

THE GBA NEWS DOCKET

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

IN THIS ISSUE

March Calendar Notes	2
Keeping Up with Covid	2
New Members	2
Wellness Corner	2
Stell: A Primer on Setting Fees	3
Young Lawyers Section: Connections	4
Herb Falk Society: 2020 Reporting Deadline EXTENDED!	4
Atty Patel Named 2020 NC Lawyers Weekly Leader in the Law	5
Report Pro Bono Involvement to the NC Pro Bono Resource Center	5
Brooks Pierce Receives Diversity & Inclusion Award	6

Message from the President

GBA Members,

We've (almost) made it to spring! Spring often brings a sense of hope and the sunshine. I hope that even though the pandemic continues, we can begin to see a light at the end of this very long tunnel.

I want to thank all of you who have participated in GBA events in the month of February. We have been very busy! In response to your survey results requesting more social and CLE opportunities, we hosted a Diversity Training Program led by the Equity Paradigm, we competed against one another through a virtual trivia event (my team will never forget that Aldi owns Trader Joe's), and we even managed to put on the Annual CLE in the midst of an ice storm. I want to give a special thank you to Kim Gatling, Judge Cabbage, and Judge Shields for leading a thought provoking Judges Panel on diversity, equity, and inclusion.

We also want to thank Judge Vincent for being the featured speaker at the February membership meeting. She discussed courthouse operations during COVID and answered questions from the membership. If you have additional questions or concerns about courthouse operations during COVID, please communicate those to me and I will communicate them to the appropriate person. In addition, we have created a COVID section of the GBA's website, which is now live. Please check it out for updates related to COVID.

Looking ahead, we have another opportunity coming up to connect socially:

Nailed It Greensboro Event, March 3 at 5:30 PM. Do you want to get in touch with your crafty side? Join us as we partner with Nailed It Greensboro to create signs for your home or office. The event will be virtual, and participants will be required to pay for and pick up their take home DIY project ahead of the event. Registration is limited to 30 people. You can [Register Here](#).

The GBA Board is continuing to work on more social and CLE opportunities, so stay tuned. In the month of March, we look forward to welcoming members of the Greensboro Police Department to speak at our membership meeting.

Stay safe everyone, and we hope to connect with you virtually at one of our upcoming events.

Lisa Arthur

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

MARCH CALENDAR NOTES

- March 3 Nailed It Craft Night, 5:30 PM, Zoom
- March 10 Board Meeting, 4:00 PM, Zoom
- March 15 Herb Falk Society Submission Deadline
- March 17 YLS Board Meeting, 12:00 PM, Zoom
- March 18 Member Meeting, 12:30 PM, Zoom
- March 20 Submission Deadline
for April Newsletter

[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.

NEW MEMBERS

Approved on February 10, 2021

Richard Lewis Glenn, III
Deuterman Law Group
Endorsed by Michele H. Cybulski

Andrea H. Smaxwell
Deuterman Law Group
Endorsed by Michele H. Cybulski

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 SETTING FEES

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. Today we will focus on tips for setting fees.

Google Search

How do you determine whether your fees are competitive? There are a variety of ways. A Google search is an easy place to start. For instance, when I use the search term, “how much for a divorce lawyer”, an ad pops up about a specific family law firm. Clicking on the ad provides insight into how other lawyers are promoting their services.

Continuing through the Google search provides an average of fees from the lawyers.com website which appears to be from the results of a consumer survey they conducted:

On average, North Carolina divorce lawyers charge between \$230 and \$280 per hour. Average total costs for North Carolina divorce lawyers are \$9,700 to \$11,700 but are typically significantly lower in cases with no contested issues. Jul 22, 2020

This search revealed other frequently asked questions and answers such as average retainer fee and the average cost of a divorce.

Reports

Clio is a cloud-based legal practice management solution designed for solo and small law firms. Clio serves 150,000 customers spanning 90 countries. An important part of their work is gathering data for the Legal Trends Report and new in 2020, the Covid-19 Impact Report.

The Clio Legal Trends Report shows fees reported by state and region of the country. You can go back and view past reports, as well as the 2020 Legal Trends Report on the Clio website.

Recruiting firms often publish online Salary Guides that include regional billing rates. Look at Special Counsel, Robert Half, and Apple One.

Ask Trusted Advisors

Ask trusted clients and referral sources what they think about legal pricing, pricing options, various fee and payment options.

You can also experiment with alternative fees and then tweak them if they don't work. Consider alternative service offerings such as unbundled services, packaged services, subscription services, offering educational programs where you charge fees to share knowledge, as well as consulting services.

Break projects down into multiple parts so that clients have payment flexibility by buying in phases. Of course, it is always important to carefully outline the scope of the project and to make sure that your engagement letter with clients reflects the scope of your services and your fee arrangement.

Advice from Lawyers

I know of law firms that have “mystery shopper” programs. In these firms, employees from marketing, intake or call centers, call other firms to inquire about rates.

Lawyers also ask judges what rates they typically award for lawyers in their area of expertise. Or view fee affidavits in other cases as a helpful gauge.

One lawyer I talked with had this to say, “Given my experience, you probably aren't the highest paid and in fact, you may be the lowest paid.”

Another lawyer said, “Solos and small firms do not seem to change their pricing at the pace of mid to larger firms due to client pushback or perceived client pushback. Based on your expertise and length of time with no increase in fees, there may be room for an increase. Often you need to increase your fees to get the kind of client you want.”

Costs

Know how much it costs to do the work and calculate that into the fee setting process. I talk with many solo and small firms who don't actually know what their costs are per

Continued on page 7



Hillary Kies
is President of the
Greensboro Bar
Association's Young
Lawyers Section
and is an attorney
with [Turning Point
Litigation](#).

Young Lawyers Section: Connections

March Madness Virtual Social

In March, the Young Lawyers Section will be hosting another fun virtual social event! Watch your emails for more details. We look forward to seeing you!

YLS Facebook Group

Have a question about practice? Procedure? Which clerk to talk to? The Young Lawyers Section has created a private Facebook Group for its members to communicate with one another about the ins and outs of practicing law. A link to the Group can be found at [YLS Resource Group – Let's Help Each Other!](#) Please request to join and ask your peers for any legal advice you may need!

Kick Off Paint Party

In February, the Young Lawyers Section hosted its annual kickoff party with a paint party. The young lawyers and their guests were able to tap their creative abilities and have a lot of fun together! Thank you to everyone who participated and to Wine & Design for providing the supplies and instruction.



Connect With Us

Do you want more information about upcoming Young Lawyers Section events or how you can get involved? Visit our website at www.greensboroyls.org, email Hillary Kies (hkies@turningpointlit.com) to make sure you are on the listserv, and follow us on Facebook ([Greensboro Bar Association's Young Lawyers Section](#)). If you have missed the opportunity to connect with the Young Lawyers Section, we hope to see you at one of our March events!

HERB FALK SOCIETY: 2020 REPORTING DEADLINE EXTENDED!

Form Due March 15, 2021

The Herb Falk Society was established to honor those members of the Greensboro Bar Association who contribute at least 75 hours of pro bono service each calendar year. The deadline for reporting pro bono work done in 2020 is March 15, 2021. The reporting has been simplified in recent years. This year, you can also report your hours online! Fill out the [Reporting Form](#) for as many pro bono activities you completed in 2020.

Questions or concerns? Reach out to Pro Bono Committee Chair [Manisha P. Patel](#).

ATTORNEY MANISHA P. PATEL NAMED 2020 NORTH CAROLINA LAWYERS WEEKLY LEADER IN THE LAW



Manisha P. Patel

Family law attorney Manisha P. Patel was honored as member of the 2020 class of North Carolina Lawyers Weekly's Annual Leaders in the Law presented by NC Law. In lieu of an in-person celebration, North Carolina Lawyers Weekly held a virtual celebration on November 30, 2020 for this year's honorees. The recorded celebration and Leader interviews can be viewed [here](#). Patel's written interview was included in the November 30, 2020 special supplemental edition of NC Lawyers Weekly and can be accessed [here](#). Patel was included with 23 other North Carolina Lawyer Leaders "who have gone above and beyond in their profession and in their community," noted by North Carolina Lawyers Weekly Editor-In-Chief, David Donavan.

"I am honored to be recognized as a leader in the legal profession in North Carolina," says Patel. "It is truly an honor to be recognized for my dedication and commitment to our community, locally and statewide. I am humbled to be included with outstanding attorneys throughout North Carolina, many of whom I have admired."

Manisha P. Patel earned her Juris Doctor from Elon University School of Law and holds Bachelor's degrees in both economics and history from Virginia Tech. With a focus on family law, Patel opened her solo law practice in November 2018. Manisha offers compassionate legal counsel and support to clients during emotionally stressful transitions and difficult life situations. Patel is currently the Immediate Past-President of the North Carolina Association of Women Attorneys after two calendar years as President in 2019 and 2020.

REPORT PRO BONO INVOLVEMENT TO THE NORTH CAROLINA PRO BONO RESOURCE CENTER

North Carolina Rule of Professional Conduct 6.1 encourages North Carolina attorneys to engage in a variety of activities to increase access to justice:

- at least 50 hours each year of pro bono legal services to clients who are unable to pay, without fee or expectation of fee;
- legal services provided at a substantially reduced fee;
- activities to improve the law, the legal system, or the legal profession;
- non-legal community service; and
- financial support to legal service providers.

The North Carolina Pro Bono Resource Center is collecting information on attorney participation in activities covered under North Carolina Rule of Professional Conduct 6.1, adopted by the North Carolina State Bar in 2010.

These activities include:

1. providing pro bono legal services,
2. providing legal services at a substantially reduced fee,
3. participating in activities to improve the law, the legal system or the legal profession and
4. financially supporting legal service providers.

The pro bono reporting form is available from January 1st to March 31st each year, collecting information about activities from the prior year.

To assist in tracking your 2021 pro bono hours, please use this [template spreadsheet](#) to keep up with all of the work and contributions you make in 2021.

For more information about 2020 Pro Bono reporting, please visit the [NC Pro Bono Resource Center's reporting page](#).

[CLICK HERE TO REPORT YOUR 2020 PRO BONO INFORMATION](#)

DEADLINE: MARCH 31, 2021

BROOKS PIERCE RECEIVES DIVERSITY & INCLUSION AWARD

Brooks Pierce is proud to announce that it has been selected as one of the 2021 Lawyers Weekly Diversity & Inclusion Award recipients for its work in promoting diversity and equal representation in the legal profession. Brooks Pierce is one of five law firms or organizations across North Carolina and South Carolina selected for the award.

“Diversity and inclusion are core values at Brooks Pierce. We have placed a strong emphasis on creating an inclusive environment in our firm, in the legal profession and in the broader community,” said Reid Phillips, the firm’s managing partner. “Our efforts are intentional, and it’s an honor to know that they are being recognized.”

Brooks Pierce was selected for the award because of its broad range of internal initiatives and external participation in efforts that increase diversity and inclusion in the broader community. The firm’s diversity and inclusion programs include:

- Creating the Chief Justice Henry E. Frye — Brooks Pierce Diversity Summer Fellowship in 2017. The fellowship provides a summer associate position and a \$10,000 scholarship to a student of color at an American Bar Association accredited law school who plans on practicing in North Carolina. It is named after retired Brooks Pierce attorney Henry Frye, who was the first Black Justice on the North Carolina Supreme Court and its first Black Chief Justice.
- Launching a “modern book club” where members of the firm are invited to read a selection of articles and books, listen to

podcasts and watch movies about racial inequity and then meet to discuss them and share related experiences.

- A continuing series of educational programming within the firm to help provide a basic understanding of issues like structural racism and creating a common language for ongoing discussions related to race and diversity.
- Launching a speaker series on racial equity in various industries, bringing together attorneys within the firm and clients to discuss ways to improve diversity.
- Sponsoring diverse bar and professional association events and scholarships, both statewide and in its local communities.
- Supporting organizations that focus on promoting diversity and inclusion in the legal profession and broader community including the NorthStar LGBTQ Community Center, the North Carolina Lawyer Assistance Program’s Minority Outreach Conference, the National Conference for Community and Justice, the Capital City Lawyer’s Association and the Women’s White Collar Defense Association.

“We really feel that we can’t just give lip service to diversity and inclusion efforts, but have to give meaningful thought to how we can further incorporate a wide range of perspectives into everything we do,” said partner Justin Outling, who was appointed Brooks Pierce’s first director of diversity and inclusion in 2020. “We have seen the impact these programs and initiatives have on advancing equality not just within Brooks Pierce, but within the broader communities we serve.”

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

A PRIMER ON SETTING FEES Continued from page 3

case or per matter. These are not new lawyers. These are experienced lawyers who know the firm is making money, but they can't tell which cases had a negative cash flow for the firm. A lawyer should know if a case will contribute a sufficient amount to overhead, staff support and their own salary.

Technology

An important point noted in the 2020 Clio Legal Trends Report is that firms who experimented with small adjustments made over time, and practiced with consistency, saw improvements year-over-year to their law practices.

As an example, firms noted as "agile" invested in technology over time. These firms added online payment options, client portals, and Client Relationship

Management (CRM) tools. Firms who used all three forms of technology outperformed their peer firms by \$40,000 a year.

Conclusion

Setting fees is a work in process. As with other aspects of your business, setting fees is an evergreen practice, meaning that there is always work to be done in this area. Continually update your knowledge to make sure you are on top of trends and communicate with clients in response to your fees.

Camille Stell is the President of Lawyers Mutual Consulting & Services and the author of Designing a Succession Plan for Your Law Practice. Continue this conversation by contacting Camille at camille@lawyersmutualconsulting.com or 919.677.8900.



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