

Although I'm permanently out of school, this time of year still feels like the start of a new year. Am I the only one? I still look at school supplies. I still sniff those big pink erasers. I always buy myself a brand new box of crayons. As the leaves change colors, the weather cools, and the life that was "born" in the spring comes to an end, I find myself anticipating the changes the new season will bring - just like when I was a student.

Although the WCBA year officially starts in July, it always seems our year really gets started in the fall, just like the school year. Our first legal education event of the year is always in September when the Estate Planning, Probate & Trust Law Section has its annual probate court training update.

In October, we observe Bias Awareness Week, sponsored by the Race, Gender & Ethnic Bias Awareness Committee. We host a dinner to present the Martin Luther King, Jr. Award to celebrate those who are addressing bias, discrimination, equity, and access. October is also when we join with attorneys in our state and across the country to promote *pro bono* work.

Let's make Fall 2021 a time for a fresh start. It's a new "year." Try something new. Join a section or committee. Attend an in-person or virtual event that you've never attended before. Make this the year you join the Lawyer Referral and Information Service (LRIS). It's a great way to both serve the community and potentially expand your practice. Just like a new school year gave you the opportunity to learn new things and make new friends, the new WCBA year can also be a time to learn new things and make new friends. Getting involved in something you've never tried before can shake up your routine and breathe some fresh air into your professional life. And, after 18 months of COVID, wouldn't some fresh air feel restorative?

Speaking of COVID: it's on the rise again. Our communities look to attorneys to navigate everything from housing/ landlord-tenant issues to disability claims from adults suffering from "long haulers" (long-term effects of COVID). Legal Services of Southcentral Michigan (LSSCM) is where a lot of people in the community turn for assistance, and LSSCM turns to us to assist them. They need our time, our talent, and our treasure. We can make a strong impact in Washtenaw County by helping LSSCM aid our friends and neighbors as they struggle with the impact of COVID.

As we start our new year, give yourself the gift of providing a service to someone or some entity you've never volunteered for before. It's a great way to give yourself a fresh start and a fresh perspective.