

# LAW MATTERS

June 2023

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## LAW Founders and Past Presidents April 2023

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Emily Warth



For my first President's message, I want to start by acknowledging Shellie Handelsman and Melanie Gober Grand and the amazing job they and the whole board did last year. It was LAW's first year "back" after the pandemic, and it feels like LAW is stronger than ever. I can only hope to continue the momentum for this amazing organization.

As I have been preparing to take over as LAW president, I keep zeroing in on the year 1981. Not just because that was the year I was born, but because in that year, 42 years ago, LAW was founded by an amazing group of women lawyers. Those women set the foundation for this wonderful organization to do work to advocate for women in the profession; to mentor one another; to network and fellowship with one another; and to contribute to the legal community and the broader Nashville community in significant ways.

While much has changed for LAW and women in the legal profession over the last 42 years, I think we can all agree that there is still a strong need for this organization. We have more women partners, more women judges, and more women general counsels than we did 42 years ago, but we have not come close to reaching that 50% mark. There is a need to continue to press for a more equitable profession; to continue to mentor and encourage one another; and to continue to be involved in our community.

So, for this next year, with the help of everyone reading this, I promise to be a steward for LAW and its underlying purpose, to continue to build on its very strong foundation, and to help it continue to evolve into an organization for women lawyers and what they need today and in the future. We will continue to meet for happy hours, for our always stellar CLE's, to join in mentorship circles, and to volunteer with charitable organizations in the community where we can truly have an impact. We also will continue to find programs and activities that meet our members' needs in this post-pandemic world, and will spend some time assessing how we can stay a strong and vibrant organization, long after I have passed this gavel on. I hope everyone finds a chance this year to try something new that LAW has to offer or brings a friend who is not a current member to a program to learn more about us. There is so much to do, and so much to look forward to this year. I hope you'll join us, and I can't wait to get started.

## KEEP COOL AND JOIN LAW FOR TWO VIRTUAL CLES

**Tuesday, July 18, 2023**, 11:30 AM—12:00 PM "Legal Developments for Women in the Workplace"

**Tuesday, August 15, 2023**, 11:30 AM—12:30 PM "*Counterman v. Colorado*: The Impact of SCOTUS's Decision on Anti-Stalking Laws and The First Amendment"

Click [Here](#) to go view LAW's Upcoming Events.

## Recap of Judge Marietta Shipley's Address as the 2023 Recipient of the Martha Craig Daughtrey Award By Morgan Bernard

Judge Marietta Shipley's 47-year legal career is unparalleled, to say the least. She is a pioneer in the legal community for women and is this year's recipient of the Martha Craig Daughtrey award for her commitment and dedication to justice and our organization. Judge Shipley has been active in LAW since its inception, and throughout her career, she has supported and encouraged women in the legal profession.



Notably, she opened the first women's law firm in Nashville in 1980 with Margaret Behm, and in 1981, she was a co-founder of LAW, which was born in the Shipley & Behm law office. In 1990, she was elected to the Second Circuit Court of Davidson County, and was the first woman in the state to win against an incumbent for a state trial court judgeship, with 71% of the vote. After hearing her address to the membership, it's clear why she garners so much support and respect—her tenacity, dedication, and wit is inspiring and had members captivated during her speech.

She recognized the importance of female friendship in the legal community and women's accomplishments in the field. Judge Shipley is a reminder that female lawyers have the ability to make a difference in the legal system and to create positive change. In fact, she has been incredibly influential in promoting the use of mediation by serving in various leadership roles and helping to adopt Rule 31 in 1996. She has also been heavily involved in passing legislation for divorcing parents, making the Parenting Plan mandatory for divorces in the state.

Judge Shipley is a true leader both in and out of the legal field. She has been instrumental in advancing the mission of promoting women in the law by providing guidance and support to countless young lawyers and pushing for greater recognition of women in the judiciary and other legal roles. Her commitment to advancing the cause of women in the law has been an inspiration to many and has helped shape the legal landscape for generations to come.

Click [Here](#) to read Judge Shipley's remarks in their entirety.



## Remarks of Shundra Crumpton Manning Recipient of the 2023 Rising Star Award



I would like to thank LAW for selecting me as this year's recipient of the Rising Star Award. LAW was the first legal organization that I joined and I have enjoyed every minute of being a part of this organization.

I would also like to thank my amazing husband who is here tonight. He has been there for me throughout my legal journey. He was there when I was applying for Vanderbilt Law School, there when I received my acceptance letter and even trailed me to the bar exam location just in case my 2001 Honda broke down.

I would next like to thank my parents who could not make it today but who have always supported me and encouraged me in all of my endeavors. While growing up, my mom would always tell me to put forth my best effort in whatever I do, even if it's just sweeping floors, and my dad would always tell me to use my head for more than a hat rack.

I would also like to thank my colleagues who inspire me to work toward being a better lawyer every day.

And last but certainly not least, I am a religious person, so I would like to thank the good Lord for guiding my steps thus far.

Receiving the "Rising Star" award has led me to reflect on how far I have come already. I remember back when I was in high school, growing up in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, my parents bought me a car, a little Neon, that I had to keep a bucket in because when it would rain outside it would leak into the car. As a condition of me receiving this car, I would have to pay the car insurance. I began working at a law firm that was across the street from my high school. So, every day after school, I would go to law firm and clean up. It was not the most glamorous job, but it put me in an environment to where I could interact with lawyers on a daily basis.

I have come from cleaning at a law firm, to now working as an attorney at one of the top 100 law firms in the country. I have experienced that when you begin working, you get into your daily routine and you get so bogged down with how long your to-do list is that you do not stop to reflect and to appreciate where you are. I am currently living the life that I once dreamed of, and I am excited to see where I end up next.



## DEI Essay Scholarship First Place Winner

### Lin Zheng, University School of Nashville (Rising Sophomore)



In 2001, my mom and dad immigrated to the United States from China with my older sister. They left their family and possessions to try to better their lives and the life of my sister. From there, they worked to get their citizenship and their place in society when starting from virtually nothing. I still remember listening to my mom studying for her English and civics test to get her citizenship and how she assimilated the American culture and environment. 22 years later, she made it possible for me and my sister to live our lives in the United States and taught us to have a voice and speak out for what we believe in. When my sister turned 18, the first thing she did was vote in the 2018 midterm elections and then every election after that.

Voting is a way to fight for the things that are most important in your life because it is a way you can directly interact with your government and make the changes that are needed. It is one of the most fundamental parts of democracy and is how one advocates for themselves. It is simply our civic responsibility. Though this is a common phrase, it truly is a key element in our lives and is especially a huge one in my family's lives. Away from the harsh reality from the world we live in, no matter the outcome, every voter is considered equal and every vote cast has

the same amount of significance. Even from the times my family had very little, they could always depend on the fact that if there were changes that should be made, they could be made.

Just a little more than a hundred years ago, this wouldn't be the case for my mother and sister. The 19th Amendment was passed on June 4, 1919 and clearly states that "the right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex." Before this, women had next to no power or say in the government and all laws and decisions were made by men. After rallying for almost 80 years and fighting during the women's suffrage movement, they found ways to use their voice. Through coming together and lobbying, organizing marches and speeches, they fought for their deserved right to vote. Today, despite age, gender, economic status, and many other factors, every American citizen has the ability to nominate who they think will represent them the best and vote for what they believe in. No one's vote is less than someone else's and regardless of what direction and point of view you are voting for, you are justified to that opinion just like everyone else.

On June 24, 2022, *Roe v. Wade* was overturned after being upheld for decades since 1973. This decision sent shockwaves throughout the country. What was thought to be a fundamental right for women was revoked and masses of people lost hope in our country's democracy and our government. Although rights to abortions were eliminated, that didn't mean people would just accept it. Thousands of people came together all over the country while demonstrations arose. Protesters took to the streets and marched while some assembled outside of the Supreme Court, fighting for a change. Even if you cannot directly change the law right now, you have the power to vote for those who can and those who can help make the changes needed to improve. That is what my mother has always believed. There is always hope because of how strong your voice can be and the power it holds.

Despite all of the constant hardships and challenges we face, we can always depend on the basic elements of our democracy and the fact that our voice is being heard through each election process. As a United States citizen, you have the right to believe in what you wish and can come together and find others

that feel the same way. We live in a vastly different, multicultural society where everyone can have varying backgrounds and identifiers and believe in many different things. In 2009 against all odds, we had our first African American president. For the first time in our history, and even more recently, we had a female vice president of the United States. These changes were the result of engaging a group of people ready to make a difference. From the little things like voting to add a sidewalk to your neighborhood, to voting for who you want as your president, you have the ability to have your input into the decisions that matter to you no matter how big. There are still a multitude of things wrong with our country as a whole and from the little to the big things, the best way to make those changes is by using your power and voting.



Annual Meeting  
and  
Awards Banquet



Thursday, April 13, 2023

Meeting Room 101  
The Music City Center  
Nashville, Tennessee





# Lessons Learned : Advice from Experienced Lawyers

Chancellor Anne C. Martin (Interviewed by Morgan Bernard)



Chancellor Anne C. Martin knew she wanted to be a lawyer since grade school because she recognized then the power that came with the profession to help others and make a positive impact. She has been on the bench since 2018 and provides insight and advice from her decades of experience as a lawyer and judge.

***What are some common mistakes or pitfalls you have observed in early-career lawyers, and how can they be avoided?***

There are so many, but some of the major ones that come to mind include not being considerate or professional with other lawyers when it comes to scheduling, failing to balance respect for experienced lawyers but also not letting them push you around, not being frank with the Court because you think you have to “win” every issue, not owning your mistakes and promptly fixing them, and telling clients what they want to

hear rather than what they need to hear because they are being pushy or you want their business. Believe me, that is not business you want if you have to make promises that you are unable to deliver on.

***In your role as a judge, do you have any advice for what lawyers should or shouldn't do?***

It is important to ensure that your pleadings are thorough, but also that they get to the point—lawyers forget that they are called “briefs.” At summary judgment, in particular, it is important that the record contain everything you are asking the judge to consider to grant or deny the subject relief. And, when including deposition transcripts, exercise judiciousness in providing only the material necessary for the Court to effectively follow the flow of the transcript. During oral argument, focus on your strong points but make concessions where needed (unless it sinks your argument—then you will have to think about how to acknowledge weaknesses but demonstrate that they are irrelevant to the overall issues).

***What were some of the most significant challenges you faced in your career, and how did you overcome them?***

The practice of law is a marathon not a sprint. I found that periodically I would be discontented, and it would happen about every 4.5 years. I do experience that less as a judge because it is a different pace and still feels new. It could have been a particular case, client, opposing counsel, firm politics, or some combination thereof. During those difficult times, it is easy to feel that practicing law is not for me or that there is something wrong with how I am doing it. However, I believe that cycle of unhappiness can happen in any career, and that it really was situational. Some cases just go bad. Some clients are just impossible. Some opposing counsel make practicing law difficult on purpose and that isn't necessarily going to change. These conditions will pass, and life will get better. I found that to be true with myself and that my love of practicing law endured—I just needed to let myself get through the bad times.

***What strategies did you use to advance your career and secure leadership roles within your firm?***

Working hard and producing quality work is important when you are part of a firm, but equally important is being a team player. This means speaking well of the firm and your partners to others, taking on cases you don't necessarily want to handle if it is for the greater good, providing help and advice to others even when you can't charge for your time (this one goes both ways – if you do this to others you need to do it very limitedly because otherwise you are not being a good team player or partner), and spending time on firm business that does not pay but improves the organization. All of these will and should pay dividends in terms of mutual respect from your colleagues and opportunities for leadership.

***Can you provide advice on developing expertise in a specific practice area or industry?***

This is difficult because there are so many great lawyers in Nashville, and it is hard to identify something totally new or novel as an area of expertise. What I will say is you can develop subareas. For instance, there are a lot of excellent construction lawyers but a limited number who do residential work for homeowners. There are a lot of plaintiff's employment lawyers but not a lot who do executive advising for those with complex compensation and contractual obligations (that was, essentially, my "subspecialty"). However, being that person everyone thinks of in particular circumstances is not easy to accomplish. You should think about what you really enjoy doing, or a particular case you really enjoyed and what was unique about it. Let others in your general specialty know of your interest in taking those types of cases, and the referrals will come.

***How did you navigate challenging situations with difficult clients or opposing counsel, and what lessons did you learn from those experiences?***

The best way to navigate these circumstances is to be clear, prompt, and put them in writing. Clients do not always absorb difficult messages and have unrealistic expectations about outcomes. They need to be clearly told the range of possible outcomes, including the risk, cost, and time associated with same, which needs to be reiterated as the case progresses. When there is bad news to be delivered, you should deliver that message in person or on the phone, with an appreciation of the client's feelings about the situation, followed by a writing. Most importantly, clients need to know that you care, that you will fight for them, and you will be honest with them. Just as you need to communicate with your clients, you need to communicate with your adversaries. Be reasonable about scheduling, providing extensions, and be courteous to them and their staff. In addition, put everything in writing and in a manner that could be attached to a pleading. You will likely have disputes about scheduling, scope of discovery, etc. and you want to be able to demonstrate to the Court that you have been respectful, clear, and consistent.

***What's the biggest piece of advice for young lawyers entering the profession as well as for experienced lawyers?***

Treat all opposing counsel, attorneys you meet through bar activities, and judges in all settings, with respect and professionalism. Nashville is a "big small town" and it is important to develop a good reputation. Cases can get heated and adversarial, which is fine. That is the job. But never cross that line and try really, really hard not to take it personally. After a case is over, create an opportunity for a positive interaction with former opposing counsel. They were simply doing their job just like you were doing yours, and at the end of the day, that is the only way the system works. As Judge Thomas Aquinas Hig-

gins always said, “lawyers used to share a whiskey on the courthouse steps after a case was over.” There needs to be more of that going on in the Nashville Bar today.

***How did you establish a strong professional network, and what strategies do you suggest for networking and making meaningful connections?***

I found bar association involvement, including YLD, NBA, TBA, LAW, ABA and national women’s bar associations, a great way to make professional connections that were lasting, enjoyable and resulted in business. But I also think it is important to do things in the community that are not focused on lawyers. I joined the Nashville Area Junior Chamber of Commerce as a young lawyer and spent most of my time in that organization with non-lawyers. I poured beer at events. I parked cars. I sold tickets. I did a little bit of everything. Getting away from lawyers helped my perspective, and it also helped me build relationships with people who are now leaders in the business community. I was their lawyer friend and they thought of me later when they needed a lawyer. Those experiences were invaluable.

***How has being an LAW member been useful to you career-wise?***

LAW has meant everything to me—whether I was struggling with the balance required as a new mother, maturing in my practice and struggling with the new responsibilities that brings, or struggling in my judicial campaign. These women have been my mentors, my friends and my lifeline. I cannot measure the value of my LAW membership and the relationships I have developed in the organization to my career advancement, both in private practice and in politics. The opportunity to network with women lawyers, and to meet experienced “baronesses of the bar” when I was a young lawyer, is priceless. As a baby lawyer, Margaret Behm encouraged me to join LAW and to get involved with substantive roles. Not only did the women judges and experienced lawyers I met get to know my name, but I learned from being around them. As my career progressed, they took an interest in me and mentored and sponsored me.

**LAW Foundation**

**Become a Legacy Circle Donor**

For the rest of 2023, we are holding a “Creating a Legacy Campaign.” Any donation of \$100 or more will be a Legacy Circle Donor.

Please make checks payable to the LAW Foundation and mail to P. O. Box 210436, Nashville, TN 37221 or use the QR code and pay with PayPal.



The Newsletter Editor for this issue is Morgan Bernard. Morgan is a Staff Attorney for the Davidson County Chancery Court, Part II. Morgan started her legal career as a Law Clerk to the Honorable Frank G. Clement, Jr.

She was an Associate at Miller, Scamardi & Carrabba P.C. in Houston before returning to Nashville to work in-house at HCA. Morgan received her law degree from The University of Memphis—Cecil C. Humphreys School of Law in 2013.

## COMMITTEE EVENTS

### Meet the Board Happy Hour

On Thursday May 18th, the Networking Committee organized our annual happy hour event for members to meet the new board. Located in Germantown, Sonny's Patio Pub provided the perfect casual atmosphere for members to network and socialize while enjoying a cocktail after work. The evening was a great opportunity for networking, making new connections, and strengthening existing relationships within the legal community.

## KUDOS



Marnie Huff received the Nashville Public Library's 2023 Adult Educator of the Year Award at its annual Adult Education Summit. After retiring from her law and mediation practice in 2021 she has volunteered at her church's ESL program and works as a teacher of English as a Second Language for the Nashville Adult Literacy Council.



Judge Lynda Jones was recently chosen to the 2023-24 Leadership Nashville class.

## Practicing Parents News

Congratulations to Mariam Stockton, her husband Eric, and big brother Maxwell, on the birth of Jude Elliot on June 23, 2023. Although a little early, he weighed in at 8 lbs. 9 oz.!

## 2022-2023 LAW BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Laura Baker, Liz Sitgreaves

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Jan Margaret Craig, Victoria Gentry

Programs  
Jenny Charles, Brooke Coplon,  
Alex Fisher, Tony Orlandi

### Executive Director

Melanie Gober Grand

## Thank you to our Sustaining Members who support the programs,

### Mission and purposes of LAW above and beyond the Sliding Income Scale categories.

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