

# THE GBA NEWS DOCKET

VOLUME 72, NUMBER 8; APRIL 2023



Marcus Allen Shields  
*President of the  
Greensboro Bar  
Association*

## Message from the President

Dear Members,

Thank you all for your continued commitment to the Greensboro Bar Association. Special thanks to Mr. Michael Humprey for serving as the guest speaker for our March 2023 Member Lunch Meeting. Congratulations to all of the members recognized for their pro bono service and honored as members of the Herb Falk Society. Service is

“

Service is our mission

and the foundation of our profession.

”

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our mission and the foundation of our profession. Please join us for the Annual Joint Meeting of the GBA & the 24th Judicial District Bar that will take place at 5:30 PM on April 20, 2023, at Starmount Country Club in Greensboro. There are still opportunities to get involved for the remainder of our bar year and so I would ask that you reach out to the various committees to see how you can get involved. Get outside and enjoy Spring!

Sincerely,

Marcus Allen Shields

President, Greensboro Bar Association 2022-2023

You can contribute news or topics of interest to the GBA by contacting Editor Jonathan M. Parisi:  
[jparisi@spanglerestateplanning.com](mailto:jparisi@spanglerestateplanning.com)

# APRIL CALENDAR NOTES

- April 12 GBA Board Meeting,  
4:00 PM, Self Help Building
- April 19 YLS Board Meeting,  
12:00 PM, Sigmon Klein
- April 20 Annual Joint Meeting 24th and GBA,  
5:30 PM, Starmount Forest Country Club
- April 26 Battle of the Bars Trivia  
5:30pm, Wicked Burgers, Tacos, Brews  
2415a Lawndale Dr.
- April 20 Submission deadline for May Newsletter
- April 30 Picnic at the Greensboro Grasshoppers,  
1:30 PM, First National Bank Field

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

## Wellness Corner

BarCARES is a confidential, short-term intervention program provided cost-free to members of the 24<sup>th</sup> 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®

# GBA/HPBA BATTLE OF THE BARS *Trivia*



5:30-7:30

April 26, 2023

WICKED BURGERS, TACOS, BREWS  
2415A LAWDALE DR, GREENSBORO, NC 27408

[Click to Register](#)

## NEW MEMBERS

Approved March 8, 2023

Hon. Mark E. Klass  
*Klass Mediation*  
Endorser: Amy S. Klass

Brennan Tyler Brooks  
*Law Office of B. Tyler Brooks, PLLC*  
Endorser: Hon. Richard A. Elmore

## NOTICE

Submissions for consideration for the Greensboro Bar Association Newsletter should be made to Jonathan M. Parisi at [jparisi@spanglerestateplanning.com](mailto:jparisi@spanglerestateplanning.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 President and  
CEO of Lawyers  
Mutual Consulting  
& Services. Continue  
this conversation  
by contacting  
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lawyersmutualnc.com](mailto:camille@lawyersmutualnc.com)  
or 800.662.8843.

# BUSINESS BASICS FOR BUSY LAWYERS

Practicing law is a time-honored profession. Many lawyers would also say it is a calling. However, in today's world we can't escape the fact that it is a business as well.

Here are a few tips to help you design a practice that will allow you to evolve and thrive.

## A Business Plan

Starting your practice with a business plan is important. At the outset it's often hard to know exactly what services you will sell to exactly what clients, but the better job you can do in pinpointing these decisions, the better positioned your practice will be.

Your business plan will serve as your North Star for building your firm. Be specific about your purpose, your goals, and the clients you want to serve.

Creating the business plan will also remind you to work "on" your business and not just "in" the business providing legal services. Working "on" your business includes marketing, business development, strategic planning, and goal setting.

Once the plan is complete, don't put it on a shelf out of sight. Rather, every quarter, build a planning day into your schedule where you review your goals and the tasks that will get you there. Measure the data by looking at your client list and reviewing your revenue and expenses to see if you are on target. Many lawyers create a dashboard to see daily results which can be scary at first, but will give you detailed data and insight into your firm that many long-time practitioners have never had about their own firms.

Keep in mind that your business plan should be evergreen, a living plan that is constantly updated and flexible if you need to pivot your practice.

## Brick-and-Mortar or Virtual

In many ways, starting a law firm has never been cheaper. With a laptop and a mobile phone, DIY website, bank accounts, and a few subscription services, you can be accepting clients the day your law license arrives.

However, take the time to think through your options of whether to go virtual or brick-and-mortar. Practicing, especially as a solo, can be lonely and isolating. If there is an available shared office space or co-working office space that may include other professionals or businesses, you may want to take advantage of brick-and-mortar for the company, the mentorship, and the networking. On the other hand, having a virtual office is a great way to keep expenses in check, especially at the beginning, and your clients may never expect to see the inside of your office.

As a result of the pandemic, there are plenty of opportunities for leasing, and as the real estate market ebbs and flows, buying your own space may be a great investment for you and your firm that will pay off down the road.

## Fees, Billing, and Collections

**Setting fees.** Determining how to set fees is tough. You want to make sure your fees are competitive.

One tactic to determine fees is the most common research tool today – a Google search. My search "how much does a divorce lawyer cost?" provided a variety of information. I did the search specifically for my state and the first result was from a survey which provided an average hourly rate for divorce lawyers. This search revealed other frequently asked questions (and answers) such as average retainer fee and average cost of a divorce. The search resulted in ads for law firms which provide insight about how other family lawyers are promoting their firms and services.

The Clio Legal Trends Report is an excellent resource which shows fees across the US reported by state or region of the country. Recruiting firms often publish online salary guides that sometimes include regional billing rates. You can also find billing rates on salary websites such as Glassdoor or Salary.com.

Getting direct feedback is valuable. You can talk with trusted clients and referral sources about what they feel are reasonable fees. Mystery shopper programs are where law

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Robert Trimble is President of the Greensboro Bar Association's Young Lawyers Section and is an associate attorney with [Sigmon Klein, PLLC.](#)

# Young Lawyers Section: Connections

During the month of March, the Young Lawyers Section volunteered at the Greensboro Urban Ministries Potter's House Community Kitchen. YLS and GBA volunteers prepared and served hot food to approximately 35 members of the Greensboro community that reside at the Weaver House Shelter. Thank you to all the YLS and GBA members who came out to volunteer at this service opportunity in support of our community.

## Hunter Elementary School In-Person Service Opportunity:

The YLS is partnering with Hunter Elementary School to host a Breakfast to recognize the school's honor roll students. The honor roll breakfast will take place on Friday, April 21st from 7:45 – 9:00 am, and the YLS will be serving breakfast to the honor roll students and their families. Hunter Elementary is located at 1305 Merritt Dr. in Greensboro. All GBA and YLS members are invited to participate. Please RSVP to [info@greensboroyls.org](mailto:info@greensboroyls.org) if you would like to join.

## YLS Kickball Team:

The YLS kickball team, Torts Illustrated, has officially kicked off its 2023 season. The team got off to a strong start with a 4-0 win at the week 1 practice game. Torts Illustrated will play every Monday evening, weather permitting, at Carolyn Allen Park located at 3610 Drawbridge Parkway in Greensboro. The upcoming schedule of games is listed below. We hope that you will come out to cheer on the team!

- Monday, 3/27/2023 @ 8:30 PM on field 2
- Monday, 4/3/2023 @ 7:30 PM on field 2
- Monday, 4/10/2023 @ 6:30 PM on field 1
- Monday, 4/17/2023 @ 8:30 PM on field 2
- Monday, 4/24/2023 @ 6:30 PM on field 1
- Monday, 5/1/2023 @ 7:30 PM on field 2

If you are interested in joining the YLS kickball team, registration is still open, and spots are still available. Membership and jerseys are FREE, courtesy of the YLS. All YLS and GBA members and their spouses are welcomed to join. Sign up today at [YLS Kickball Team Interest Survey \(surveymonkey.com\)](#) or email Team Manager, [Elizabeth Robertson](#). We look forward to seeing you on the field!



Back Row, left to right: Robert Trimble, Tyler Nullmeyer, Gunnar Robertson, Ben Rafte, Casey Robinson, Andrew Carter

Front Row, left to right: Kionie James, Elizabeth Robertson, Timisha Henley, Hilary Hux

## Lawyers On The Lawn:

The YLS is partnering with Shift\_Ed to host an outdoor happy hour for lawyers at Lawn Service in LeBauer Park in Downtown Greensboro. Shift\_Ed is a non-profit organization that operates using an equity-based model to support students with the greatest needs in the Guilford County School system. Come join us on Thursday, May 11th to network with other attorneys in the community and learn about Shift\_Ed. Free snacks and a drink ticket will be provided to all attendees, and a portion of the proceeds collected by Lawn Service from the purchase of drinks will be donated to Shift\_Ed. All attorneys with both the GBA and YLS are welcome to join. We hope to see you there!

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# GBA DEDICATES ITS NINTH HABIT FOR HUMANITY HOUSE

On March 4th, GBA members gathered at 1310 Picard St. in Greensboro to unveil the finished product of its ninth Habitat for Humanity home. Amongst GBA members were Habitat for Humanity staff, volunteers, and members of the community who shared in the celebration of David Sosa-Ramos and Martha “Patty” Sanchez, Greensboro’s newest homeowners.

In 2011, Mr. Sosa-Ramos was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis. Unable to navigate his wheelchair through the doorways of his previous residence, he faced exceptional challenges performing his day-to-day tasks—some things we oftentimes take for granted. Since September of last year, our members have worked diligently to complete the GBA’s first ADA compliant home so that Mr. Sosa-Ramos and his family can live comfortably every day.

Habitat for Humanity committee chair, Bill Cooke, performed the dedication to David, Martha, and their two grandchildren, and special remarks to the family followed.

Each member of the family addressed the membership and expressed their true gratitude for the selflessness of our members, nothing that they “would never forget this moment.”

Thank you to all of the GBA members who dedicated their time to the service of others on this project. Furthermore, the committee and membership are especially grateful for the remarkable leadership of Bill Cooke which has supported this program for many years.



# GBA PARTNERS WITH WOMEN'S RESOURCE CENTER

The GBA has partnered with the Women's Resource Center of Greensboro (WRC) and is looking for volunteers!

Started in 1995, the Women's Resource Center is designed to help women navigate life's hurdles, to access community services, to develop new skill sets, and to move lives forward. The organization's mission? To promote the self-reliance of women by assessing needs, providing services and acting as a gateway to community resources.

The WRC is looking for attorneys to participate in its Free Attorney Hotline to assist women in making well-informed decisions based on clear knowledge of their legal rights and responsibilities as they move through life transitions.

The program allows community women to receive 15 minutes of telephone consultation with an attorney through appointments on the attorney hotline.

Attorneys from all areas of law are encouraged to volunteer, but the WRC is in particular need of volunteers for matters relating to separation/divorce, landlord/tenant, and immigration. The time commitment is as little as 15 minutes per month and is an ongoing volunteer opportunity.

For further information about how to volunteer, please contact the Community Involvement committee chair, Jonathan M. Parisi, at [JParisi@SpanglerEstatePlanning.com](mailto:JParisi@SpanglerEstatePlanning.com).

To learn more about the WRC and its services, visit their website at <https://womenscentergrso.org/>

## ANNOUNCING SLATE OF NOMINEES FOR OFFICERS & DIRECTORS 2023-2024

The following members have been nominated to serve as officers and directors of the Greensboro Bar Association for June 1, 2023 to May 31, 2024:

- GBA President Elect (24th JD VP): Manisha P. Patel
- GBA/24th JD Secretary: Karen McKeithen Schaeede
- GBA/24th JD Treasurer: Davis McDonald

GBA Director (3) for 3-year term starting June 1, 2023 and ending in May 31, 2026:

- Hon. A. Robinson Hassell
- Frankie T. Jones, Jr.
- Angela F. Liverman

GBA Director (1) for 1-year term starting June 1, 2023 and ending in May 31, 2024 (fill unexpired term of Manisha Patel):

- Nicole R. Scallon

The nominations were submitted by the 2022-23 Nominating Committee:

*Desmond Sheridan (Chair), Mark Gaylord, Adam Kerr, Manisha Patel, Eric Richardson, Marcus Shields, Hon. 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 20, 2023 at Starmount Forest Country Club.



# HERB FALK SOCIETY 2022 INDUCTION

The **Herb Falk Society** honors those members of the Greensboro Bar Association who contribute at least 75 hours of pro bono service annually. The fourteen individuals inducted for 2022 were recognized at the GBA member meeting on Thursday, March 16, 2023 at Greensboro Country Club. They are:

Kearns Davis: 167.8 hours

Jennifer Noble 105.6 hours

D. Clark Smith 252 hours

Eloise Hassell: 77.2 hours

Jonathan Parisi: 101.3 hours

Theodora Vaporis: 86 hours

Adam Linett 75 hours

Manisha P. Patel: 601 hours

Gerald Walden: 171 hours

Jamey Lowdermilk 127.8 hours

Jim Slaughter: 89 hours

Jonathan Wall: 139.3 hours

Emily Meister 82.3 hours

Daniel Smith 91 hours

## CONGRATULATIONS AND THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE!



Pictured, left to right: Manisha Patel, Gerald Walden, Jon Wall, Theodora Vaporis, Jonathan Parisi, Adam Linett, Eloise Hassell, Kearns Davis

## RUBY CHASE TALIERCIO, PLLC OPENS FOR BUSINESS



Margaret Chase, Jennifer Ruby and Michael Taliercio are pleased to announce the opening of their new law firm of Ruby Chase Taliercio, PLLC on April 1st.

The new firm's practice will focus on civil litigation, community association representation, landlord tenant matters, and parliamentary services. The partners previously worked together and are excited to reunite in this new endeavor!

# GBA 2023 ANNUAL PICNIC AT THE BALLPARK

Bring your family (kids too!)  
for an afternoon of  
food, fun, and BASEBALL!!!

**Sunday, April 30**

**Picnic Buffet: 1:30-3:00 p.m.**

**Game Time: 2:00 p.m.**

First National Bank Field  
408 Bellemeade St.  
Greensboro, NC

**[Register Here!](#)**

When reserving, please indicate the number of adults ages 18+ and the number of children. (*PLEASE SPECIFY THE AGE OF EACH CHILD*)

Admission tickets and picnic wristbands can be picked up upon arrival at the big white tent near the Bellemeade gate.



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## YOUNG LAWYERS SECTION: CONNECTIONS Continued from page 4

### NCAA Tournament Bracket Challenge:

The Young Lawyers Section's NCAA Tournament Bracket Challenge is in fully swing. Thank you to all the GBA and YLS members who submitted brackets. With all the upsets in rounds 1 and 2 of March Madness thus far, we hope that you are watching basketball and keeping track of your brackets. Stay tuned for announcements regarding the first, second, and third place prize winners.

### Connect with YLS:

One of our main goals is to serve our members by providing service opportunities and activities that interest you. We are working diligently to think of new events and that will create additional ways to interact with other young lawyers. We encourage you to consider what service opportunities and activities you would be interested in, and

we would love to hear from you. Please email your ideas and suggestions to the Young Lawyers Section at [info@greensboroyls.org](mailto:info@greensboroyls.org).

The Young Lawyers Section would like to celebrate life's milestones with our members. Email the YLS at [info@greensboroyls.org](mailto:info@greensboroyls.org) to share personal and professional updates about yourself that you would like celebrated on the YLS Facebook page.

If you are interested in more information about the Young Lawyers Section and how you can get involved, visit our Facebook page (Greensboro Bar Association's Young Lawyers Section) or email the YLS at [info@greensboroyls.org](mailto:info@greensboroyls.org).

If you would like to be added to the Young Lawyers Section email list, please email the YLS at [info@greensboroyls.org](mailto:info@greensboroyls.org).



firms call other firms to inquire about rates. Most firms don't quote prices over the phone, but you can find out whether other firms provide free or paid consults if nothing else. And finally, look at fee affidavits that have been filed in your jurisdiction.

**Client billing.** The most important note about billing is to make it a priority. Firms often bill at the end of the month for all the work done that month. While that may work in larger firms, timely billing results in greater collection rates. When the bill arrives while the results are fresh in your clients' mind, the value of work seems higher. Put processes in place to make sure you are adequately capturing your time and document your billing process in order to improve your billing workflow.

**Collections.** From the moment you open your law firm doors, you should offer online payment options and accept credit cards.

A recent study conducted by Total System Services (TSYS) showed that as many as 75% of customers today prefer to pay with a credit or debit card. In addition to the convenience, customers enjoy credit card rewards, cash back and other perks of using their cards.

Studies show that 85% of electronic invoices are paid the same week they are sent, and 57% are paid the same day the client receives the invoice.

Taking credit cards means you get paid faster and the money is deposited in your account sooner. Also, integration between your credit card processor and your time and billing / accounting system reduces duplication of payment and client information.

While there are many online payment platforms available, LawPay is often an affinity partner of many bar associations. LawPay was designed specifically for attorneys and is designed to prevent commingling of earned and unearned funds, protects your trust account from third-party debiting, and ensures IOLTA compliance for credit card, debit card, and eCheck transactions.

Other legal specific credit card payment processors include ClientPay, Headnote, LexCharge, and MyCase Payments.

## Technology

There are many resources to guide you through the process of choosing your technology and your bar associations are a great first stop. You may be able to save money by taking advantage of the affinity partnerships your bar associations have with various technology providers such as Clio and Fastcase.

Most bar associations have Practice Management Advisors or Practice Management Centers which typically offer free technology consults.

In terms of what kind of tech you need, you should focus on tech that makes you more efficient and provides a good client experience. Tools that are often listed as "must have" for your tech toolkit include:

- Scheduling automation – I use Calendly
- Virtual meetings – I use Microsoft Teams and Zoom
- Project lists and "to do" task lists – I use Trello
- Marketing automation – I use Canva to create and MeetEdgar to automate
- Website – I use WordPress
- Document automation – this will vary by practice area
- Accounting / Trust Accounting – Trustbooks is designed for solo and small firms and is compatible with state bar trust accounting rules

As you move through your career, never lose sight of professionalism and the art of practicing law, but neglect the business side at your own risk.

*Camille Stell is the President of Lawyers Mutual Consulting & Services and the co-author of the newly published book, RESPECT – An Insight to Attorney Compensation Plans available from Amazon. Continue this conversation by contacting Camille at [camille@lawyersmutualconsulting.com](mailto:camille@lawyersmutualconsulting.com) or 800.662.8843.*

