Of note, our GBA Board meeting scheduled for April 8 will be, for the first time, attended remotely via Zoom. And our annual Legal Aid Fundraiser became an online raffle and donation. Thank you to our sponsors, many of whom have agreed to maintain their pledge to the Legal Aid Fundraiser despite cancellation of the in-person event.

“ Let me offer some encouragement
at this time of uncertainty.”

I’m wondering, are these pandemic changes to our routine merely short-term adjustments or will we learn that there are better ways to do the things that we have been doing for years and, therefore, implement new processes or plans? One local businessperson said it this way, “we are seeing that instead of sending an employee on a two-day trip to California for one in-person meeting, that same employee can have three video conferences a day, and meet with six clients in the same two-day period.” Many of you have already participated in CLE by webinar, but now we are seeing a conscious move toward conference, mediation, deposition and even minor settlement hearings by video from your desk. I believe we are just scratching the surface. As we sit around our homes learning that we can actually get things done from a distance, I’m curious what new tools will we develop to be better at or more efficient with practicing law? And will this “downtime” force us to see our practice or our lives in new ways?

Let me offer some encouragement at this time of uncertainty. I’d like to tell you this will all work out okay. But no one has a crystal ball to make such a prediction. What we do have is the ability to examine the truths that we are aware of and then proceed in the direction that is best for us individually. So how do we proceed? Author Parker Palmer, in his work *Let Your Life Speak*, teaches that the evolution of finding one’s true calling has more to do with listening to what your life is trying to tell you about the truths you embody and the values you represent than telling your life the noble values that you have discovered in others and intend to live up to.

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You can contribute news or topics
of interest to the GBA by contacting
Editor Allie Petrova:
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APRIL CALENDAR NOTES

- April 2 Trivia Night (Postponed)
- April 8 GBA Board Meeting,
4:00 PM, Teleconference
- April 15 Annual Joint Meeting,
5:30 PM (Postponed)
- April 18 Human Race (Postponed)
- April 21 Second Chance Expunction CLE,
1:00 PM (Tentative Webinar)

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Wellness Corner

We can use life's precious moments
to reenergize.

*Allie Petrova,
Editor*

BarCARES®

VOLUNTEER AT POTTER'S HOUSE

Volunteers are needed to serve food to the less fortunate at the Urban Ministry's Potter's House. Shifts are from 9:00 AM to 12:30 PM. This is a great opportunity to give back to the community in the company of fellow bar members.

Schedule changes due to COVID-19:.

April 19 (Cancelled) May 17 (Tentative).

Please email Molly Hilburn-Holte at molly@erlaw-nc.com if you are able to help. Write POTTER'S HOUSE in the subject line.

NEW MEMBER

Approved on March 11, 2020

Alan Andrews
City of Greensboro
Endorsed by William A. Kelly



SUBMISSIONS TO THE GBA NEWS DOCKET: Submissions for consideration for the Greensboro Bar Association Newsletter should be made to petrova@petrovalaw.com. All written submissions should be made in Word format and should be in complete and final form, and any photographs should be submitted in jpeg format. Any photographs submitted should contain a caption identifying the person or persons in the photograph and, where applicable, other information necessary to understand the context of the photograph. Submissions made in other formats, including e-mail text submissions, may not be considered for publication.



Camille Stell
is the President of
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Continue this
conversation by
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THE IMPACT OF EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP IN A CRISIS

Leadership is a concept that we don't spend much time discussing. We know who the leaders are, those people whose names are on the door. And we know what leadership looks like, it's what the leaders tell us to do.

But is that really what leadership is all about?

Times of crisis can bring out the best or the worst in leaders. The COVID-19 health crisis is a case study at the ready. Take a few minutes to scan the list to see where you fit on the leadership scale.

Great leaders stay on top of data

Garbage in, garbage out is how we refer to whether the information in our database is accurate. This also applies to the information we need to make decisions. Disaster preparation occurs in law, such as when we anticipate weather emergencies. Many of our firm leaders have had to decide whether to close the office in the wake of a weather warning or how to continue to serve clients following a flood. But not many of us have had to deal with an infectious disease calamity. As a result, we are trying to gather information in real time.

As a leader, you need to make sure you are accessing the best data possible. You need a clearinghouse for the data, whether it is you or someone on your team. Designate a data czar and share that name with everyone. People then know to whom to forward the latest articles or raise concerns.

Great leaders recognize that even while meeting client needs and daily operations, a new crisis means devoting time to gathering new data.

Great leaders make decisions

Decision making is hard. Especially when you must reach consensus, make decisions by committee, or wait for all the decision makers to focus on the issue at hand.

However, being a law firm leader requires that difficult decisions must be made and made timely.

There are ways to improve the decision-making process. Have a lean team making the decisions. Once a process is in place to collect the data, leaders need to rely on the data to reach a decision. Avoid decision fatigue by having process and procedure in place so that leaders are not making hundreds of decisions every day. Set a time limit to provide the pressure of reaching a decision timely.

Great leaders listen

Two ears for listening, one mouth for talking. Did your mom ever share that homily with you? It's good advice.

During a time of crisis, great leaders listen to their constituents' fears and concerns. It can be tempting to think you know what is best for everyone. And that your position within the firm allows you the authority to make the decision. But listening allows people to feel heard and tells them that their voice matters. They will trust your decision-making process more if it includes a listening component.

Great leaders listen twice as much as they talk.

Great leaders communicate

When people discuss life in a law firm, one of the most common complaints is a failure to communicate. While there is some information that must be safeguarded, for the most part, we err on the side of withholding too much information. As firm leadership meets to discuss how to handle a firm crisis such as COVID-19, do you share information as you make decisions? Or does your staff see you gather at 10:00 a.m. in the conference room, but they don't get the memo until 4:00 p.m.? Does your staff know that you make salary adjustments at the February partners meeting, but you don't share the information with them until the day before paychecks are deposited in March?

Lawyers are busy. That goes without saying. But the reality is that everyone is busy. And the more information your team has, the less time they spend worrying, and wondering, and losing productivity.

Great leaders make decisions, then communicate clearly and as quickly as possible.

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Perhaps examining one's life may not be on your pandemic survival checklist. That is okay. However, is this the time to implement that change you have relegated to the backburner? It is not unusual to find that in the routine hustle and bustle of our busy practices and lives that the idea of planning something new, developing a new practice area, or learning a new life skill (like dancing or meditation, or joining a book club, etc.) must compete

with the built-out life that we already have in place. But right now something else is happening. Court hearings are cancelled, appointments have been minimized, travel is discouraged, restaurants and gyms are closed and non-essential social gatherings are banned. As a result, some of us have found time to reflect. If this applies to you, make use of this opportunity, listen, and during this break in your routine, let your life speak to you!

STELL: THE IMPACT OF EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP IN A CRISIS Continued from page 3

Great leaders have empathy

When people express fear, worry, or anger, great leaders have empathy. Great leaders do not retaliate. Great leaders do not mock. Great leaders do not discount others' emotions.

We can improve our empathy muscle. Walk in other peoples' shoes. Challenge yourself to tackle experiences that take you outside your comfort zone. Seek feedback from people in person and have conversations though they may be uncomfortable. Examine the emotion presented, not just the data. Ask questions. Examine your biases.

Great leaders recognize that when people have an unexpected reaction to your decision, you must lean into empathy. This doesn't mean your decision necessarily has to change, but expressing empathy is what keeps your team following you even when they disagree with you.

Great leaders reassess

I was five business days away from hosting a conference with 70 people, my Managing Partner Summit. During the day on Wednesday (before my upcoming Tuesday conference), I was on the phone with my venue, my

keynote speaker, my caterer, and my sponsors. On Wednesday evening, I sent out an email telling registrants the conference was moving forward. On Thursday, the situation deteriorated quickly, it seemed everything in North Carolina was cancelled due to COVID-19, including schools, universities, sporting events, and more. By Friday morning, I was back on the phone with my venue, my keynote speaker, my caterer, and my sponsors. Before lunch, I sent out an email telling registrants the conference was cancelled.

In a fast-moving situation, great leaders continue to reassess the situation and make changes as necessary.

Trust = Leadership

Trust is an essential element of leadership. Effective leadership impacts every aspect of your law practice. If you exercise these six skills, you will build trust and strengthen relationships even in times of crisis.

Camille Stell is the President of Lawyers Mutual Consulting & Services. Continue this conversation by contacting Camille at camille@lawyersmutualconsulting.com or 919.677.8900.



In Memoriam

EDWARD LINN MCVEY III

May 1, 1947 – March 11, 2020

Edward Linn McVey, III, 72, passed away suddenly on March 11, 2020. He spent that day doing many of his favorite things: volunteering at the hospital, helping friends and neighbors, playing with his grandchildren, and working in the yard.

He was born in Columbus, Ohio, the son of Edward Lynn McVey, Jr. and Irene Spence McVey. He graduated from Baylor University with a degree in business and a Juris Doctorate. He practiced law for 42 years.

Ed and his wife of 45 years, Catherine (Kay) Boyd McVey, began raising their three daughters in Columbus, Ohio. They moved to Greensboro in 1985 to nurture their warm and adventuresome relationship with Kay's mother, Sis Cole Boyd Schenck.

As a young man, Ed enjoyed marathon running, distance cycling and scuba diving. He was a certified rescue diver, ice diver, divemaster. In later years, he could usually be found somewhere outdoors, noticing the subtle signs of growth and change in nature. He enjoyed managing the family tree farms, splitting firewood, and taking "urban hikes" around Greensboro. Some of his most favorite days were spent kayaking and enjoying sunsets from the dock of his Topsail Island home. He was an involved and attentive dad, and an amazing grandfather, "GG." He took a special joy in playing with and leading his three grandchildren on adventures around town and out in "the wide world." He attended Oak Ridge Presbyterian Church.

He is preceded in death by his father Edward Lynn McVey, Jr.; mother, Irene Spencer McVey; son, Edward Lynn McVey IV; and daughter Catherine Courtney McVey. He is survived by wife, Catherine (Kay) Boyd McVey; daughter, Cole McVey Kampen and husband Andy, daughter, Elizabeth Whitney McVey and fiancé Sean Hennessy; grandchildren Clara Louise Kampen, Eleanor Rae Kampen and Simon Cole Kampen; sister, Lynn McVey Scott and husband Tim; as well as a loving handful of "adopted" children.



PARISI INVITED TO RUN IN BOSTON MARATHON



Jonathan Parisi, associate attorney with Spangler Estate Planning in Greensboro, has been invited to run the 2020 Boston Marathon on behalf of the Veteran's Department for the City of Newton, Massachusetts. The marathon is scheduled for September 14, 2020. Jon proudly runs in honor and remembrance of his father, Sergeant Major Todd M. Parisi, who passed away in March, 2018. Jon is dedicated to raising awareness for veteran PTSD and the suicide epidemic statistic that 22 veterans take their own lives every day. In addition, Jon is raising funds to support initiatives and programming for veterans and their families. His GoFundMe link is <https://charity.gofundme.com/o/en/campaign/boston-marathon-for-todd-m-parisi>. Jon Parisi is a graduate of Elon School of Law.



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