

THE GBA NEWS DOCKET

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Lisa W. Arthur
*President of the
Greensboro Bar
Association*

Message from the President

GBA Members,

We've finally made it to spring! I hope that the month of March has brought you sunshine and maybe even a dose (or two) of the COVID vaccine.

This past month, we hosted another social opportunity with NailedIt DIY. We painted signs for our homes and connected with each other over a fun craft. Thank you to those of you who participated.

At our membership meeting, we hosted Andrea Harrell and Sergeant Ryan Todd from the Greensboro Police Department. They shared the Department's diversity hiring initiatives and discussed the recruitment process for new police officers. Our Nominating Committee also announced our slate for the next cycle of GBA leadership as follows:

GBA President Elect (24th JD VP): Judge Marcus A. Shields

GBA/24th JD Secretary: Molly A. Hilburn-Holte

GBA/24th JD Treasurer: Davis McDonald

Directors: Judge K. Michelle Fletcher, Manisha P. Patel,
L. Nicole Patino, and Jennifer Gibert Mencarini

We are grateful for these devoted GBA leaders and are excited to see what the future of our organization has in store under their leadership.

In April, we will welcome the Guilford Education Alliance as our featured speaker at our membership meeting. We hope to see you there! Stay safe everyone.

Lisa Arthur

IN THIS ISSUE

April Calendar Notes	2
Keeping Up with Covid	2
Wellness Corner	2
Stell: A Primer on Your Firm's Financial Health Part 2: Billing	3
Christon Halkiotis Presented with 2020 Centennial Award	4
In Memoriam: Fred Thurman Hamlet	5
Announcing Slate of Nominees for Officer & Director 2021-22	6
Help Support Our Ninth Habitat House	7

You can contribute news or topics of interest to the GBA by contacting Editor Gabe Snyder:
gsnyder@wardblacklaw.com

APRIL CALENDAR NOTES

- April 14 GBA Board Meeting, 4:00 PM, Zoom
- April 14 GBA Foundation Member Meeting, Zoom
- April 14 GBA Foundation Annual Board Meeting, Zoom
- April 15 Annual Joint Meeting of 24th Judicial District Bar & GBA, 12:30 PM, Zoom
- April 20 Submission Deadline for May Newsletter
- April 21 YLS Board Meeting, 12:00pm, Zoom

[Click to keep up with GBA Events Online](#)
[Click Here for Legal Community Events](#)

CONNECT WITH US!



[GBA Young Lawyers Section](#)
[Greensboro Bar Association](#)

KEEPING UP WITH COVID

The Greensboro Bar Association's website now includes a page specifically for COVID-19 updates. Look for the RED banner at the top of the Home page for direct access to: <https://www.greensborobar.org/category/covid-19-updates/>. Here you will find information such as Administrative Orders, COVID-19 Positive Reports, and other news regarding COVID-19. The GBA's email updates will continue as this webpage is designed as an alternative means to publish information related to COVID-19.

Wellness Corner

BarCARES is a confidential, short-term intervention program provided cost-free to members of the 24th Judicial District Bar and other participating judicial district bars, voluntary bar associations and law schools. If you would like additional information about the program and/or its availability in your area, please contact the BarCARES coordinator at 919.929.1227 or 1.800.640.0735 or click on the icon below.

BarCARES®



NOTICE

Submissions for consideration for the Greensboro Bar Association Newsletter should be made to gsnyder@wardblacklaw.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.



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A PRIMER ON YOUR FIRM'S FINANCIAL HEALTH PART 2: BILLING

If you are operating the fees, billing, and collections component of your practice as you did twenty years ago, chances are you are missing opportunities for work.

Legal Trends Report

Clio is a cloud-based legal practice management solution designed for solo and small law firms. Clio serves 150,000 customers spanning 90 countries.

The Clio Legal Trends Report provides information on the most important issues facing the legal profession. By analyzing aggregated and anonymized data from tens of thousands of legal professionals, supported by extensive survey research, the report offers unique insights into law firm efficiencies, hourly rates, and other key metrics for success.

The Clio 2019 Legal Trends Report showing law firm production numbers are disappointing, but not surprising based on my conversations with solo and small firm owners.

- Average daily utilization rate – 2.5 hours of billable time
- Average daily realization rate – 2.0 hours billed to clients
- Average daily collection rate – 1.7 hours collected from clients

The average law firm bills clients for work roughly within 30 days of performance and gets paid approximately 90 days later presenting a four-to-six month gap in cashflow.

Law firms can speed up the process by which payments are received and simplify the process by focusing on the essentials.

Jordan Furlong, lawyer and legal consultant with Law21, suggests offering your clients a “crisis billing arrangement” for any matters arising out of the pandemic and recession, rather than billable hours. Your client will pay a monthly “pandemic flat rate” on the lower end of your billing scale, with a unique billing code that all timekeepers in the firm will use for simplicity and with automatic payments to ensure financial stability.

Voice of the Client

From your client's perspective, nothing annoys them more than surprises when it comes to billing. Here are the excuses or delaying tactics often used, are you guilty?

- “The case was more complicated than we expected”
- “I've already written off some of my time and had an associate do a lot of the work to keep your bill low”
- “I'll check with the managing partner and get back with you”

Your client would say:

- “You're the lawyer, you should know what this case is going to cost”
- “How many of these cases have you tried before? The data is in your billing records, use it”
- “Before we start a matter, give me a worst-case scenario in terms of cost so I can decide if I really want to pursue it”
- “If there is a wrinkle in the case that may cost me more money, pick up the phone and call me”

Use the Data

Review your financial reports for the prior 18-24 months for clues, data, insights, and trends and talk this over with your accountant or CPA. What is your most profitable work? Your least profitable work? Are you staying in touch with clients? Referral sources? Networking from six feet is not only possible but necessary. Do you know where your work comes from? Use this time to be strategic about building your referral network and thanking them for their efforts.

Look for opportunities for additional work. What work have you been doing that should be expanded? What are new practice areas to explore? What new regulations might impact your client in an unexpected way?

Make Billing a Priority

Put processes in place to ensure you are adequately capturing your time which should be billed to clients

- Document your billing process in order to improve billing workflow

Continued on page 8

CHRISTON HALKIOTIS PRESENTED WITH 2020 CENTENNIAL AWARD



The 2020 Centennial Award for outstanding and exemplary community service was presented to Christon S. Halkiotis at the virtual GBA member meeting on March 18, 2021.

Christon earned her B.A. from Rutgers University in 2000 and her J.D. (cum laude) from N.C. Central University School of Law in 2004. She was an Assistant District Attorney in the District Attorney's Office in Greensboro and High Point for 15 years, from 2004 to 2019. She has had her own law practice since October of 2019.

Christon's community service has largely been with the Junior League of Greensboro where she had a stellar year as President. She focused her volunteer and fundraising efforts on the League's goals of providing resources and assistance to elderly adults in our community. Some of the community projects she has been involved with include Friends Against Fraud, which provided assistance to elderly individuals on elder financial abuse; Community Housing Solutions, which provided financial help and volunteers to assist elderly residents in Greensboro by making home repairs when they were unable to complete those repairs themselves due to physical and financial issues; Food Assistance to provide food to elderly members of our community who are homebound; and she assisted with the rehabilitation of the Smith Senior Center.

She has always been a big supporter of the League-run thrift store, the Bargain Box. As a sustaining member of the League, Christon continues to go out of her way to support the Bargain Box through

donations and volunteering her time because she believes it plays an essential role in our community, and specifically to women in need through the League's special partnership with the Women's Resource Center.

We are pleased to recognize Christon Halkiotis for her dedicated service to the community and her commitment to making it a better place for all.

Need help around your office this summer? Consider one of our great Elon Law students as a summer intern.

FOR MORE INFORMATION EMAIL JENNIFER MENCARINI AT JMENCARINI2@ELON.EDU

 ELON LAW | Career & Student Development

FRED THURMAN HAMLET

February 28, 1947 – February 18, 2021

Fred Thurman Hamlet grew up in Pittsboro, North Carolina and was a 1965 graduate of Pittsboro High School. He received his undergraduate degree with highest honors from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, participating in Phi Eta Sigma and Phi Beta Kappa, and went on to obtain his law degree from Harvard Law School in 1973. He was admitted to the bar in 1973, Georgia, 1973; 1977, North Carolina, 1977; and 1978, U. S. Supreme Court, 1978.

Fred practiced law for more than 45 years. Beginning his legal career in Atlanta with Fisher Phillips, he soon returned to North Carolina where he worked with firm Nichols, Caffrey, Hill, Evans & Murrelle. In 1994, he opened his own practice where he remained devoted to his work until his final days. Fred provided advice to businesses and individuals on a broad range of labor and employment matters. A special interest in labor unions led to his involvement in matters that required him to enter into strike areas at the risk of physical violence. He also litigated matters that created employment law precedent in North Carolina and in the Fourth Circuit. His most notable trial involved representation of the City of Greensboro in the November 1979 Communists and Klansman clash known as the Greensboro Massacre.

Fred participated in the Boy Scouts in his youth, earning his Eagle Scout award, and served as a Scout Leader at the 16th World Scout Jamboree in Australia in 1987. He enjoyed the camping trips and outdoor adventures associated with the Boy Scouts and lived up to their motto, "Be prepared." He was an avid college basketball fan and attended annually the ACC tournament for many years.

He was a frequent seminar speaker on labor and employment law topics and took pride in being a guest speaker at Elon Law School, UNC Law School, and Wake Forest Law School. He was a preceptor at Elon Law and employed over 30 law clerks from Elon in his practice. He was a mentor to countless young attorneys who would seek his advice on a range of topics, from negotiating a salary to selecting a jury and discussing ethic issues. Throughout his career, he exercised prudence and demonstrated the highest standards of professional ethics.

Fred was predeceased by his parents, Curtis T. Hamlet and Blanche Justice Hamlet of Pittsboro, NC. Family members who survive him are his two children, Fred Thurman Hamlet, Jr. of Durham, NC and Alice Hamlet of New York City, NY, and his twin sister Margaret and her husband Bill Bingham of Garner, NC. He is also survived by his significant other of 20 years, Sheila Dorsett of High Point, NC; and his longtime associate attorney, Nicole Patino of Asheboro, NC.



ANNOUNCING SLATE OF NOMINEES FOR OFFICER & DIRECTOR 2021-22

The following members have been nominated to serve as officers of the Greensboro Bar Association for June 1, 2021 to May 31, 2022:

GBA President Elect (24th JD VP): Judge Marcus A. Shields

GBA/24th JD Secretary: Molly A. Hilburn-Holte

GBA/24th JD Treasurer: Davis McDonald

The following members have been nominated to serve as directors of the Greensboro Bar Association for a 3-year term starting June 1, 2021 and ending in May 31, 2024:

Judge K. Michelle Fletcher

Manisha P. Patel

L. Nicole Patino

The following member has been nominated to serve as a director for 1-year term starting June 1, 2021 and ending in May 31, 2022 (filling the unexpired term of Judge Shields):

Jennifer Gibert Mencarini

The nominations were submitted by the 2020-21 Nominating Committee:

Eric Richardson (Chair), Lisa Arthur, Jim Bryan, Mark Gaylord, Molly Hilburn-Holte, Sarah Roane, Karen McKeithen Schaede, Grant Sigmon, Judge Teresa Vincent, and Gerald Walden

Voting will take place at the Annual Joint Meeting of the Greensboro Bar Association and the 24th Judicial District Bar on April 15, 2021 via Zoom.

Judge Marcus A. Shields

Judge Shields is a native of Sumter, South Carolina. He received a Bachelor of Arts in Experimental Psychology from The University of South Carolina-Columbia and his Juris Doctor from North Carolina Central University, School of Law in Durham, North Carolina. Marcus is licensed to practice law in all State and Federal Courts in North Carolina.

Marcus began his career in private practice handling civil, juvenile, and criminal matters in both the Triangle and Eastern North Carolina. He practiced as a Post-Conviction Attorney with North Carolina Prisoner Legal Services, Inc. in Raleigh, North Carolina. In 2013, Marcus joined the Guilford County Public Defender's Office where he practiced in both District and Superior Court up until his appointment as a District Court Judge by North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper in May of 2018. Marcus was elected to the district court in 2020. Marcus presides in all of the district courts in Greensboro and High Point. He is the assigned recovery court judge for Greensboro's Adult

Mental Health Court and Greensboro and High Point Juvenile Drug Treatment Courts.

Off the bench, Marcus is active in his community. He serves on the Greensboro Bar Association's Board of Directors; he is former President of the Guilford County Association of Black Lawyers; he is a member of the North Carolina Association of Black Lawyers; he is a member of the Guilford Inn of Court, and a host of other civic organizations. He is a former adjunct law professor at Elon University, School of Law.

Judge K. Michelle Fletcher

Judge Fletcher is a native of Greensboro and graduated from Northwest Senior High School. She received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology from UNCG. She began law school in 1992 and received her Juris Doctorate from North Carolina Central School of Law in May 1995.

Michelle served Guilford County as an Assistant District Attorney before being appointed by Governor Easley in 2008 as a District Court Judge. She has presided over each of the various district courts including, but not limited to, criminal, family law, juvenile delinquency, juvenile abuse/neglect/dependency, contract disputes, domestic violence orders of protection, and landlord-tenant disputes. Michelle received her certification in Juvenile Law in 2010. She was appointed by the Chief District Court Judge as the lead juvenile judge for DSS Court until she was appointed to serve (and currently serves) as the lead judge for the Guilford County civil courts. She also currently serves as the presiding judge for the High Point Mental Health and Drug Treatment Courts.

Judge Fletcher continues to serve the community by being active with several local organizations.

Michelle is married to Ken Free and they have one child, Trey, who is 15 years old.

L. Nicole Patino

Nicole Patino is a zealous advocate for her clients. She loves the practice of Labor and Employment Law and considers herself lucky each day she gets to practice.

Nicole completed her undergraduate and graduate work (M.A. in English) at Virginia Tech University. She graduated from Elon University School of Law where she was a staff member of the Elon Law Review in 2013-2014 and became Notes and Comments Editor during the 2014-2015 school year. Nicole was a law clerk with the Law Offices of Fred T. Hamlet during her second and third year in law school. She continued her legal career as an associate with Law Offices of Fred T. Hamlet for five years until Mr. Hamlet's death. Her goal is to honor his memory and work with the same dedication and devotion to the ethical practice of law.

Continued on page 7

HELP SUPPORT OUR NINTH HABITAT HOUSE

After a one-year COVID delay, we will begin construction of GBA's ninth Habitat house on September 18. In the meantime, we need to raise the rest of the \$75,000 we have committed to Habitat for the cost of house. Already GBA members have given \$40,078 including the \$25,000 anonymous contribution that got us started. In the coming weeks, you will receive an email with a link to a giving page for you to make contributions and volunteer to work on the house. Please be on the lookout for the email. Our goal is to complete the fundraising by May 31 and to have a list of volunteers who have committed to join in the work.

This project adds to our long-standing tradition of sponsoring Habitat houses going back to 1990. Our Habitat work has brought great credit to this Bar Association and provided us with an opportunity to work together in partnership with one another, with the judges who join with us, and with the homeowner families who move from substandard housing to a home of their own and who can then build equity for the future as they pay down their mortgages to Habitat. When you receive the link to the giving page, please give generously so we can meet our fundraising goal going away and be among the first to volunteer for our work on the site.



NOMINEES FOR OFFICER & DIRECTOR 2021-22 Continued from page 6

Jennifer Gibert Mencarini

Jennifer Mencarini is a graduate of the University of Virginia and Emory University School of Law. She also has a Master's degree from Southern Methodist University. Before coming to Greensboro, Jennifer practiced law for 11 years in Dallas, TX where she primarily represented health care providers who had been sued for malpractice.

Jennifer's current work at Elon University School of Law focuses on providing professional development and support services to students and graduates. In addition to providing 1:1 career coaching, she teaches professional development in the Lawyering, Leadership & Professionalism Program, manages Elon Law's pro bono program, serves as an adjunct faculty member, and coaches graduates studying for the bar examination.

Jennifer is an active member of local organizations including the Women's Professional Forum, the GBA, and the United Way of Greater Greensboro's Education and Economic Impact Council. She serves on two North Carolina Bar Association Committees (including as a Co-Chair of the Pro Bono Committee).

Manisha P. Patel

Manisha Patel is a family law attorney representing clients in various stages of their domestic law matters. She began her legal career practicing with a private law firm before opening the doors to her solo practice in November 2018. A Virginia native, Manisha graduated from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech) with Bachelor's degrees in both economics and history. While enrolled in Virginia Tech, she received recognition at both the state and national levels for distinguished service in student affairs and on-campus student government.

Manisha earned her JD from Elon University School of Law, where she was the Vice President of the Women's Law Association and member of Phi Alpha Delta International Law Fraternity. She identified family law as an area of interest early in her first year of law school and has since dedicated her practice to offer compassion, dedication, and zealous legal support to individuals in emotionally trying seasons of life.

In her free time, Manisha enjoys Burn Boot Camp, running, & has completed ten half marathons and a number of smaller races throughout the country and Canada. She is also enthusiastic about her Virginia Tech Hokies and loves spending time with her adopted rescue dog and firm mascot, Rusty M. Patel.

A PRIMER ON YOUR FIRM'S FINANCIAL HEALTH PART 2: BILLING Continued from page 3

- Timely billing results in greater collections – is it necessary to only bill once a month? Is it time to change the process? Rather than hold all bills to the end of the month, do you want to process bills throughout the month?
- Does your process involve multiple layers of time keeping, review, editing, and processing?
- Streamline the process and you'll collect more money and have happier clients

Conclusion

Billing is a work in progress. As with many aspects of your practice, this is an evergreen component, meaning

that there is always work to be done, always knowledge to collect to make sure you are on top of trends, and constant communications with clients as to how they are responding to your fees, billing practices, and collections processes. Check in next month for our next installment on collections best practices.

Camille Stell is the President of Lawyers Mutual Consulting & Services and works with law firms to modernize their law practices through strategic planning and succession planning. Continue this conversation by contacting Camille at camille@lawyersmutualconsulting.com or 919.677.8900.



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