

# *the* BALTIMORE BARRISTER

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From left, Samuel R. Pulver, Esq., Young Lawyers' Division Chair; The Honorable Anthony F. Vittoria, Bar Association of Baltimore City President; Damien Banks, Esq., Baltimore Bar Foundation President

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# President's Message

By The Hon. Anthony F. Vittoria



## *Three Questions with New Executive Director Karen Fast*

Last month I wrote about former Executive Director of the Bar Association of Baltimore City (BABC) Kathy Sanzone, who retired on June 30, 2021. This month, I would like to introduce the BABC's new Executive Director, Karen Fast. Karen comes to us by way of the Orange County Bar Association in Florida. Karen started on April 12, 2021

and took over as Executive Director on July 1, 2021. I have been working closely with Karen during these first few weeks of our new positions, talking almost every day and, sometimes, several times a day. During those conversations, I asked Karen to tell me a little bit about herself.

Karen was born in Brooklyn, New York, but was raised on Long Island. Karen went to Farmingdale High School where, during her junior and senior years, she was enrolled in the "Informal School." Karen explained that the "Informal School" had a very relaxed environment in which the classrooms contained couches, the students called their teachers by their first names, and creative thinking was encouraged. Karen remarked that the program provided her with skills necessary for success both in and after college.

Following high school, Karen enrolled at Jacksonville University in Florida where she pursued a major in Fine Arts. After two years at JU, Karen shifted her focus and transferred to American University in Washington, D.C. to pursue a degree in Graphic Design.

Karen's first job out of college was as Assistant Art Director with Kenneth Feld Productions. You may not recognize that name, but Kenneth Feld Productions owned or managed some of the most famous traveling shows in the country; including Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus, Siegfried and Roy, and the Disney Ice Shows. This was a very creative time for Karen, as she worked with the marketing team designing advertisements, artwork and promotional materials. Karen recalled fondly that she got to see a part of the circus that most people never get to experience, including getting up-close-and-personal with the famous Ringling Brothers' elephants, which she always adored.

After a brief stopover in Rhode Island, Karen returned to D.C. looking to clear her mind and reset. She took a job waiting tables at Morton's Steakhouse (during which she waited on Martin Sheen!) but was quickly promoted to a sales position and then promoted again to a marketing position, which, ultimately took her back to New York. While at Morton's, Karen got to meet and speak with a lot of celebrities; including Billy Jean King and Patti LuPone (who were her favorites), Paul Rudd (one of my favorites) Tiger Woods, and John Riggins. Karen also became good friends with the Equipment Manager for the New York Islanders, who provided her with tickets to Islanders' games and even gave her a hockey stick autographed by her favorite Washington Capitals' player, Adam Oates!

Karen learned a great deal about sales and marketing during her time in the hospitality industry. After seventeen years however, she



Karen Fast  
BABC Executive  
Director

was looking for change. Karen moved to Florida and enrolled in the Notter School of Pastry Arts in Orlando, Florida. Karen opened her own pastry business but soon was asked to help a friend from pastry school who had taken a job with the Orange County Bar Association (OCBA). After only two weeks helping her friend on a part-time basis, Karen was asked by the Executive Director to take a position as Membership Manager. After a year in that role, Karen was promoted again, taking over Strategic Marketing as well as Membership Management.

When she left the OCBA, Karen was running four departments and 29 committees, and had developed many marketing campaigns and membership drives.

I asked Karen three questions about her time with the OCBA and her initial thoughts about the BABC.

## **What was your greatest accomplishment at the OCBA?**

"Turning their Bench Bar Conference, which was a series of nine seminars over three days, into a one-day, off-site conference with 61 CLE seminars taught by over 50 judges, attended by over 350 attorneys, and brought in over \$30,000 in revenue."

## **What do you see as the BABC's biggest strength?**

"The members, by far. They have a passion for the Association and the work they are doing. Volunteer positions are tough. Every member takes their personal time to contribute. As much as people thank me for what I am doing, it is really the members that deserve the thanks. I have been here only a short time, but the work and time that I saw dedicated to the golf tournament, showed me how much the members are invested in the organization and the passion they possess."

## **What is your foremost goal in your first two years at the BABC?**

"I know that coming out of the pandemic, the Association had a challenging year, but there are some programs that I noticed that need attention. The Lawyer Referral and Information Service for instance, seems like it could host more panel members in areas that are not covered. I would like to start a marketing campaign to promote referring clients that are out of the scope of a member's practice area over to LRIS. The money made through LRIS can not only fund BABC programs but can offset the cost of member events as well, all while assisting those in need of attorneys. Of course, I am here to help, so hopefully we will get a plan in motion and continue to be the leaders in the legal profession in Maryland."

When you get the chance, please introduce yourself to Karen. She is incredibly friendly and helpful – and she welcomes all of your suggestions and questions.

I think I can speak for all of us on the Executive Council when I say: Welcome, Karen!

# Young Lawyers' Division Message

*By Sam Pulver, Chair*

## And Now ... A Word to Our Sponsors



Like many of the young lawyers that comprise the membership of the Young Lawyers Division (YLD) of the Bar Association of Baltimore City, the YLD is not flush with cash. We run a lean and mean operation that somehow manages to annually put on dozens of programs including monthly happy hour/networking events, monthly CLEs,

community service events, and our flagship events such as the Holiday Party for Children Living in Shelters, the Spring Awards Ceremony, and much, much more. You may ask yourself, how does the YLD manage to fund these wonderful events and programs? The answer is quite simple. We rely heavily on the generous donations of our sponsors and donors. It is only through sponsorships and donations that we are able to offset the cost of our many events and give back to our membership and the Baltimore City community.

As we move forward into the upcoming bar year, I would like to

recognize and thank our generous sponsors who have helped us thrive throughout our many years of existence. I would also like to make a promise, if not a pitch. As young lawyers, many of us do not have the decision-making power within our respective firms to decide how to allocate firm money. Often, decisions are made on a high level, firm-wide basis about which court reporting companies, process servers, expert witnesses, and other types of legal vendors that can be used in our respective practices. However, that does not mean that the funding you provide is simply a charitable act of giving. Instead, think of your sponsorship as an investment.

When you sponsor the YLD, you are making an investment in the young lawyers, the Bar Association, and in the City of Baltimore. While we may not be able to effectuate the kind of change that would give you a short-term return on that investment, remember that we will not be young lawyers forever. Young associates will become partners, solo practitioners, managing partners and even judges, and when they do, they will remember the names and faces of those that helped them along the way. We promise to remember our sponsors and donors and to give back when we have the decision-making power and finances to do so.

**Young  
Lawyers'  
Division**

*Save the Date!*

**BABC CRAB FEAST  
@ BO BROOKS**

**October 20, 2021  
5:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.**



## Senior Legal Services – Celebrating 30 Years of Service to Baltimore City

*By Viola Woolums, Director, Senior Legal Services*



Viola Woolums

This year marks 30 years since the establishment of Senior Legal Services (SLS), a joint program of the Bar Association of Baltimore City, Inc. and the Baltimore Bar Foundation, Inc., dedicated to providing free civil legal services to Baltimore City residents aged 60 and older. At its inception, SLS was a novel program because its services were tailored to the needs of Baltimore City seniors; that has never changed. Another thing that remains unchanged is the need for SLS services dedicated to seniors. Not only does Baltimore City have a greater percentage of its population living in poverty than any other county in Maryland, it also has the highest percentage (18%) of seniors living in poverty. These low-income seniors are often just one legal problem away from losing their homes and agencies. SLS's civil legal services help them to age in place in the Baltimore City communities that they call home and where they have often lived their entire lives.

What has evolved is the SLS service delivery model – SLS provides community-based services to clients via in-house staff and a panel of pro bono attorneys! Community-based services are easier and more comfortable for clients to access, especially for seniors with limited mobility and/or reticence to travel to unfamiliar locations to meet with unfamiliar people. SLS is able to reach Clients through long-established (and some new) partnerships with neighborhood churches, senior centers, senior living communities, and other organizations. Potential Clients can also reach SLS directly at (410) 396-1322 during intake hours Monday through Friday from 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. When Clients are unable to leave their homes for medical reasons, SLS attorneys will even meet with Clients in their homes.

Pro bono attorneys are an integral part of the SLS program. With a very small, yet dedicated and knowledgeable in-house staff, pro bono attorneys help to increase the capac-

ity and expertise of the program, allowing more seniors to be served. Why is this so important? SLS is a resource of last resort. Clients usually have nowhere else to turn for civil legal services.

SLS is funded entirely by grants and donations. The program has some flexibility in the types of cases handled by volunteer attorneys, and case acceptance is prioritized by client need and program capacity. In-house staff are generally more limited in the types of cases they handle because their duties are defined by the awarded grant. Currently, staff focus is on elder justice issues including abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation as well as legal issues that put seniors' homes in jeopardy. Preserving homeownership is extremely important for seniors during their lifetimes in addition to the added benefit to future generations.

Pro bono attorneys come to SLS with a desire to put their own legal knowledge and experience to work for low-income Baltimore City seniors. Recent pro bono successes include representing seniors in collections actions, advance planning matters, and eviction prevention litigation. With an end to COVID-19 housing protections, SLS client needs in these areas of practice will certainly exceed the capacity of the in-house staff.

How can you support SLS in our work for Baltimore City seniors? Donate your time or money! All SLS programs are funded by donations and grants, so all support is extremely important to the success of the program. Join the SLS pro bono panel by registering on our website at <http://www.baltimore-seniorlegalservices.org/contact> or calling the office to express interest at (410) 396-1322. Donations can also be made on the website by clicking the "donate" link or mailing a check made payable to "Baltimore Bar Foundation, Inc." with "Senior Legal Services" in the memo line to Senior Legal Services, 111 North Calvert Street, Suite 631, Baltimore, MD 21202. Donations are tax exempt as allowable by law.

Thank you to all of our supporters for 30 years of success. With your generosity we hope to keep the program viable for 30 more years!

# Waiver of Appellate Review in the Fourth Circuit: When a Clause's Enforceability Turns on One Word

By Joshua B. Keyser

Lawyers add arbitration clauses to contracts, in part, to ensure speedy resolution of problems that may arise from those contracts. So, while it may not surprise ADR practitioners (who will know well that judicial review of arbitration is already “substantially circumscribed”<sup>1</sup>), the Fourth Circuit placed yet another tool in the hands of contract drafters seeking to shorten the litigation process earlier this year, announcing that it will enforce clauses waiving intermediate appellate review of arbitral awards. However, that depends heavily upon the words that the drafter chose.

In *Beckley Oncology Associates, Inc. v. Abumasmah*,<sup>2</sup> the Fourth Circuit followed the Tenth Circuit in narrowly parsing waiver clauses. The court made much of the precise language in the challenged contract, which waived “any right of appeal” rather than “review.”<sup>3</sup> It ruled that a clause waiving intermediate appellate review is enforceable, even though one precluding all judicial review would not have stood, in an attempt to reconcile the general purpose of the Federal Arbitration Act to reduce courts’ caseloads with its concern for ensuring a “minimum of due process.”<sup>4</sup> The result is that parties may contract to limit appeal to a “one-shot opportunity before the district court,” but no less.<sup>5</sup>

*Beckley* was a compromise solution, and, therefore, will likely please no one. Parties seeking finality cannot contract to keep completely out of the courthouse, while those dissatisfied with an arbitrator’s ruling can only take their appeal as far as a district judge. Consumer advocates should take note as well—businesses drafting adhesion contracts are sure to employ the strongest waiver clause available, and will just as

surely include them in terms that consumers will click to accept without reading.

Preserving the possibility of intermediate appellate review only enables a last-ditch effort under any circumstances, as federal courts are exceedingly deferential to arbitrators’ rulings.<sup>6</sup> Given that preference for the finality of arbitral awards, the Fourth Circuit found it “lamentable” that parties would treat arbitration as a precursor to litigation even after having expressly waived the right to appeal.<sup>7</sup> But even if the court isn’t pleased about it, *Beckley* illustrates that it will permit contract parties to select the appealability of arbitration at the time of agreement, and will pay careful attention to the terms that they agreed to.

With the Fourth Circuit’s laser focus on whether the parties agreed to waive “review” or “appeal,” *Beckley* is one more reminder of the legal significance of a single word. It also comes with a cautionary tale. *Beckley Oncology Associates*, the party who drafted the contract, was the one that ended up arguing against the waiver clause’s validity before the Fourth Circuit.<sup>8</sup> The Fourth Circuit made it clear that it holds contract parties to their word, and those who draft arbitration clauses should take care not to find themselves similarly hoisted by their own petard. Parties who agree to the finality of arbitration, then try for more bites at the apple, should not count on sympathy from the judiciary.

Josh Keyser is a law clerk at Silverman Thompson Slutkin & White, LLC, and a rising thirdyear law student at the George Washington University Law School. He commutes to Baltimore from his home in Arlington, Virginia, which he shares with his veterinarian girlfriend and her ever-increasing number of small animals.

1 *Patten v. Signator Ins. Agency, Inc.*, 441 F.3d 230, 234 (4th Cir. 2006).

2 993 F.3d 261 (4th Cir. 2021).

3 *Id.* at 264.

4 *Id.* at 265.

5 *Id.* at 264 (quoting *MACTEC, Inc. v. Gorelick*, 427 F.3d 821, 830 (10th Cir. 2005)).

6 The Fourth Circuit refers to the scope of judicial review of arbitral decisions as “among the narrowest known at law.” *Apex Plumbing Supply, Inc. v. U.S. Supply Co., Inc.*, 142 F.3d 188, 193 (4th Cir. 1998).

7 *Beckley*, 993 F.3d at 266–67.

8 *Id.* at 262.



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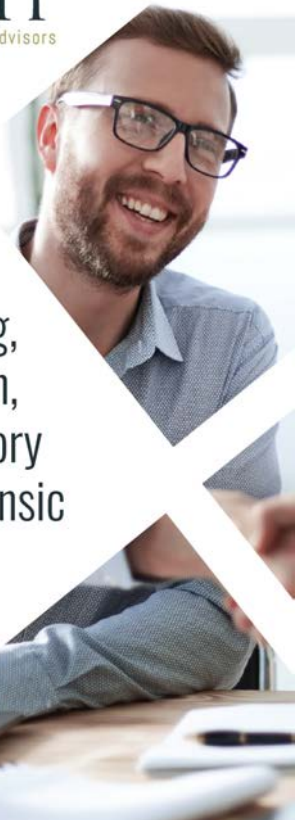
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SEPTEMBER 28

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## Bar Association of Baltimore City Committee Reports 2020-2021

### Alternative Dispute Resolution

James W. Motsay, Esq., *Motsay and Lay*

This year the ADR committee again provided substantive education in the areas of arbitration, mediation, and neutral case evaluation. The ADR committee met regularly and engaged its members with information about current ADR topics, trends, and ethics.

On October 13, 2020, we sponsored a seminar on neutral case evaluation, a topic that most attorneys are unfamiliar with as an option to resolving their client's case. The presenters were Senior Judge Diane O. Leasure – retired judge from the Circuit Court for Howard County, J. Snowden Stanley, Jr., Esq., Semmes Attorney and Of Counsel and Neil J. Dilloff, Esq., DLA Piper, Trial Attorney, Mediator and Arbitrator. The moderator was Senior Judge Edward J. Angeletti, retired judge from the Circuit Court for Baltimore City. The topics included what is neutral case evaluation? How does it work? How do I have my clients scheduled for a neutral case evaluation? How can it help my client? Why use neutral

case evaluation? What are the benefits and drawbacks?

On February 22, 2021, the Winter/Spring seminar of the ADR committee presented Liens and Other issues I Need to Prepare for Before my Client's Mediation and/or Arbitration. The moderator was James W. Motsay, Esq. The presenters were Rodd Santomouro, Vice President of Business Development, Synergy Settlement Services; Joanna Wynes, Partner Planner, Synergy Settlement Services; and Rasa Fumagalli, Director of MSP Compliance, Synergy Settlement Services. The topics covered what types of liens do I need to be aware of before resolving the client's case? How do I determine if there is any money owed to third parties? How third-party lien holders, Medicare, Medicaid, BC/BS, ERISA, EQUIAN, etc. handle liens? What part can a trust play in resolving the case? What are my obligations where there is a lien on my client's case? A check list of preparation items I need to do before arbitration and/or mediation.

### Bench Bar Committee

The Honorable Julie Rebecca Rubin, *Circuit Court for Baltimore City*  
Thy Christine Pham, Esq., *Cowin Systems, LLC*

**Court, Counselor & Covid-19;** October 6, 2020

The Honorable Julie R. Rubin and T. Christine Pham, Esq., Co-Chairs, presented **Court, Counselor & COVID-19**. In this moderated virtual judicial panel discussion, we shared and discussed challenges and concerns from both the bar and the bench as we progress to a full re-opening of our court during the COVID-19 pandemic. This program also provided participants an opportunity to discuss and gain a greater understanding of COVID-19-related policies and procedures of the Circuit Court for Baltimore City. Our speakers were: **The Honorable Audrey J.S. Carrion**, Administrative & Chief Judge, *Circuit Court for Baltimore City*; **The Honorable Lawrence P. Fletcher-Hill**, Judge-in-Charge of Civil, *Circuit Court for Baltimore City*; and **The Honorable Melissa M. Phinn**, Judge in Charge of Criminal, *Circuit Court for Baltimore City*. In preparation for this program, the members of the Bench Bar Committee participated in a confidential survey, the results of which were the basis of the questions presented to the panel.

**District Court for Baltimore City Town Hall; March 18, 2021**

Attorneys were invited to participate in a Town Hall with **The Honorable Halee Weinstein**, Administrative Judge, *District Court of Maryland for Baltimore City* and **The Honorable L. Robert Cooper**, Judge in Charge of Civil, *District Court of Maryland for Baltimore City* (via Zoom) for a discussion regarding Phase IV of the resumption of operations, followed by an opportunity to ask questions. The meeting was moderated by **T. Christine Pham, Esq.**, Co-Chair of the Bar Association of Baltimore City's Bench Bar Committee.

**Meet Our Newest Circuit Court Judges! An Evening with The Honorable Erik Atas and The Honorable Myshala E. Middleton;** March 24, 2021

Join the Bar Association of Baltimore City in welcoming the newest members of the Circuit Court for Baltimore City Bench, **The Honorable Erik Atas**, and **The Honorable Myshala E. Middleton**. Participants were told to grab their beverage of choice and login for an informal discussion moderated by **The Honorable Julie Rubin and T. Christine Pham**, Co-Chairs of the Bench-Bar Committee.

### Continuing Legal Education Committee

The Honorable Michael Studdard, *Circuit Court for Baltimore City*

The BABC Continuing Legal Education Committee met approximately 6 times via zoom and actively assisted other committees to put on CLEs during the 2020-2021 bar year. The

committee, comprised of members of the bar, government and public interest lawyers, and members of the judiciary, and held two educational forums for its members during member appreciation week.



## Bar Association of Baltimore City Committee Reports 2020-2021

On February 23, 2021, the committee held a virtual, very well attended, continuing legal educational program titled “**An Office Without Walls-A Crash Course Running Your Own Virtual, Mobile or Hybrid Practice**” The speaker was **Sahmra A. Stevenson, Esq.** and the moderator was **David Pantzer Esq.** The committee thought this was timely and important based upon the ongoing pandemic.

On February 24, 2021, the committee held a virtual, well attended, continuing legal education program titled “**Succession and Disaster Planning: Tips from Bar Counsel, a Law Firm Partner, and an Accountant**”. The purpose was to educate members that things happen, and often without warning. Protect the future of your firm by successfully executing a succession plan to ensure continuity of your firm’s manage-

ment and its important client relationships. Every firm, small to large, should have a succession/disaster plan in place to protect the firm, clients, loved ones and to protect attorneys from professional and ethical exposure. Panelists included **Lydia E. Lawless, Esq.**, Bar Counsel, **Steven S. Manekin, CPA**, *Ellin & Tucker*, **Barry F. Rosen Esq.**, *Gordon Feinblatt LLC*, and was moderated by **Eric N. Schloss Esq.**, *Saltzberg & Schloss*.

Additionally, the CLE Committee worked in concert with several other bar associations to put on collaborative CLEs. Specifically, the committee co-sponsored, with AABA and several other local and national bar associations, two CLEs on implicit bias. The committee thought this was important based on the topic, and the impact it was having on the Baltimore legal community.

## Diversity Committee

Kay N. Harding, Esq., *City Solicitor’s Office*

During the 2020-2021 term, the committee hosted two very successful events.

On March 4, 2021, the Bar Association of Baltimore City’s Diversity Committee organized an in-depth educational program discussion regarding **Disability-Related Diversity and Inclusions**. This program highlighted disability-related diversity and inclusion issues in the practice of law by challenging people’s assumptions about disabilities. Attendees were provided with information on best practices to put in place to ensure that they are accommodating individuals with disabilities. The panelist were **Eve L. Hill, Esq.**, *Brown, Goldstein & Levy, LLP* and **Gary C. Norman, Esq.**, L.L.M., Chair of the Board of Commissioners, *MD Commission on Civil Rights*. The program was moderated by **Monica Basche, Esq.**, *Brown, Goldstein & Levy, LLP*.

On May 6, 2021, the Bar Association of Baltimore City’s Diversity Committee held an in-depth discussion entitled **The Intersectionality of Civil Law, Structural Racism and You as a Maryland Attorney**. The program addressed how historical

and current discriminatory societal practices impact civil legal issues, including consumer, foreclosure, and eviction matters. Participants learned that that laws and practices that appear neutral on the surface had disproportionate negative impacts on communities of color. The panel discussed practical tips for attorneys to utilize in their practice and provided additional resources. The panelists were **Susan Francis, Esq.**, *Maryland Volunteer Lawyers Service (MVLS)*, **Matt Hill, Esq.**, *Public Justice Center*, and **Aja’ Mallory, Esq.**, *Maryland Volunteer Lawyers Service (MVLS)*. The program was moderated by **Kirsten Downs, Esq.**, *Office of the Public Defender*.

In September 2020 and April 2021, the Diversity Committee was also a program sponsor with other bar associations with the Diversity & Inclusion Division of the Anne Arundel Bar Association (AABA) on the topics of **Implicit Bias: In the Courtroom, Workplace, and Beyond (Part 1 and 2)**.

The Diversity Committee looks forward to continuing hosting educational trainings on topics of diversity, equity and inclusion and welcome feedback and suggestions from members of the association.

## Estates & Trusts

Michaela C. Muffoletto, Esq., *Neuberger, Quinn, Gielen, Rubin & Gibber, P.A.*

Jennifer S. Yeagle, Esq., *Sims & Campbell*

In its ninth year, the Committee has continued many of the initiatives from its prior years as well as several new initiatives despite the continuing pandemic. A critical initiative is to maintain the Committee’s active, cooperative partnership with the Orphans’ Court for Baltimore City and the Office of the Register of Wills for Baltimore City.

The Committee benefits from the active participation and

valuable insight of those of the judges from Orphans’ Court for Baltimore City and the Register of Wills or her staff, who attend the meetings. In furtherance of that initiative, the Committee held its ninth annual “**State of the Orphans’ Court and Register of Wills**” address in November via Zoom. The address was delivered by the following Judges of the Orphans’ Court for Baltimore City and the Register of Wills: **Chief Judge Lewyn Scott Garrett**, **Associate Judge Michele Loewenthal**, **Associate Judge Charles G. Bernstein** and the **Chief Deputy of the Register of Wills, Larry Edmund**. The address covered a wide

## Bar Association of Baltimore City Committee Reports 2020-2021

range of issues relevant to the Baltimore City Orphans' Court and the Register of Wills. The address was followed by an open question and answer session. Those in attendance directed questions to the judges and the register.

Keeping our members apprised of legislative changes, changes to the Maryland Rules and developing proposed changes are important initiatives of the Committee. Several Committee members also serve on the MSBA Estate and Trust Law Section Council and led several discussions throughout the year regarding changes to the law affecting estates and trusts practice. The Committee's February and May meetings featured **Legislative and Rules Updates** by **Michaela C. Muffoletto, Esq.**, the Chair Elect of the MSBA Estate and Trust Law Section, as well as discussions with **Mark Weisner, Esq.**, Assistant Attorney General,

*Courts and Judicial Affairs Divisions.*

Providing information to the public and attorneys through education and outreach programs is another important initiative of the Committee. Committee members, **Timothy Chance, Esq.**, and **Jennifer S. Yeagle, Esq.**, served on **Resources Subcommittee of the Life and Health Planning Committee of the Maryland Attorney General's COVID-19 Access to Justice Task Force**, working to create a directory of low-or-no cost legal resources as well as a handbook of estate planning documents. In addition, Committee members, **K. Alice Young, Esq.**, **Timothy Chance, Esq.**, and **Jennifer S. Yeagle, Esq.**, presented **Estate Planning: Protecting Your Legacy**, focusing on what lawyers should know about their own estate planning.

## Events Committee

Kerri L. Smith, Esq., *Silverman Thompson Slutkin & White, LLC*

The BABC Events Committee worked hard to provide engaging virtual events during the 2020-2021 Bar year. The highlight of the year was **Member Appreciation Week** which occurred from Monday, February 22 through Friday, February 26, 2021. Monday featured a CLE program: **Preparation for Liens and Other Issues for My Client Mediation and/or Arbitration**. Tuesday featured a second CLE program: **Office Without Walls: A Crash Course on Running Your Own Virtual, Mobile or Hybrid Practice**. Both programs were very well attended with over 40 participants. Tuesday also featured a Trivia Contest with the topic of Just How Much Baltimore, General, & BABC Knowledge Do You Have? Over 60 people (8 teams)

played trivia and had a great time. Wednesday included another CLE program on **Succession & Disaster Planning: Tips from Bar Counsel, a Law Firm Partner, and an Accountant** which had nearly 50 attendees, as well as a family-friendly Magic Show: Cyber Sorcery with Magician Christian Cagigel which had 50 registrants. On Thursday, there was a program titled **Historical Perspectives in the Black Community** which was also extremely well attended. We ended Member Appreciation Week with a Happy Hour with President Kadish which was lots of fun!

The BABC Events Committee also hosted the **141<sup>st</sup> Annual Meeting**, which occurred virtually for the second time in BABC history on June 17, 2021.

## Family Law Committee

Barbara Bakal Greene, Esq., *Schlachman, Belsky, Weiner & Davey, P.A.*  
Alice G. Pinderhughes, Esq., *Alice G. Pinderhughes, P.A.*

The associations' Family Law Committee co-chaired by **Alice Pinderhughes, Esq.** and **Barbara Greene, Esq.** had an active calendar of events, despite the challenges of COVID related court and office closings. In fact, Zoom made it possible for a record number of participants at our monthly meetings.

The year began with a presentation by the **Honorable Michael DiPietro** who updated members of changes to court operations during the COVID shut down. He also advised us of the need for assistance from members of our committee with guardianships. The process is complicated for individuals who do not have the resources to obtain a lawyer and so Judge DiPietro is asking members of the bar to voluntarily assist these individuals. It is of great help to both the Court and to the families seeking a guardianship.

The introduction of Parenting Plans into the family law has

been a "hot" topic this year and a comprehensive tutorial was provided by now **Magistrate Carrie Polley** for completing the necessary pleadings and documents. In January 2021, we had the pleasure of hosting the **Honorable Marilyn Bentley, Clerk of the Circuit Court**. In a program entitled, "Let's Dialogue" committee members and Ms. Bentley had an engaging discussion about operations of the clerk's office, issues experienced by attorneys and members of Ms. Bentley large staff and changes necessitated by the COVID crises. **Eric Haviland, Esq.**, *The Law Office of Laura Burrows* presented our February program which was a deep dive into domestic relations orders of all kinds - 401(k)'s, municipal pensions, federal government pensions and private pensions. In April, **Barbara Greene, Esq.**, *Schlachman, Belsky, Weiner and Davey*, and **Renee Bronfman Ades, Esq.**, *Wright, Constable and Skeen* presented the annual review of Court of Appeal cases, and a legislative update of new statutes passes by the Maryland legislature. Our year ended



## Bar Association of Baltimore City Committee Reports 2020-2021

with an excellent presentation by judges of the Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Howard County Harford County and Carroll

County benches in our annual multi-jurisdictional meeting.

### Long-Range Planning Committee

The Honorable Anthony F. Vittoria, *Circuit Court for Baltimore City*

The Long-Range Planning Committee developed an **End-of-Year Questionnaire** to be complete by the chair(s) of each committee of the BABC. The questionnaire was three questions long and requested information as to (1) what was accomplished by the committee that year, (2) what was discussed by the committee that year, but not acted upon or accomplished, and (3) any other useful information to pass on to next year's chair of the committee.

The purpose of the questionnaire was two-fold: First, the response to the first question of the questionnaire would be used as that committee's Annual Report for the summer issue of The

Baltimore Barrister. Second, and perhaps more importantly, the information was to be provided to the respective chair(s) of the committee the following year, to help ease the transition and allow the chair(s) to "hit the ground running."

The Committee also decided that, to the extent possible, the staff of the BABC should not be tasked with getting completed questionnaires from the committee chairs; rather, the members of the Committee would take that task on themselves. Accordingly, in early June, several members of the Long-Range Planning Committee sent out e-mails requesting that the committee chairs complete the questionnaire.

### Membership Committee

Teresa Epps Cummings, Esq., *City Solicitor's Office*

The BABC Membership Committee met regularly via Zoom during the 2020-2021 bar year. The committee, comprised of members of the private bar, government and public interest lawyers, and members of the judiciary, strived to find viable, but creative, ways to grow the membership numbers while also ensuring that current members remained satisfied with the benefits, programs and services provided by the BABC. During this bar year, the membership committee decided to achieve the following goals: (1) Meet the \$204k membership budget goal; (2) plan an End of Summer Members Only Reception; (3) solicit Membership committee and Executive Council members to assist with contacting attorneys who have not renewed their membership; (4) Work with Events Committee and/or YLD to plan an outdoor coffee social which could also be a recruitment event with donuts, coffee and tea, and; (4) Kick-off a January 2021 New Member Drive.

At the September 30, 2020, organizational meeting, the committee learned that, at that time, dues were on par with this time last year. The committee was advised that reminder invoices would be sent shortly and that members who did not renew their membership are purged yearly. The plan of action decided at this meeting was to be ready to launch a renewal campaign by mid-October. It was decided that non-members and completely new members would be a focus of a campaign set to start January 1, 2021. In addition, considering the economic hardships created by the pandemic, the committee voted to implement a hardship waiver program.

On October 2, 2020, President Kadish sent an email to the Executive Council regarding the proposed **Hardship Waiver**

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## Bar Association of Baltimore City Committee Reports 2020-2021

**Program** and the Council voted to approve the initiative. As was stated in the email, the membership committee recognized that at least some portion of our membership, or their firms, might be facing financial difficulties and that now was not the time to abandon them, or be mercenary about dues. And, while goodwill would be generated by this initiative, the dominating purpose of the initiative was to be of help to our members in any way possible during these unprecedented times. The committee worked diligently to get the Hardship Waiver Program application drafted and approved, and by mid-December, the entire membership received information regarding the program.

The committee then shifted focus to the **Membership Retention Program**. With the help of Ms. Sanzone, all Executive Council members were given a list of names of people to be contacted regarding renewing their membership. Each council member was also given a template letter to be inserted into the body of an email. The members who were contacted also received a copy of their invoice and information about the government/public interest discount.

The committee then met in January 2021 to discuss the **New Member Campaign**. This campaign focused on completely new members and members who had been purged from the rolls. Ms. Sanzone again helped the committee with securing a professionally created flyer and she was instrumental in finding and editing a user-friendly list of several hundred attorneys practicing in the Baltimore City region. There were a lot of moving parts to get this campaign instituted including having the IT department make necessary changes to the online application. The campaign launched on March 15, 2021, and gave new members free membership until June 30, 2021. The committee is happy to report that the New Member Campaign was launched with great success and the BABC gained 61 new members, with dates of admission to the bar ranging from 1972 to 2020. To-date, this is one of the most successful BABC new member campaigns.

The BABC ended the year collecting \$167,905 in membership dues, and while this is short of the \$204,000 goal, the goodwill extended with the Hardship Waiver Program and the free New Membership Campaign, is priceless.

## Pro Bono and Access to Legal Services

Catherine A. Bledsoe, Esq., *Office of the Attorney General*

The BABC Pro Bono and Access to Legal Services Committee met regularly during the 2020-2021 bar year. The meetings and programs were conducted remotely, via Zoom, due to the pandemic. The committee, comprised of members of the private bar, government and public interest lawyers, and members of the judiciary, held two training programs for attorneys interested in providing pro bono legal assistance to low-income Marylanders.

On February 19, 2021, the committee held its first training program entitled “**Tax Sale Foreclosure Prevention in Baltimore City**.” The training, which was co-sponsored by the Maryland Volunteer Lawyers Service (“MVLS”) and the Pro Bono Resource Center (“PBRC”), was open to all attorneys and housing counselors interested in helping homeowners and/or nonprofit groups facing tax sale foreclosure in Baltimore City. The training was well attended and resulted in several attorneys agreeing to handle at least one pro bono tax sale foreclosure case in the coming year.

On April 14, 2021, the committee held a second training program entitled “**Guardianship of Person and Property Appointments**.” During the training, which was co-sponsored

by MVLS, attorneys **Janet Fedder, Esq.**, **Carolyn Malinowski, Esq.**, and **Caitlin Tepe, Esq.** guided participants through the process of representing low-income Marylanders in filing petitions for guardianship. The training was well attended, with over thirty attorneys participating.

On June 5, 2021, the committee held an outdoor **Baltimore City Pro Bono Event** at the Mt. Pleasant Church in Baltimore. The event was co-sponsored by Maryland Legal Aid, MVLS, and PBRC. The Church provided the space, along with tables and chairs, and graciously opened its indoor space to members of the public wishing to cool off on a particularly hot day. Maryland Legal Aid provided staffing, computers and printers, and food and beverages for the volunteers. The attorneys who volunteered provided a total of forty-two clients with free legal advice on a wide range of topics, including bankruptcy, family law, expungement, and consumer debt.

In addition to the training programs mentioned above, members of the committee participated in selecting the recipients of the prestigious Maryland Pro Bono Service Awards that were presented at the Annual Maryland State Bar Association Meeting.



## Bar Association of Baltimore City Committee Reports 2020-2021

### Technology Committee

The Honorable W. Michel Pierson, *Circuit Court for Baltimore City*  
Scarlett Corso, Esq., *Franklin & Prokopik, P.C.*

Robert Carroll Baker, III, Esq., *Neuberger, Quinn, Gielen, Rubin  
& Gibber, P.A.*

The BABC Technology Committee met several times during the 2020-2021 bar year, sponsored an educational webinar for attorneys, and led an initiative to create list serves to facilitate discussion between BABC members.

On November 12, 2021, the Committee presented a webinar on **Court Proceedings in The Age of Covid- Remote Participation for Attorneys**. The seminar included a panel discussion facilitated by **Scarlett Corso, Esq.**, Committee Co-Chair, whose panelists were **Circuit Court Judge Lawrence Fletcher-Hill**, **District Court Judge Nicole Edgerton Taylor**, and **Circuit Court Chief Court Reporter Trish Trikeriotis**. The discussion included a broad array of topics relating to techni-

cal and practical guidance to effectively participate in remote proceedings as well as other aspects of remote proceedings of interest to the bar. The webinar also featured an interactive exchange in response to participant questions. The seminar was well attended and received an extremely positive response.

Beginning in Fall 2021, the Committee commenced an initiative, under the leadership of Committee Co-Chair **Robert Baker, Esq.**, to facilitate the creation of online forums for bar association members to share knowledge and experience and discuss topics related to the practice of law, which would be known as **BABC Groups**. After study and discussion, the decision was made to move forward with listservs through the Association's software and website vendor. Detailed plans were developed for administration and development of the project, as well as rules and guidelines for participants. Web development and implementation is ongoing.

### Workers' Compensation Committee

Angela Garcia Kozlowski, Esq., *Franklin & Prokopik, P.C.*

The Workers' Compensation Committee seeks to be an educational and collegial resource for Baltimore City attorneys on both the claimants' and employers' sides of the bar. This year was challenging for all, as we dealt with very limited personal interaction between members of the bar at the Workers' Compensation Commission due to staggered dockets. The Maryland Workers' Compensation Educational Association (MWCEA) elected not to hold its 2020 annual convention in Ocean City, but the convention will return in-person in Ocean City in September 2021. The Workers' Compensation Commission will resume regular 9:30 a.m. dockets in August 2021. The Committee held an initial virtual meeting in September 2020 but elected not to hold any virtual workshops or seminars. We look forward to hosting both in-person and virtual seminars in 2021-22.

## Time to Renew!

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# YLD Public Service Event at Duncan Street Miracle Garden

April 24, 2021

On Saturday, April 24, the BABC's YLD Public Service Committee and its wonderful volunteers partnered with the Duncan Street Miracle Garden to bring in Spring! Our volunteers helped to spread mulch, plant transplants and seeds, and prepare garden beds for planting. The garden is a half-acre, and the fruits and vegetables grown there are often donated to local churches and soup kitchens. Thanks to all who participated!

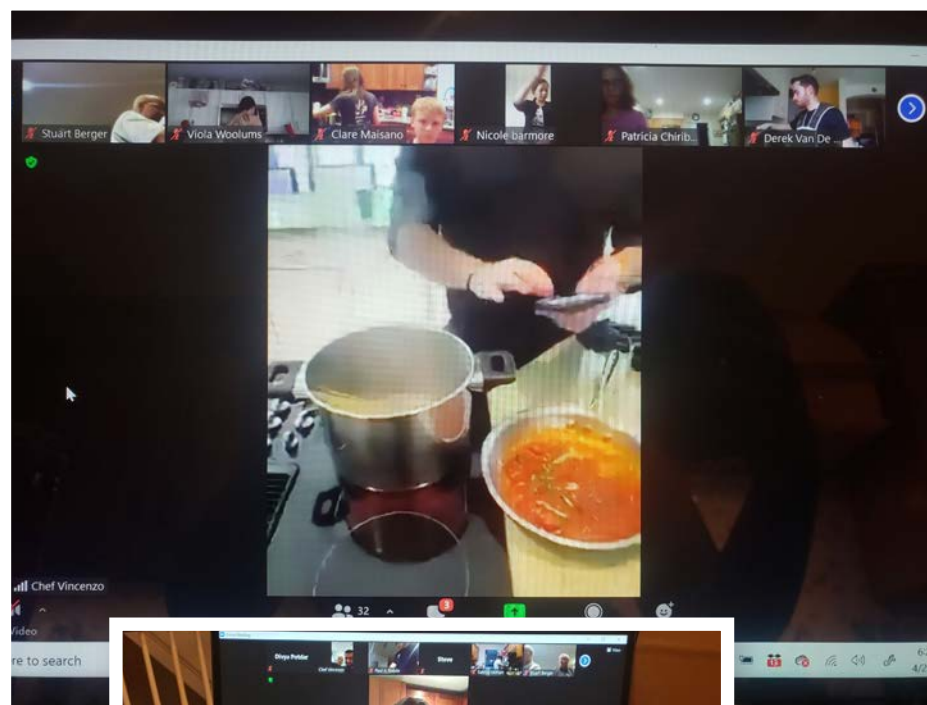




# YLD Virtual Vittles Cooking Class

April 29, 2021

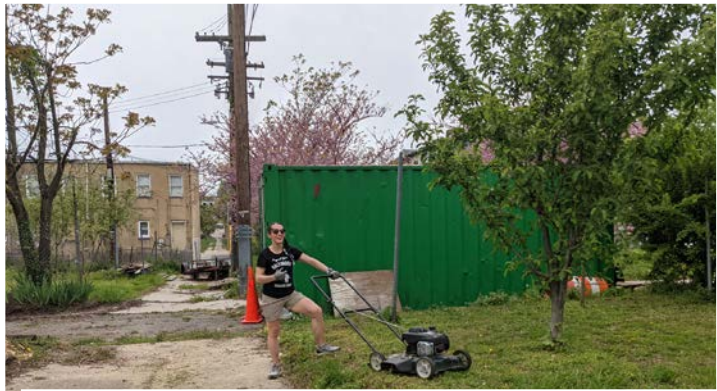
On Thursday, April 29, our Membership and Mentorship Committees teamed up to host the Virtual Vittles event, an online cooking class with Vincenzo Schiano and Chef Gennaro di Benedetto of Limoncello Baltimore. Not only did attendees learn how to prepare Bucatini all'Amatriciana with step-by-step instructions, but they also got a tasty surprise in their take-home meal kits... house made limoncello!





# YLD Public Service Committee Volunteer Event at Filbert Street Garden

May 15, 2021





# YLD Council End of Year Celebration

June 5, 2021

On Saturday, June 5, the Young Lawyers' Division Council celebrated the end of the bar year with crabs, corn on the cobb and desserts at Druid Hill Park. Thank you to YLD Chair, Lauren Lake, for a good year and leading the YLD.





# Baltimore Bar Foundation's Annual Golf Outing

June 28, 2021

Despite the heat, all the golfers had a great time at the Baltimore Bar Foundation's Annual Golf Outing on Monday, June 28. Thank you to the 120 golfers and the many sponsors of the Baltimore Bar Foundation's Annual Golf Outing Fundraiser at Woodholme Country Club. Great golf, great course, and a great way to support the BBF. Special thank you to our Title Sponsor, The Bar Associations Insurance Agency, Inc.









# Kathy's Sanzone's Last Day at the BABC

June 30, 2021

Some members of the BABC, members of the Bench and Bar and friends came outside to the steps of the Cummings Courthouse to surprise Kathy on her last day at the BABC.





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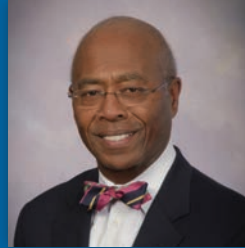
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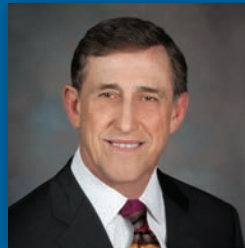
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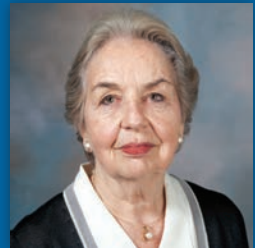
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