

## President's Message

### **Work. Life. Balance.**

You are likely a little tired of hearing or seeing those three words in succession. You might wonder why another bar association article is devoted to lowering the potential stressors in a legal career. I understand. However, there is a reason those three words exist: attorneys face some of the highest rates of substance abuse, depression, and anxiety amongst professionals. In a study co-funded by the American Bar Association and the Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation this decade, 28% of attorneys have some level of depression, 19% express some form of anxiety, and more than 20% consume alcohol at levels consistent with “problem drinking.”<sup>1</sup>

So what to do about it before such stressors cause a tangible negative impact on our work product or client relations? That's the critical question that proper work-life balance attempts to answer, and that I would like to spend my column addressing. We are so fortunate to live and work in a county that offers so much to do – recreationally, educationally, and professionally. What follows is just a sampling of some of the amazing things that any attorney can do in Washtenaw County to take some stress away from the daily grind of legal practice and simply unwind (if not unplug):

- **Apple Orchards.** Local residents most assuredly know that football weekends tend to dominate the community during the fall months. But that has never stopped the other burgeoning activity that delights thousands in the area from September to November: seasonal trips to apple orchards and cider mills! I personally love taking my family to the various local (and distant) orchards and mills to sample the various concoctions and to pick apples. It always has the feel of one last outdoor hurrah before the winter sets in here.
- **Museums.** Did you know greater Ann Arbor is home to over a dozen museums?<sup>2</sup> I recommend spending a sleepy weekend day perusing the terrific exhibits that Washtenaw County has to offer. From the wonderful collections at the UM Museum of Art, to the zany childhood fun at the Ann Arbor Hands-On Museum, to the restored gristmill at Parker Mill, there is something nearby for everyone.
- **Trivia Night.** You really didn't think I would make it through an entire column without giving a plug for one of our most popular events, did you? Each year, usually in late February or early March, WCBA members (and some ringers) team up to test their mettle in that most friendly of lawyerly competitions – a challenge of knowledge! Be sure to pick

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<sup>1</sup> Elejalde-Ruiz, Alexia, “High Rates Alcohol Abuse, Depression Among U.S. Attorneys, Study Says,” *Chicago Tribune* February 3, 2016 (accessed on [chicagotribune.com/business/ct-lawyers-problem-drinkers-0204-biz-20160203-story.html](http://chicagotribune.com/business/ct-lawyers-problem-drinkers-0204-biz-20160203-story.html) on July 1, 2019).

<sup>2</sup> “City Guide: Museums,” *Ann Arbor Observer* (accessed on <https://annarborobserver.com/cg/t0154.html#.XRz56rmWzoo> on July 15, 2019).

your team of eight well in advance, this is one of the WCBA's most popular and fun events and usually draws a packed house.

- **Golf Outing.** I know, I know – not all of you are golfers. I get that --it's a tough game. Even my wife (a fellow WCBA member) has a rule that she does not play sports that require hitting one object with another object. But the WCBA golf outing is so much more than getting four people (whether they be friends, clients, or colleagues) to score low in a scramble format. It's a chance to meet up as an organization during the doldrums of the summer months, relax, have a laugh (hopefully not at the expense of other golfers), enjoy good food, and bask in the wonderful weather. If you haven't golfed before, it's the perfect opportunity to start! The scramble format is low stress because it doesn't rely on any one person excelling. Even non-golfers can delight in the receptions that take place before and after the outing.
- **Kayaking/Canoeing.** This is a personal favorite for me, being from Minnesota. I absolutely love meandering down the Huron River on a beautiful summer day soaking in the sites of the area that one cannot normally see. There are several boat launches and liveries nearby, and numerous places rent for day trips for those who are hesitant to investing in an aquatic vessel. And you can get a little exercise in this endeavor, too!

Of course, this list is not at all meant to be exhaustive. The key is to find the activity that is right for you and spend some time doing it. We all do our very best when we are at the top of our respective games, and it takes a little bit of rest to make sure we're at peak (legal) performance.