



A Midsummer Newsletter 2020

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President's Corner

By **Dodie Sachs**



I know that every incoming GCBA President starts their first President's Corner the same way. This is a very surreal experience. I am honored to join the ranks of all of our members that were Presidents of the GCBA, and I am looking forward to my Presidential Year.

This is also a strange summer for many other reasons. We very rarely have a Newsletter in July, as traditionally the GCBA is dormant in the Summer months. Due to the wrench that COVID has thrown into everyone's lives starting this Spring, we have a lot of news important to our legal community that we need to share with everyone.

First, hopefully everyone saw the Survey Monkey survey that we distributed asking your opinions on cancelling 2020's Law Day banquet, continuing our monthly luncheons, and your thoughts on the COVID-19 mitigation measures in place at the Gwinnett County Courthouses. Based on your responses, we have decided to cancel our Law Day Banquet that was originally scheduled for August 21, 2020. In lieu of the Law Day Banquet, we are going to have a Zoom event on August 21, 2020 with an Installation for our incoming officers, and recognition to all the people who contributed to the GCBA over the past year. Please watch your emails for more information.

In the survey, we had also asked your opinions on whether we should have in person luncheons over this upcoming bar year. We are still debating how we will handle luncheons this upcoming bar year. We welcome your input on the luncheons and on the COVID-19 mitigation measures at the Gwinnett County Courthouses. If you have not completed your survey, please check your in boxes and your Spam folders to find the link and let us know your thoughts. Please click [here](#) to see the survey results that have been tabulated so far.

Second, there is a Fourth Order Extending Declaration of Statewide Judicial Emergency that was filed July 10, 2020. The new Order extends the Judicial Emergency until Tuesday, August 11, 2020 at 11:59 p.m. Please click [here](#) to read the new Order.

Finally, as you read the article on Upholding the Mission Statement below, I want to implement some new committees as part of the GCBA. If you would like to participate in a Courts and Judiciary committee, the CLE Committee, the Community Outreach Committee, or any other committee already existing or that you wish to create, please reach out. I would welcome your involvement.

I am excited for the 2020-2021 bar year. I can't wait to see you all in person or virtually as our circumstances allow.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Upholding the GCBA Mission Statement

Dear Colleagues:

The Gwinnett County Bar Association Board has convened to discuss the events that have been transpiring in our communities and those worldwide following Mr. Ahmaud Arbery's, Ms. Breonna Taylor's, Mr. George Floyd's, and many others' premature deaths. Any omission of personal and public acknowledgement is not acceptable. The Gwinnett County Bar Association Board condemns racism, bigotry, and hatred in all its forms. The purpose of this statement is to highlight the steps that the Gwinnett County Bar Association is going to take to combat the systemic racism in our community.

Our Mission Statement is "to uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States and of Georgia and maintain representative government; to advance the science of jurisprudence; to promote the administration of justice; to uphold and honor the profession of law; to apply our knowledge and experience in the field of the law to the promotion of the public good; to encourage cordial intercourse among the members of the corporation; to correlate and promote such activities of the bar organizations in Gwinnett County as they are in the interest of the legal profession and of the public."

It is our mission to uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States and of Georgia. The Preamble to the Georgia Constitution echoes the Preamble to the United States' Constitution, in stating that the citizens of Georgia adopt this Constitution to "insure justice to all, preserve peace, promote the interest and happiness of the citizen and of the family, and transmit to posterity the enjoyment of liberty." Through the formation of committees and through community outreach, not only as part of our Law Day celebrations but also throughout the year, we will attempt to build better dialogue with the Gwinnett County Courts and Judiciary to insure justice and promote peace. Please let us know if you are interested in serving on these committees.

It is our mission to maintain representative government. We began this work by having a Gwinnett County Legislative Day just this past legislative session. We will continue to work to build relationships with Gwinnett County Government Leaders on a local level up to the State Level. Dana Pagan of Crawford Boyle, LLC is the new Chair for the Government Liaison Committee, and is seeking members for her committee. We also continue to work to ensure that the government of the Gwinnett County Bar Association is representative of its members.

It is our mission to uphold and honor the profession of law and to apply our knowledge and experience in the field of law to the promotion of the public good. Therein, we shall continue to promote professionalism through our Continuing Legal Education Programs and to build our relationship with Gwinnett County Legal Aid and other Community Organizations to provide assistance and representation to our local community members.

It is our mission to encourage cordial intercourse among members of the corporation. Therein, we shall be working to ensure that all of our members and guests feel welcome to speak freely and express their opinions free from prejudice and hate.

It is our mission to correlate and promote such activities of the bar organizations in Gwinnett County as they are in the interest of the legal profession and of the public. Therein, we shall be working to sponsor meetings that reinforce the proud virtues of our Constitutions with our membership and public guests.

The Board of the Gwinnett County Bar Association acknowledges that these conversations are overdue and shall continue to work towards effectuating the ideals of decency, dignity and fairness.

SPECIAL ELECTION RESULTS

The results of the special election for secretary of the GCBA are in. Attorney Sean Goldstein has officially been elected as the new GCBA secretary. Congratulations, Sean! To see the results of the special election, click [here](#).



Sean Goldstein

CRIMINAL E-FILEING

PRESS RELEASE re: Criminal E-filing

The Gwinnett County Clerk of Superior and State Courts announces the commencement of e-filing for criminal cases, which began June 24, 2020 via Tyler Technologies' Odyssey eFileGA. Attorneys and self-represented parties now have the option to electronically file into existing criminal cases.

Tiana Garner, Chief Deputy Clerk of the Gwinnett County Clerk's office, stresses the importance of participation in this effort. "It will not only make access to justice more convenient, but it will also aid in slowing the spread of COVID-19 by decreasing in-person contact at the Clerk's Office. Protecting the public and our employees is a top priority."

Frequently asked questions, filing instructions and training opportunities can be found at: www.odysseyefilega.com. Additionally, while at the courthouse, the Clerk's staff can provide hands-on assistance.

To read the full press release, click [here](#).

ATTORNEY KIOSK AT GWINNETT COUNTY DETENTION CENTER

The Gwinnett County Sheriff's Office has purchased a new kiosk for all attorneys to utilize when entering the Jail to visit with inmates and/or for court purposes. The kiosk is user friendly and went live on July 6, 2020.

GWINNETT COUNTY STATE COURT CRIMINAL CLOSURE

NOTICE

From the Judges of the State Court, Gwinnett County:

Due to the public health emergency all state court arraignments and criminal hearings are cancelled effective immediately until July 17, 2020 at 5:00 p.m.

This cancellation applies only to state court criminal cases.

These matters will be rescheduled at a later date.

GWINNETT ADR PARENTING CLASSES AVAILABLE VIA ZOOM

The Gwinnett County Alternative Dispute Resolution Department has recently converted their parenting seminars to Zoom. The previous in-person classes were discontinued due to the pandemic. The classes are now offered virtually and are still interactive.

If you have any questions, please contact Laura Lynn Swafford, Alternative Dispute Resolution Programs Director, at 75 Langley Drive Lawrenceville, Georgia 30046 770-822-8587.

Read the entire press release [here](#).

GCBA SPONSORSHIP OF MEADOW CREEK CHEERLEADING

In keeping with GCBA's mission statement of community involvement, GCBA will be sponsoring Meadowcreek High School Varsity Cheerleading for its 2020-2021 season.

In addition to supporting Meadowcreek athletics, the varsity cheerleading program, led by head coach Amber Echols, supports the varsity cheerleaders academically and in community service endeavors. Academically, all cheerleaders are prepped for college including ACT and SAT prep.

Regarding community service, the cheer team coaches cheerleaders in grades K-8 from Bryson Park and hosts a camp for them over the summer. Other community service projects include a Stampede in the Park 5K and a team food drive and toy drive at Christmas.

Meadowcreek Varsity Cheerleading fosters leadership skills, academics, and community involvement among its members, and GCBA is excited to sponsor this team for the upcoming season!



PANEL ON RAISING RACE CONSCIENCE CHILDREN

GCBA member Sharmin Arefin, owner of The Arefin Law Office, presented an esteemed panel on Raising Race-Conscious Children in Today's America on June 15, 2020. This Panel was intended for people who have children or know children ages 8-17 who have race-related questions. Due to the success of the program, Ms. Arefin is considering making this a recurring discussion. To view a recording of the original panel, click [here](#).



Sharmin Arefin

JOBS

Fulton County Magistrate Court Vacancies

Fulton County Magistrate Court has vacancies for two senior staff attorneys and two judicial assistants.

Please have anyone interested email a resume, cover letter and writing sample of not more than 5 pages (writing sample is for the Staff Attorney only) to Mary Shimell at maryshimell@fultoncountygga.gov no later than July 24, 2020. This is a rolling application and interview process and the positions will be open only until filled.

Read the entire job listing [here](#).



DeQuentin Augustine

Recent Grad Seeks Employment

DeQuentin Augustine, a GCBA college scholarship recipient, has recently graduated with a bachelor's degree in political science and successfully completed the paralegal program at Georgia Gwinnett College. He is seeking part-time employment as an office assistant or paralegal.

If interested, please email him at d.augustine@ggc.edu.

LEGAL UPDATES AND ARTICLES

UPDATE TO USCR RULE 6.1

The Supreme Court entered an order modifying Uniform Superior Court Rule 6.1 effective July 2, 2020. The revised rule requires as follows:

Filing in civil actions every motion made prior to trial, except those consented to by all parties, when filed shall include or be accompanied by citations of supporting authorities and, where allegations of undisputed fact are relied upon, supporting affidavits, or citations to evidentiary materials of record. In circuits utilizing an individual assignment system, the clerk shall promptly upon filing furnish a copy provided by the attorney or party of such motions and related materials to the assigned judge or the judge's designee. When an attorney or party e-files a motion or any response, the attorney or party shall notify the opposing parties and the assigned judge or the judge's designee by e-mail of the motion or response contemporaneously but no later than 24 hours after e-filing. Amended effective July 2, 2020.

LEGISLATURE PASSES HATE CRIME LEGISLATION

On June 23, 2020, the Georgia Legislature passed House Bill 426. HB 426 would allow enhanced criminal penalties to be levied against those who target their victims on the basis of race, gender, sexual orientation, sex, national origin, religion, or physical or mental disability.

The bill, co-sponsored by GCBA member and House Representative Chuck Elstratton (R-Dacula), has been hailed as "a defining moment in Georgia," by House Speaker David Ralston (R-Blue Ridge). The bill will now go to the Governor's desk to be signed.

To see more about HB 426, click [here](#).

LAWYER JOKES



Articles and Updates Welcome!!

If you would like to contribute to the GCBA Monthly Newsletter, e-mail submissions by the 5th of each month to Editor Sean.Goldstein.

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