

2024 Annual Edition

Official Publication of the Hennepin County Bar Association

HENNEPIN LAWYER



2023-24 HCBA President

**NICOLE
KETTWICK**

Mitchell Hamline scores its highest Minnesota first-time bar passage rate since our combination

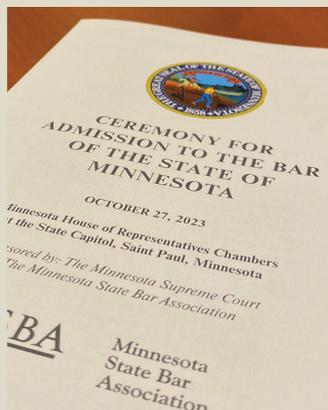
BY TOM WEBER

Mitchell Hamline's first-time bar passage rate for the July 2023 exam was 86.44%—the highest first-time rate we've had since the combination of William Mitchell and Hamline Law in 2015. For our first-time takers who actively worked one-on-one with our Academic Excellence team, the pass rate was significantly higher at 93.33%.

The first-time rate in Minnesota for all test-takers was 85.53%; we were the only Minnesota law school with an increased first-time rate over last July.

In all, 113 Mitchell Hamline graduates passed the July bar exam in Minnesota. Many of them were at the Minnesota Capitol on Oct. 27 to be sworn into the bar. Congratulations to all our state's newest licensed attorneys!

We love being Minnesota's law school of choice.



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STAFF

Executive Editor
Joseph Satter

Managing Editor
Elsa Cournoyer

Art Director
Jennifer Wallace

Photography
Sarah Mayer

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Hennepin County Bar Association
600 Nicollet Mall, #390
Minneapolis, MN 55402-1043
Phone 612-752-6600 www.mnbar.org/hcba

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Keeping Up with **Nicole Kettwick**

HCBA 2023-2024 PRESIDENT

Nicole Kettwick keeps busy as a partner at Brandt Kettwick Defense and an adjunct professor at the University of St. Thomas School of Law. Prior to her current term as HCBA president, Kettwick served in a variety of leadership roles within the association, including chairing the New Lawyers Section, co-chairing the Criminal Law Section, and continues to serve on the HCBA Board of Directors, and Foundation board. Kettwick also mentors law students at St. Thomas and Mitchell Hamline School of Law. She is a member of the Minnesota State Bar Association, Minnesota Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, and the American Bar Association. She also serves as a board member of the local nonprofit, H2O for Life.

What have been the most rewarding parts about your time leading up to and now serving as HCBA President?

Serving as the HCBA President has been an incredibly rewarding journey, and it's the people I've had the privilege of meeting that have made it truly special. I've had the opportunity to connect with remarkable individuals who have generously offered their mentorship, guidance, and support. These mentors have provided invaluable insights, shared their experiences, and helped me navigate the complexities of the legal profession. Their wisdom and encouragement have been instrumental in my growth as a lawyer and a leader.

Moreover, I've had the pleasure of collaborating with a diverse and talented community of legal professionals who are dedicated to advancing the legal field and advocating for justice. Working alongside these individuals, I've witnessed the incredible impact that collective effort can have in our legal community and beyond.

These mentors, colleagues, and friends have enriched my life both professionally and personally. I am so very thankful for the relationships and experiences this role has brought into my life.

You have a busy criminal defense practice, as well as many other professional commitments. How do you like to unwind when stepping away from work and these roles?

First and foremost, I love spending time with my family. I have three young children, and they are my greatest source of joy. Engaging in family outings—a weekend hike, a day at the beach, or simply playing board games at home—allows me to unwind and reconnect with what truly matters.

Travel is another passion of mine. Exploring new places, experiencing different cultures, and immersing myself in unfamiliar environments provide a refreshing change of pace. Whether it's a weekend getaway to a nearby city or an international adventure, travel allows me to broaden my horizons and gain new perspectives.

Staying active is crucial for maintaining both physical and mental well-being. I enjoy regular exercise. I love riding my Peloton (nsquared14) and playing tennis, pickleball, or any sport. It not only helps me stay in shape but also serves as a fantastic stress-reliever.

Finding balance between my legal career, professional commitments, and personal life is a continuous journey. These activities enable me to unwind, recharge, and return to my professional roles with renewed energy and enthusiasm.

What HCBA programing and initiatives do you value most as a member?

I value the range of programming and initiatives that cater not only to our professional growth but also to our personal interests. Participating in the softball league is a personal favorite, offering a delightful blend of friendly competition and camaraderie. It's a refreshing way to engage with colleagues outside the usual professional settings.

The annual Judges Social is another highlight. These gatherings are more than just networking opportunities; they foster genuine connections and understanding among members, contributing to a more cohesive and supportive legal community.

Moreover, my role on the Hennepin County Bar Foundation's grant committee stands out as particularly impactful. This involvement is a constant reminder of the powerful ways in which our legal community contributes to broader societal good. It's fulfilling to see how our collective efforts support vital initiatives and projects, making a tangible difference in the lives of those in need. Being part of this process not only reinforces the HCBA's mission but also underlines the importance of our continued commitment to meaningful and impactful work.



Thinking back to the 2014-2015 bar year, when you were serving as the HCBA's New Lawyers Chair and were first profiled in the Hennepin Lawyer, if you could send a message to yourself then, what personal or professional advice would you'd give?

I'd emphasize the wisdom my dad shared about the necessity to 'earn my stripes.' Reflecting on this, I realize the significance of patience and the organic development of one's professional journey. Back then, I was eager for immediate trust and respect from the community. However, I've learned that such recognition is something that is cultivated over time through consistent effort and integrity. I would advise my younger self to embrace the gradual process of building a reputation, understanding that each step taken, no matter how small, is a critical part of the journey towards earning the trust and respect I desired.



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What's a great piece of career advice you've received?

This is a tough job, and having a supportive partner or spouse is important.



What's a great piece of career advice you've received?

Embrace being uncomfortable; it means you're growing.



What's a great piece of career advice you've received?

Don't put off delivering bad news.



What's a song that energizes you?

"Unstoppable" by Sia



What's something you're unexpectedly good at?

Learning languages.



Where would we find you on a vacation day?

Storm damage forced me to be an involuntary home improver, but once I finished those repairs, I ended up updating other rooms.



Where would we likely find you on a vacation day?

In the pool with my family.



How do you like to start your workday?

Before the workday starts, I like to play a word or logic game to get my brain going. My current favorite is Connections by the *New York Times*.



How do you like to start your workday?

With hot coffee from September to May and with cold brew June through August.



Can you share a favorite quote that resonates with you?

My mom's signature quote is "live life with an open hand." It means accept what comes, don't force things, and be open to opportunities.



What's a great piece of career advice you've received?

Find a champion, not just a mentor; someone who uplifts you and sings your praises. A champion is hard to find, but once you find them, cherish them.

2023-2024

Section Leadership

The Hennepin County Bar Association has 40 sections that are here to help you connect with colleagues, stay updated with developments in your area of law, and provide leadership opportunities to advance your career. Thank you to the volunteer members who are leading our sections this year.

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Interested in getting
involved in your sections?
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My First ...

Members of the New Lawyers Section leadership reflect on some professional firsts



MY FIRST
Pro Bono Client
by Roxanne Thorelli

LegalCORPS is a local non-profit organization which connects attorneys with startup businesses. I am an active volunteer through LegalCORPS with the business law advice clinics and have accepted a few projects from its weekly email lists. My first ongoing pro bono client was through LegalCORPS and was a hard kombuchery startup company called BÜCH. I was initially intrigued by the hard kombuchery concept and met the owner in 2019. I then assisted BÜCH with formation and licensing matters as well as an acquisition of a taproom in Northeast Minneapolis in 2022. I am proud of BÜCH and am happy to have supported it through COVID-19. Pro bono work is very meaningful, and I encourage all lawyers to participate by finding a project they are passionate about.



MY FIRST
Clerkship
by David Hackworthy

I had the distinct pleasure of clerking for the Honorable Heidi S. Schellhas at the Minnesota Court of Appeals. Because I attended law school out of my home state, my clerkship cohort formed the basis for professional relationships and some of my best friends that I am forever grateful for. Clerking was (one of) the best legal jobs I will ever have: I learned about a myriad of legal issues I otherwise would never practice; I sharpened and developed my legal writing and research skills under the guidance of the best legal writers and researchers in the state; and I received mentoring that resulted in the career I have today. I can't imagine what my professional and personal life would look like without my clerkship with Judge Schellhas, and I encourage all law students and new lawyers to explore clerking opportunities!



MY FIRST
Mock Trial Volunteer Experience
by Megan Miller

I recently had my first opportunity to serve as a judge for appellate oral arguments presented by MHSU students. Surprisingly, this experience turned out to be as much of an education for me as it was for the students themselves. Throughout my legal education, my advocacy professor emphasized that when you're presenting an argument, you often possess the most comprehensive understanding of the subject matter in the room. After all, you've invested countless hours scrutinizing the intricate details of the case and how they can best serve your client's interests. Here, even though I came prepared, the level of detail that the students highlighted was remarkable.

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The reality of this finally hit me in a practical way: as I'm tasked with presenting facts and information, whether it be to senior partners, clients, foreign counsel, or even the Trademark Trial and Appeal Board, I should avoid assuming that others necessarily possess a deeper knowledge of the specific case at hand solely because they have more experience. My role is to leverage my knowledge to inform and persuade effectively. Recognizing this has been instrumental not only in my practice, but also in addressing imposter syndrome.

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CHECKING IN WITH

ROXANNE THORELLI

2023-24 NEW LAWYERS SECTION CHAIR



Roxanne Thorelli is a Senior Associate at Fredrikson & Byron, representing clients with mergers and acquisitions, debt and equity financing, corporate restructuring, and general corporate matters. She has been involved with the Hennepin County Bar Association since her time as a student at the University of Minnesota Law School, and currently serves as Chair of the New Lawyers Section. Thorelli is active in the profession on a local and national level, with involvement in HCBA, MSBA, and serves as a delegate to the American Bar Association's Young Lawyers Division.

Thorelli's professional accomplishments, pro bono service, and overall community and association involvement were recognized recently by the MSBA's New Lawyers Section with its Outstanding New Lawyer of the Year Award for 2023. She recently shared insights about her work and the HCBA New Lawyers with us.

Congrats on your recent Minnesota State Bar Association award, and thanks for your service to the HCBA. What advice would you give to law students and new lawyers who have yet to get involved in HCBA activities or bar leadership. What's a great entry point?



Thank you to the MSBA for the award and to my firm Fredrikson & Byron, P.A. for committing to pro bono. Thank you also to my family who flew in from Chicago to celebrate the award at the acceptance ceremony. My uncle Tom was my inspiration to become a lawyer when I was a child and has continued to support me throughout my career.

A great entry point to the bar association is the HCBA New Lawyers Section, which is not just a shameless plug for the section that I chair.

It has been very beneficial to me. I joined as a law student and have been an officer for the past six years. The HCBA New Lawyers Section is a casual and fun way to get your foot in the door, which will then provide you with many opportunities within the legal community. Each local law school also has a student chapter. You can attend a social event, monthly meeting or a CLE to become comfortable. Bring a friend if that is less intimidating. It is never too early or too late to become more involved,

but the benefits won't start until you do. I am happy to get coffee with anyone hoping to learn more! Feel free to reach out to me at rthorelli@fredlaw.com.

You represent private and public companies in business transactions. What are some of the most rewarding and the most challenging aspects of this work?

The rewarding aspects of my work relate to the many closings that I have led for clients. It is very gratifying when a transaction closes and our clients are able to either expand the acquired business or enjoy the fruits of a sale. I really enjoy working with local entrepreneurs that have grown their companies exponentially and are able to retire after a successful sale. It is meaningful to assist pro bono clients from the ground up as well, starting with formation issues, then helping them develop profitable businesses. I also enjoy training new associates who are eager to learn and watching them develop their skills and practice.

The challenging aspects of my work are within deadlines and balancing of many transactions. The timeline and speed of any particular deal is unpredictable, so it can be difficult to understand how much time is needed. Projects always seem to take longer than anticipated and issues arise unexpectedly, both personally and professionally. Luckily, my firm has plenty of resources to assist where needed so that our team is generally covered. Through experience and firm support, we are able to tackle all issues together. I highly encourage new lawyers to find an informal mentor whether inside or outside their companies for general advice.

The HCBA New Lawyers Section plays an important role in creating connections between the bar and its newest members and works to support attorneys in the early years of their careers. What NLS initiatives and programs have you been most excited about working on in recent years, and what's on the horizon for the Section?

We are excited to focus more on social and networking activities that are active and less centered around the consumption of alcohol (although our overbooked cocktail class is staying). Lawyers regularly are unable to find healthy releases for their stress, and we hope to encourage new lawyers to create good habits from the beginning of their careers. We had a successful fall walk at Stone Arch Bridge and outdoor yoga events. We will endeavor to continue healthy activities such as bouldering, pickleball, or other options depending on the weather.

We are also coordinating a CLE-athon where we are organizing monthly seminars for each area of the law as an introduction for new lawyers. These sessions include high-level overviews of each practice area to provide useful information for new lawyers figuring out what they want to practice or if they are considering a change. Law school is mostly theoretical and new lawyers can't be expected to know what they want solely based on that, so we are providing brief "101 sessions" to guide them.



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Use of Personality Assessments In Law

By Traci Capistrant

Ever take one of those tests in *Cosmopolitan* to determine your personality type? Or had someone ask you to take the Myers Briggs assessment? There's nothing more interesting than learning more about ourselves and what makes us tick. Determining preferred personality traits can be helpful in your practice and in your law firm partnership and staffing as well.

One of the more common causes of law firm failure is a lack of communication. A lack or failure of communication is often directly related to the different way that people approach problem-solving. An introvert's approach to addressing an issue would be completely

different from that of an extrovert. The introvert might process internally, reaching conclusions based on data without seeking any input from others. Extroverts may process verbally, including others in their assessment, asking for opinions and weighing the information gleaned verbally in their ultimate decision. Think what a huge benefit it would be if you knew in advance how the person you are negotiating with, partnering with, or representing processes information and makes decisions.

Our firm has used both the Insights Discovery® tool, which is based on the same Jungian theory as the Myers Briggs assessment but adds in a color-wheel, and we've used *The Six Types of Working Genius*, an assessment tool created by Patrick Lencioni. By identifying the personality

traits of each member of our firm, attorneys and staff alike, we have been able to identify our strengths and our weaknesses as individuals and as an entity. This creates strength within our team and helps us be the complete "package" that a client is seeking.

Internally, the benefit the firm receives from such an analysis is that it creates a more cohesive and respectful work environment. If you understand that your coworker has a need for significant attention to detail and a set time to process and focus on those details, you can refrain from interrupting them when you know they're working on a big project. Likewise, you may better understand that one co-worker needs an outline of requested work in writing, while another would prefer to receive a verbal outline.



It's important to remember that we all have the ability to be introverted, extroverted, thinking, and feeling, though each of us has a natural tendency to fall most often into one of the categories. Those categories should not be used as excuses to say, for example, "I can't do that because I'm an introvert." But it should make it clearer to those involved that asking that introvert to act as the leader of a meeting, without prep time, could be more stressful and exhausting for them. Knowledge of this is power.

One of the more important aspects that personality assessments can provide is an ability to notice personality types in others, allowing you to adjust your approach. You can begin to note personality traits in opposing counsel, your client, and opposing parties, if you study these types of assessments enough and gain an understanding of how each personality trait presents itself. This can be a helpful tool in determining how you approach a particular client or attorney. For example, some clients will need extensive handholding. If you know that they are more of an introverted or feeling

personality type, you will have a sense in advance that handholding and detailed explanations in writing may be necessary. Others will be quick studies, not super interested in detail, and just wanting an overview of how they should proceed. Seeing these signs in the early stages of a case can help you as an attorney determine how best to provide for that client or how to handle the opposing attorney or party.

Our firm regularly uses the "language" provided by Insights Discovery® to describe our personalities or the mode in which we're operating on any given day when it's outside of our normal personality type. Likewise, we try to identify our client's personality types at the onset of a case, so we know how best to move forward providing information and materials to them. It has improved our practice immensely. If you haven't yet, consider how the knowledge of personality attributes and approaches to work can help you and your firm, as well.



Traci Capistrant

Graduating from William Mitchell College of Law in 1988, Traci has been practicing in family law for over 35 years in small and solo practices. When representing clients, Traci

uses several different methods to get to a resolution for her clients, including early neutral evaluations, mediation, and if needed, litigation. More recently, she is working more frequently as a Rule 114 Qualified Neutral, an Early Neutral Evaluator, and as a parenting time consultant or expeditor, along with her litigation practice.



**Temporal
Landmarks
and
New
Year's**

By Joan Bibelhausen

Resolutions



Joan Bibelhausen is Executive Director of Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers where a team of committed professionals helps colleagues with any issues that cause stress or distress. Services are

free, confidential, and there is someone to talk to 24/7/365. help@mncl.org; 651-646-5590, www.mncl.org

Every January, it's hard to find a parking space at my local Y. I celebrate the new people I will meet and try to encourage them to keep coming back. But, knowing that some will only attend briefly, I do look forward to the inevitable drop-off in attendance and quicker access to equipment and lockers.

People often make New Year's resolutions because of tradition—it's something everyone does. This is one example of a temporal landmark, a date or event where we decide to break from the past and move forward with new goals. We experience a "fresh start" effect, which offers a way to envision what could be, rather than what has been. These can be helpful with small goals, but for larger change, we need more. That's why nearly half of those who made a New Year's Resolution were no longer engaged by the end of January.

What can we do to increase our likelihood of success? Here are some steps.

Apply the Stages of Change

These 5 phases can help you envision a path toward a goal. Using the example of reducing stress, here's how they work:

- 1. Precontemplation:* You are aware of a potential problem but are not yet acknowledging that change is needed (Everyone is stressed, I can't do anything about it).
- 2. Contemplation:* You recognize and acknowledge that there is a problem but may not be sure where to begin, sure that you want change, lacking confidence that you can make a change, or somehow not ready (I would like to do something, but I don't have time and I don't know where to start).
- 3. Preparation/Determination:* You want to do something and are open to next steps (What is the first thing I could do? Maybe Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers [LCL] can help).

4. Action/Willpower: You take the first step to start doing something different with a goal of changing behavior (you've made an appointment with a counselor, or attended a CLE on stress and resilience, or joined a health club).

5. Maintenance: You keep doing something and it becomes a habit or practice. (You're still at the health club in April, you're incorporating practices suggested by a counselor, you've examined your biggest stressors and are addressing them systematically).

When you think of your goals, where are you in the stages of change? It's important to recognize that we may move back and forth through these phases, and that even if we start and stop, we can begin again. Joining a health club and not attending by the end of January is a breakdown between steps 4 and 5. You've already recognized the need and made progress.

Think About Your Reasons

What is the goal you would like to reach and what is your motivation? How do you envision your future self? What is present and what is reduced? Are you doing it for you or someone else? If it's for someone else, a counselor can help you rediscover your self-worth.

Think About Your Goal

Envision yourself at your goal. What happened right before that? What was the step before that one? Walk back to today and consider the reality of those steps. How do you take the first one?

What Are Your Barriers?

As you envision those steps to your goal, what is in the way? Sometimes the simplest things can hold us back. As lawyers we solve problems, and we think we should be able to figure it all out on our own. Don't know what kind of shoes you need to start running? Find a store where someone will evaluate your needs and sell you

what you need. Not sure how to find the right counselor? One call to LCL will start the process to make a good match. And you can always ask for a new referral if the connection isn't right the first time.

One Step at a Time

Look at the steps toward your goals and break them down into challenging, but manageable pieces. Find a way to measure so you can track progress when you are feeling discouraged and celebrate small wins. Any celebration is a source of motivation. If you didn't meet a goal, consider setting a smaller goal, then take that step. Set up accountability, whether it is telling someone, setting up a tracking document, or using a coach or counselor.

Reassess

Through your thought and action processes, you will learn about yourself and what really makes sense as you consider and make progress. Adapting to where you are now can help with those forward movements.

Ask for Help

Whether it is how to do something, support through a barrier, or something larger, help is available. We may wish for less stress, but if we are dealing with anxiety or depression symptoms, or drinking or engaging in other behaviors at levels we know are unhealthy, these well-being strategies may not be enough. Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers provides free counseling to legal professionals and their families statewide on any issue that causes stress or distress. Please reach out. You are why we are here.



GOT THC?

Until Minnesota Begins Issuing Licenses for Adult-Use Cannabis Businesses, the Hemp-Derived Product Market Will Continue to Flourish

By Jason Tarasek

Depending upon who you ask, Minnesota may (or may not) have accidentally legalized edible hemp-derived THC products back in June 2022.

At least one Minnesota senator was seemingly caught off guard. During a conference committee in the spring of 2022, Senator Jim Abeler jokingly asked whether the State had just legalized marijuana. Representative Tina Lieblich replied, “Of course. Just kidding. We’ll do that next, okay?”

But by legalizing “edible cannabinoid products” in June 2022 with up to 5 mg of hemp-derived THC per serving and 50 mg per package, Minnesota effectively legalized intoxicating cannabis products for adults.

Many people are surprised to learn that hemp and marijuana are the same plant. Indeed, the distinction between hemp and marijuana is purely a legal distinction based solely on the percentage of delta-9 THC found in the plant and its derivatives. Under federal law and state law, any plant or resulting product with more than 0.3 % delta-9 THC is considered marijuana (aka: “adult-use cannabis”) and any plant or product with a lesser concentration of delta-9 THC is considered “hemp.”

The distinction is hugely significant for cannabis businesses. Because hemp and its derivatives are not listed on the federal Controlled Substances Act (“CSA”), businesses may freely import and export such products through interstate commerce. The same is not true for marijuana, which remains on

Schedule I of the CSA. Further, unlike adult-use cannabis businesses, hemp businesses have much freer access to insurance products, banking products and—perhaps most significantly—are not precluded from deducting business expenses on their federal tax returns.

For consumers, the source of THC is not nearly as important. THC is THC whether it is derived from hemp or marijuana. And 5 mg of hemp-derived THC gets most people high.

Whether or not Minnesota's legalization of hemp-derived THC was intentional, the law is here to stay.

Ever since the Summer of 2022, Minnesotans have been able to purchase hemp-derived THC products, including beverages, virtually anywhere. Surprisingly, no license is required to sell such products. Until recently, moreover, the only place you could *not* buy such products was at a liquor store.

Now, of course, Minnesota has legalized adult-use cannabis. The sale of hemp-derived THC products will continue to be legal here, and now liquor stores can sell such products, too.

Through legislation legalizing marijuana, the State of Minnesota calls for the creation of the Office of Cannabis Management (“OCM”), which will eventually issue licenses for adult-use cannabis businesses, including marijuana dispensaries.¹ Until OCM begins issuing such licenses, however, the hemp-derived THC product market

will continue to flourish. Indeed, even after marijuana products become available for sale, observers expect that the hemp-derived THC product market will continue to be profitable in Minnesota and elsewhere.

Unlike so many other state cannabis laws that impose separate and distinct regulatory frameworks for hemp and marijuana, Minnesota's newly enacted adult-use cannabis law (“Adult-Use Act”) incorporates hemp-derived cannabinoids².

While adult-use sales might not begin until 2025, the new law makes significant changes to Minnesota's existing rules governing the manufacture and sale of hemp-derived cannabinoid products. Some of those changes went into effect with the passage of the Adult-Use Act. Others do not take effect until 2025. Here are some of the most notable changes.

■ Sellers of Edible Cannabinoid Products Must Register with the State

At no cost, sellers of “edible cannabinoid products” were required to register with the Minnesota Department of Health by October 1, 2023. After October 1, sales of edible cannabinoid products by an unregistered person are prohibited.

■ Cannabinoid Limits for Food and Beverages

Prior to passage of the Adult-Use Act, there was no limitation imposed on the number of servings per container in an edible cannabinoid product, but such products could not contain more than 50 mg of THC per

package. Now, beverages may only contain two 5-mg servings. Products intended to be eaten may contain up to 5 mg per serving and 50 mg per package.

■ Prohibited Hemp-Derived Product Categories

Additionally, the Adult-Use Act clarifies that hemp-derived products intended to be smoked or vaped are not permitted for sale in Minnesota. This is the most significant distinction from the products that will be available in the adult-use market. According to estimates, “smokable” products represent roughly 60 percent of products sold in adult-use markets.

■ Change in Regulatory Authority

Oversight for hemp-derived products has moved from the Board of Pharmacy to the Department of Health. No later than March 1, 2025, oversight will move to the Office of Cannabis Management.

■ Cannabis Tax Applies to Hemp Edible Cannabinoid Products

Starting July 1, 2023, moreover, edible cannabinoid products became subject to the 10% Cannabis Tax. In July, Minnesota earned more than \$600,000 of tax revenue generated by sales of such products.

As the adult-use marijuana market emerges in Minnesota, it will be fascinating to watch its interplay with the established hemp-derived THC market. One thing is for sure: Minnesota consumers will have no shortage of cannabis products from which to choose.

Notes

¹ It is possible that such licenses will not be available until 2025. In such case, Minnesota consumers likely will not be able to purchase marijuana products at adult-use dispensaries until mid-to-late 2025.

² The hemp/marijuana plant contains more than 100 cannabinoids, including CBD and delta-9 THC.

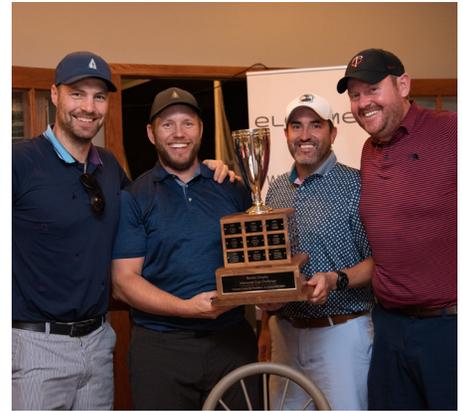


Jason Tarasek is a cannabis attorney and manages the Minneapolis office of the national cannabis law firm, Vicente LLP.



COME TOGETHER! Throughout the year, HCBA's signature CLEs, Section programming, and annual events bring the local legal community together. Attorneys, judges, law students, and community partners gathered for the Bar Benefit and Charity Golf Classic, joined us for the Judges Social, attended the 2023 Annual Meeting for the Excellence Awards and the ceremonial passing of the presidential leadership gavel, and took part in happy hours, socials, and other member meetups. It's always a great time when HCBA members come together.







Feeling Good

How Being in Touch with Your Emotions Can Make You a Better Lawyer

By Kendra Brodin

The legal profession is often associated with logic, reason, and objectivity. Lawyers are expected to make sound arguments, analyze evidence, and navigate complex legal theories and statutes with precision. While these skills are undeniably crucial, being in touch with your emotions can elevate your abilities as a lawyer. Emotional intelligence (the ability to understand and manage your emotions and those of others) plays a significant role in a successful legal practice.

Enhance Client Relationships

One of the fundamental aspects of practicing law is building strong client relationships. Clients turn to lawyers during some of the most challenging and emotional periods of their lives. Whether it's a divorce, a criminal case, a business dispute, or an estate planning matter, emotions are often running high. Lawyers who are in touch with their own emotions can better empathize with their clients, understand the fear, hope,

and frustration of clients, and provide a more supportive and reassuring legal service.

To enhance client relationships, actively listen to your clients, allowing them to express their emotions and concerns. Show empathy by acknowledging their feelings and concerns without judgment. This fosters trust and confidence, ultimately improving the attorney-client relationship.

Negotiate and Resolve Conflict More Effectively

Negotiation is a key component of legal practice. Whether you are settling disputes outside the courtroom or trying to reach a favorable plea agreement, emotional intelligence is vital for successful negotiations. Being in touch with your emotions and those of the opposing parties allows you to read the room, adapt your strategy, and find common ground. It can also help you remain calm and composed in tense situations, which is essential for conflict resolution.

To become a better negotiator and conflict resolver, work on your emotional self-awareness. Recognize your own emotional triggers and learn to control them. This will enable you to remain level-headed in high-pressure situations, making you more effective in negotiations and conflict resolution.

Connect with the Emotions of Decision Makers

For litigators (and others who want to influence others), the courtroom is where legal skills are put to the test. Effective advocacy involves presenting your case persuasively, and emotions often play a significant role in influencing judges and juries. Lawyers who can connect with their own emotions and understand the emotional dynamics of the courtroom can be more compelling advocates.

To improve your advocacy, learn to connect with the emotions of the judge, jury, and other decision makers. This doesn't mean manipulating emotions but rather understanding what is likely to resonate with them. Craft your arguments and presentation to appeal to the emotions that align with your case. Additionally, manage your own emotions effectively to appear confident and credible.

In the legal profession, being in touch with your emotions is not a sign of weakness; it's a sign of strength and effectiveness. Emotional intelligence allows lawyers to better serve their clients, negotiate more successfully, and advocate more persuasively. By actively listening and empathizing with clients, developing emotional self-awareness, and connecting with the emotions of decision makers, lawyers can significantly enhance their practice and become better advocates. Remember, emotions have a valuable place in the legal world, and embracing your emotions will make you a better lawyer.



Kendra Brodin is founder and CEO of EsquireWell, a lawyer wellbeing and professional development company that provides speaking, coaching, consulting, and on-demand learning to help lawyers be

happier, healthier, and more successful.



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***SUPPORTING
YOURSELF
WHILE SUPPORTING CLIENTS***

Finding Grace and Working Through Grief as a Lawyer

By Rachel Schromen

In 2020, much of my life started to unravel, beginning with the death of my father. From the outside, it looked like I was handling the loss as best as could be expected, but under the surface, more was happening.

My father passed away in the fall of 2019, and a few months later after taking a *23 and Me* test, I learned that he had not been my biological father—a revelation which reopened other childhood and life events I had not effectively dealt with. I was just beginning to process this information when the world shut down due to COVID 19, requiring not only personal adjustments but also massive adjustments for my busy law practice. I was coping and surviving—but just barely.

Eventually, I got the help I needed to move forward in a more productive way. I sought the support of a grief therapist, was introduced to somatic therapy, started yoga and meditation practices, and gained tools through Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT). As with all healing, it's a journey, not a destination. I continue to learn new skills, and as my life changes, so does the way I relax, recover, and heal.

As I travel the path of healing from these traumas, however, I sometimes face triggers in my work as an estate planning and elder law attorney. My work can bring up difficult topics that can elicit emotional responses, and even closely resemble my personal experiences. In fact, 15 minutes after I learned that my biological father was not who I had been told he was my entire life, I walked into a new client meeting where the woman I was meeting with shared that she had recently learned, through a commercial DNA test, that she had a sibling she did not know about previously. I was still in shock from receiving my news, so, while I did not have an emotional response, the irony of the timing of meeting with a client with this concern was certainly not lost on me.

Of course, this doesn't mean I need to change careers or stop engaging with clients. I love the work that I do, and my lived experiences lend to my passion for supporting families and individuals facing similar challenges. While these conversations with clients can be personally challenging, I don't want to avoid them. So instead, I prepare myself. That preparation can look different on different days.

One thing I do to prepare myself is to prioritize my own grief work. I have practiced sitting with my own emotions and acknowledging them when they come up. Trying to stifle responses or stuff down my emotions in a meeting can be more uncomfortable and disruptive than gently acknowledging them in the moment. I have also learned to communicate my responses and feelings, when necessary and appropriate, and ask to take a moment when I need to.

I lost my father in 2019 to Alzheimer's, and as an elder law attorney, I frequently work with families caring for a loved one with Alzheimer's. Recently I had a client who was caring for her husband whose Alzheimer's was rapidly progressing. Her husband's behaviors and demeanor presented almost identically to my father's—he even had the same hobbies and type of career prior to his diagnosis.

Trying to stifle responses or stuff down my emotions in a meeting can be more uncomfortable and disruptive than gently acknowledging them in the moment.

When working with this client, I found myself getting teary-eyed one day. Rather than trying to shut down the emotion and power through the meeting, I simply shared with her the similarities that not only reminded me of my own sad journey, but also reminded me of fond memories. This led to a beautiful conversation about our shared experiences, which deepened the trust in our attorney-client relationship.

In addition to working on and tending to my own grief, I also schedule carefully. There are certain days where I don't meet with clients because I know my own grief will feel too heavy. Other days, I schedule virtual meetings or phone calls because I know that meeting in person with clients may be too much. My father passed away on his 70th birthday— October 26, 2019. I make certain this is not a meeting-heavy day.

My experience is not unique and certainly is not specific to the practice of estate planning and elder law. As attorneys, we often support our clients with difficult decisions and in difficult times of life, with many attorneys not only having to navigate personal triggers but also vicarious trauma stemming from the work that they do. In addition to the tools previously discussed, I also provide myself with ample grace and space—the same kind of grace and space I want to extend to my clients and employees, and something I hope more attorneys give themselves permission for as well.



Rachel Schromen is an estate planning and elder law attorney and owner of Schromen Law, LLC. Since starting to practice law in 2013, Rachel has been named one of the Top 3 Best Rated Estate Law firms in St. Paul (2018-2022) and was voted Best Estate Law Firm in Minnesota by readers of the Star Tribune in 2021 and 2022. Apart from her law practice, Rachel is a hospice volunteer as an end-of-life doula.

Law, Art, and Social Justice

How the Tools of the Advocate and the Tools of the Artist Can Both Create Powerful Change

By Terrance Newby



Pablo Picasso, *Guernica* © 2023 Estate of Pablo Picasso / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / Photo Credit: Art Resource, NY

Some believe that artists and lawyers don't have much in common. Artists create beauty, while lawyers create rules that allow for a peaceful and civil society. One seems essential to society, while the other can seem like a privilege reserved for wealthy people who are generally shielded from the hardships of daily life.

But artists and lawyers are both supremely suited to advocate for social change and justice. The indescribable power of artistic beauty and the insistence on equal justice for all have always driven the most important societal advances in America and worldwide. I contend that both artists and lawyers have a moral obligation to use their talents to advance social progress.

CASE STUDY:

The Artist versus the Dictator

In January 1937, Pablo Picasso was commissioned by the Spanish government to create a work to be displayed at the 1937 Paris World's Fair. Although he reluctantly accepted the commission, Picasso struggled to find inspiration. For three months, he tried and failed to find a topic that would motivate him to create art that met his standards. Burdened by personal failings and the rise of the fascist uprising in Spain, Picasso spent many fruitless days sulking in his studio, creating nothing worthwhile.

Everything changed on Monday, April 26, 1937. On that day Nazi aircraft, with the permission of

Spain's General Franco, bombed the quiet village of Guernica, a sleepy enclave in the Basque region of Spain. General Franco viewed Guernica as a bastion of resistance to his fascist dictatorship, and many residents of Guernica supported Franco's opponents. Franco, eager to eliminate his perceived political opponents, allowed the Nazis to use Guernica as a practice bombing range to test Germany's newly-developed high explosive and incendiary bombs. The Nazis, with Franco's blessing, bombed the remote Basque village for over three hours, destroying almost every building. When the townspeople fled into nearby fields, Nazi aircraft mowed them down with machine guns as they ran, using fleeing citizens as target practice. Most of those slaughtered were women and children.

News of the massacre quickly spread throughout Spain. Picasso now had his inspiration. Before the bombing, Picasso had avoided politics in general, and had purposely never created openly political artworks. The slaughter in Guernica changed his views of art. After struggling to find inspiration for over three months, Picasso completed his epic, titled simply *Guernica*, in just 35 days, finishing the work on June 4, 1937.

After its initial exhibition at the Paris World's Fair in July 1937, *Guernica* found a home in New York. Strangely, General Franco wanted *Guernica* to be displayed in Spain, but Picasso—who very intentionally wanted his painting to be a thumb in the eye of the Franco regime—refused, declaring that *Guernica* would never be displayed in his home country until the Spanish people lived in a republic, and not a dictatorship. Picasso's wish was granted, and *Guernica* did not touch Spanish soil until 1981, six years after Franco's death and three years after Spain ratified a new constitution. Guernica is now widely considered the most important anti-war painting ever created. The artist had defeated the dictator.

CASE STUDY:

The Lawyer, the Doctor, the Mob, and the Verdict

Unlike Picasso, Clarence Darrow eagerly waded into politics whenever he could. But after working on two of the most important and politicized trials of the 20th Century, the Leopold & Loeb murder trial of 1924, and the internationally known Scopes “monkey trial” of 1925, Darrow was ready to retire. At sixty-eight years old, Darrow was “determined not to get into any more cases that required hard work and brought me into conflict with the crowd.” But Darrow immediately postponed his retirement when he learned about a very public and appalling civil rights violation, one that would bring him right back into conflict with the crowd.

In late summer of 1925, a Black doctor named Ossian Sweet purchased a home at 2905 Garland Avenue in an all-white middle-class neighborhood in Detroit. Dr. Sweet's new white neighbors were not welcoming,

and had previously driven out other Black people who had tried to purchase homes in the neighborhood. Aware of the racial tensions in his new neighborhood, Dr. Sweet waited until September 1925 to move his wife and daughter into his new home, hoping that his white neighbors' animosity would have ebbed.

Dr. Sweet chose September 8 as his moving day. Before moving in, Sweet purchased nine guns and an ample supply of ammunition. He notified Detroit police of his planned move-in day, and asked for police protection on the day of the move. He left his two-year old daughter with his wife's family. And he asked his brothers and several friends to spend the night with him for their first night in their new home.

The evening of September 8, 1925, was relatively quiet—a crowd gathered, the police watched, but did nothing. The following evening, a larger crowd gathered outside the Sweet home. Around 8 pm, the mob began throwing rocks and bricks, shattering an upstairs window. The mob closed in on the house, while the police moved away, content to let the mob finish its work. At 8:25 pm, as the mob crowded onto the porch, shots rang out from inside the house, killing one mob member and injuring another. The crowd dispersed and the Detroit police, whose primary purpose had seemingly been to protect the mob from harm, entered the Sweet home and promptly arrested all 11 people inside. Sweet and his family and friends were charged with first-degree murder. The police allowed the mob members to return safely to their homes.

At trial, Darrow made it very clear that although the defendants were on trial for murder, the justice system was also on trial: “I know that if these defendants had been a white group defending themselves from a colored mob, they never would have been arrested or tried. My clients are charged with murder, but they are really charged with being black.”

After deliberating for 46 hours, the jury could not reach a verdict. The presiding judge declared a mistrial, and a second trial proceeded, this time with Henry Sweet, Ossian Sweet's younger brother, as the sole defendant. Henry Sweet admitted that he fired shots out the front window on that night.

Darrow argued that the “castle doctrine” applied to Black homeowners as well as white homeowners and that the Sweets, facing a threatening mob and a police force intent on safeguarding that mob, had no choice but to use lethal force. The all-white jury quickly returned a not-guilty verdict. Darrow had, for perhaps the first time in American history, successfully argued the “castle doctrine” in defense of a Black family.

Darrow had not just secured an acquittal. He had convinced an all-white jury in 1925 that the laws that protect life, liberty and property apply equally to Black Americans. The advocate had, at least for one day and for one family, secured equal justice under the law.

Both the artist and the advocate have skills that are designed to advance social change and justice. And artists and lawyers alike have a moral obligation to use those talents to advance human progress. Perhaps no one has explained this obligation better than the late Nobel prize-winning author Toni Morrison:

This is precisely the time when artists go to work. There is no time for despair, no place for self-pity, no need for silence, no room for fear. We speak, we write, we do language. That is how civilizations heal.



Terrance C. Newby is an attorney, novelist, and playwright based in St. Paul. His plays *The Cage*, *The Body Politic*, *Reunion Forever*, and *The Piano Teacher* have been professionally staged in

Twin Cities theaters. Terry's novel *Dangerfield's Promise* was published in April 2022, and has received five-star reviews from the *Seattle Book Review*, *Manhattan Book Review*, *Chicago Book Review*, and the *Midwest Book Review*, among others. The book is available on Amazon and Barnes & Noble. Terry is currently working on a sequel to *Dangerfield's Promise*.

Serving the Community

HCBA's Access to Justice Programming

A conversation with Katy Drahos and Dana Miner

Access to Justice Director **Katy Drahos** notes that when we talk about Access to Justice (ATJ), we so often talk about pro bono but forget to mention “low bono” services provided by attorneys. Drahos sat down recently with **Dana Miner**, Legal Services Director, to talk about HCBA programs, and what the bar does to help those who make too much to qualify for pro bono but cannot afford a market-rate attorney for their legal issues.

What are the main HCBA Access to Justice programs?

The HCBA administers four primary access to justice programs through our Minnesota Lawyer Referral and Information Service (MNLIRIS): 1) Misdemeanor Defense Project; 2) Legal Access Point; 3) Reduced Fee Program; and the 4) Commitment Defense Panel. The HCBA also partners with the MSBA and RCBA to administer MN Unbundled.

MNLIRIS (a joint program with the HCBA and Ramsey County Bar) receives over 24,000 calls per year and a few thousand online interactions. Staff determine the legal issue a caller is experiencing, identify the jurisdiction and procedural posture of the case, and determine if the case should be handled through one of our private attorneys or referred out to a partnering pro bono, nonprofit, or government agency. By connecting potential clients with quality private attorneys, we have the opportunity to benefit our members and the public.

When a caller can't afford to hire an attorney but is over income for our pro bono partners, MNLIRIS will attempt to place the case with an attorney in our **Reduced Fee Program**. Our counselors screen individuals to ensure that they have a form of stable income between 125-250% of the poverty guidelines. Attorneys participating on the panel have agreed to accept the referral for a \$750 retainer and a rate of \$90 per hour.

Individuals with misdemeanor cases can also be served through our **Misdemeanor Defense Project (MDP)**. MDP attorneys are present through each morning arraignment calendar to offer advice and information to defendants who do not qualify for public defenders. Clients who understand their charges, the court process, and their legal options are better prepared to make informed decisions during their arraignment, making this a highly valued program by both the bench and bar.

HCBA's Legal Services Department also administers the **Commitment Defense Project (CDP)**. Individuals petitioned for civil commitment in Hennepin County are appointed an attorney at no personal cost through CDP. CDP attorneys remain with their clients through the life of their case and are compensated for their work by Hennepin County.

Some callers just have a few questions or are looking for brief legal services. In those instances, we rely on partnerships with VLN and the MSBA to refer to either the **Legal Access Point (LAP)** or **MN Unbundled**. Through LAP, our MNLIRIS attorneys provide 20 minutes of advice over the phone. Other attorneys offer unbundled (or “limited scope”) services through MNLIRIS referrals or MN Unbundled.

What impact have you seen on MNLIRIS callers?

Individuals are often feeling overwhelmed when they call MNLIRIS. They need professional guidance, but they do not know where to turn for help. When an appointment with a private attorney is appropriate, we set up appointment times, conduct the conflict checks, and notify attorneys of pending deadlines. We do our best to ensure that the attorney-client relationship is set up to be successful on the onset. By doing this, we take a substantial weight off the caller's chest.

Do you need more attorneys?

Our needs skyrocketed over the last three years. We need attorneys in all practice areas—particularly those who practice employment law, labor law, tax, civil rights, social security, malpractice, local government/municipality issues, MN Health Records Privacy Acts, and car issues.

What are the benefits for an attorney?

Our attorneys can advertise that they have been approved for membership in a referral service that meets the stringent requirements for ABA accreditation. We coordinate with bar referral services nationwide to ensure we provide the highest quality of service to both the public and our attorney members.

Our attorneys build a reputation with the bench. Through regular communication with judges and court administration, we ensure that stakeholders are invested in our success. As a result, the courts extend their goodwill to our attorney participants and volunteers.

Finally, we generate leads that turn into income for our members. Last fiscal year MNLIRIS referrals generated over \$4 million in revenue for our members. Our marketing services ensure our members' membership fees create maximum results, and our staff's personal, hands-on approach sends our members screened leads that are a good fit for their firm.

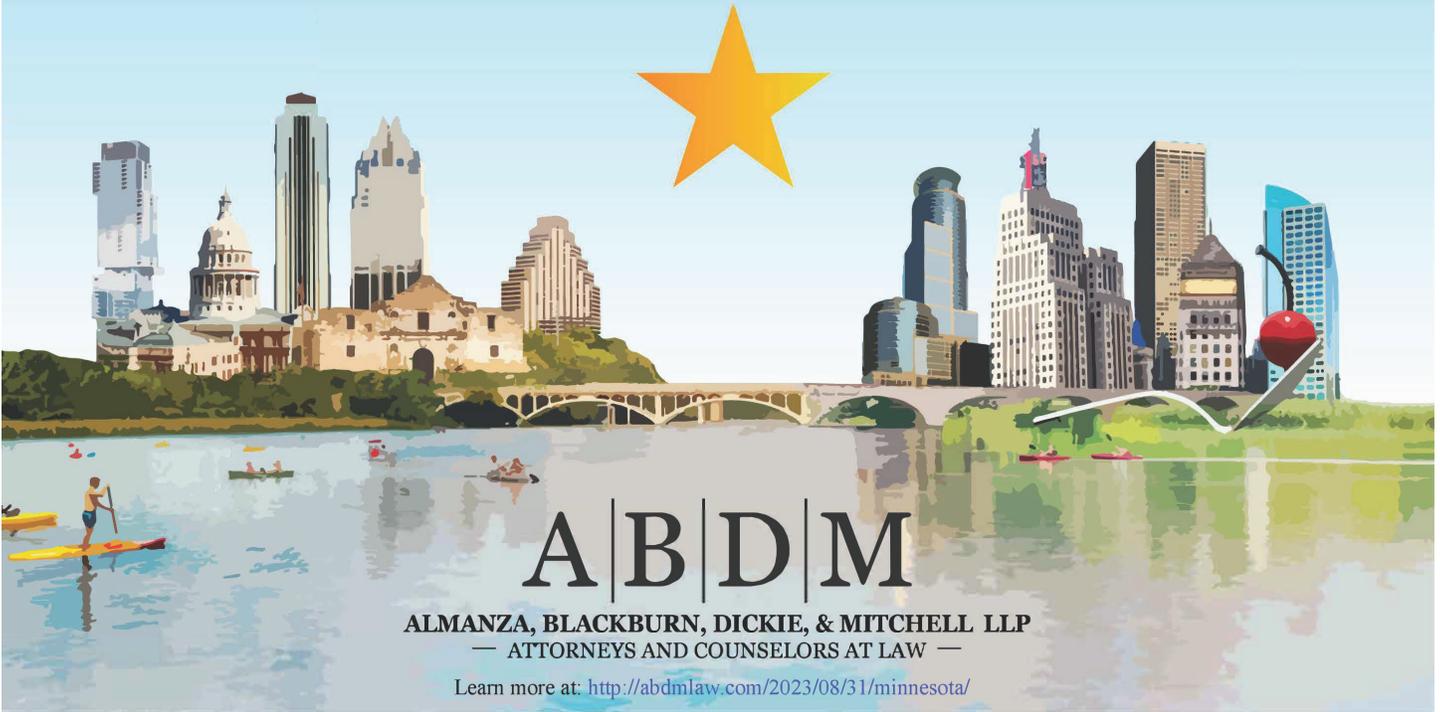


Katy Drahos
Access to Justice Director
kdrahos@mnbars.org



Dana Miner
Legal Services Director
dminer@mnbars.org

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HENNEPIN COUNTY BAR FOUNDATION



In 2023, the HCBF awarded grants to local nonprofits that work to provide legal access and support to those in need. Because each organization is unique in the way they provide services, we would like to highlight the collective work of our grantees to show how your support of the foundation promotes access to justice for the people of Hennepin County.

\$220,000
2023 GRANTS
AWARDED

HCBF PARTNER GRANT

\$130,000

VOLUNTEER LAWYERS NETWORK

Each year, the HCBF gives a meaningful contribution to Volunteer Lawyers Network – the pro bono arm of the Hennepin County Bar Association. HCBF funding assists VLN in protecting and enforcing the legal rights of low-income Minnesotans.



VLN CONNECTED
517
PRO BONO
VOLUNTEERS

VLN DELIVERED
6,701
LEGAL
SERVICES

VLN ASSISTED
5,915
LOW-INCOME
MINNESOTANS

FELLOWS

Making a Difference
in Hennepin County



GAVE
\$24,135

Established by the HCBF board of directors in 2018, the Fellows Program is an honorary society of attorneys, judges, law faculty, and legal scholars who have committed to financially support the goals and objectives of the foundation. 60 Fellows brought in **\$24,135** this year that was given away in community grants. Thank you to our Fellows for this commitment to closing the justice gap in Hennepin County.

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Mission Inc.
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Neighborhood Justice Center
\$1,000

Rainbow Health
\$4,000

Restorative Justice
\$4,000

Seward Longfellow
\$3,000

Sojourner
\$3,000

Standpoint
\$2,500

Tubman
\$5,000

Volunteers of America of MN
\$2,000



DIVERSITY LAW STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS \$6,000

For the first time, the HCBF awarded \$6,000 in Diversity Scholarships to 15 students who attend a MN law school and are members of traditionally underrepresented groups in the law field, with an emphasis on students engaged in legal aid work.

SERVING THE COMMUNITY

The Hennepin County Bar Foundation strives to meet a variety of unmet legal needs in Hennepin County and recognizes value in providing services for different communities. We work to choose grantees with a wide range of targeted services in order to diversify our support.

Help fund legal services in our community, go to: mnbar.org/HCBFdonate

Grantees report the number of individuals served from HCBF funding.



LOW-INCOME



WOMEN



PEOPLE OF COLOR



IMMIGRANTS



LGBTQ+



DISABLED



VETERANS



CHILDREN



YOUTH
(ages 18-24)



HOMELESS

WIN/WIN: 1L Diversity Clerkship



We all know that the law has the potential to transform lives and affect systemic change. But the historic exclusion of Black, Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC) and LGBTQ+ individuals from the legal field has created persistent gaps in the number of BIPOC and LGBTQ+ people who become attorneys.

“The law can be used to create a positive social impact,” said Alena Stankaitis, an alumnus of the Hennepin County Bar Association’s 1L Diversity Clerkship program. “As a queer, gender nonconforming kid, [I] experienced firsthand how ... a lack of legal protection hurts minority groups.”

HCBA’s 1L Diversity Clerkships aim to combat these gaps in access by giving 1L law students from historically-excluded groups a valuable first clerkship. Employers from private and public entities in the metro partner with the HCBA to provide a full-time, paid clerkship to a student. Last year over 50 students applied for the program, and 15 were placed with the participating employers. Clerkships in diverse areas of law, including corporate, defense, nonprofit, and public sector law were available.

When members of the BIPOC and LGBTQ+ communities become attorneys, they report higher levels of stress, anxiety, and feelings of isolation and imposter syndrome. If these individuals are first-generation attorneys, those feelings could be exacerbated.

The clerkship aims to give students the tools they need to thrive in a legal environment. In addition to placing the students, the program provides support from HCBA staff and peers to combat the feelings of stress and imposter syndrome that law students from historically marginalized communities might face.

“It was helpful to be in a cohort with other 1Ls. [We put] together a happy hour in the summer and discussed how folks’ clerkships were going and decompressing after finals,” said Adam Revoir, another alumnus.

Matt Buechner agreed that having a community was helpful. “Connecting and reconnecting with people throughout the legal industry over the past summer has been helpful,” he said. “It was great to feel like part of the community.”

With the help of Erika Ryan, Director of Equity, Inclusion, and Foundations at HCBA, this program has helped students gain access to paid clerkships in a variety of legal fields. Alumni of the program have gone on to work for a variety of organizations, with many being hired or continuing to work with their 1L summer employer past their clerkship term. By providing a sense of community and an expanded network to students, and offering employers the chance to connect with talented candidates, the 1L Diversity Clerkship is creating pathways to a more diverse Hennepin County legal community.



1L students meet and mingle at the program orientation.

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The HCBA annually gives out the Excellence Awards to honor individual members and organizations for contributions to the profession and the community. The 2023 awards were given at the HCBA Annual Meeting.



Honorable Denise Reilly

Career Contributions to the Profession

Reilly has been a champion of children in the justice system throughout her career. As a district court judge, she was a presiding judge of juvenile court and helped overhaul the juvenile protection system. She has continued her work with children as an active member of the Children’s Justice Initiative Advisory Committee.



Northern Hennepin Community College and the Legal Revolution

Improving Access to Justice

The Legal Revolution, a nonprofit subsidiary of All Square, and North Hennepin Community College’s Paralegal Program created the first ABA-approved paralegal certificate and law firm internship for incarcerated Minnesotans. The program provides high-quality paralegal education and experience to the students, who, upon release, will be equipped to secure competitive employment and help other Minnesotans affected by the justice system.



Dee Baskin

Improving Access to Justice

As the executive director of Loan Repayment Assistance Program, Baskin has been a behind-the-scenes champion for legal aid attorneys seeking public service loan forgiveness. Baskin has helped Minnesota attorneys navigate each pause on student loan payments through articles, CLE presentations, and social media updates.



Logan Drew

Providing Pro Bono Service

As chair of Robins Kaplan's pro bono committee, Drew helped launch the Robins Kaplan Name Change Clinic in 2019. Under Drew's leadership, the firm has hosted 15 clinics, helping 225 clients seeking a gender-affirming name change through 800 hours of pro bono legal aid.



Caitlinrose Fisher and Virginia McCalmont

Providing Pro Bono Service

Fisher and McCalmont maintain a robust pro bono practice of civil rights appeals and impact district court litigation. In 2022, they provided over 200 hours of pro bono services. The two obtained partial appellate reversals in two separate civil rights appeals. They also have two additional pending pro bono appeals in the Eighth Circuit.



Mary Kaczorek

Improving Access to Justice

Kaczorek has led the Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid Housing Department through the challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. She has advocated for remote hearings for the benefit of MMLA's low-income and disabled clients. In addition to supervising attorneys and litigating her own cases in housing court, Kaczorek has also advocated for eviction reform at the Minnesota legislature.



Amanda Kruse

Providing Pro Bono Service

Kruse has been a dedicated pro bono volunteer for Volunteer Lawyers Network. She fully represents low-income Minnesotans looking to expunge their state records, increasing their chances to find stable jobs and housing. She has also served as a mentor to other attorneys looking to do pro bono expungement work.



James Poradek

Improving Access to Justice

Through his work at the Housing Justice Center, Poradek has represented low-income individuals facing housing instability across the state, helping thousands of Minnesotans avoid mass eviction from landlords. He sought compensation for residents who were exposed to shoddy construction and unsafe housing conditions. Poradek is known for his compassion and patience when dealing with clients who are mistrustful of the justice system.



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HCBA has been proudly serving the legal profession and the community since 1919. With over 7000 attorney and law school members, HCBA is the largest district bar association in Minnesota. HCBA brings the legal community together, providing CLE seminars and programming, professional resources, and opportunities to connect, learn, grow, and give back. HCBA members can access free and discounted programs, events, and offerings throughout the year.

Thanks for being a part of the association. Your membership makes it happen. And thanks also to our annual HCBA sponsors listed here. Their financial support contributes significantly to the programming we provide for our members and we encourage you to support them this year.

