

LAW MATTERS

April 2025

Volume XXXVII No. 5



**2025 MARTHA CRAIG DAUGHTREY AWARD
RECIPIENT**

JACQUELINE B. DIXON



2025 RISING STAR AWARD RECIPIENT

PRINCESS ROGERS

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: COURTNEY ORR



Words cannot capture the experience of the past year as LAW President. But through all of the emotions that I've been feeling at the end of my term, I keep coming back to two words: Thank you.

Thank you for trusting me to lead this organization over the past year. It has been an incredibly rewarding experience, and I am continuously humbled by the faith you placed in myself and Janna Smith.

We have certainly had a successful year. We've had a full schedule of CLEs. Our Health and Wellness committee hosted three outstanding book club meetings, several which included the books' authors. Our Oral History committee produced an outstanding video and CLE program to honor LAW Founder Judge Martha Craig "Cissy" Daughtrey.

And through it all, LAW stood firm in our founding principles and remained committed to promotion of qualified women within the legal profession. I know that commitment will continue through our new joint membership partnership with the Napier-Looby Bar Association, which is explained in more detail in this newsletter.

I am so proud to be a member of this organization, and I am excited to see what it will do in the years to come. Thank you.

This article represents the opinions of the authors and not necessarily those of the Office of the Tennessee Attorney General and Reporter.

2025-2026 LAW BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Catherine Moore

Legislation and Litigation
Olivia Park, Emily Sanders

Marion Griffin Women's Symposium 2025
Victoria Gentry, Corey Harkey

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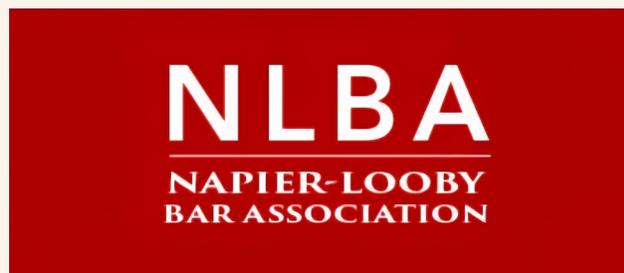
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LAW Matters is a bi-monthly publication of the Lawyers' Association for Women—Marion Griffin Chapter, P. O. Box 150532, Nashville, Tennessee, 37215; 615.428.6657; www.law-nashville.org.



Announcement of LAW/Napier-Looby Bar Association Joint Membership

Authors: Courtney Orr (LAW President) and Simone Marshall Hayes (Napier-Looby Bar Association President)

For years, LAW and Napier-Looby Bar Association (“NLBA”) have operated to support both women and Black members of the middle Tennessee legal community. In the past, our partnership has been limited to individual events such as CLEs and networking opportunities. But today, we are excited to announce a new joint membership option between LAW and NLBA!

Beginning May 1, 2025, individuals may register as a joint member and pay a single \$200 dues fee to simultaneously join both of our organizations. Joint members will enjoy the full privileges of an LAW Member and a NLBA Regular Member as long as their joint membership remains active.* Joint membership must be renewed annually.

For those interested in signing up for a joint membership, please visit either organization’s website and look for the “Joint Membership” option on the “Join Us” (LAW)/“Become a Member” (NLBA) tab.

In addition to the joint membership option, LAW and NLBA have agreed to co-produce at least one CLE per fiscal year. We look forward to seeing the relationship between our organizations continue to flourish as we support our community!

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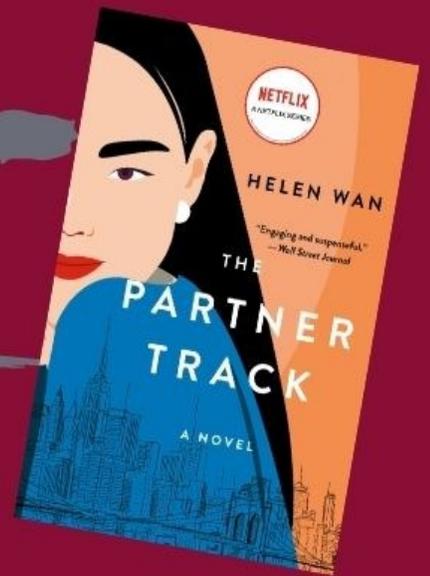
*Joint membership is not available to any individual who would otherwise not have the right to vote or hold office in either organization, as defined by each organization’s bylaws.

LAWYERS' ASSOCIATION FOR WOMEN
PRESENTS THE 2025 MARION GRIFFIN
WOMEN'S SYMPOSIUM SPEAKER SERIES

Raising Our Voices for Change

September 18, 2025
Nashville City Club

Featuring Helen Wan,
bestselling author of
The Partner Track —
now a hit Netflix
original series — and
trailblazing attorney
& storyteller



WOMEN ON THE BENCH



Tuesday
March 18, 2025



Lunch 11:30 a.m.
Program 12:00 p.m.

Cafe at Thistle Farms



Judge Ana Escobar



Judge Lynne Ingram



Judge Alistair Newbern

On March 18th, LAW held its monthly membership meeting with panelists Judge Ana Escobar, Judge Lynne Ingram and Magistrate Judge Alistair Newbern. They each relayed the story of their legal background and how they came to hold judicial office. Judges Escobar and Ingram gave unique insight into the somewhat difficult balance between running for an elected office while remaining non-partisan. Judge Newbern explained the procedure for appointing magistrate judges in the federal court system and the way in which magistrate judges work with litigants and other federal judges. They all explained the importance of having mentors at the beginning of their legal and judicial careers to seek guidance when needed. Judge Newbern discussed the vast knowledge she was able to gain while clerking for Judge Cissy Daughtrey, who was in attendance at the luncheon. Also, all of our panelists discussed the importance of taking care of one's mental health no matter what type of legal career you hold, whether on the bench or in private practice. Judge Ingram explained that her exercise regimen was vital in keeping a healthy balance in her work and personal life. All of the judges encouraged anyone interested in seeking judicial office to not get weighed down by self doubt and to seek advise from others who have succeeded in that career path.





Transportainment April CLE

On April 10th, LAW hosted a CLE on Transportainment followed by a happy hour for attendees and the general membership at the headquarters for Honky Tonk Party Express. Will Cheek, an experienced alcohol and hospitality attorney, presented an hour of entertainment detailing the history and evolution of party vehicles starting with the pedal taverns through all iterations of mobile revelry. The CLE happened around the custom hat bar offered at the venue. (Janna even got a hat...allegedly.) Attendees were very engaged and asked lots of good questions, and several of the attendees were new LAW members. Whether attendees were for or against the transportainment industry, they all agreed that the CLE was highly entertaining and educational. Special thanks to Will Cheek and Grant Rosenblatt, owner of the Honky Tonk Party Express!



ANNUAL MEETING AND AWARDS BANQUET

APRIL 24, 2025

MUSIC CITY CENTER



Past Presidents of LAW



Welcome by President Courtney Orr



President's Awards given to Breakfast Chairs:
Erin Palmer Polly, Liz Sitgreaves and Danielle
Johns (absent)



President's Award given to Victoria Gentry



President's Award given to Margaret Dodson



Essay contest winner Ava Dakash reads her essay



Chicoya Smith Gallman introduces Princess Rogers



Rising Star Award recipient Princess Rogers



Courtney Orr presents the Rising Star Award



Emily Crawford introduces Jackie Dixon



Remarks by Martha Daughtrey Award Winner Jackie Dixon



Jackie Dixon with Judge Cissy Daughtrey



Courtney Orr presents Martha Daughtrey Award to Jackie Dixon



Leighann Ness presents Courtney Orr with President's Gift as Courtney passes the gavel to Leighann as Board President



Leighann Ness gives remarks as new Board President of LAW

2025 Rising Star Award Recipient

Princess Rogers

Princess Rogers is an Assistant District Attorney General in the Juvenile Court Division who previously worked as a Lead Litigation Attorney with the Division of TennCare. She is heavily involved in giving back to the community—she is a past president of the Napier-Looby Bar Association, diversity committee co-chair for the Nashville Bar Association, and part of a mentoring program with Saving Our Daughters of Mt. Zion Baptist Church, as well as her involvement with LAW. Her contributions to the profession and the community shows her capabilities as a strong leader and promise of future leadership.

Her remarks from the LAW banquet are reprinted below.

Remarks from the LAW Banquet

Good evening everyone.

With my faith-based background, I am accustomed to opening a certain way and this evening is no different, giving honor to God, the head of my life.

I am deeply honored and humbled to stand before you tonight as the recipient of the Rising Star Award from the Lawyers Association for Women, Marion Griffin Chapter. To be recognized by this remarkable community of women—trailblazers, leaders, and mentors—means more than I can fully express. I want to thank President Orr and the selection committee, my dear friend Chicoya Smith Gallman, and each of you in this room for your support, encouragement, and belief in me.

My aunt Janet Askew, who I did not ask to be present today because I know she would have uprooted her trip to Vegas with her class to do so, I love you and I thank you for being my person. To my husband who I almost did not invite until Ellen told me her husband would also be here, thank you for being the best Cowboy and husband any princess could ask for. I love you 3000.

To receive an award named for Marion Griffin, one of Tennessee's first licensed female lawyers, is especially meaningful. Marion Griffin, along with Lutie Lytle, didn't just practice law—they broke it open for women who came after them. Their courage and resilience are part of the reason I'm able to do what I do today. They walked through doors that had never been opened to women or to Black women—and tonight, I stand on the very foundation they helped build.

My why is simple, it is to be a servant to others. I have always considered myself a servant leader. I went into law to help those without a voice. First as a defense attorney and for nearly 10 years, a State's attorney in some capacity.

I've always believed that the law is a tool—not just for order, but for equity. For dignity. For voice. I come from a family that didn't always have easy access to those things. I watched people I loved navigate systems they didn't understand, often without representation, without explanation, and too often—without justice.

That stuck with me. It fueled me.

When I entered law school, I wasn't sure where the journey would take me. What I knew was that I wanted to be someone who showed up. For people who are too often unheard or overlooked. That's still my guiding principle. Whether I'm in court, in an organization, or mentoring a student—my purpose is to stand in the gap, and to bring others through it with me.

Like many of you, the path hasn't been without its challenges. The legal profession demands so much of us. Long hours. High stakes. And, for women—especially Black women—there can be an extra layer of navigating rooms where we're the “first,” the “only,” or sometimes, the “unexpected.” Complete transparency, I have been asked why I chose to be so active with LAW with some people believing it is for white women, not all women in the legal field.

(cont. page 10)

But what I've learned—and what I hope to pass along—is that your voice belongs in every room you enter. You don't need to shrink to fit. You don't need to second-guess your place. You've earned your seat. And if there's not a seat, bring your own chair—or better yet, build a longer table.

I've also learned that success in this profession isn't just about what you accomplish—it's about who you lift while you rise. Mentorship has changed my life. I've been fortunate to have women in this very chapter pour into me—offering guidance, feedback, and sometimes just reminding me to breathe. Every card Maria Salas has sent me encourages me. Every call from Judge Kimbrough Hayes, even if it's 7pm Friday while I am having dinner with my family, has left me feeling better. Every stern look from the bench Judge Calloway gives me has sharpened my skill set. You do not see her here tonight because of the Titans draft event even though she expressed that is surely more important, she would not be present. And now, I try to do the same for others coming up behind me and beside me. Sort of how I forced Jerice's hand in joining and now she's a committee chair. That's how we sustain progress—not just with big wins, but with intentional community. I am thankful that Kimberly got me back involved and that Shellie welcomed me with open arms.

I'm incredibly optimistic about the future of this profession—because I see the talent, the passion, and the brilliance of my peers and colleagues. I see young lawyers who are rewriting what justice looks like. Who are not afraid to speak out, to challenge precedent, and to lead with both heart and intellect.

But I also know we have work to do. We need more women in leadership. More equity in compensation and opportunity. More systemic reform. And we need to protect the rule of law, especially in times when it feels fragile. That work takes all of us. And it requires courage—the kind Marion Griffin and Lutie Lytle had. The kind I hope I am exemplifying each day.

I want to thank my family, my mentors, my colleagues—everyone who's been part of my journey. My core four: Chicoya Smith Gallman, Jerice Glanton, and Deaderick Thaxton. This award may have my name on it, but it belongs to the village that's poured into me every step of the way.

To my fellow women in LAW: Let us keep showing up—for ourselves, for each other, and for the generations to come. Let's challenge the norms, expand the narrative, and create a profession where no one has to question whether they belong.

Thank you again for this incredible honor. I promise to keep rising as a kind, servant leader—and to keep reaching back always.

2025 Martha Craig Daughtrey Award Recipient

Jacqueline Dixon

Jacqueline Dixon is an experienced trial lawyer with Lewis Thomason and shareholder in the Nashville office. She handles family law matters, wills and estates, probate litigation, personal injury, and general civil litigation. Throughout her career, she has contributed countless hours to pro bono work, legal aid and nonprofit organizations, bar associations, and mentorship programs, consistently advocating for access to justice and promoting visibility of women in the legal community. Her commitment to giving back has made a lasting impact on the legal community and LAW.

Her remarks from the LAW banquet are reprinted below.

Remarks from LAW Banquet

Thank you, Emily for introducing me. It has been my privilege to mentor Emily Crawford for her Nashville School of Law Rigorous Writing Exercise over the past year. Her paper was selected as the top paper and won the Robert Ballow Excellence in Writing Award. I can assure you that I got more out of the process than Emily did when I read her paper which was titled, “Pocket Pistols, Spanish Stiletos and Arkansas Toothpicks: A post-Bruen history of weapons regulations in Tennessee.” Pocket Pistols, Spanish Stiletos and Arkansas Toothpicks are all weapons of by-gone eras. Emily is going to be successful in whatever career path she chooses to pursue with her law degree.

Congratulations, Ava on your winning essay.

Congratulations, Princess. I enjoyed your remarks.

I am deeply honored and humbled to receive the Martha Craig Daughtrey Award. Thank you to my friends who nominated me. It is truly a highlight of my career. I am sometimes in awe at my good fortune in being a lawyer. I love our profession, and I love being a lawyer. Plenty of people, both men and women, have shown me goodness and grace in all aspects of my life and especially in the practice of law. I have tried to return those favors and “pay it forward.”

I struggled to come up with these remarks. I woke up at 3 a.m. recently and could not go back to sleep. I alternately thought about various home improvement projects, the health concerns of multiple people dear to me, and this speech, and I also said some prayers. My 3 a.m. thoughts on this speech were likely better than what I will actually deliver since I didn’t get out of bed to write them down for fear of waking my husband and our dog.

I will share with you something about Judge Daughtrey’s trail blazing efforts. I also want to make some observations about the contributions lawyers can make in the times we find ourselves, and finally I want to share a few thoughts on personal well-being.

I have been very fortunate to personally know Judge Daughtrey for most of my career. She has been a role model, mentor and friend to me. When she went to Vanderbilt Law School, she had never seen a female lawyer. That may be the only thing I have in common with Judge Daughtrey, growing up in rural East Tennessee, I had never seen a female lawyer when I started law school almost 20 years later. Judge Daughtrey graduated near the top of her Class of 1968, despite having taken time off to give birth and care for a newborn, Carrie, who is here this evening.

None of the law firms in Nashville would interview Judge Daughtrey for an attorney position. She was told that they didn’t have anything against hiring women, but their clients would not want to deal with a woman. She took a job as the first female Assistant United States Attorney for the Middle District of Tennessee and later was the first female prosecutor in the Davidson County District Attorney’s Office.

In 1972, Judge Daughtrey became Vanderbilt’s first female tenure-track law professor. She developed and taught a course on Women and the Law, mentored the then 50 female law students, and helped them start the Women Law Students Association.

In 1975, she was appointed to the Tennessee Court of Criminal Appeals, becoming the first woman to sit on a Tennessee Court of Record. After attending a national meeting of judges, she became interested in how other states

associations. That led to her being one of the founders of LAW with a principle goal to have more women become judges in Tennessee. In 1990, she was elected to serve as the first female associate justice on the Tennessee Supreme Court. In 1993, she was appointed to serve on the United States Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit. It was her first professional position where she was not the first woman.

Upon receiving the 1998 President's Award of Excellence from the National Association of Women Lawyers, Judge Daughtrey noted that it was important, not just to open a door as the first woman through, but to make sure she "held the door open long enough to prevent it from slamming in someone else's face." Thank you Judge Daughtrey for all you have done to open doors for the rest of us. Thank you for being here this evening.

The legal profession, the judicial system, and justice itself are permanently interwoven. For many of us, especially those of us who are addicted to online news media, the times we are living in are troubling for our profession and the judicial system. Many days, the administration of justice itself feels in jeopardy. All of this made me wonder, are there things that we as lawyers are uniquely suited and even professionally obligated to do that can make a difference?

I looked at the oath we took when we were admitted to the Bar:

I, _____, do solemnly swear or affirm that I will support the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of Tennessee. In the practice of my profession, I will conduct myself with honesty, fairness, integrity, and civility to the best of my skill and abilities, so help me God.

I looked at our Tennessee Rules of Professional Conduct, specifically the Preamble and Scope:

In part 7, we are told:

"...A lawyer should further the public's understanding of and confidence in the rule of law and the justice system because legal institutions in a constitutional democracy depend on popular participation and support to maintain their authority."

In part 12, we are reminded:

"To the extent that lawyers meet the obligations of their professional calling, the occasion for government regulation is obviated. Self-regulation also helps maintain the legal profession's independence from government domination. An independent legal profession is an important force in preserving government under law, for abuse of legal authority is more readily challenged by a profession whose members are not dependent on government for the right to practice."

Being an officer of the Court is a high achievement which brings privileges and responsibilities, such as speaking out for our judges, the rule of law, and the judicial system. We must also do what we can to improve public awareness of the law and our legal system. One way we can do this is by speaking to others, be it family, friends, or groups about the importance of a fair and independent judiciary as well as other vital aspects of how our judicial system works. For example, lay people need to know that the remedy for a court ruling one disagrees with is to appeal, not to impeach the judge. It should be deeply offensive to us, as officers of the court, that high ranking government officials are threatening to impeach judges when they make a decision that does not go the government's way.

Bill Bay, the current president of the American Bar Association was recently interviewed on NPR. He was asked how attacks on judges affect those outside the legal profession. He noted that such behavior "undermines the rules and the laws that keep everyone in our country safe and secure. They're basic rules of fairness, rules that are supposed to apply to everyone, including the government. Nobody is above the law. Lawyers know and most Americans that it's important to follow court rulings in the law." He went on to remind us that, "if you disagree with the ruling, you appeal it."

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Last week, during Passover, there was a middle of the night arson attack on the Pennsylvania Governor's mansion. Fortunately, Governor Josh Shapiro's family and pets were safe, although the dining room, where hours before they had celebrated their Passover Seder, was destroyed. After an arrest was made, Governor Shapiro commented, "I believe in the rule of law, and for the rule of law to work, prosecutors and law enforcement officials need to be able to do their jobs and investigate without fear, favor or political pressure. It is not my job to opine on what the motive was or what the charges should be."

Our country was founded on the concept of equal justice. Justice was more important to the drafters of the Constitution than defense— as evidenced by the preamble to the Constitution which states:

We the People, of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare,

Ok, you get the idea--

See "justice" is ahead of "defense," it's even ahead of "domestic tranquility." The founders clearly valued justice. The struggle for justice goes back much further than our Constitution. The phrase "Justice, justice shalt thou pursue" appears in the book of Deuteronomy 16:20, a part of both the Torah and the Bible.

Martin Luther King, Jr., reminded us that "the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice."

Barack Obama, when he gave the Nobel Lecture in December 2009, said, "For all the cruelty and hardship of our world, we are not mere prisoners of fate. Our actions matter, and can bend history in the direction of justice."

I am currently serving as the chair of the Tennessee Bar Foundation. I probably should have said my remarks here tonight are my own and don't reflect the views of the Bar Foundation. The Bar Foundation provides grants from our IOLTA accounts' interest to charitable legal aid organizations providing civil legal assistance to low-income individuals. There is a lot of concern in this area of the non-profit world about what is happening with cuts in government funding. Some funding in the fair housing area has already been lost. Last night, at the Legal Aid Society's Champions of Justice event, DarKenya Waller, the executive director, spoke about the gaps in services that will occur if the current trend of cuts continues. She noted that a recent survey showed that for people at the poverty level, 92% of their needs for legal assistance are currently not met.

I was recently talking with John Murphy, the executive director of the Tennessee Bar Foundation about my remarks here tonight and Martin Luther King's quote about justice. John astutely pointed out that the corollary to King's remark was that there must be someone there to bend the moral arch, and it is lawyers who are that force, in ways such as lending a voice to the voiceless.

We can help by volunteering at a Legal Aid clinic, taking a pro bono case, donating to non-profit providers of legal assistance, and by speaking out to those in positions of power about the importance of continued funding for programs that provide access to justice for those who otherwise have no access.

As we all try to find our way toward doing our part in protecting the judicial system and our democracy, it may be hard to "play nice" while fighting for what is so important. But, as we fight, it is good to be reminded that two components of professionalism are collegiality and civility. As lawyers, we are trained to disagree without being disagreeable and to leave the argument at the courtroom or conference room door.

We are living in a terribly polarized world and many are troubled. I was in a church related meeting a while back and a wise speaker noted that troubled people either talk it out or act it out. We are seeing a lot of acting out in society. As lawyers, we help others talk it out rather than act it out. We do this in part by continuing to model collegiality and civility and by encouraging people to look at all sides of an issue.

Being a part of a profession that is generally civil and respectful to each other has contributed to my good fortune in being very happy in the practice of law, and that has spilled over into my personal life. One of my long-time concerns has been the well-being of our colleagues, especially those who struggle due to mental health and/or substance abuse issues. My work on the TLAP Commission has been very rewarding. TLAP has an excellent staff including two wonderful female counselors who are available to assist us.

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Our relationships are one of the things that matters most. This is true both personally and professionally. Be patient with yourself and others. Never hesitate to share a kind word. Do not hesitate to reach out for help. Life can be rough. While the practice of law can be very rewarding, it can also be very stressful and difficult. We all need to look out for each other. We all need to reach out and, depending on our circumstances on any given day, either be the one offering to help or the one open to receiving help. Don't hesitate to ask how your colleagues are doing and to let them know that you care and are there for them. Don't hesitate to talk to a colleague and ask for assistance if you are struggling in any way. We all struggle from time to time.

One of my favorite quotes is from Maya Angelou. She said, "I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."

Mentoring has been important to me. Look for role models and mentors and also look to be a role model and mentor. If you have been at this practice of law for a while, consider reaching out to a new lawyer. It can be as simple as making yourself available over a cup of coffee to answer the same kinds of questions you had as a new lawyer.

Before his untimely passing, former TBA president Larry Wilks gave me a book on leadership. In it, there is a quote from Justice Thurgood Marshall— "None of us have gotten where we are solely by pulling ourselves up from our own bootstraps, we got here because somebody bent down and helped us." Let's be that help for each other and to the next generation of lawyers.

There have been times when I realized that changes could make a difference in my personal and professional happiness. As lawyers, spouses, parents, family members, and friends, we are accustomed to putting the needs of others before our own. Certainly, there are times when we have no choice but to make sacrifices to keep clients and family happy. However, we need to remind ourselves from time to time that if we don't include ourselves in the category of most important people in our lives and thus put ourselves first from time to time, we will end up burned out, ineffective, unhappy and unable to be of help to anyone. There is no doubt that we live in a tough world, and we need to be physically and mentally healthy to survive and be happy as lawyers. To do that, we must take good care of ourselves.

There are simple things that can help us be happy and cultivate joy in everyday life, I want to share a few of my favorites.

Practice gratitude. As I mentioned earlier, I sometimes find myself awake in the middle of the night. When I do, I try to go over a mental list of things that happened that day for which I am grateful. Those pleasant thoughts usually take my mind off whatever calamity I woke up thinking about and help me fall back to sleep.

Try to reduce "mental clutter" which has been defined as when all the stuff you are trying to remember gets mixed up with all the stuff you are trying to forget. A way to do this is to be a disciplined list maker.

Replenish yourself. Spend some time in silence. Find time to be alone, take a bubble bath, mediate or engage in spiritual or religious activities on a regular basis.

Breathe deeply. This helps me to relax anytime, and when in a difficult conversation, it gives me time to formulate a response and sometimes even keeps me from saying something I will regret.

Buy a pair of fuzzy slippers and keep them at the office to put on at the end of (or during) a long, hard day. It is amazing how happy one can feel when your feet are comfortable.

Be present. Presence can involve being able to do one thing at a time or being able to sit with someone without wishing you were somewhere else and without repeatedly checking your phone. Being present has apparently been an issue since the 6th or 5th century BCE, when the Buddha said, "As you walk and eat and travel, be where you are. Otherwise, you will miss most of your life." He also said, "The secret of health for both mind and body is not to mourn for the past, not to worry about the future, nor to anticipate troubles, but to live the present moment wisely and earnestly."

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Don't be too hard on yourself. One of my favorite self-improvement books is *The Four Agreements: A Practical Guide to Personal Freedom* by Don Miguel Ruiz. One of the agreements the author tells us to make with ourselves is "to always do your best." He goes on to say that our best may not always be the same on any given day.

It is okay to sometimes turn a deaf ear. I greatly admired Ruth Bader Ginsburg, and enjoyed seeing the documentary *RBG* with my girls. Justice Ginsburg was another woman who blazed many trails. One of my favorite quotes from her was about her professional and personal life. "Every now and then it helps to be a little deaf. This advice has stood me in good stead. Not simply in dealing with my marriage, but in dealing with my colleagues."

Have a thick skin. My mom always encouraged her six children not to let unkind things others said get to us. She loved to laugh and taught us to be friendly and nice to everyone and treat everyone with respect. She reminded us to take the high road, maintain a sense of humor and let things roll off our backs.

We are at different stages and seasons of our lives. I sometimes comment that it was great fun going through those seasons when my friends and I were completing our educations, getting started in our careers, finding life partners, buying our first homes, and for many, having children. Then many of us went through the season of seeing our kids off to college and/or launching into the real world. Now, I have many friends who are at the enjoyable stages of retirement and having grandchildren. Some of us are also at the more difficult stage where we too often hear bad health news from family members and friends.

I arrived late to the child rearing game when my nieces who were 10 and 15 years old came to live with me and my husband somewhat unexpectedly. I came to enjoy attending all the practices, games, competitions, and concerts that their arrival brought to our lives. I must admit that, after decades of watching colleagues leave the office early for various children's activities, it was fun to walk out on a beautiful sunshiny day as I said, "Carmen has a soccer game today." It was a whole new world that came with lots of different opportunities and new friends. Those eight years of having at least one child in the house went by so fast. I miss those days. Embrace the season you are in.

In closing, this room is full of people who do all the right things. You all are wonderful. You work hard to improve the lives of your clients and make things better in your communities. You volunteer to help others. You lead our profession. We, as a profession, are unique in that we work for free or almost free on a regular basis by taking pro bono cases and accepting court appointed cases. You deserve to have a light shined on you for all the things you do. Remember to take good care of yourselves. Thanks for honoring me tonight, my friends.

Youth For Our Tomorrow

In an evolving world, where crises unfolds within homes, schools, neighborhoods, and communities, the determination of young people is shown as a sign of hope for all of us. As youth are constantly faced with challenges that seem impossible to overcome, young individuals maintain a unique talent to direct change, have resilience, and create hope within their spaces of influence. The question arises: what role will young people play in making change, keeping hope alive, and why is this important?

As the next generation, young people are often the start of social, political, and environmental movements that are reshaping our world and its future. Whether it's fighting for or against legislation, advocating for others struggling with social injustice, or promoting mental health awareness, youth are not careless witnesses to the state of the world; in fact, they are some of the most active participants. Youth naturally have a type of creativity and innovative thinking that constantly challenge normalcy. Youths' fresh perspectives are vital in identifying and addressing issues, and their collective voice holds the power to direct change in their communities.

Let's explore the topic of legislation and how youth can impact decisions made about them. Despite the fact that youth usually do not have their voice heard within legislative policies, many are now being more proactive in participating in the steps to ensure that their opinions are heard in policies and legislation affecting them. An example of this is Tennessee's House Bill 793 or Senate Bill 836, which addresses the issue of educating undocumented students in K-12 public schools. Despite many opposing this bill, this bill passed the education subcommittee, prompting youth to quickly go to social media, organize protests, and reach out to education committee members to advocate against the implementation of this bill.

Through technology and social media, young people are effectively uniting and amplifying their voices, driving awareness on crucial issues, and showcasing their determination to be heard and create positive change. The Black Lives Matter movement that started with the tragic death of George Floyd, saw different young activists going online and offline to initiate policing and justice reforms. This shift to digital activism across generations is a reflection of a broader awareness that change could actually be initiated through collective strength as well as global outreach.

Young people's role is not limited to activism; it promotes the urge to keep hope alive in spite of challenges. In the modern world, where despair and negativity tend to take over most people's lives, young people are often equipped with the resilience and optimism needed to keep going. They are able to establish platforms where they can engage in conversation, exchange ideas, and foster hope. Programs like peer mentorship initiatives in schools and community centers enable young people to lift up one another, reminding them that they are not alone. These bonds create a sense of familiarity and allow youth to be vulnerable, leading to self-discovery and personal growth in the long run. To have hope during times of adversity is not only crucial to the health of individuals, but also to the morals of society.

When young people are optimistic, they are more likely to invest more in their community, seek solutions, and engage in civic responsibilities. This kind of involvement encourages innovation and creates a more productive society. Hopelessness creates impassivity, which suppresses progress and worsens existing issues. Thus, by embodying hope, young people contribute to a cycle of positivity that pushes change forward, emphasizing the importance of their role in shaping a better tomorrow. Additionally, the importance of engaging young minds in discussions about change should not be underestimated. They introduce new insights from their experience that are not typically valued by decision-makers who may not even be aware of the issues that youth are going through. Being open about the future, the youth can innovate new ideas that transcend the limits set by conventional or outdated means. Education systems, political frameworks, and community programs must evolve to incorporate the ideas and energy of youth which pave pathways for equitable and sustainable progress.

In conclusion, young people are composed to play a critical role in driving change and keeping hope alive in a world filled with challenges. Their resilience, creativity, and willingness to act are crucial assets in the pursuit of a brighter future. By uniting their voices, they have potential to share their stories, bring hope, change communities, and awaken world movements. As we go forward, it is important that society acknowledges and empowers the efforts of young people, because in their hands lies the hope for a better and more equitable future for everyone. The risk is high, but the potential of young people is our guarantee for a promising future and is our greatest hope to combat the crisis in which we are immersed in today. The youth is our tomorrow.

News from the Courthouse: Updated Mother's Room

The downtown historic courthouse is proud to announce the recent update of its dedicated room for nursing mothers, providing a private, clean, and comfortable space. The upgraded room includes a locking door, chairs, a fridge, and cleaning supplies, ensuring that nursing parents have the privacy and amenities they need while visiting or working in the courthouse. The room is located on the 7th floor of the Historic Courthouse in Suite 702.





New Member Spotlight:

Allison Wilson

NEW MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Where are you from? Tell us about your path to practicing law.

I was born and raised in East TN in the tri cities area. I am from a very small, rural town. Growing up I witnessed family members and other members of the community's direct involvement with the criminal legal system. Through my observations, I could see just how important it was for indigent people to have adequate, compassionate legal representation. I was inspired to go to law school to become an advocate for the underserved in our community. I came to Nashville to attend the Nashville School of Law after undergrad in 2018 and have been here ever since!

What do you do professionally, and what is your favorite part about your job?

I currently work as an attorney at the Choosing Justice Initiative, a nonprofit in Davidson County, primarily doing indigent criminal defense work. My favorite part about working at CJI is interacting with clients. CJI takes a holistic, client-centered approach to legal representation. I have the opportunity to really get to know my clients and compassionately assist them through some of the most difficult times in their lives. I really enjoy the work we do and the way we are able to do it.

What's your favorite thing to do in Nashville?

My favorite thing to do in Nashville is to check out new restaurants with my fiancé and hang out at home with my sphynx cats, Poe and Raven!



Why (and how) did you first get involved in LAW?

I first got involved in LAW in 2024. I was introduced to the organization through my previous employer, Chancellor Martin. She always emphasized the importance of women supporting each other in the legal profession and encouraged me to get involved in LAW for that reason.

What woman inspires you and why?

My grandmother inspires me the most. She's the definition of resilience and grace. She has always worked so hard, raising her family all on her own and supporting me in everything I do. She has overcome every obstacle placed in her path and she inspires me every day!

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