



# CITY BAR REPORT

News from the Bar Association of Baltimore City

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## Lawyers Learn Differently- And Why It Matters



Amy Petkovsek,  
BABC Secretary

Learning- the process by which each of us takes the many outputs that our brains receive each day, and decide to use these outputs to implement the knowledge in a meaningful way. Benjamin Franklin so wisely told us, “Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn.” As practitioners in the legal services field, we often find ourselves facing the challenges of developing trainings so that less experienced colleagues, pro bono professionals and peers might learn in a way that can be tangibly applied to their work. While legal content is often, for good reason, at the forefront of these training development efforts, there is a lack of attention paid to how, exactly, that content might best be conveyed to the learners. When your primary learner is also – a lawyer- there are

varying considerations that will make your training more palatable, and eventually, more effective.

### Lawyers as Critical Thinkers

Whether the ability to apply facts to the law is interpreted as a critical thinking superpower, or viewed as an overly analytical mindset, individuals educated as attorneys go through rigorous and intentional training to be able to think in a certain way. Once it becomes a part of the tools that a lawyer has, this new lens of critical thinking begins to shape how attorneys intake all information, and thus, how lawyers learn. In fact, there are books written to highlight the benefits of this style of approaching new evidence for the general non-attorney population. In *Thinking Like a Lawyer: A Framework for Teaching Critical Thinking to All Students*, author Colin Seale highlights aspects of legal thinking that can be applied to youth in formational stages of education. His website, thinklaw.us, emphasizes that critical thinking skills are essential for all educators in primary and secondary schools, and offers a panoply of resources to

increase lawyer-like thinking skills in the general population as their brains grow. Similarly, in her book *How to Think Like a Lawyer- and Why: A Common Sense Guide to Everyday Dilemmas*, law professor Kim Wehle teaches non-attorneys to use the legal brain for advantages in buying homes, salary negotiations and everyday life decisions. Professor Wehle makes the point that breaking complex issues down into smaller parts that are more digestible supports better decision making.

So where does this enviable, replicable skill of critical thinking come from? Well, the process of Socratic questioning, still used in the majority of introductory law classes across the nation, is intended to have the learner apply the law and facts instead of listening to a lengthy lecture without active brain engagement. In her 2017 article, Shirlene Brown writes on [lawschooltoolbox.com](http://lawschooltoolbox.com) about the challenges in turning off the lawyer brain. She notes that law students and attorneys begin to analyze all inputs through a legal lens, for even when

enjoying an episode of a favorite tv show, the legal brain will begin to overanalyze, imagine random hypotheticals, and work through them. And this idea of lawyers brains being “re-trained” when they become an attorney is not new- in the *Journal of Legal Education* in 1983, published by the Association of American Law Schools, John O. Mudd stated, “[a]sk any lawyer or law professor to identify the most important features of a sound legal education and inevitably at the head of the list will be training to ‘think like a lawyer’”. In a more recent analysis, a May 2019 article on [forbes.com](http://forbes.com) by Mark A. Cohen speaks to the need to apply these traditional lawyering brain skills to the digital age, and acknowledges, that critical thinking and problem solving are “key elements of traditional legal pedagogy.” With this understanding, that for generations, attorney brains have been intentionally trained to learn differently- how do we move forward with development of continued legal education in a meaningful way?

## YLD Bar Report (February 2026)



Derek Van De Walle,  
YLD Chair

The Young Lawyers’ Division took a brief pause in January to recuperate, recharge, and, like much of Baltimore, do a fair amount of snow shoveling. We’re returning in February with renewed energy and an exciting slate of programming focused on connection, creativity, and

professional development. In early February, the YLD participated in a Judicial Clerkship Panel at University of Baltimore School of Law, co-hosted with the Maryland State Bar Association Young Lawyers’ Section. The panel brought together former law clerks from State and Federal Courts to offer candid advice on the application process, interviews, and life in chambers. Attendance was strong, and the discussion was especially valuable for students considering clerkships at both the trial and appellate levels.

Looking ahead, the YLD is excited to roll out a mix of social and service-oriented events, including a cocktail-making class and pizza night, the return of Tips on Tap featuring one of our local judges, and a collaboration with Courting Art to celebrate and promote the arts in Baltimore City public schools.

Finally, the Young Lawyers’ Division is pleased to announce that nominations are opening for the YLD Spring Awards, including the Rising Star Award, Public Service Award, and Sustained Leadership Award. These awards recognize outstanding

young attorneys who exemplify excellence in the profession, dedication to public service, and sustained leadership within the Bar and the broader community. YLD members are encouraged to nominate deserving colleagues and help highlight the talent, commitment, and impact of young lawyers across Baltimore.

We look forward to seeing members out this spring and continuing to build community through engaging and creative programming.

RAISE THE BAR BY  
ATTENDING BAR EVENTS

Find and register for events at  
[www.baltimorebar.org/ecalendar](http://www.baltimorebar.org/ecalendar)

The Bar Association of Baltimore City  
presents a  
Women's History Month event

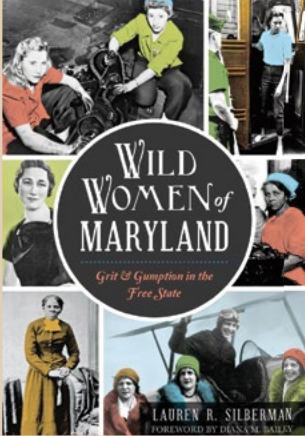
Wild Women of Maryland

Join the BABC as we welcome Lauren R. Silberman, author of "Wild Women of Maryland Grit & Gumption in the Free State."  
This event will focus on the legacy created by several of Maryland's most daring women, including Margaret Brent, Etta Maddox, and "Lady Law" Violet Hill Whyte.

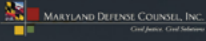
March 26, 2026

12:30 - 1:30 pm

Clarence M. Mitchell, Jr. Courthouse, Room 504  
Lunch will be served







Bar Association of Baltimore City  
Maryland Association For Justice  
Maryland Defense Counsel  
Maryland State Bar Association

MEET THE JUDGES

OF THE CIRCUIT COURT AND DISTRICT COURT  
FOR BALTIMORE CITY

April 15, 2026 5:00 – 7:00 P.M.  
The Renaissance Baltimore Harborplace Hotel  
202 E. Pratt Street Baltimore, MD 21202  
Enjoy a forum for judges and lawyers to meet one another in a social setting outside of the courtroom.

ADMISSION \$35 PER PERSON  
Includes One Drink Ticket and Lite Fare

Register online at <https://www.baltimorebar.org/calendar/>



The Bar Association of Baltimore City  
Continuing Legal Education Committee Presents:  
The 2026 District Court Trial Advocacy Series



During this three-part series, gain courtroom confidence and receive an introductory primer on District Court practice from sitting judges and experienced practitioners  
April 15 – Strategies for Opening and Closing Arguments and Courtroom Decorum at Goodell Devries  
April 22 – Presentation of Evidence and Ethics Considerations at Silverman Thompson  
April 29 – Direct and Cross Examination and Impeachment at Gallagher LLP  
12:00-1:30pm for all three sessions  
Lunch will be included  
Free to members, \$30 per session for nonmembers  
Register at [baltimorebar.org/ecalender](https://baltimorebar.org/ecalender)



THE BAR ASSOCIATION OF BALTIMORE CITY EVENTS COMMITTEE PRESENTS



Baseball Night

ORIOLES VS ASTROS



TUESDAY APRIL 28, 2026 | 6:35 P.M.

CAMDEN YARDS

TICKETS \$65 - INCLUDES FOOD, DRINKS, PICNIC PERCH

PURCHASE TICKETS BY MARCH 10 AT  
[BALTIMOREBAR.ORG/ECALENDAR](https://baltimorebar.org/ecalender)

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The generous support of Sustaining Members of the Bar Association of Baltimore City greatly assists this bar association in fulfilling its mission and achieving further growth and success. The unwavering dedication of these members ensures the BABC will continue its long and distinguished tradition of service to our legal community and the public.

If you are interested in becoming a Sustaining Member, please contact Natalie Foster at [nfoster@baltimorebar.org](mailto:nfoster@baltimorebar.org).

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NOTICE FROM THE BABC

**NOMINATING COMMITTEE**

On behalf of the BABC Nominating Committee, pursuant to BABC Bylaws, Article XI, Section 2, the Nominating Committee is forwarding the following nominations for the 2026-2027 Executive Council:

President-Elect: Samuel Pulver  
Vice-President: Valda Ricks  
Treasurer: Amy Petkovsek  
Secretary: Ryan Dietrich  
Elected Member: Hon. Anthony Vittoria  
Elected Member: Hon. Otis Freeman  
Elected Member: Gary Norman  
MSBA Board of Governors: Hon. Lynn Stewart Mays  
MSBA Board of Governors: Robert Anbinder  
ABA Representative: Hon. Michael Reed

Fifteen (15) or more Members may nominate candidates for any one (1) or more offices and positions to be voted on, provided such nominations be in writing and be filed with and received by the Secretary at the Association's headquarters not later than March 15, or on the next succeeding day in which the offices of the Association are open for business.

Please contact me with any questions or concerns.



Secretary  
The Bar Association of Baltimore City



**YLD Nominating Committee Report**

The Nominating Committee of the Young Lawyers' Division, comprised of Rachel Samakow (Chair), Kerri Smith, Samuel Pulver, Maria Bermudez Wharton, Sarah Belardi, Divya Potdar and Lauren Lake has considered applicants for 2026-2027 Division Officers, Elected Member, and Members-At-Large and has submitted its nominating slate.

In accordance with the By-Laws of the Young Lawyers' Division, you are hereby given notice of the nominations of the Nominating Committee:

Chair Elect - Viola Woolums  
Secretary - Steven Kappen  
Treasurer - Stephen Craig  
Elected Member - TJ Creevy  
Member at Large - Michael Spanos

Jacob Dorfman will serve as Chair of the Young Lawyers' Division in 2026-2027.

The By-Laws of the Division provide that any Division member may seek a nomination to any one or more of the positions stated above, provided that the member submits to the Nominating Committee, a petition of nomination which shall be signed by not less than 15 members of the Division. Petitions are due at Association headquarters no later than 4:30 p.m. on Friday, March 14, 2025.

Nominating petitions are available at Association headquarters.



Committee Chair,  
Bar Association of Baltimore City, Young Lawyers' Division

**LAW DAY 2026**

**SATURDAY, APRIL 25**

**Senior Legal Services 33rd Annual Law Day for Seniors**



**Seniors & their caregivers**  
RSVP by April 22 to:  
Senior Legal Services  
T: (443) 264-4950 or (410) 396-1322  
E: slsinfo@baltimorebar.org

**Location:**  
**Middle Branch Fitness & Wellness Center**  
201 Reedbird Avenue,  
Baltimore, MD 21225

**Time:**  
8:00am - 3:00pm

**What to Expect:**

- Free Admission
- Free On-Site Parking
- Handicap Accessible
- Useful Presentation Topics
  - Home Ownership Issues
  - Elder Abuse
  - Estate Planning
  - Probate and more!
- Vendor Displays
- Free Lunch

Donations Welcome



**BALTIMORE BAR FOUNDATION**

**GOLF OUTING**

**TUESDAY, MAY 26, 2026**

**EAGLE'S NEST COUNTRY CLUB**

**12801 STONE HILL RD PHOENIX, MD 21131**



**\$200/PLAYER**

**REGISTRATION - 11 A.M.**  
**SHOTGUN START - 1 P.M.**

**REGISTER NOW**

**LUNCH, DINNER, DRINKS, AWARDS, RAFFLE**

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