

Greetings and Salutations! (Since we finally made it into spring, I feel confident appropriating an opening from E.B. White's irrepressible Charlotte.) What a difference ten degrees higher and a little sunshine make to the psyche. Spring has sprung! And if you missed the daffodils, the tulips, and the various tree blossoms, you can still set aside some time to make it to the Peony Garden in Nichols Arboretum. <https://mbgna.umich.edu/matthaei-botanical-gardens/whats-in-bloom-matthaei-nichols/>

Meanwhile, the WCBA has been busy and will remain busy until at least the onset of the summer. The President's Speakeasy continues to gain momentum. In March, we gathered in downtown Ann Arbor at the ABC Brewpub on Washington St. for great local beverages and some old fashioned table shuffleboard (a.k.a. shufflepuck and quoits). The ABC pub has one of the few old tables left in Washtenaw County. In April, we ventured out west to the wonderful Village of Dexter and met downtown at The Beer Grotto. It was a nice gathering of members who came and went as we took over the front area on a sunny afternoon. The Speakeasy is a great, low-key way to spend some time, talk to people you haven't seen in a while or meet new folks. Thanks to everyone who made it. If you missed us, don't worry, you can still look forward to one in May and one in June to round out the year.

On March 23<sup>rd</sup>, friends, family, public officials and colleagues gathered at the Washtenaw County Trial Court to pay tribute to our former Washtenaw County Public Defender, Lloyd E. Powell who passed earlier this year. Delphia Simpson, stepping in and taking over for Mr. Powell as the newly appointed Public Defender, led a wonderful program where we heard both humorous and heartfelt stories about how Mr. Powell lived his life and how he made such a positive impact on his community. I was honored to join the ranks of those sharing memories and thoughts, and paid respects on behalf of the WCBA.

Earlier that same day, the WCBA offered a workshop to its members entitled "Understanding Implicit Bias: An Introduction for the Legal Practitioner." This was the first in what we hope is a series of workshops and conversations that attempt to provide a working understanding of what "implicit bias" or "unconscious bias" means and how we can incorporate that understanding into providing better legal services for our clients and better support in the legal system. We had a great group of attorneys and judges who gathered in the Fifteenth District Court Jury Assembly Room and engaged in an interactive discussion. The feedback was positive and we look forward to revisiting this subject in the future.

The WCBA had its Annual Award Dinner and Election of the new Board Officers at the Ann Arbor City Club on April 12<sup>th</sup>. We had a great showing and elected the proposed slate for the 2018-19 Board. Elizabeth C. Jolliffe will be moving up to take over duties as next year's President and I will be serving as Immediate Past President. The rest of the Board: Mark W. Jane, President Elect; Paul C. Fessler, Vice President; S. Joy Gaines, Treasurer; Samuel J. Bernstein, Secretary; Alexander W. Hermanowski, Scott E. Munzel, Shalini Nangia and Katherine M. Sharkey as Directors-at-Large. The new team will formally take over at the start of next fiscal year on July 1<sup>st</sup>, but we always take the election as an opportunity to recognize the work of the current Board and have a celebratory "passing of the gavel." I would like to say a special thanks to those Board members who have served in a number of different roles and will be stepping down after this year: Elizabeth Kitchen-Troop; Jennifer Lawrence; Anna Frushour; Rosemary Frenza Chudnof; Justin Altman; and, Benjamin Muth.

This year, the WCBA gave its Patriot Award to John A. Shea. The Patriot Award was established by the WCBA in 1987 to recognize an attorney for his or her work in (1) promoting a better understanding of the Constitution and Bill of Rights, (2) encouraging greater respect for law and the court system, (3) helping to stimulate a deeper sense of responsibility on the part of individuals and helping them recognize inherent duties and rights, (4) contributing to a better and more effective functioning of government institutions, and/or (5) fostering a better understanding and appreciation of the rule of law [as referenced in our bylaws].

John, a longtime WCBA member, was selected as this year's Patriot Award recipient by his peers for many reasons, not the least of which the respect he holds as a model ethical practitioner. For those of you not familiar with John's work, a few highlights that touch on various aspects of the award's criteria include:

1. Serving as a Michigan Indigent Defense Commissioner and working towards better criminal defense services and effective assistance of counsel;
2. WCBA representative on the Washtenaw County Criminal Justice Collaborative Council;
3. Active member of the Criminal Defense Attorneys of Michigan, including policy committee work;
4. Active member of the Detroit-area Federal Criminal Justice Act appointed counsel list;
5. Active member of the local ACLU chapter of Michigan;
6. Member of the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers.

John was introduced by fellow WCBA member and attorney, David Nacht, and then presented the award to rousing standing ovation.

And as if that were not enough for an action-packed evening, we also convened twenty-two of our past WCBA Presidents for a group photo and a toast to all the wonderful people who have served at the helm of our bar association: Ed Pear (1979-1980), Peter Flintoft (1982-1983), Monika Sacks (1987-1988), Hon. David Swartz (1988-1989), Bob Gillett (1993-1994), Tom Daniels (1997-1998), Hon. J. Cedric Simpson (1999-2000), Lori Buiteweg (2000-2001), Doug Lewis (2002-2003), Tom Bourque, (2004-2005), Erane Washington (2005-2006), Véronique Liem (2006-2007), John Reiser (2007-2008), Hon. Karen Quinlan Valvo (2008-2009), Brad MeLampy (2009-2010), Ashwin Patel (2010-2011), Peter Falkenstein (2011-2012), Hon. Patrick Conlin, Jr. (2012-2013), Delphia Simpson (2013-2014), Matt Jane (2014-2015), Greg Dodd (2015-2016) and Elizabeth Kitchen-Troop (2016-2017). It was my special privilege to raise a glass to all of those who made it that evening. The room was abuzz with conversation as this group of past presidents gathered and reminisced before the dinner. It was also a great opportunity for some of our newer members to meet them and hear some stories. I am honored to join such a diverse and interesting group.

Finally, I look forward to seeing many of you at another one of our annual events, the Bench-Bar Conference on May 4<sup>th</sup> at the Travis Pointe Country Club. This has become an event that we all look forward to hear about the health of our courts, have time to sit down with our judges and interact with one another. Until next time, enjoy the weather and thanks for your continued support.