GCBA March 2021 Newsletter

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President's Corner

Dodie Sachs
GCBA President 2020-2021

By Dodie Sachs

I'm tasked this month by Editor Sean Goldstein to say fun things about Spring. To that end, I would like to point out that one of the biggest pluses of wearing a mask (besides that it prevents COVID) is that they should help us all breathe easier as we enter into pollen season. I am very much looking forward to being able to go outside and hang out with people, of course wearing a mask.

I am very excited that for International Women's Month we have the first elected Clerk of Court of Gwinnett County here for our speaker this month. Please show up in person or join our Zoom when we have Clerk Tiarna Garner and Deputy Clerk Ruth McMullin as our featured speakers this month.

The 2021 Law Day theme is Advancing the Rule of Law Now. The rule of law is the bedrock of American rights and liberties-in times of calm and unrest alike. The 2021 Law Day theme-Advancing the Rule of Law Now-reminds all of us that we the people share the responsibility to promote the rule of law, defend liberty, and pursue justice. Stay tuned for more information coming soon for our 2021 Law Day Festivities.

We also just returned from our Social Distanced Civil Rights Journey to Montgomery and Selma, Alabama. I'd love to take the GCBA on another trip. If you have any ideas for a trip or a tour, please let me know. Someone pointed out that we could secure CLE credits for these trips. I'm happy to go through that process if you can help me think of destinations.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Attend the GCBA March 2021 Luncheon

GCBA March 2021 Luncheon
March 19, 2021 at 12pm, at

The 1818 Club
6500 Sugarloaf Pkwy.
Duluth, GA 30097

Join us for the GCBA March 2021 luncheon! The Gwinnett County Clerk of Court Tiana Garner and the Deputy Clerk of Court Ruth McMullin will speak to us about changes in the Clerk's office and its response to COVID19.

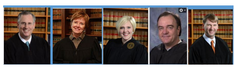
We will be observing COVID Safety protocols at the luncheon. We have capped our registration at 60 members, and once we meet that limit we will not allow additional people to attend in person. The luncheon tables will be spaced out and there will be a limited number of people at each table so we can social distance.

We will also broadcast the luncheon via Zoom. To register, click here.

Chief Deputy Clerk Ruth Rocker McMullin

Gwinnett County Clerk of Court Tiana Garner

GCBA February 2021 Luncheon Featured The Chief Judges of Gwinnett



The GCBA February 2021 luncheon featured the chief judges of Gwinnett County speaking about the impact of COVID19 on their respective courts. The luncheon was informative and well attended by our members. We thank each of the judges that appeared.

The GCBA Civil Rights Experience Trip on February 27, 2021 Was a Success

Our members attended the GCBA Civil Rights Experience in Montgomery and Selma, AL on February 27, 2021. This trip was led by Billy Parker of Elgar JR (www.elgarjr.com) and was inspiring. We started the tripin the center of Montgomery learning about the Montgomery Bus Boycott, then went to The Rosa Parks Museum, and the National Memorial for Peace and Justice. Finally we traveled to Selma, Alabama and learned about Bloody Sunday and walked across the Edmund Pettus Bridge to the memorial on the other side of the bridge. It was a great trip. If you have ideas for future trips, please let us know.

Judge Trace Cason and Tuwana Davenport on Edmund Pettus Bridge

The John Lewis Monument

A sign honoring Rosa Parks in Montgomery, Alabama near the Rosa Parks' statue.

GCBA President Dodie Sachs at the Legacy Museum

A tribute at the National Memorial for Peace and Justice in Montgomery.

Maya Angelou quote on the side of The Legacy Museum - party of the Equal Justice Initiative.

Manely Firm Announces New Associate

The Manely Firm, P.C. is excited to announce a new associate attorney has joined the Firm. Attorney Desiree Perez-Cassidy has joined the Firm and will be based at the state of Florida. Of Ms. Desir, Founding Attorney Michael Manely says, "We are very excited about Ms. Desir joining the Firm, she will add more depth and breadth to the experience of the Firm."

Ms. Desir officially joined the Firm on December 10, 2020 in the role of Associate Attorney to her based in the Firm's Miami office. Ms. Desir's practice focuses on Immigration, International Trade and Mana School of Law and received her undergraduate degree here as well. She has past experience working with civil litigation and guardianship matters through Dade Legal Aid in Miami, Florida.

Ms. Desir celebrates coming from a large blended Cuban and Colombian family while having spent much of her free time in Miami volunteering with local fundraisers benefitting police, veterans and low-income families. She says, "Even as a young girl, I spoke for my grandparents because they never spoke English, only now, I am taking that role with me into the legal field to make sure the families of my community feel and believe that same voice." Ms. Desir will focus on Family Law and International Family Law in her new role with The Manely Firm, P.C. and has the distinction of being the Firm's only fluent Spanish speaking attorney.

Ms. Dina Khismatulina, Lawrenceville Associate Attorney says, "We are thrilled to have Ms. Desir join the Firm. Her background, energy and experience that will enhance our firm's ability to serve each client, in English and Spanish, with the utmost strategic care."

G.R.E.A.T. Little Minds Program

Gwinnett Reading Exchange & Art Transforms (G.R.E.A.T.) Little Minds is a public art and public awareness campaign designed to inspire the love of reading, provide access to early learning children's books in areas where books are scarce, and encourage an appreciation for public art in Gwinnett County. You are receiving this message because you are a partner / supporter that has enabled the successful growth of this program in Gwinnett County.

The G.R.E.A.T. Little Minds initiative was an idea spurred by the Gwinnett Coalition's Early Learning Committee. In October 2019 and in collaboration with Kim Holland, Director of Early Learning & School Readiness at Gwinnett County Public Schools, and John Upchurch, Early Learning Advocate, the Gwinnett Coalition launched the initiative. We are grateful for the early financial investment for the pilot program which came from The John and Maria Upchurch Foundation, Dan King, and A.C. Myers.

On July 17, 2020, the United Way awarded G.R.E.A.T. Little Minds with a $26,000 SPARK Prize that provided the initial investment to launch the program in Gwinnett County. This investment has helped accelerate the growth of the G.R.E.A.T. Little Minds program. Since our last update in October 2020, we have increased the number of book exchange sites and the number of books distributed into the community. Today, there are 48 beautifully painted Book Exchange Sites maintained by 34 volunteer stewards, and all are increasing awareness for the importance and necessity of early childhood reading. We are in the tremendous need for books for our community's most precious asset - our children ages 0-8 years of age.

To meet this ever-growing need, the Gwinnett Coalition will transition the G.R.E.A.T. Little Minds program to Gwinnett County's Department of Community Services. Under the leadership of Jason West, Deputy Director of Community Services, and Lecia Young, Director of Early Learning & Workforce, the G.R.E.A.T. Little Minds program will continue to flourish and expand its impact across the community as part of a new educational initiative called B2 Anywhere.

The Gwinnett Coalition is proud to have piloted the G.R.E.A.T. Little Minds initiative and is even more proud to be transitioning it to a partner who has the capacity to grow its impact in Gwinnett County. On a personal note, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to every person and organization who helped G.R.E.A.T. Little Minds flourish and become the program it is today. With your assistance, we have distributed over 40,000 books into the community and there will be thousands more in the years to come!

Contact information for Tania Ballou: Tania.Ballou@gwinnettcounty.com or 678.277.0927.
Contact information for Jason West: Walter.West@gwinnettcounty.com or 678.765.4662.

Sincerely,
Lecia Young
Gwinnett Coalition for Health and Human Services
750 S Perry Street, Suite 312
Lawrenceville, GA 30046

Center for Navigating Family Change Director Diane Dierks Semi Retirement

A message from CNFC Director Diane Dierks:

Greetings all, I hope you are staying well! In this long season of COVID, I think we all have learned how to adapt and we have had to adapt quite quickly. I have had to adapt to the idea that I will not actually make a move to St. Simons Island to fulfill our dream of living on the coast. I am calling it my "semi" retirement because I will still continue to provide leadership to the CNFC organization and supervise co-parenting services, as well as the court-ordered education programs. However, I will not be maintaining my private practice as I have in the past. My current clients who want to continue with me will do so via Zoom or in person. I will be available to my clients who want to do so for a few months, but I want to let you to know that when you hear that Diane has fled to the beach, I don't want her name to be that I have retired and am no longer in the business!

My esteemed colleague, Sherri Rawsthorn, is currently in training with me to take over as clinical director for the Center for Navigating Family Change in 2022 to free my time to expand our online co-parenting services (Parenting Coordination and Co-Parent Counseling) to the whole state of Georgia. We are finding that video sessions with co-parents are often more productive and less stressful for them than in-person sessions. We are also developing a mediation program to be offered through the Center. We will continue to do reunification therapy and parental alienation assessments in person, though, because there is a need to see children privately and face-to-face. And as always, we continue to provide the basic, advanced and Spanish speaking LIVE court-ordered parenting seminars via the Zoom platform. I am proud that CNFC has responded, and pivoted (as they say), to roll with the new media culture created by the pandemic.

Please feel free to call or email me with questions (so I can gloat about my next chapter :-), and if we end up on a consultation call about your next case, Sherri Rawsthorn is likely to join me so she can become familiar with her leadership as well. Check out her profile on our web site to learn more.

I will always be thankful for the great work we have been able to do in the Atlanta metro area, and I look forward to being able to provide our valuable services to those in various parts of Georgia that may not have easy access to experienced professionals in this field.

I consider all of you friends and colleagues. I hope to hear from you soon!

I am grateful,

Diane C. Dierks, LMFT, CFLE
Executive and Clinical Director
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LEGAL UPDATES AND ARTICLES

Update to Uniform Superior Court Rules

Effective February 25, 2021, multiple updates were made to the Georgia Uniform Superior Court Rules. To view the updates, click here.

12th Order Extending Declaration of Statewide Judicial Emergency

Chief Justice Harold Melton has issued the 12th Order Extending Declaration of Statewide Judicial Emergency.
Click the link below for the latest order.

GWINNETT CLERK SEEKS CITIZENS TO SERVE ON BOARD OF EQUALIZATION

(Lawrenceville, Ga., March 2021) - *The Gwinnett County Clerk of Superior Clerk is looking for interested citizens that own property in Gwinnett County to serve as Board of Equalization members.*
What does the Board of Equalization do?
The Board of Equalization is charged with hearing appeals including, but not limited to determinations of fair market value, assessment uniformity, and current use determinations. Members of the Board of Equalization are also responsible for assuring that all real and personal property entered on the county's assessment roll is at true and fair market value.
What are the qualifications for serving on the Board?
1. Must own real property in Gwinnett County
2. Must be a registered voter
3. Must be qualified and competent to serve as a grand juror
4. Must be at least 18 years of age.
5. Must have a high school diploma or equivalent
6. Must be able to attend scheduled hearings (virtual and/or in-person)
7. Must satisfactorily complete 40 hours of state-mandated training within one year of appointment.
8. Can NOT hold an elected office or be employed by an elected official.
What else should I know?
1. The board members will serve a three-year term on a three-member board or serve a three-year term as an alternate member.
2. The board members are compensated at the rate of $100 per day.
Interested citizens should contact Lily Perez, Gwinnett County Board of Equalization Director, at 770.822.7235 or boardofequalization@gwinnettcounty.com.

Job Listings

The Auld Firm is seeking a paralegal. Listing follows:

We are seeking a full-time litigation paralegal for a fast-paced practice in Gwinnett County. Hybrid work schedule including the ability for in-office and remote hours.
Requirements:

1. 5 years of experience with trial preparation and case management
2. Substantial drafting discovery responses from parties and determining non-party requests for production of documents, preparing the same for attorney
3. Able to work independently
4. Able to efficiently multitask and meet deadlines
5. Excellent organizational skills a must
6. Must be proficient with Adobe, Word, and Excel. Experience with Casemap and TimeMatters a plus.

Experience in domestic litigation and contract cases a plus but will train the right candidate.
Send resume, cover letter, and salary requirements to kriwegard@auldlaw.com.

Lawyer Joke

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.

Visit our Facebook Page & our WEBSITE to stay updated until our next newsletter.

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