

Although the Vernal Equinox officially signals the beginning of spring on March 20<sup>th</sup> (this year), our thoughts turn to spring as soon as the calendar says, “March.” In many ways spring is the season of hope, in large part because it is the season of renewal. After months of cold and dark, we look forward to change: more light; slightly warmer temperatures; and signs of color as buds start showing, birds get more active and we all breathe a sigh of relief. Although our calendar marks January 1<sup>st</sup> as the beginning of the new year, historically most calendars were lunar based, and spring was often seen as the start of the new year. The ancient Romans marked the beginning of the new year in the middle of March, also known as the “Ides of March.” Caesar was famously warned to beware the Ides of March because his death was prophesied to happen at that time. But, for the rest of us, we welcome the Ides of March as the time for growth, positive change, new energy and the beginning of the Spring Season!

But before I jump too boldly into March and April, I want to take a moment to look briefly behind us. On January 19<sup>th</sup>, the New Lawyers Section of the WCBA led us in celebrating our newest members at a Gala Event. The evening was a chance for us to welcome and toast these new members in a lively, classy setting. Supreme Court Justice Bridget McCormack reminded us of the importance of being an attorney and led us all in a renewal of our oaths. Along the way we had great live jazz to start the evening, a wonderful sit-down dinner, socializing and dancing into the night. Thanks to all who made it and to those who made it possible, especially the New Lawyers Co-Chairs, Alex Hermanowski and Jinan Hamood.

Along with great offerings from our various sections, February brought us two great events focused on mental health: one aimed at lawyers and one aimed at our clients. On February 16<sup>th</sup>, we hosted the second in our series of workshops on wellness. The Director of University of Michigan’s Wolverine Wellness at University Health Services, Mary Jo Desprez, presented a lively discussion on “Developing Resilience Techniques for the Working Lawyer.” For those of you who missed this wonderful and interactive workshop, check our website for Mary Jo’s slide presentation. It has plenty of great resources for follow-up. Also, our final workshop in the series is coming in May. Check the WCBA calendar later for information on it. On February 27<sup>th</sup>, the Criminal Law Section and the Estate Planning, Probate & Trust Law Section teamed up to present a seminar on Forensic Mental Health Training. This afternoon session provided a great overview of not only background and case law surrounding key forensic mental health issues, but some great practical information on how to incorporate this information into different practice areas.

On March 1<sup>st</sup> the WCBA had our Third Annual Trivia Challenge FUNdraiser and Silent Auction where we convened again at the iconic Zal Gaz Grotto Club for an evening of fun, socializing and team trivia challenge. This is the third year in a row that we have sold out the new iteration of our annual fundraiser event. Having been to all of them, I can say that a good time is always had, and our members really like a chance to get together in a little friendly competition. Thanks to everyone who worked behind the scenes to make it happen again, and thanks to those of you who came out for a fun night!

As we turn our gaze forward, in March and April the WCBA continues with events and programming to enrich the work, and hopefully, the lives of its members. For those of you whose practices deal with medical marijuana in some way (and as the legal issues surrounding the partial legalization of marijuana continue to be one of the fastest areas of growth in our profession), make plans to attend the upcoming lunch seminar, “Medical Marijuana and Impaired Driving: What You Need to Know.” This two-hour seminar on March 9<sup>th</sup>, noon to 2 p.m., is being presented jointly by the Marijuana Law and Criminal Law Sections. On March 23<sup>rd</sup>, the WCBA will host another lunch seminar that explores the impact of implicit bias on the legal profession and the court system. This informative and interactive session will take place in the Jury Assembly Room of the Fifteenth District Court and will convene from noon to 1:15 p.m.

Mark April 12<sup>th</sup> on your calendars for another one of our main events: The Annual Award Dinner and Board Election. We will be gathering again this year at the Ann Arbor City Club for a fun evening of official business. First, we will formally vote in next year’s Board of Directors and have a ceremonial passing of the gavel to next year’s President, Elizabeth Jolliffe. We will also present this year’s award, the Patriot Award, to a fellow attorney whose work has promoted a better understanding of the Constitution and fosters a greater understanding of the law and its systems. I look forward to seeing many of you for an excellent evening that includes dinner and a toast to the ongoing tradition of solid leadership at the WCBA.

Finally, in the spirit of simply getting together around some non-legal activities, I invite you to join me for a few things in the future. Our President’s Speakeasy has continued and been a lot of fun. In January we met on the west side of Ann Arbor at HOMES, a relatively new neighborhood microbrewpub. February found us in Saline at the Salt Springs Brewery in a repurposed church building! And in late March, look for information on when and where to meet, but it will be further west. You do not have to drink beer to come and join some great camaraderie and conversation with your fellow bar members. As the weather starts to get a little more user-friendly, look for some notices on some other fun, outdoor activities as well. Unless your name is Julius Caesar, enjoy the Ides of March!