

THE GBA NEWS DOCKET

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Gerald L. Walden, Jr.
*President of the
Greensboro Bar
Association*

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Message from the President

Hello GBA Members!

With this month being November and Thanksgiving fast approaching, I want to share something I am thankful for – the GBA.

The following events of the last two weeks have led me to reflect on when I first began my career as an attorney 22 years ago:

- Witnessing the GBA's recognition of Judge Ralph Walker as one of two Distinguished Service Award winners – a man who was serving on the NC Court Appeals and was so welcoming to me when I began my judicial clerkship there immediately following graduation;
- Hearing seasoned GBA attorney, Margaret Dudley, share a personal story from her time at law school during our October member meeting which culminated in her advising the members to not let the practice of law prevent them from making time for family and friends; and
- Participating in the swearing-in ceremony of newly licensed attorneys to the NC Bar hosted by the GBA's Young Lawyers Section.

When reflecting on my early years, I realized that I was practicing law for nearly a decade in Greensboro before connecting with the GBA. As someone who went in-house directly after my clerkship, there really was no business need for me to engage with local attorneys since literally none of the matters I worked on were tied to the Triad area. Nevertheless, I am thankful to former GBA president, Afi Johnson-Parris, for personally reaching out and asking me to join the GBA. Since that time, I have enjoyed my membership in the GBA immensely – developing personally and professionally along the way.

I'll close with a portion of the remarks I shared during the swearing-in ceremony I mentioned above; remarks I wish I had heard earlier in my legal career:

New lawyers, you are joining a legal community that, while adversarial at times when defending and advocating for clients, is quite collegial and wants to see you succeed as your success is a win for the profession. Never is that more evident than through the members of the Greensboro Bar Association. . . . It has been a place where I have found mentors and mentees, been given and offered advice, received opportunities to give back to my community and take on leadership roles, and simply connected with like-minded individuals who have become great colleagues and friends.

Gerald L. Walden, Jr.

President, Greensboro Bar Association 2023-2024

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

NOVEMBER CALENDAR NOTES

- November 8 **GBA Board Meeting,
4:00 PM, Self Help Building**
- November 9 **Real Property Section Meeting,
5:30 PM, Tuggle Duggins**
- November 15 **YLS Board Meeting,
12:00 PM, CR Legal Team Office**
- November 16 **Member Lunch,
12:30 PM, Greensboro Country Club
[Register for GBA Lunch Here](#)**
- November 20 **Submission Deadline
for November Newsletter**

[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 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®

NEW MEMBERS

Approved October 11, 2023

Jacob W. Parrott
Schell Bray PLLC
Adrienne Edmonds Poe

Madison L. Boyer
Tuggle Duggins P.A.
Michael J. Wenig

Allison M. Burke
Teague Rotenstreich Stanaland Fox & Holt, PLLC
Joshua C Rotenstreich

Mason P. Butner
Tuggle Duggins P.A.
Michael J. Wenig

Anupama Pal
Elon University School of Law
Alan D. Woodlief, Jr.

Cory A. Rayborn
Tuggle Duggins P.A.
Michael J. Wenig

Claire E. Thompson
Tuggle Duggins P.A.
Michael J. Wenig

ATTENTION RE LAWYERS!

Join the Real Estate Section for a great meal, drinks and discussion on the growing market for build-to-rent products with Eric Friedman, Build-to-Rent Development Manager with Crescent Communities. This meeting will be held at 5:30pm on November 9th at the office of Tuggle Duggins (400 Bellemeade Street, Suite 800). To make a reservation, please call Martha Bailey directly at 336.271.5202 or send an email to mbailey@tuggleduggins.com.

We look forward to seeing you there!

NOTICE

Submissions for consideration for the Greensboro Bar Association Newsletter should be made to Jonathan M. Parisi at 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.

Young Lawyers Section: Connections



Elizabeth Robertson is President of the Greensboro Bar Association's Young Lawyers Section and Personal Injury Litigation Attorney at [CR Legal Team, LLP](#)

An Update from YLS

YLS is dedicated to hosting at least one event each month. In September, we hosted our “kick off” event at Abbey Taphouse and planned our Fall Swearing-In Ceremony. The Swearing-In Ceremony took place on October 27, 2023, at the Old Guilford County Courthouse and we enjoyed the opportunity to welcome newly-licensed attorneys to the profession and to tell them about the GBA!



The YLS Board recently met with Assistant Principal Oneeka Lockhart to discuss the needs of Hunter Elementary School students and to discover ways we can serve this well-deserving school. We look forward to continuing our partnership with them this year!

YLS Happy Hour “Kick Off” Event at Abbey Taphouse

On Thursday, September 28, 2023, YLS hosted a Kick-Off Party at Abbey Taphouse. We welcomed some familiar friends and welcomed some new faces! This was a successful networking and service event. Alongside the networking fun, we raised school supplies for Hunter Elementary School to be delivered in the following weeks.



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Camille Stell
is President and
CEO of Lawyers
Mutual Consulting
& Services. Continue
this conversation
by contacting
Camille at [camille@
lawyersmutualinc.com](mailto:camille@lawyersmutualinc.com)
or 800.662.8843.

ARE YOU READY FOR 2024?

The end of the year is barreling towards us – are you ready? If not, here are a few tips for tidying up the financial side of your law practice.

Financial Management

For many lawyers, financial management is the business area of practicing law that provides the most heartburn. It's completely understandable. But it is to your own detriment that you don't understand the financial fundamentals better. Hire financial advisors to aid you in better understanding your business. Too many lawyers delegate responsibility to employees who have not been properly trained.

Be aware of potential landmines. A major red flag is having one employee who has all financial responsibility: check writing, bookkeeping, trust account management, financial reconciliation, as well serves as the gatekeeper for all communication with your financial partners and bank. Checks and balances are key. Often, there is no ill intent on the part of the employee, just a lack of knowledge. If, as the owner, you do not understand the process, you will have a hard time finding the flaws in your system or properly supervising.

Analyze Your Cash Flow

Brenda Barnes, law firm consultant and compensation expert, has this to say about law firm finance, "A good system of cash flow management can spell the difference between a successful business and a failed one. You need positive future cash flow to meet your debt commitments. Strong cash flow management also provides the ability to invest in growth. Getting to a position of excess cash flow helps your company operate in a strategic, proactive way, and can help keep you from operating on the defensive. Year end is an excellent time to document your cash flow, prepare a cash flow budget, and look for areas of improvement."

Financial Review

Here is a checklist for law firms to strategically maximize profitability in 2024.

- Review realization rates and compare to prior years
- Review client profitability to assist with determining billing rate adjustments
- Review attorney and paralegal billing rates to determine whether an adjustment is necessary. If so, establish a communication protocol with your clients to discuss.
- Set timekeeper budgets including billable hours, collections, and origination goals
- Review your general ledger and correct coding adjustments as necessary
- Review your Profit & Loss report. Where do you stand? If you have a larger than expected profit, are there any major purchases (investments in your firm) you should make now that can be depreciated? Make sure you have the cash. Talk to your CPA tax advisor.
- Verify loan accounts and clean them up if necessary
- Reduce your receivables – follow up with clients to get paid
- Write off bad debt if necessary but work on getting paid first
- Make SEP IRA or 401k contributions and donations to charity to reduce taxable income. Talk to your CPA tax advisor.
- Verify your 1099 information is set up properly in your accounting system. Ensure you have W9's and Tax ID numbers for issuing correct tax forms.
- Begin to think about year-end bonuses. Will you give these this year or in January?
- Review benefits that should be reported on W-2's such as health and life insurance, transportation subsidies, moving expense reimbursements, and education debt or education reimbursement programs
- Create budgets for 2024
- Focus on your balance sheet – verify all your account balances

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THE HON. RALPH A. WALKER AND ATTORNEY DONALD R. VAUGHAN RECEIVE PRESTIGIOUS GBA DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD



GBA President Gerald L. Walden, Jr. and NC Bar Association President, Patti Ramseur, honor Judge Ralph A. Walker with Distinguished Service Award

Service to others is one of the core values of the Greensboro Bar Association. In 1929, the GBA was established to encourage the assembly of its members for the transaction of business that furthers the public good and that maintains honor and dignity of the profession of law.

Although it is no secret that Judge Walker and Attorney Vaughan resemble the true meaning of those words from the GBA Constitution, they were certainly caught by surprise at GBA's October 19th membership meeting when they were introduced and celebrated as the recipients of the GBA Distinguished Service Award. Having dedicated decades of gracious service to their communities, in various capacities, Judge Walker and Attorney Vaughan continue to commit themselves to the Greensboro community, its legal profession, and the GBA.

The Honorable Ralph A. Walker has demonstrated selfless service in many roles over the course of his lifetime. In his nearly sixty years of legal practice, he has served as a Guilford County solicitor, the Guilford County attorney, a partner of a private practice law firm, a Superior Court judge, and a judge for the North Carolina Court of Appeals. Judge Walker is a veteran of the United States Army and North Carolina National Guard. He has been



GBA President Gerald L. Walden, Jr. and Judge A. Robinson (Robby) Hassell, honor Donald R. Vaughan with Distinguished Service Award

a public member of the NC Medical Board, is a past board member of the Greensboro Urban Ministry, was a member of the Greensboro Mental Health Association, and is actively involved in his church. It is apparent that Judge Walker has truly dedicated his life to serving the legal profession and his community.

Attorney Donald R. Vaughan is a Greensboro native and Wake Forest University alumnus. From Eagle Scout to zealous legal advocate, it is without doubt that Attorney Vaughan has been committed to public service since a young age. Early in his career, his quest to serve led him to seek elective office—first being elected to an at-large position on the Greensboro City Council and ultimately serving two terms as Greensboro's Mayor Pro Tempore. His term was followed by his election to the NC Senate for two terms. Attorney Vaughan's private law practice over the last several decades has afforded him opportunities to help others, whether in the halls of traffic court or the cells of our prisons, where he has devoted time in post-conviction clemency matters. Attorney Vaughan is an adjunct professor at Wake Forest and Elon Law Schools. His presence in the community is one that illustrates the true meaning of selfless service, and it is a badge of service worn well.

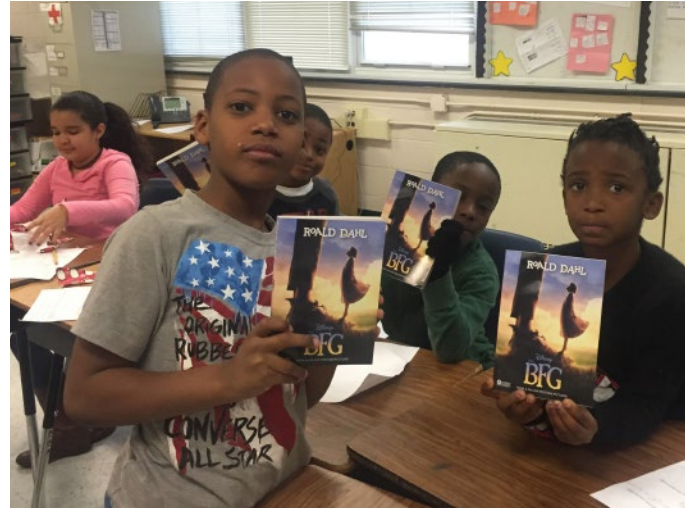
YOUR DONATION IS NEEDED FOR THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL BOOK PROGRAM

The book program at Jones Elementary School is a wonderful Greensboro Bar Association tradition! This year, GBA member donations will be used to allow the children in grades K-5 of the Traditional English program to select a book of their choice (\$8 or less) at the school's Book Fair, to be held the week after Thanksgiving. We will also provide a gift book for all "graduating" 5th graders in the spring, both in the Traditional English and Spanish Immersion programs. GBA volunteers are welcome to help children shop at the Book Fair this fall, and to deliver the 5th grade graduation books to the students next Spring.

[Donate now online](#), or mail your check made payable to the Greensboro Bar Association Foundation, with "Elementary School Project" in the memo line, to:

**Greensboro Bar Association Foundation
P.O. Box 1825
Greensboro, NC 27402**

To volunteer or for more information, please contact Elementary School Project committee co-chairs Ashley Canupp or Erin Reis.



Donations are tax-deductible, with receipts sent to each donor. Thank you in advance for your continuing support – the children and teachers at Jones thank you too!

[**Click to Donate Online Now**](#)

THE UNSEEN BENEFITS OF VOLUNTEERISM CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

Strategic Look Ahead

Continue to examine how the pandemic and current economic market has impacted your law firm.

- How is your area of practice performing? Are your clients able to pay their bills timely? Are your rates supporting your practice?
- How are your employees faring? Are your work from office / work from home protocols meeting the firm's needs? How stable is your remote work plan? Does your post-pandemic work force plan need further adjustment?
- How is your personal mental health holding up? Do you have the support you need to continue to serve your clients? Are you able to support and encourage your team members?

Too often in our busy lives, we don't take time for reflection. Schedule time to reflect on the current state and future of your firm. Ask your employees for input as their front-line communications with clients may reveal stresses or successes that don't see from your point of view.

Conclusion

Use a year-end review to see how your law firm performed under pressure and to make the changes necessary to strengthen your practice. With an objective look back, you can plan for moving forward.

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 or 800.662.8843.

YLS Member Spotlight: Casey Robinson, Board Member



Casey practices Family Law at Garrett, Walker, Aycoth & Olson. She handles domestic matters such as child custody, child support, equitable distribution, alimony, and divorce cases in Guilford County, Randolph County, and Rockingham County here in North Carolina.

Casey's favorite part about her job is being there to help people going through some of the toughest times of their lives. She states,

“Navigating the legal process can be difficult, especially revolving around something as important as one’s family. My goal is to help people navigate the system, advocate for their needs, and work to a resolution that meets their goals.”

Upcoming YLS Events:

In November, YLS is hoping to host a “bowling night” social event. Stay tuned for details!

For more information about YLS events & service opportunities, follow us on [Facebook: Greensboro Bar Association’s Young Lawyers Section.](#)

Connect with YLS:

To provide feedback & suggestions for future events/programming, please email the Young Lawyers Section at info@greensboroyls.org.

The Young Lawyers Section would like to celebrate the personal milestones and professional accomplishments of it’s members. Email YLS at info@greensboroyls.org to share achievements that you would like celebrated on the [YLS Facebook page.](#)

