

Volume 21, Number 2

# RICHBARNEWS

*Newsletter of the Richland County Bar Association*

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# **RICHBARNEWS**

*Newsletter of the Richland County Bar Association*



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## **Executive Committee**

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# From the Editors

by Chris Boguski & Jescelyn Spitz



I always enjoy looking at the “On This Day” photos that come up on my iPhone, the review of which gives me a few minutes to reflect on how many things have happened since those years have passed, and what life events have led me to the present day. Looking at the connections of the people I’ve met in relation to people I’ve already known is interesting because I get to see how associating with certain people and groups leads to common connections. If I remember correctly, I think I first met co-editor Jescelyn Spitz in law school, probably about twelve years ago (my iPhone photos would probably tell me it was during another classmate’s wedding in Islamorada, Florida). At the time, I didn’t expect we’d both be living and working in Columbia this many years later and that we would be members of the Richland County Bar Association.

From then to now though, we have both made new connections and while keeping up with old connections which ultimately has lead us to our most recent endeavor as being Co-Editors of the Richland County Bar Association Newsletter. I know we are both excited about taking on this new position and are looking forward to keeping the RCBA’s members updated on what is happening in Richland County. While I don’t know what we will be doing twelve years from now, I’m looking forward to being able to go back through my iPhone (or current day equivalent) and remember all the people I’ve met and experiences I’ve had along the way, and I have no doubt that a number of those people and experiences will be related to the RCBA and its members, and Jes and I look forward to that.



## GET INVOLVED IN THE RCBA

### *We need you!*

Did you know the RCBA has eleven active committees and seven court liaisons? If you’re interested in growing our membership, educating our member through CLE’s, planning member-focused bench & bar events, volunteering legal services at our HELP Clinic, engaging various affinity groups within our bar, and more – we have a place for you!

If you have an occasional hour or are interested in a longer term commitment, please consider getting involved in one of our committees. All are excellent opportunities to strengthen leadership skills, connect with other attorneys locally, and give back to our association. Please contact Executive Director Mandy Wren at [mandy.wren@scbar.org](mailto:mandy.wren@scbar.org) to find a place that fits your interests and availability!

# From the President

by Ashley Story



Summer is my favorite time of year. As I've gotten older, I realize that summer begs for us to slow down, but there is always work to be done. It is my hope that you caught a much needed break last summer. No matter the season, just know that the RCBA was working hard to bring you programming and events through our amazing task force of leaders. We have a wide variety of committees, and the attorneys who lead those efforts are amazing.

Brian Comer, Chair of the Lunch & Learn Committee, continued to organize and moderate discussions with our members throughout the pandemic. He's taken Lunch & Learn events to a new level by organizing webinars, virtual events, and panel discussions, as well as by engaging members on a variety of topics - all for valuable CLE credit.

Taylor Gilliam, Chair of the Public Service Committee, worked with Transitions to re-open our Project HELP Legal Clinic, which has offered legal services to Columbia's homeless population for more than a decade. Taylor is one of the most involved young lawyers I know, and he's passionate about pro bono and legal aid in our community; Project HELP is organized by volunteer attorneys.

Mandy Pittman, Chair of the Membership Committee, is also an active member in at least two other RCBA Committees while she finds the time to lead. Mandy comes to every single RCBA event; she always has a smile on her face and partners with other committees to offer events that our members enjoy, including our recent movie night featuring Judge Joe Anderson's introduction of *My Cousin Vinny*.

Susan Porter and Alex Postic, Co-Chairs of the Ethics CLE, start planning this annual CLE event at its conclusion every year. Susan and Alex never disappoint with the folks that they select to engage our members and got a lot of kudos for this past year's event, which even went into details about hair styles – who is cool enough to do that?!

Lamar Fyall agreed to take the helm as Chair of our Memorial Service, one of our association's most time-honored traditions. Lamar, who welcomed his first daughter recently, adds the Memorial Service to his long list of RCBA commitments. The Memorial Service provides our bar a unique opportunity to honor those members who are no longer with us, particularly this year as we recognize those from both 2019 and 2020.

Cheslyne Brighthop and Jamie Rutkowski serve as the Co-Chairs for our Diversity Committee. Together, they conduct monthly meetings to foster open dialogue. There are four – F-O-U-R! – sub-committees within the Diversity Committee, all of which are led by more of our Bar members to meet the Committee's

goals. They are growing, developing, and expanding our leadership!

Tiffany (Butler) Holt and Tina Cundari have Co-Chaired our Wellness Committee since its inception. They consistently offer advice through the E-Blast, organize events, and encourage Bar members to lead wellness activities, including, just to name a few: office yoga; the Science of Well-Being course; and various walks, talks, and tours – all within the last year.

Olivia Jones and Jonathan Milling Co-Chair our Solo/Small Firm Committee. They recently issued a survey to members, seeking input about your needs to find the best ways to offer networking events, educational activities, and programming that will most benefit solo/small firms.

Sara Weathers and Alden Dalton, Co-Chairs of our Young Lawyers Committee, began planning events for our young lawyers earlier this year. In June, they partnered with Jack Pringle to host a CLE walk along the riverfront about creating space and resilience. I look forward to the other activities they plan for the remainder of 2021.

Reece Williams, former President, continues to serve and leads our Recognition Committee. There ought to be an honorary Reece Williams Day to celebrate Reece and his dedication to the RCBA; his input and institutional knowledge of our Bar is unparalleled, and we thank him, tremendously.

Bryan Caskey and Rhodes Bailey Co-Chair our Courthouse Committee. When rumblings of a new Richland County Courthouse started, they jumped on board and ensured that our attorney voices were heard.

Last but not least, Jescelyn Spitz and Chris Boguski recently took over as new Co-Chairs for the *RichBar News*. Jes, who had her first baby over the summer, and Chris have taken over an incredible amount of work in collaborating with Bar members, editing the articles, and seeking out information that appeals to you.

Here's to all of our amazing leaders<sup>1</sup>. Toni Morrison said, "You are your best thing." The RCBA is the best thing because of our leaders, our volunteers, and the time they give to it. We celebrate that and look forward to their continued hard work and success.

*Ashley C. Story is a partner at White & Story, LLC and can be reached at [astory@sodacitylaw.com](mailto:astory@sodacitylaw.com) or (803) 814-0993.*

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<sup>1</sup> I've been told I have a word limit, but I am thankful for all of our leaders and want you to know each of them. Stay tuned for our next issue to hear more about our Court Liaisons and others who serve. Interested in becoming a leader? Reach out to any of these folks; our Executive Committee Members; or Mandy Wren, our fabulous Executive Director, for more information.

# RCBA Strategic Plan Update

In 2019, pre-pandemic and when life was more “normal” - whatever that means now, Past President Kristen Horne led efforts to develop a Strategic Plan for the Richland County Bar Association. Under Kristen’s leadership, the RCBA hired respected consultants The Weathers Group to develop a Strategic Plan that (1) recognizes our mission and the values of our membership; (2) contemplates our various strengths and opportunities for growth; and (3) identifies priorities, goals, and indicators for upcoming years. As part of that process, The Weathers Group solicited input and feedback from members and RCBA leadership, which included in-person focus groups and meetings conducted over a period of several weeks.

Kristen shared one of the key reasons the Executive Committee undertook the strategic planning process was the organization’s maturity and continued growth. A strategic plan is one of the hallmarks of a well-established organization, allowing us to see where we want to be and guides us on how to get there. Simply stated, strengthening our organization can strengthen our community. Kristen noted it was gratifying to work with members, as well as past and present leadership, to identify what is important in serving our nearly 2,000 members. We sincerely appreciate our members, stakeholders, and leaders who engaged in this process and provided valuable insight and direction to ensure the success of the RCBA.

Below you can see the priorities and goals that were adopted by the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee is committed to monitoring our progress, meeting the potential success indicators for these three priorities, and attaining their related goals. It is in that spirit that we are happy to share some of our successes with you from the past eighteen months – what pandemic? – and areas that we can target as a team.

## RCBA GOALS & PRIORITIES

**Priority:** *Collaboration*

**Goal:** *Foster mission-driven partnerships, alliances, and collaborations*

**Action Steps:**

- With inspiration from our reinvigorated YL Committee leadership, the RCBA has hosted events geared specifically to younger members of our Bar, including a socially distanced, nature focused walk along the riverfront.
- Establishing the RCBA Diversity Committee, with four active sub-committees, has focused our efforts and increased our capacity to educate and diversify our membership, as well as broadening our reach beyond the Bar and into our community.
- Committee leadership continued to be engaged and effective throughout the pandemic, promoting value and benefits of an RCBA membership in the midst of challenging times (Probate Court Liaison organized virtual Q&A when courts closed, Solo/Small Committee survey to members on specific needs, and Public Service Committee involvement in Eviction Diversion efforts).



### **Priority:** *Engagement*

**Goal:** *Develop and strengthen internal and external stakeholder relationships.*

#### **Action Steps:**

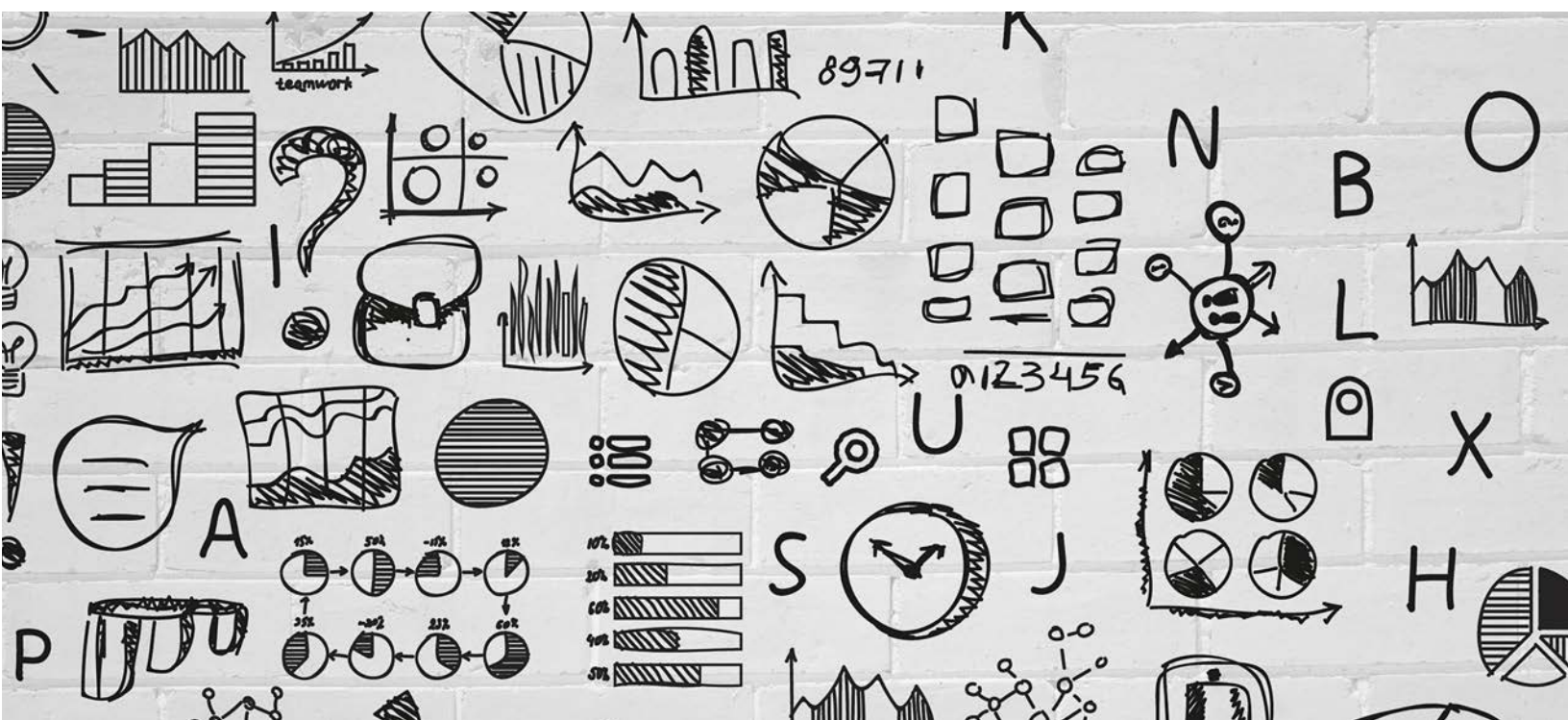
- RCBA has fostered a sense of community by organizing and co-hosting events with other organizations, including the University of South Carolina School of Law and the Lexington County Bar Association.
- Richland County Bar leadership remains engaged at both the state and national levels with organizations focused on best practices, connecting legal professionals and providing policy guidance for Bar executives and volunteer leaders.
- Committee leadership and Court Liaisons have worked diligently to cross-promote member events and resources by partnering with one or more other Bar Committees/Liaisons to reach multiple members (Movie Night on the Lawn presented by the Membership and Wellness Committees).

### **Priority:** *Capacity Building*

**Goal:** *Increase the capacity of the organization to meet its mission.*

#### **Action Steps:**

- During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, we leveraged technology to new heights and engaged more members in our educational programming – examples include member-led Lunch & Learns via Zoom Webinar, creative Wellness opportunities offered virtually, professional livestream of our Annual Business Meeting, and the highly-attended Ethics CLE seminar presented from multiple remote locations.
- Executive leadership authorized the Executive Director to pivot as appropriate to remain relevant and accessible to members and update technology necessary to carry out our mission while working remotely.



# Profiles of RCBA Leadership

## Brett Stevens

*Stevens Law, LLC and Family Court Liaison*

### What interests do you have outside of law?

I love reading novels, playing tennis, and hanging out with my son, James.

### What is the best piece of advice you have ever received?

"Be curious, not judgmental." - Ted Lasso

### What is your favorite book, movie, or music?

Favorite recent novel is *American Dirt*. It was a rubber-necking experience.



### Why did you choose to get involved in the Richland County Bar? What benefits do you see to your involvement?

It's an enthusiastic, supportive group of attorneys and staff who are working to better the profession.

## Jamie Rutkoski

*Associate at Kassel McVey and Co-Chair,  
Diversity Committee*

### What have you been up to lately?

I'm working for two of the best lawyers in the game, John Kassel and Theile McVey, on everything from car wrecks to medical malpractice. Outside of work, I'm milking the remainder of these long warm days and trying to be outside as much as possible.

### What hobbies do you enjoy, or more generally what interests do you have outside of law?

My soon-to-be husband and I enjoy golfing together. We love any and all sporting events from Gamecock volleyball to Tampa Bay Lightning hockey. We love travel. We love eating good food. We hate wedding planning.





**Why did you choose to get involved in the Richland County Bar?**

I've been involved in RCBA since I became a lawyer with the hopes of creating relationships with other lawyers in my community. With the creation of the Diversity Committee in summer of 2020, I found an opportunity to volunteer my time working towards something I'm passionate about. I truly believe the more diverse our Bar is, the better we can serve our community.

**Why should someone join your committee or get involved in a leadership capacity w/ RCBA?**

Every lawyer should be doing something to improve the profession and/or give back to the communities we serve. RCBA is a great organization to facilitate that. Ashley Story and Shea Brighthop recognized the need for a Diversity Committee and we've been able to jumpstart the committee with several events and programs to encourage and support diversity within the bar and facilitate access to the legal system for all communities. I have high hopes for what we can accomplish this year!

**Cheslyne Shea Brighthop**

*Associate at Turner Padget and Co-Chair,  
Diversity Committee*

**What are your hobbies?**

My hobbies are keeping Cardi, my dog, entertained and tired. I also enjoy (sometimes) working out with Ashley Story with our trainer, Ashley O'Hearn – check her out! [Optimumoutcomes.training@gmail.com](mailto:Optimumoutcomes.training@gmail.com)

**What is the best piece of advice you have ever received?**

Be you. Always.

**What is your favorite restaurant?**

I really like Cantina 76. It's the margaritas and queso for me!

**Why did you choose to get involved in the Richland County Bar?**

Ashley Story and Mandy Wren are the reasons I'm involved with the RCBA. They're great people, easy to work with, and are truly devoted to ensuring the RCBA is keeping all of its members engaged.

**Why should someone join your committee or get involved in a leadership capacity w/ RCBA?**

Becoming a leader within the RCBA most certainly puts you in a position in which you become personally invested in members' individual success and the success of the organization as a whole.

# Bar Bites

By Trey Harrison



In the past, the Richland County Bar Newsletter included a “Bar Bites” section that highlighted what attorneys were doing, watching, and making in their own homes. We have decided to bring this section back and transform it into a column that will focus more on what is happening in the Midlands. We believe this transformation is especially timely to help support the businesses and organizations that have grappled with COVID-19. Hopefully, we will be able to gather more as a community in our local establishments. If you are interested in contributing to *Bar Bites*, please feel free to email me at [treyharrison1@gmail.com](mailto:treyharrison1@gmail.com).

## Soda City Market

A Columbia staple, Soda City Market is open on Saturdays from 9:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M. on Main Street and boasts over 5,000 visitors each weekend to see on average 150 vendors. The market has fresh produce, a variety of delicious food offerings, and numerous other hand-crafted products that are available for purchase. After picking up a great haul from the market, lots of visitors enjoy eating their treats at Boyd Plaza while listening to local street performers or visiting the State House’s grounds to appreciate some sunshine and history. Pro tip: Visit the market early in the morning to interact with the vendors and learn more about the products that are available.



## First Thursdays

On the first Thursday of each month, businesses located around Main Street (from the 1200 to 1700 block) stay open a little later for a block party-type event. There is always great music and camaraderie for visitors of all ages. When not jamming out in the front row, this is the perfect opportunity to stroll around Main Street and stop in one of the businesses because many of them offer special deals and sales during this time. Pro tip: My favorite place to duck into is Mast General Store, which has the perfect combination of outdoor gear and delicious candies by the pound. Mast even allows customers to bring their well-behaved dogs in the store too.



## Bourbon

Bourbon, a whiskey bar and Cajun-Creole restaurant, is located at 1214 Main Street and is known for its intimate setting, craft cocktails, and selection of over 450 whiskeys, which is the largest whiskey selection in the Southeast. Bourbon recently opened its new whiskey lounge in the space that used to be Blue Flour Bakery. (Do not worry, Blue Flour Bakery's Irmo location is still turning out delicious treats.) Bourbon's new lounge provides an additional gathering space to enjoy small plates, craft cocktails, and other beverages. Pro tip: Bourbon does not take reservations, so make sure you have a contingency plan in case there is a wait. The Whig and Hall's Chophouse are great places to grab a drink while you wait for a table.

## Lula Drake Wine Parlor

Lula Drake Wine Parlor calls 1635 Main Street home and is open Tuesday through Saturday, starting at 5:00 P.M. each day. During most of the pandemic, Lula Drake remained closed in an effort to keep its staff and customers safe. However, as vaccination rates continued to climb, Lula Drake made a grand reopening in July and has introduced new dishes that you have to experience for yourself. Do not worry, Lula Drake is still the place you have come to know and love with a thoughtful and witty wine menu. Pro tip: Bring some friends, or meet some new friends there, to enjoy a charcuterie board and the cacio e pepe.

*Trey Harrison, Staff Attorney, South Carolina Court of Appeals, and he can be reached at [treyharrison1@gmail.com](mailto:treyharrison1@gmail.com)*





# If You're Happy and You Know It...

## RCBA Happiness Course Finishes Strong

By Mandy Wren



What if happiness is a skill? What does scientific research teach us about happiness? Are there specific habits that “happy people” practice? These were just a few of the questions participants pondered when the RCBA Wellness Committee offered members an opportunity to take the online course “The Science of Well-Being.” Taught by Dr. Laurie Santos, Yale University Professor of Psychology and host of the popular podcast *The Happiness Lab*, the Happiness Course was a unique departure from Richland County Bar typical member activities, but during this most atypical time, it seemed like an opportunity worthy of consideration.

So, how did this come to be? Despite the challenges over the past year, our Wellness Committee has remained steadfast providing valuable and relevant wellness tips, tours, playlists, activities and more (both virtual and in-person with precautions) for our membership. Recognizing the significant stress and daily pressures of the legal profession, in addition to the added anxieties of the last year, Wellness Committee Co-Chairs Tina Cundari and Tiffany Butler Holt have long maintained that wellness is more than just physical health. As the committee discussed possible plans for the summer, member Shannon Bobertz suggested RCBA consider offering this online course to interested attorneys. She proposed to lead the course in a book club format where participants would agree to complete selected videos and readings, learn various “rewirements” (weekly practices aimed at rewiring habits to boost mood and overall well-being) and report back on their challenges and successes. Shannon, along with several college friends, decided to take the course in the summer of 2020 at the height of the pandemic. Like many of us, she was filled with anxiety and when her usual calming strategies were no longer working, it seemed like the perfect time to dig deeper into the science of well-being. Shannon committed to putting this research into practice over the past year, sharing that while the concepts may appear simple, one must be intentional in order to see real change.





The course appeared to be a creative, yet workable idea for busy lawyers managing practices, families, and other responsibilities. But would anyone sign up? To our delight, ten curious, courageous, and somewhat hesitant attorneys of varied practice types, ages, and circumstances signed up for the summer-long course. Due to the pandemic, almost all sessions had to be completed virtually. Participants generally found this to be convenient while balancing already full schedules, varying levels of in-person meeting comfort, and the occasional summer vacation. As the course moved forward, however, several noted how nice some discussions would have been if everyone was in the same room. The group's final meeting was an in-person lunch with a post-course assessment and reflections on the overall experience. Tina Cundari, Wellness Committee Co-Chair, said this offering from Shannon Bobertz and the Wellness Committee came at just the right time. "One year into the pandemic, and during a time where the need for social justice is more urgent than ever, the course provided a way for people to come together and to prioritize their mental health and well-being. Shannon's passion for the course and the topic of wellness came through every step of the way," Tina remarked.

Susan Hackett echoed Tina's comments sharing that while her experience during the pandemic was mild in comparison to others, it still resulted in feelings of loneliness, fear, and confusion. She hoped to learn about emotions from a science-based perspective, remarking that the two often seem counter to each other, and was curious about what science can teach us about emotion. Susan reported the benefits of meditation were particularly eye-opening and that she had considered meditation as "something that other people did and not something I could do or even needed to do." However, evidence-based research provided by Dr. Santos that quantified how meditation affects people who practice it convinced Susan to give it a try. She said in the short time she has been practicing meditation, it has had an incredible calming effect on her...so much so that even her co-workers have noticed!

***continued on page 15...***

## ***If you're Happy and you Know it (...continued from page 14)***

Throughout the ten-week course, Dr. Santos reveals misconceptions about our happiness, annoying features of the mind that lead us to think the way we do, and evidence-based research that can help us change. RCBA President Ashley Story, along with several other participants, noted the course challenged her in ways she did not anticipate. In fact, Sandra Mosier said she was surprised to find out she was more in charge of her happiness than she thought. Ashley decided to join the course because "often we neglect our mental well-being, and this opportunity, led by our own Shannon Bobertz, was a great way to learn more about myself and connect with members in a way that a traditional bar event could not provide." Pete Dworjanyan shared that learning statistics on the rapidly diminishing happiness we get from certain things, i.e. new cars, more money, better grades, etc. were, in his opinion, some of the most thought-provoking sessions of the course. Shannon agrees learning more about this concept ("thwarting hedonic adaptation" in the words of Dr. Santos) and framing strategies to combat those tendencies is critical to understanding what we think makes us happy. As a result of this learning, insightful and sometimes lively discussions abounded during meetings on topics such as the value of experiences versus things, techniques that enhance our savoring, the need to reset our reference points, and the importance of establishing healthy habits. Several participants noted that making a concerted effort to improve and/or increase their sleep, exercise, gratitude, and social connections were paying off, even when things might go temporarily off track. During the course, Shannon's emails supported, but never pressured participants and helped to keep everyone on track - most felt they could manage to work sessions into their own schedules, whether that be watching videos while preparing dinner or listening in the car.

Shannon genuinely believes mental and physical health are keys to overall wellness ("strengthening her mental immune system") and notes that purposeful activities, such as learning to savor experiences and appreciate the beauty around us, can have a powerful effect on how happy we are. And as the course neared its conclusion, participants agreed more and more with her assessment, several reporting an increase in their overall happiness score post-course. Regardless of how much someone was able to complete or will maintain in the long run, it was generally agreed the course was time well-spent. Participants highly encouraged others to take charge of their own happiness and take the course for themselves.

Wellness Committee Co-Chair Tina Cundari commended participants for courageously taking on this challenge, recognizing that happiness comes (and goes), and it is critical for each of us to find the tools to improve our overall wellness. The Richland County Bar is grateful for our outstanding Wellness Committee, and member Shannon Bobertz and her leadership and willingness to guide this course. We hope such a course is the first of more unique and valuable wellness offerings for our members.

*Mandy Wren is the Executive Director of the Richland County Bar Association and can be reached at [mandy.wren@scbar.org](mailto:mandy.wren@scbar.org) or (803) 771-9801.*





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# A Litigator's Musings:

## On Covid-19 as a Legal Technology Adoption Accelerator and on What's Next in the Short Term

by Bill Latham



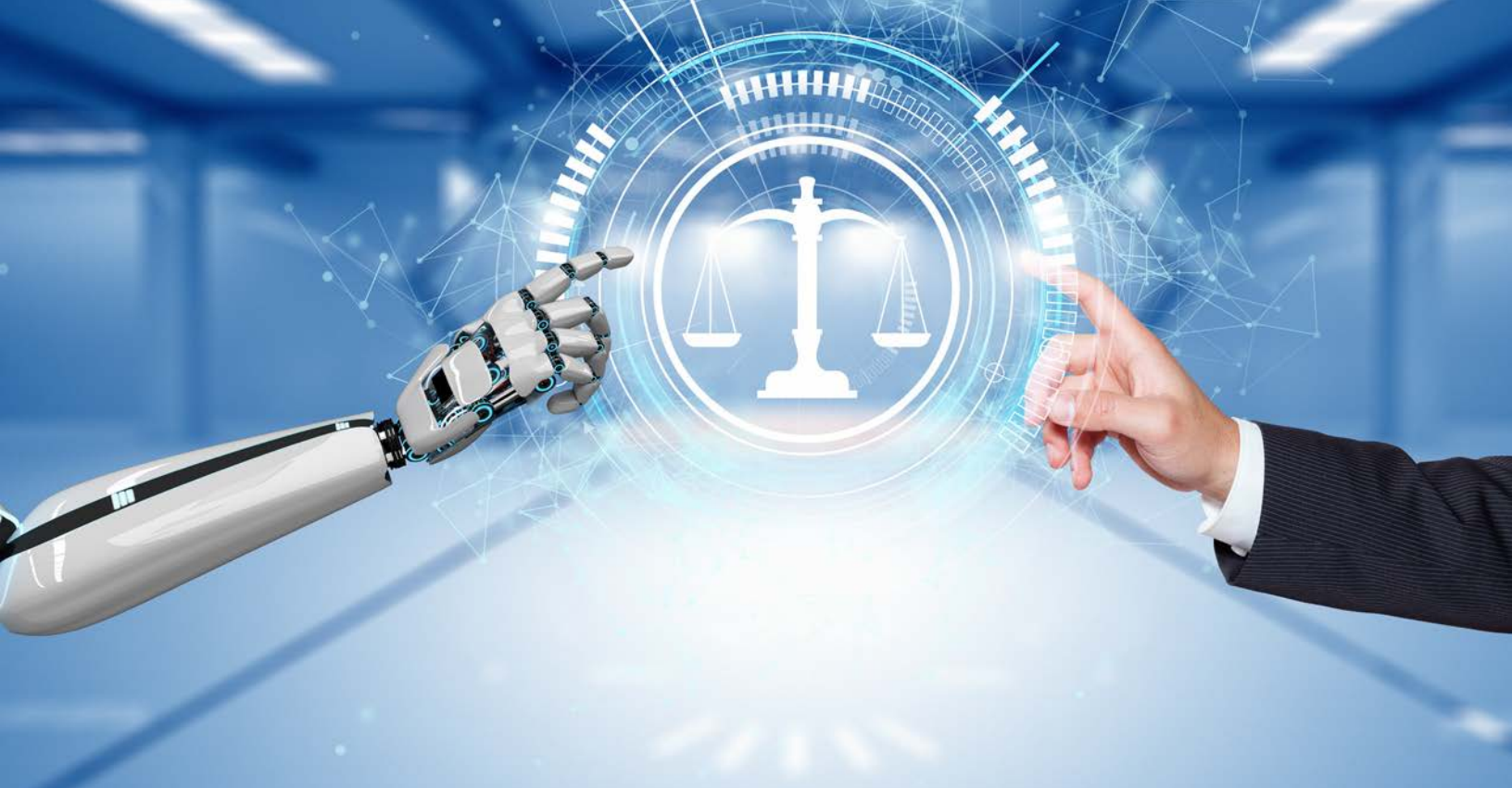
Back in 2012, I was an active legal technology blogger. I mostly wrote about the coming technological revolution and how I thought it would likely transform the law practices of the near future. In the same time frame, I also discussed what I perceived as my then “cutting edge” use of Skype, Facebook, and GoToMeeting to virtually present witnesses in court hearings and arbitrations/mediations and advocated for these tools to be adopted by other litigators (see <http://hytechlawyer.com/?p=2124>). Back then, the general response from my colleagues was these virtual presence tools were “neat” but not practical (or desirable) for use in a real life litigation practice.

Fast forward to March of 2020 and the COVID-19 lockdowns that necessitated the rapid adoption of virtual presence technology by attorneys and courts en masse. Law firms were scrambling for laptops, webcams and virtual applications such as Zoom and GoToMeeting that had suddenly become indispensable in the era of social distancing, masks and virtual everything. Fortunately, the technology for having a virtual practice was already sitting on the shelf ready and waiting to be used - we just needed a COVID-19 push to finally adopt it into our practice routine. During the height of the pandemic, virtual depositions, hearings, mediations, arbitrations, and even trials became accepted as routine.

So what does the (hopefully) post pandemic near term future hold for legal technology adoption? Probably more of the same. Now that clients have gotten a taste of the cost effectiveness of virtual presence law practice, this genie likely cannot be put back into the bottle. For example, clients are likely to clamor for virtual depositions for non-key witnesses, along with virtual deposition preparation of client witnesses. Likewise, I expect to see a continuation of virtual mediations for smaller matters given the potentially much lower cost and the perfection of breakout room features by many of the virtual presence applications.

In the new normal, virtual law practices are likely to become much more common (and accepted) going forward. The profession and clients have accepted that client intake, interviews and depositions can all be accomplished virtually, as can hearings, mediations and trials. It is no longer a necessity to have a formal brick and mortar law office to function as an attorney.

Post-pandemic, team collaboration software that permits legal teams to collaboratively work on cases, share documentation, track task progress, and review data should continue to rise in popularity with law



firms as more attorneys work remotely, at least part-time in the new normal. Examples of these collaboration programs include Slack and Microsoft Teams.

As for “new” technology, legal tech companies are continuing to tout various forms of Artificial Intelligence (“AI”) powered applications as the next big thing. However, as observed by noted legal futurist Richard Susskind, “People overestimate the impact of AI in the short term, and underestimate the impact of AI in the long term” (see <https://legal-tech-blog.de/legal-a-i-high-on-artificial-low-on-intelligence>). We are definitely in the over-hyped short term phase right now. Despite earlier warnings of the imminent coming of The Singularity (i.e., machine self-consciousness and self-sufficiency - see <https://didyouknow-science.com/what-is-the-singularity-concept-in-artificial-intelligence><sup>1</sup>), that type of general AI which focuses on building thinking and learning systems that can handle any task or problem in any field, now looks to be at least decades away and will change all facets of machine/human relations. This is to be contrasted with Narrow “AI” in which the program focuses on one problem (e.g. IBM’s Watson).

IBM made headlines in 2011 when its Watson “AI” system beat two of the very best Jeopardy players ever. Watson is an example of narrow AI - in this case, a computer-designed to process language and

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<sup>1</sup> “The idea is that the global effort to build AI is likely to result in the Singularity at some point with Kurzweil, in fact, predicting it will happen by 2045. This will be a critical transition point where humans will no longer control the evolution of AI and robotics. The machines will self-develop, learn to self-improve, and succeeding technological iterations are likely to be significantly superior and arguably changing at a rate that is beyond our full human understanding.” *Id.*



# Noteworthy News & Announcements

**Bruner, Powell, Wall & Mullins, LLC** is pleased to announce the addition of **J. Cole Hancock** as Associate Attorney in the firm located at 1735 St. Julian Place, Suite 200.

**Burnette Shutt & McDaniel** is being recognized by the American Bar Association as a 2020 Pro Bono Leader for its efforts in assisting with the ABA's Free Legal Answers Program. In addition to the firm's award, **Sarah J.M. Cox** was honored individually. She answered more than 300 questions last year through Free Legal Answers. Cox's award continues a long tradition of pro bono work at **Burnette Shutt & McDaniel**. Across the country, more than 140,000 questions were submitted to Free Legal Answers last year covering a variety of civil issues, though 41 percent of the questions involved family and children's law. The ABA says its Free Legal Answers program is, in many cases, the only opportunity some people have to get assistance.

**Burr & Forman, LLP** announces that **Michael Burchstead** has joined the firm located at 1221 Main St., Suite 1800.

**Callison, Tighe and Robinson** has given \$2,500 to the **Michael W. Tighe Endowed Scholarship Fund** at the University of South Carolina Law School, in celebration of both the 50th anniversary of the firm's founding, and Mike Tighe's 80th birthday. The firm created the fully endowed scholarship in 2016, upon its 45th anniversary, with an endowment of \$50,000. The scholarship was announced in May 2016 at a celebration of Mr. Tighe's 75th birthday – and the firm's 45th anniversary.

**The Carolina Law Group, LLC** announces that **W. Hugh McAngus, Jr.** has joined the Columbia office located at 824 Meeting Street, West Columbia.

**Cavanaugh & Thickens** announces that **Robb Brown** has joined the firm at 1717 Marion Street.

**Clarkson & Hale, LLC**, announces that **Sara Stevens Hill** has joined the firm located at 1044 Wildwood Centre Drive.

**Daniel Coble** announces the opening of the **Coble Law Group, LLC** located at 6923 N. Trenholm Rd.

**Collins & Lacy** attorney **Christian Stegmaier**, shareholder and chair of the firm's Hospitality and Retail Practice Group, has been tapped to lead the newly formed hospitality subgroup for the Primerus International Practice Group. In this role, Stegmaier will help advance the goal for firms looking to better service in-house counsel and corporate clients with international needs. Primerus member firms are screened to ensure a commitment to excellence as embodied in the Six Pillars: Integrity, Excellent Work Product, Reasonable Fees, Continuing Legal Education, Civility and Community Service.

**Crowe LaFave, LLC** announces the addition of **Steven R. Spreeuwers** as an associate attorney in the firm located at 500 Taylor St., Suite 202.

**Joseph D. Dickey, Jr.**, managing partner of the **Dickey Law Group**, has been selected as one of the *South Carolina Lawyers Weekly* Leadership in Law Honorees. His practice focuses on Employment and Labor Law, Education Law, and Corporate

Law. A graduate of Leadership South Carolina, Mr. Dickey has been recognized as one of the Top 40 attorneys under 40 by the National Black Lawyers. He is a contributing author of the latest edition of Labor and Employment Law for South Carolina Lawyers and serves on the Board of Directors for the Japan America Association of South Carolina and the South Carolina Appleseed Justice Center. He also serves as a City Councilman in the City of West Columbia. Before law school, Mr. Dickey worked and lived in Japan, where he learned the language and culture. Since establishing Dickey Law Group in 2014, Mr. Dickey has grown a niche Japanese practice using his knowledge and experience.

**Will Edwards**, attorney at **Moore Bradley Myers**, has been selected as Vista Night Rotary Club president. Started in 1995, the Vista Night Rotary Club is the only club to meet in the evenings. Edwards said his priority is growing the membership and participating in one service project a month, continuing the club's literacy focus. Edwards graduated summa cum laude from Presbyterian College and cum laude from the UofSC School of Law.

**Gaffney Lewis LLC** announces that **Randi Lynn Roberts** and **Nashiba Boyd** have been promoted to equity partner status. Roberts has been with the firm since 2014 and focuses her practice on tort defense, including catastrophic injury, pharmaceutical professional negligence, and products liability, primarily representing national retailers in cases across the state. Prior to joining the firm, Roberts first served as a law clerk to Judge Thomas A. Russo on the circuit court and thereafter as a law clerk to Chief Judge James E.

Lockemy, of the South Carolina Court of Appeals. She holds degrees from the University of South Carolina (2007) and the Charleston School of Law (2010). Boyd joined the firm in 2017 and also focuses her practice in the areas of tort defense and commercial litigation, including catastrophic injury, pharmaceutical professional negligence, and products liability. Boyd has over 15 years of civil litigation experience and also practices complex, multi-jurisdictional commercial defense. Boyd is a graduate of Clemson University (2001) and Howard University School of Law (2004).

**Gallivan White & Boyd P.A.** announces that **Kendall P. Crawford**, **Kyle McGann** and **Makenzie Polston** have joined the firm located at 1201 Main St., Suite 1200.

**Graybill, Lansche & Vinzani, LLC** announces that **John G. Tamasitis** has joined the firm's Columbia office as an associate located at 2721 Devine Street.

**Haynsworth Sinkler Boyd** is pleased to announce that **Kaitlin Beck** has recently graduated from the Leadership Columbia program. Founded by the Columbia Chamber of Commerce in 1972, approximately 60 professionals are selected each year based on their community involvement, capacity for leadership and commitment to improving the Midlands. Kaitlin focuses her practice on immigration and corporate law. She is active within the South Carolina Bar Young Lawyers Division and currently serves as co-chair of The Bridge Project. Kaitlin also gives back through Junior Achievement South Carolina and City Center Partnership.

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## **Noteworthy News & Announcements (...continued from page 22)**

**Haynsworth Sinkler Boyd** is pleased to announce that associate attorney **Tyra McBride** has been elected to serve on the Board of Directors for Girls on the Run (GOTR) Columbia. GOTR is a nonprofit organization designed to enhance girls' social, psychological and physical skills and behaviors to successfully navigate life experiences. Tyra focuses her practice on utility and commercial litigation and commercial real estate. She was recently selected for inclusion in The National Black Lawyers "Top 40 Under 40" in South Carolina. She is also a member of the SC Bar Young Lawyers Division and the SC Black Lawyers Association.

### **Hedrick Gardner Kincheloe & Garofalo, LLP**

announces that **Paul E. Allen, Jr.** joined the Civil litigation team in the Columbia office located at 1230 Main St., Suite 325.

**Kathy Dudley Helms** of **Ogletree, Deakins, Nash, Smoak & Stewart, P.C.** has been named the Distinguished Lawyer of 2021 by the South Carolina Bar Employment and Labor Law Section. Helms was nominated for this award due to her meritorious service to employment and labor law practices in South Carolina.

**Kenison, Dudley and Crawford, LLC** is pleased to announce that **Shannon C. O'Reilly** has joined the firm as an associate in the firm's office located at 1122 Barnwell Street, Suite B.

**Wm. Grayson Lambert** has joined the **Office of the Governor** as senior legal counsel, located at the South Carolina State House, 1100 Gervais Street.

**Steve A. Matthews**, shareholder at **Haynsworth**

**Sinkler Boyd**, has been elected to serve on the Board of Directors for the Atlantic Legal Foundation (ALF). ALF is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, public interest law firm advocating for the use of sound science in judicial and regulatory proceedings, primarily as amicus curiae in the Supreme Court of the United States and federal and state appellate courts. He is experienced in transactional negotiation and documentation, as well as trial and appellate advocacy.

**McAngus Goudelock & Courie LLC** attorney **Brett Bayne**, was named Young Lawyer of the Year by the American Board of Trial Advocates' (ABOTA) South Carolina chapter. ABOTA is an invitation-only national organization of experienced trial lawyers and judges dedicated to the preservation and promotion of the civil jury trial right provided by the Seventh Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Bayne received a JD from the University of South Carolina School of Law and a BA from Baylor University. Bayne teaches Trial Advocacy at the UofSC School of Law, and has served as the Director and Head Coach of the school's Mock Trial Bar since 2013.

**The McKay Firm** is pleased to announce **Joe Catalano** and **Tony Ibarra** have joined the firm as associates. Catalano concentrates his practice in transportation and trucking law, government defense, and Section 1983 Defense and general liability defense. Before law school, Joe served as a criminal investigator for the Lancaster County, South Carolina Sheriff's Department. Ibarra practices in personal injury, premises liability and insurance defense. He has diverse experience in construction defect litigation, employment





discrimination and cybersecurity. Ibarra served in the U.S. Navy and attended the United States Naval Academy before completing his undergraduate studies in Long Beach, CA.

**The McKay Firm** is pleased to announce that **Daniel R. Settana Jr.** is a Leadership in Law Honoree by *South Carolina Lawyers Weekly*. He has been recognized for his expert legal advice in the area of transportation law. Settana practices in insurance, civil rights defense, governmental defense, premises liability and general insurance defense litigation. He is a member of the Federal Bar Association and the Insurance Coverage Committee of the Claims and Litigation Management Alliance. He is also a member of various professional organizations, including Trucking Industry Defense Association, Transportation Lawyers Association, South Carolina Trucking Association, Defense Research Institute - Trucking Committee.

**McWhirter, Bellinger & Associates** is pleased to announce attorney **Emma Taylor** is being honored by the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation – South Carolina Chapter as one of South Carolina's Finest Young Professionals.

**John Mobley** is pleased to announce the 2021

recipient of the John Mobley Law Firm Scholarship. Mobley founded the \$1,000 John Mobley Law Firm Scholarship in honor of his son, Brandon, who has high-functioning autism. The scholarship is for students who intend to work in special education and this year's recipient is Austin Lea, a junior at the University of South Carolina studying special education.

**Michael Montgomery** and **Nick Haigler** have been named to the executive committee of **Robinson Gray** law firm. They join Managing Member Cal Watson and Member Bill Metzger on the committee. The firm's 19 members have full authority over the LLC's affairs, however, to facilitate management and administration, they delegate certain powers and duties to the executive committee. Michael leads the firm's insurance defense team and focuses his litigation practice in areas involving premises liability, automobile and trucking torts, insurance coverage, and products liability. He also has experience in handling construction matters, defending medical malpractice claims, and litigation involving administrative agencies. Nick is a litigator who focuses his practice on workers' compensation defense. He has represented businesses, insurance companies, captives, third-party administrators

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## **Noteworthy News & Announcements (...continued from page 20)**

and self-insured employers before the Workers' Compensation Commission, the South Carolina Court of Appeals and the Supreme Court of South Carolina.

The former **Moore Taylor Law Firm** announces its new name is **Moore Bradley Myers**, located at 1700 Sunset Blvd., West Columbia and 110 S. Main Street, Saluda.

**Moore Bradley Myers** is proud to recognize **Ward Bradley** for his selection by *South Carolina Lawyers Weekly* as a Leadership in Law Honoree. Bradley is a member of the South Carolina Bar's Board of Governors and Judicial Screening Committee and is a past president of the Richland County Bar Association. He serves his community as a board member for the Salkehatchie Summer Service Project of the United Methodist Church and as a Sunday school teacher at Shandon Presbyterian Church. Bradley received his bachelor's degree in economics from Davidson College and is a graduate of the UofSC School of Law. He is a regular presenter on trial techniques to practicing attorneys and students.

**Stanley L. Myers, Sr.**, managing partner and attorney at **Moore Bradley Myers**, completed the 64th Military Judge Course. He is the third Military Judge for the South Carolina Army National Guard and the first African American to hold this position in SC. He is currently a Lieutenant Colonel in the National Guard. As a judge, he serves many roles in the Military, including presiding over trials, interpreting military law, assessing the presentation of presenting evidence and controlling hearings and trials in the courtroom. Myers began practicing law

with MBM in 2004 and was deployed as a Captain to Afghanistan from 2007-08 with the 218th Infantry Brigade to support Operation Enduring Freedom. His focus areas include criminal defense, personal injury and workers' compensation.

**Nexsen Pruet** announced that the firm is participating in the Mansfield Rule 5.0 Certification process, aimed at evaluating and boosting diversity and inclusion in law firm leadership positions. Overseen by Diversity Lab, an incubator for innovative ideas and solutions to boost diversity and inclusion in the law, the program aims to set benchmarks to ensure that at least 30 percent female lawyers, lawyers of color, LGBTQ+ lawyers and lawyers with disabilities are considered for leadership opportunities. "We are eager to dive into, and learn from, this collaborative effort, reiterating our long-standing commitment to building and supporting a diverse, equitable, and inclusive firm," said Tushar Chikhliker, Member and Co-Chair of the Diversity, Equity & Inclusion committee at Nexsen Pruet. "Diverse representation is valued at every level of our organization."

**David Paavola** has become the newest partner at **Lewis Babcock**. His practice focuses on eminent domain and condemnation, complex business disputes, legal malpractice and more. Paavola earned a Juris Doctor at the University of South Carolina School of Law after a career in the financial services industry. Before entering private practice with Lewis Babcock, he served as a South Carolina Assistant Attorney General in Consumer Protection & Antitrust. He holds a BA in financial services and planning from Baylor University.

The members of the South Carolina House of Representatives honored the life and achievements of African American attorney **Hemphill P. Pride II** through a resolution in February 2021. He was recognized for his spirit of excellence and dedicated service to the people of South Carolina.

Five experienced litigators have come together to form the law firm of **Richardson, Thomas, Haltiwanger, Moore & Lewis**. Firm co-founder **Brady Thomas** is joined by **Terry Richardson, Dan Haltiwanger, Chris Moore** and **Will Lewis** in forming the firm. The firm will represent plaintiffs in a range of cases, with a focus on product liability, vehicle accidents, serious injury and wrongful death, medical malpractice, class actions and whistleblower litigation.

**Dr. Tiffany N. Richardson**, General Counsel and Director of Policy and Legal Services at the South Carolina School Boards Association has been elected to the position of Secretary for The National School Boards Association (NSBA) Council of School Attorneys (COSA), the national network of attorneys representing K-12 public school districts. She previously clerked for the Honorable L. Casey Manning in the Fifth Judicial Circuit, practiced labor and employment law, and worked for the Supreme Court in the Office of Disciplinary Counsel. Dr. Richardson received her Bachelor of Science, Masters of Business Administration, Juris Doctor, and Doctor of Philosophy from the University of South Carolina.

**Robinson Gray** attorney **La'Jessica Stringfellow** has been appointed to the South Carolina Access to Justice Commission by Chief Justice Donald W.

Beatty of the South Carolina Supreme Court. The commission was created by the court in 2007 "in recognition of the need to expand access to civil legal representation for people of low income and modest means in South Carolina." Prior to joining Robinson Gray, she was an assistant solicitor in the 11th Circuit Solicitor's office, where she prosecuted domestic violence, sexual assaults, and other violent crimes. Before that, she served as a law clerk to the Honorable John Cannon Few with the South Carolina Court of Appeals and the South Carolina Supreme Court. La'Jessica is a graduate of Virginia State University and received her Juris Doctor from the UofSC School of Law.

**Robinson Gray** has been named a "2020 Pro Bono Leader" for South Carolina by the American Bar Association for volunteering their services through the ABA's Free Legal Answers program. Free Legal Answers is a website operated by the ABA to increase access to advice and information about non-criminal legal matters for those who cannot afford it. **Cal Watson**, the law firm's managing member, expressed pride in the recognition, and in particular thanked attorneys **La'Jessica Stringfellow** and **Molly Campolong** for leading Robinson Gray's pro bono efforts.

**Robinson Gray** announces that **Maura Ashton Greg** has joined the firm as an associate located at 1310 Gadsden Street.

**Scott & Corley, P.A.** announces that **Kevin T. Brown** has joined the firm as Senior Counsel, located at 2712 Middleburg Dr., Suite 200.

**Karlen Senn** has joined **O'Shea Law Firm, LLC** at

*continued on page 23...*



## **Noteworthy News & Announcements (...continued from page 22)**

the firm's new Columbia office, located at 1821 Hampton Street.

**Turner Padgett** announces that **Virginia "Ginny" Bozeman** has joined the firm as counsel to the Litigation practice group located at 1901 Main Street.

The **South Carolina Supreme Court Historical Society** has announced a new board of directors to lead the Society. The Board will oversee the transition of the Society from a committee within the SC Bar Foundation to its renewed status as an independent organization. RCBA members **George Cauthen** and **Whitney Harrison** successfully led the Society through the initial steps of that revitalization process. Former UofSC School of Law **Dean Rob Wilcox** will serve as President. Other RCBA members serving on the Board: **Luther Battiste, Johnson Toal & Battiste; Mitch Brown, Nelson Mullins; Larry Flynn, Pope Flynn; Roy Laney, Riley Pope & Laney;** and **La'Jessica Stringfellow, Robinson Gray. Julie Moose, McAngus Goudelock,** will serve as treasurer and **Lanny Lambert, Turner Padgett** will serve as secretary.

**Williams Mullen** is pleased to announce that it has added two attorneys to its Litigation Section. **Richard H. "Dick" Willis** has joined the firm as a partner, and **Derek D. Tarver** has joined as an associate. Dick has over 40 years of experience representing product manufacturers and business clients in product liability litigation, mass torts, environmental litigation, and various types of commercial litigation. He is a Fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers and is the current President of the South Carolina Chapter

of the American Board of Trial Advocates. Derek focuses his practice on product liability litigation, particularly among clients in the automotive and consumer product industries. He earned his JD from the UofSC School of Law, magna cum laude, where he was both a member of the Order of the Coif and the Order of the Wig and Robe. During that time, he also served as the associate editor in chief of the South Carolina Law Review. Derek also served as the Associate Reporter for the Uniform Law Commission's committee on automated vehicles (UAOVA).

**Willson Jones Carter & Baxley, P.A.** is pleased to announce that **Andrew MacLeod** has joined the firm located at 3600 Forest Drive, Suite 204.

**Wyche, P.A.** announces that **Jim May** has joined the firm as a member in its litigation practice. May will concentrate on white-collar criminal defense, government and internal investigations, securities litigation, false claim actions, and other complex civil litigation. He will also help to establish and grow a governmental investigations and white-collar defense team. Before joining Wyche, May served as an Assistant U.S. Attorney for the District of South Carolina from 2012 to 2021. He was named Senior Litigation Counsel in 2018 and held that position until his departure. Prior to that time, he was an assistant public defender for the Richland County Public Defender's Office. May earned his JD from UofSC School of Law and graduated with a BS and a Master's degree from Vanderbilt University.

## ***A Litigator's Musings (...continued from page 16)***

answer trivia questions. From that impressive but limited beginning, IBM sold the notion that Watson would soon revolutionize the medical profession by helping doctors diagnose cancer and other diseases. The general idea was to have Watson ingest medical records from thousands of patients. From these records, Watson was supposed to diagnose the ailments of other patients. That never panned out for a myriad of reasons which can be boiled down to Watson's "AI" learning capabilities being over-hyped, medical records being difficult to standardize, and doctors' handwriting being often difficult to read.

Likewise, IBM's ROSS legal iteration of the Watson platform was supposed to revolutionize the practice of law by using AI to conduct legal research using a combination of natural language processing and machine learning to assist lawyer research efforts. However, the ROSS system never fully materialized as a value proposition. ROSS shut down operations in December 2020 under pressure from a lawsuit by Thompson Reuters alleging that it stole content from Westlaw to build its legal database.

### **PUBLIC DEFENDER**

**The Richland County and Kershaw County Public Defender offices are seeking qualified applicants for contract positions representing indigent clients in Magistrate and General Sessions Court.**

**If interested, please contact Fielding Pringle by email at [pringle.fielding@richlandcountysc.gov](mailto:pringle.fielding@richlandcountysc.gov).**

To be sure, there are some narrow "AI" applications that have had a modicum of success in the law firm environment. For example, technology assisted review programs have for years streamlined the discovery process. These systems have saved clients lots of money and law firm associates from untold hours of drudgery by reducing the number of documents requiring human review. As the amount of data generated expands exponentially on a daily basis, use of such programs will only increase over coming years. Contract management and re-

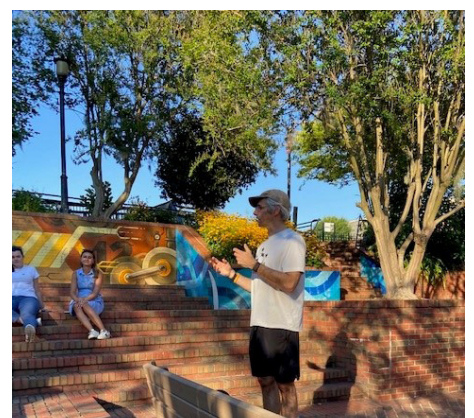
view appears to be another area where practical "AI" has proven to drastically reduce the time necessary to conduct contract due diligence or to manage a corporations contract portfolio. Less compelling are applications that purport to use AI to predict hearing/trial outcomes, write legal briefs and conduct legal research. In my experience, most of these so called "AI" applications are not yet ready for primetime and are currently of limited usefulness to the practicing attorney.

So bottom-line, I predict that in the short term (3-5 years) legal tech advancements will be primarily related to the further virtualization of the practice of law. Narrow AI is unlikely to threaten the jobs of many attorneys in this time period. Long, long term, general AI will be a game changer for everyone to include lawyers (but that is another article). A word of caution--take these predictions with a grain of salt. In 2012, I also predicted that driverless cars would be in general usage in 2025 - at least 10 years early on that one (see <http://hytechlawyer.com/?p=2525>).



# RCBA Events

Some places may have shut down over the last year and a half, but your Richland County Bar has remained active, engaging our members in new and different formats. We were delighted to host several in-person events over including our awesome Outdoor Movie Night, the always popular Night at the Zoo, an educational Walk in the Woods CLE with our Young Lawyers, and a Leadership Luncheon for our fantastic Committee and Liaison leaders our highly anticipated Judicial Reception and a lovely Memorial Service. Below are some of the moments captured at these events.









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