

# THE BALTIMORE Barrister

WINTER 2025

VOL 15 | NO 1



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# The More Things Change, the More They Stay the Same!

*Hon. Teresa Epps Cummings, President, Bar Association of Baltimore City*



I hope you all had a wonderful holiday season, and I wish you all a heartfelt Happy New Year. We are all in the period of new beginnings that are ushered in when the clock strikes 12 on January 1. Many of us are in the throes of beginning to tackle our new year resolutions and while we are all looking forward to all that is to come in 2025, I wanted to take a moment to look back. As I stated at the 2024 annual meeting, I wanted to spend some time reviewing the history of the BABC

because to again quote the famous poet Maya Angelou, “You can’t really know where you are going until you know where you have been.” And while we are in the early days of a new year, I wanted to share with you a President’s message from 2019. In 2019, Kelly Hughes Iverson was president of the BABC. Her message in 2019 centered around change and the goals of the BABC’s Legislation Committee. And while this message is from over five years ago, everything contained in Ms. Iverson’s message, rings true to the adage that the more things change the more things remain the same. So, please enjoy this blast from the past and remember: We are One~ One City, One Profession, One Bar!

Change is in the air. As the holiday season wraps up, our attention turns, as it always does, to the business of the new year. Traffic picks up, phones ring more frequently (or so it seems), and to-do lists practically jump off the page. New years’ resolutions, not yet broken, hold the promise that this year will be the year that we [insert long-standing unattained goal here]. There is a new legislature in Washington and a new legislature in Annapolis. While the nature and extent of the 2018 “blue wave” can be debated, few would deny that both legislative bodies that convene this month have some surprising new faces and new personalities, and politics-watchers wait with bated breath as new interpersonal and political dynamics begin to take shape. Change can be good, and change is often the driver of progress. But to be more effective than disruptive, particularly in the legal profession, change must be tethered to the values that have anchored us since the days of the Founders. Checks and balances in governance, respect for the rule of law, and the independence of the judiciary are a few of the core principles that we must take care to tend and nurture, even as the winds of change blow hot and cold across the political landscape. The Bar Association’s Legislation Committee is charged this year with minding the store, so to speak, in Annapolis. The Committee will be monitoring the bills introduced in the General Assembly, looking for anything

that might impact the legal profession in Baltimore City. If the Committee identifies concerns, the concerns will be brought to the attention of the Association’s officers and potentially the full Executive Council, and if it is agreed that a particular legislative undertaking would impact the profession in Baltimore

City, the Council will determine whether to take a formal position, or even testify, on a bill. The Association is not interested in taking ideological sides; some of the more controversial legislative bills in the past have, for example, pitted the plaintiffs’ bar against the defense bar on certain policy questions. The Association does not intend to weigh in on such measures. But where our core principles are in play, or where our membership as a whole is potentially affected, a more significant presence may be warranted. Members of the Association who have concerns about a bill that may impact the legal profession are urged to contact our Legislation Committee chair so that the Association may study the issue and potentially propose next steps. In the meantime, the new year marches forward. With a full plate of CLE programs, health and wellness programs, and social and cultural events, the Association is diving headfirst into the new year, striving to give our members tools to help them continue to develop professionally and personally, and to practice the profession with excellence. If you have not yet resolved to become more active in the Association this year, it is not too late. Participate in what the Association has to offer in the new year, and buckle up. In the midst of uncertain times, one can nevertheless count on change. And from all appearances, it looks to be a wild ride.



The BABC Diversity Committee would like to make you aware and aid us in celebrating these diverse holidays in February.

<b>UN: World Interfaith Harmony Week</b>	<b>2/1</b>	Promotes harmony between all people regardless of their faith.
<b>Pagan and Wiccan: Imbloc</b>	<b>2/2</b>	Celebrates the beginning of spring and the goddess Brigid.
<b>World Cancer Day</b>	<b>2/4</b>	Raises awareness of cancer prevention, detection, and treatment.
<b>Washington’s Birthday (President’s Day)</b>	<b>2/17</b>	Honors the birthday of George Washington, the first U.S. President.
<b>Hindu: Maha Shivaratri</b>	<b>2/26</b>	A major Hindu festival celebrating Lord Shiva.



# Rabbit, Rabbit!

## Young Lawyers' Division Update

*Rachel Samakow, Esq., Chair, Young Lawyers' Division, Bar Association of Baltimore City*



Happy New Year, BABC!

They say if you say "Rabbit, Rabbit" on the first day of the month, it brings good luck. So, I'm starting my first article of the year with those words, hoping to share a bit of extra luck with all of you as we kick off 2025!

As I write this, we're wrapping up the first week of the year, and I had the pleasure of starting my morning with my first docket of 2025. While it felt similar to last week's docket, there's something undeniably electric about the atmosphere right after New Year's – an energy that's contagious.

And what do we do with that extra spark of energy? We make resolutions!

In that spirit, I'd like to share some of mine. Along with spending more quality time with my family, painting the breathtaking view

from the top of Federal Hill Park, and finally mastering a proper pushup, one of my goals this year is about you. That's right – you, the reader of this article. As YLD chair, my goal is to see you at one of our events this year, especially if it's been a while since you last joined us.



So, how do I plan to achieve this goal?

First, let me tell you about the exciting event we held on January 21st: *Practice Tips on Tap*. We gathered at Diamondback Brewing Co. for an engaging Q&A session with The Honorable Catherine Chen and The Honorable Hope Tipton. They shared insights on courtroom practice, procedures, and more. It was the perfect way to kick off our 2025 programming, and I was so glad to see many of you there!

Next, I want to hear from you. What types of events are you most excited to attend this year? I'm looking forward to having those conversations and tailoring our programming to your interests and needs.

Let's make 2025 a year to remember!

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Personal Injury

Additionally joining our senior ranks: Laura Llanso to Senior Counsel, Vida Mokhtari, Morgan Kirby, and Joseph Moeller to Senior Associate.

These outstanding lawyers have demonstrated tremendous leadership and commitment to our clients and the legal community.

# Advice to New Lawyers: Three Lessons from Mattel

*Kendrick McLeod, Esq.*



College days swiftly pass, and during undergrad and law school, I found myself frequently furnishing spaces inexpensively. My go-to? IKEA-style furniture because you could get a good deal if you were willing to put in a little work to build it. Over the years, I became quite the expert at putting together bookshelves, bed-frames, and coffee tables. Friends and family often called on me to tackle anything with more than two pieces. Nowadays, my construction

skills have shifted to building toys, gadgets, and playsets for my two-year-old daughter. There's always something new to assemble while she's at daycare.

As I searched through a toolbox for the correct Allen wrench this past holiday season, I couldn't help but reflect on how lessons from assembling items apply to practicing law. Here are a few insights:

First, starting is sometimes the hardest part. The first few steps are often the most challenging at the beginning of any new project. Not because they're inherently tricky but because this is when you identify all the parts and get acclimated to how the instructions are written. Some instructions with only eight steps can be more confusing than those with twenty.

Similarly, as a young lawyer, starting your first assignments can feel daunting. Different managing partners and clients will provide instructions in unique ways, and it's your responsibility to decipher and execute their vision. Take the time to understand what's being asked of you. Break each task into manageable steps, and you'll find yourself producing excellent work products in no time. Patience and preparation at the outset lay the foundation for success.

Second, you don't have to go it alone. When assembling a play center, I often skim over the part in the instructions that says, "Requires two people." My instinct is to think, "I can do this myself," especially when others seem to be managing solo. However, some projects genuinely require collaboration.

The same is true for the practice of law. It's a highly collaborative profession, particularly when starting. You'll find yourself bouncing ideas and theories off colleagues, seeking guidance from senior attorneys, and having your work reviewed and refined. These interactions not only improve your skills but also ensure the best outcomes for your clients. So, don't hesitate to reach out for help. Collaboration isn't a weakness; it's a cornerstone of professional growth and a source of support in this challenging profession.

Lastly, rushing can lead to mistakes. I'm most prone to errors toward the end of a project. I recall one instance when frustration got the better of me after two hours on a task that should've taken thirty minutes. Ignoring the manufacturer's clear instructions, I grabbed an electric drill instead of a manual screwdriver. The result? I accidentally drilled straight through a sideboard.

As a lawyer, you'll often face tight deadlines and competing priorities. It's tempting to rush through the final stages of a task, especially as the clock winds down. But this is when attention to detail matters most. Take a moment to pause, review your work, and ensure you're adhering to the "instructions." Avoid shortcuts that could compromise quality or lead to costly mistakes.

Assembling toys for my toddler and building a legal career share surprising parallels. Each piece and each step are essential to the finished product. Take your time, seek support when needed, and always stay focused, even when the finish line is in sight.





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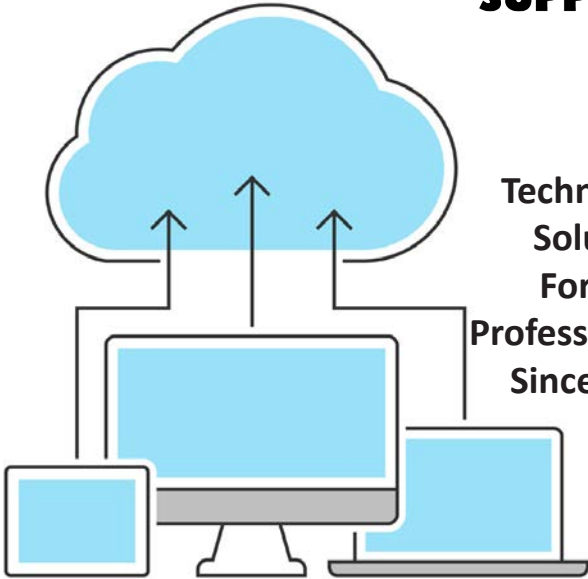
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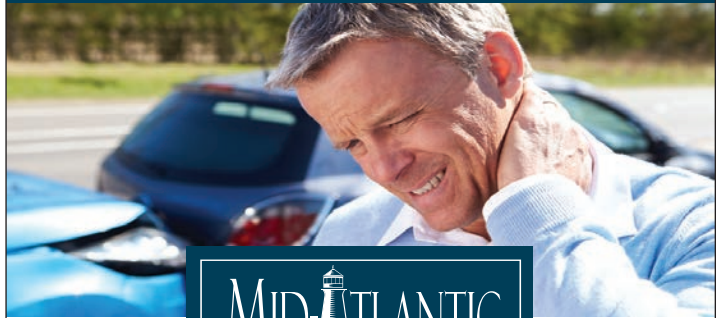
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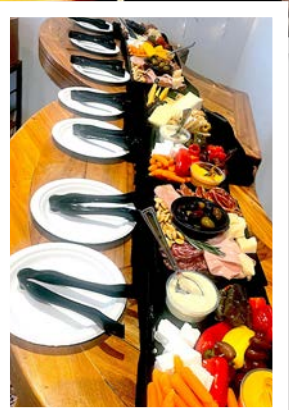




## YLD Wine Tasting

October 22, 2024

On October 22nd the YLD held a Wine Tasting. BABC Members mixed and mingled at Bin 604 while learning about many varietals. Thanks to Gallagher Evelius & Jones for their sponsorship.



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## Green Mount Cemetery Tour

October 26, 2024

Derek Van De Walle, BABC Historical Committee Chair, provided a wealth of information regarding the many notable people who are buried at Green Mount Cemetery located in the heart of the City. Thank you, Derek for continuously providing valuable programming for our members. Don't miss this fabulous tour next year!



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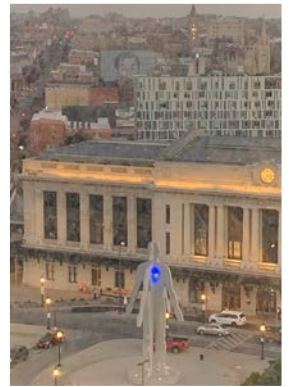


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## University of Baltimore Breakfast

Thank you to Dean LaVonda Reed and the University of Baltimore School of Law for hosting the BABC for breakfast. It was a pleasure getting to know you on a more personal level and to see the great views from the 12th floor Reading Room. If you have not met the Dean, please introduce yourself at one of our upcoming events.



## Supreme Court Trip

A quiet day at the Supreme Court but they still admitted six of our members on November 6, 2024. A beautiful day full of surprises and great camaraderie. A special thank you to Judge Cummings for leading our group admissions.





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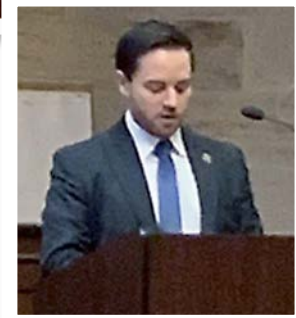
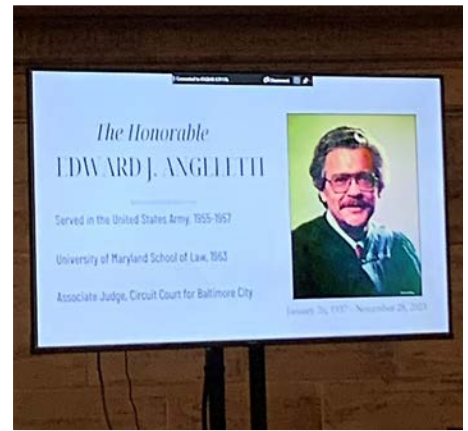
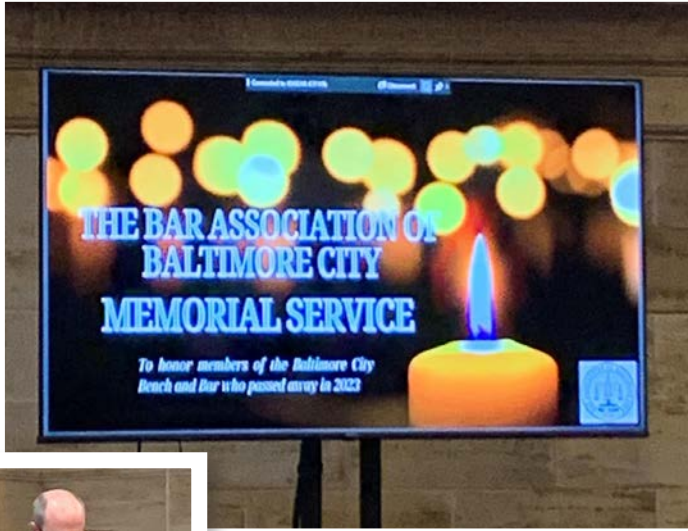
## BABC Memorial Service

November 7, 2024

On November 7th, the BABC Memorial Committee honored those who have passed away in 2023 from our legal community.

Thank you Judge Scurti for leading the committee.

It was a heartfelt ceremony and an honor to have so many families with us.





*The Baltimore Bar Foundation  
Presents*

*Spaghetti Opera Night*

*Featuring*



Claire Iverson  
Soprano



Guzal Isametdinova  
Piano



Daniel E. Sampson  
Tenor

**March 19 & 20, 2025  
Chiapparelli's Restaurant  
237 S. High Street  
Baltimore, MD 21202**

**6:00 p.m. - Cocktail Hour (Cash Bar)  
7:00 p.m. - Dinner & Performance**

**\$89 per person  
includes dinner, wine, dessert and coffee**

**To register, go to:  
[www.baltimorebar.org/calendar/](http://www.baltimorebar.org/calendar/)**

**For more information, contact:  
[info@baltimorebar.org](mailto:info@baltimorebar.org)**

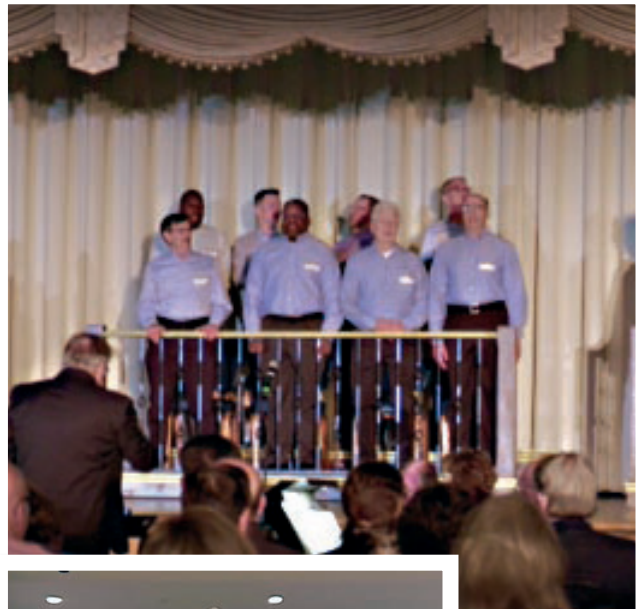




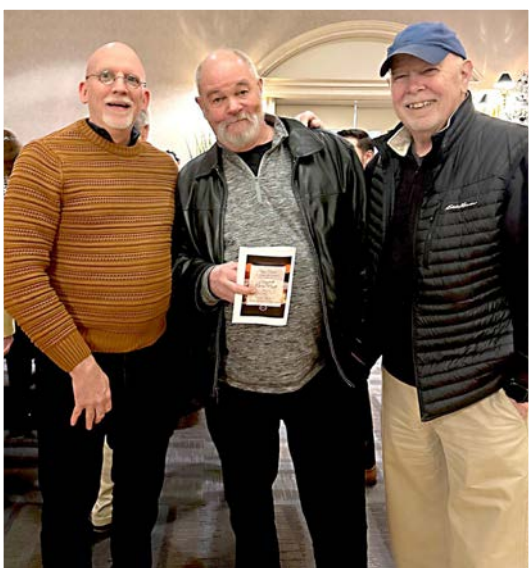
## Trial By Jury

November 8, 2024

What an amazing show! Congratulations to The Baltimore Bar Foundation & Young Victorian Theatre Company on giving such memorable performance! Sending a special thanks to Catrin Rowenna Davies (Artistic Director), J. Ernest Green (Music Director & Conductor), Chris Flint (Director of Production & Scenic Designer) and the amazing cast for making this a night to remember. Also giving a special shout out to Kelly Hughes Iverson and Brian Goodman for all their hard work and dedication!









## YLD Yappy Hour

November 20, 2024

Paws-itively Thankful! 🐾 A huge thank you to all the amazing lawyers (and their adorable furry friends) who joined us for the YLD Yappy Hour! Your energy, smiles, and wagging tails made the event truly adogable! We loved seeing your pups in their cutest outfits – congratulations to our prize winner, Raelyn Schuh, and her dog, Fredrick! A big thank you as well for supporting BARCS with your generous donations.





# National Adoption Day

November 23, 2024

A big thank you to everyone who joined us this on November 23, 2024, to celebrate National Adoption Day! Your support helped make this special event a memorable one as we honored families and the incredible gift of adoption. It is so heartfelt to see children get their forever families. We appreciate you being part of this important day!





## Past Presidents' Luncheon

November 26, 2024

We had a great time out on November 26th for the Past Presidents' Luncheon. It was a special afternoon as we celebrated our incredible leaders who have shaped our organization. A warm congratulations to the Presidential Award winners,

Ryan Dietrich and Samuel Pulver – your dedication and accomplishments inspire us all!

Congratulations to Robert Anbinder for the Charles H. Dorsey, Jr. Mentor Award and to Quinton M. Herbert for the Paul A. Dorf Memorial ADR Award. Congratulations to all our new and retired Judges as well.















# JOINT NETWORKING HAPPY HOUR

Join the Bar Association for Baltimore City and the University of Baltimore School of Law Alumni and Career Development Office for a networking happy hour. This event promises to be an evening of valuable connections, insightful conversations, and new opportunities.

Thursday, March 6, 2025

5:30 - 7:30 PM

Mobtown Ballroom & Cafe  
30 W. North Avenue  
Baltimore, MD 21201



Please RSVP HERE



THE BAR ASSOCIATION OF BALTIMORE CITY EVENTS COMMITTEE PRESENTS

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- ✔ Supreme Court Lecture
- ✔ Group Lunch



**Wednesday, October 8, 2025**

Registration is limited to 12 applicants.

Completed applications are due no later than August 30, 2025.

To obtain an application package, contact the BABC office at [info@baltimorebar.org](mailto:info@baltimorebar.org), or call 410-539-5936.

Register on [www.baltimorebar.org/calendar/](http://www.baltimorebar.org/calendar/)

\*To qualify for admission to the Supreme Court, you must have been admitted to the practice of law for three years prior to the date of application.



## BALTIMORE BAR FOUNDATION, INC. ANNUAL GOLF OUTING & AUCTION

APRIL 28, 2025

WOODHOLME COUNTRY CLUB  
300 WOODHOLME AVENUE  
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11:30 am Lunch  
1:00 pm Shotgun Start  
5:00 pm Dinner, Awards & Auction



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REGISTER: [WWW.BALTIMOREBAR.ORG/CALENDAR/](http://WWW.BALTIMOREBAR.ORG/CALENDAR/)



## BABC Holiday Party

December 6, 2024

What an amazing 2024 BABC Holiday Party! We had a wonderful time celebrating the season with all of you on December 6th. Thank you to everyone who bought items in the auction supporting the Children Living in Shelters Holiday Party – your generosity truly makes a difference! A special thank you to Gregory Waterworth and Andrew Siske for putting that auction together. Of course, also contributing to the kids party and always a good time, The Wine Pull.

Here's to spreading joy, building community, and making the season brighter for all.









## Children's Holiday Party

December 10, 2024

A heartfelt THANK YOU to everyone who volunteered and donated to make the 2024 Holiday Party for children living in shelters a success! Your generosity and kindness brought joy, smiles, and unforgettable memories to these deserving kids. We couldn't have done it without the Grinch, Santa, the Oriole's Bird, all the entertainers and YOU!







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# Blast From the Past: “Breaking Down the Doors”

*Derek M. Van De Walle, Esq., Chair of the Historical Committee*



*Group portrait of lawyers and litigants who battled University of Maryland's segregationist admissions policy. The photograph was taken at Sharp Street Church in Baltimore, Maryland, during the celebration held by the National Association of the Advancement of Colored People in honor of Thurgood Marshall. Included in the image are (right to left): Parren Mitchell (student, sociology); Donald Gaines Murray (lawyer); James "Biddy" Wood; Earl Koger (lawyer); Richard Tyson (student, pharmacy); Hiram Whittle (student, engineering); Donald Stewart (student, medicine); unidentified man; Linwood Koger (lawyer); Thurgood Marshall (lawyer); Harry A. Cole (lawyer); Esther McCready (student, nursing). The two men on the far left remain unidentified.*

*The title for this image comes from a caption for the photograph in a special edition of the Afro-American newspaper.*

*\*Photograph and description courtesy of the Maryland Center for History and Culture*

After Parren Mitchell was denied admission to the University of Maryland's graduate program in sociology because of his race, he sued in the Baltimore City Circuit Court, which ordered UMD to accept Mitchell as a full-time student in College Park.

Donald Gaines Murray successfully challenged segregation policies at the University of Maryland School of Law. After several years of litigation, Hiram Whittle became the first African American student to enter the University of Maryland at College Park. Donald Stewart was one of the first African-Americans to be admitted to the University of Maryland School of Medicine. Esther McCready was initially

denied admission to the University of Maryland of Nursing. In 1950, after a court battle, McCready the won the right to attend the School of Nursing.

Thurgood Marshall, who would serve as the first African American Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, represented Mitchell, Murray, Whittle, and McCready. Harry Cole was the first African-American elected to the Maryland Senate and the first African-American to serve on the Maryland Court of Appeals (now Supreme Court of Maryland).





Nick Mongelluzzo

In their Baltimore office, Venable LLP has promoted **Nick Mongelluzzo** (Investigations and White-Collar Defense) to partner, and four attorneys to counsel: **Brian Healy** (Products Liability & Mass Torts), **Chelsea Riggin** (East Coast Private Wealth Planning); **Rachele Sokolis** (Products Liability & Mass Torts), and **Emily Wilson** (Commercial Litigation)

VENABLE LLP



Brian Healy



Chelsea Riggin



Rachele Sokolis



Emily Wilson



Kerri Smith



Patrick R. Seidel

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Silverman Thompson is thrilled to announce seven partners have become equity partners in the firm: Avery Strachan, Monica Scherer, Jason Wasserman, Bill Sinclair, Ned Parent, Ramsay Whitworth, and Mark Edelson will be the first to join this transition toward a broader sharing of equity. These talented lawyers possess not only exceptional legal acumen but also the business foresight needed to guide the firm into a prosperous future.

In addition to the naming of these new equity partners, Silverman Thompson is proud to announce the promotion of four outstanding attorneys in recognition of their exceptional contributions to the firm and their respective practice areas: **Kerri Smith** (real estate), **Patrick R. Seidel** (criminal defense), and **Ethan Nochumowitz** (personal injury, medical malpractice) have been named partners of the firm, and **Ilona Shparaga** (business litigation) has been promoted from associate to member.

Ethan S.  
Nochumowitz

Rosenberg Martin Greenberg LLP is pleased to announce the addition of attorneys **Christopher DeCarlo**, **Daniel Grossman**, **Naseam Jabberi**, **Michael Spanos**, and **Elizabeth Stalfort**.

Chris is an experienced attorney in RMG's Litigation and Land Use & Zoning practice groups. RMG welcomed Dan as an associate in RMG's Real Estate practice group,

focusing on a broad range of real estate transactions and corporate matters. Naseam is an associate with experience in employment and labor law, focusing on federal litigation. Mike is an associate in RMG's Litigation and Real Estate groups, with a focus on landlord/tenant matters. Elizabeth is an associate in the Creditors' Rights practice group.

Christopher  
DeCarlo

Daniel Grossman



Naseam Jabberi



Michael Spanos



Elizabeth Stalfort



Rosenberg  
Martin  
Greenberg LLP



## Member Spotlight

### A Conversation with Natasha M. Dartigue



In addition to serving as the Maryland State Public Defender, **Natasha M. Dartigue** also serves as the President of the Baltimore Bar Foundation. Incorporated in 1970, the Baltimore Bar Foundation is a charitable organization to foster and maintain the honor and integrity of the profession of the law; to improve and to facilitate the administration of justice, to enhance and improve the image of lawyers, and to promote the study of the law and research therein and the diffusion of knowledge thereof.

Despite her demanding roles, Ms. Dartigue graciously took time from her busy schedule to share her insights, experiences, and vision for the future in this exclusive interview.

***What inspired you to pursue a career as a public defender, and how did that journey lead you to becoming the Maryland Public Defender?***

Clerking for Judge Roger W. Brown, who once worked in social work, ignited my passion for public service and public defense. Judge Brown's innate ability to treat every person with compassion and understanding exemplified that, regardless of the circumstance, an individual is deserving of dignity and respect. I have never forgotten this lesson. Over the years I continued growing as an advocate, engaging more intentionally in community, developing as a skilled storyteller, and expanding my platform to amplify the voices of those I served.

***What are some of the biggest challenges you face in your role, and what accomplishments are you most proud of during your tenure?***

Insufficient funding and excessive caseloads are two recurring challenges I face daily. Advocating for additional resources is an ongoing battle. In an adversarial system, equal justice requires properly funded public defender offices. Inadequate funding leads to wrongful convictions, unjust sentences, and the corrosion of integrity and trust in the criminal justice system.

***How does your experience as the Maryland Public Defender inform your leadership and decision-making within the BBF?***

As Maryland Public Defender, my leadership must be adaptive and collaborative to achieve success in this mission driven work. These qualities are equally important in my role as BBF President. As BBF President, I must be flexible, responsive and open to feedback to develop strategies that will have a long-term impact. Additionally, through collaboration I am able to build networks that serve to amplify the reach of BBF.

***What advice would you give to young lawyers or those aspiring to leadership positions in public defense or legal philanthropy?***

There are three main things I would share with young lawyers aspiring to leadership positions: 1) identify your core values and lean into activities that drive your passion; 2) surround yourself with people who inspire you and seek mentors; 3) embrace a mindset of continual learning as a person who embodies kindness and compassion.

### Meet Sam Pulver: Winner of the Presidential Award (Young Lawyers' Division)



**Sam Pulver** was the 2024 recipient of the Presidential Award for a member of the Young Lawyer's Division. Sam serves as the Secretary for the BABC, and is a past-Chair of the YLD. Sam is an attorney at the Yost Legal Group, where his practice focuses on catastrophic personal injury cases involving commercial motor vehicle collisions, civil rights violations, toxic exposure, premises liability, and wrongful death.

***How has being part of the BABC enriched your professional and personal life?***

Being a part of the BABC has enriched my personal and professional life by providing me with a sense of camaraderie and community in the legal profession. Through the BABC, I have developed relationships and friendships with lawyers that I may have never met, or would have only met through the adversarial process, without getting to know them on a more personal and human level. I think as lawyers, there is a tendency for us to stick within our own tribes, where we mostly associate with those in the same area of law and on the same side of the "v.," and there is rarely an opportunity or desire to associate with individuals outside of our own insular community. Membership and participation in the BABC have helped me to break out of this tribalistic trap and allowed me to be a part of a larger community of good people who also happened to be lawyers.

***What's next for you in your career or in your contributions to the legal community?***

With regards to my career, my goal is always to obtain justice for my clients and to find opportunities to develop and grow as a trial lawyer. As for my contributions to the legal community, I currently serve as the Secretary of the BABC and I intend to stay on the leadership track and move my way up the executive ladder. I have taken this year to focus on community service within the BABC and would like to continue to explore new opportunities for our members to give back to the community through service. I also am in my second year serving as the co-chair of the Education and Programs Committee for the Maryland Association for Justice and have really enjoyed the opportunity to help create fun and engaging educational programming for plaintiff's trial lawyers.

***Who has been a significant influence or mentor in your own career, and how have they impacted you?***

The person who has been the greatest influence on my legal career has been my father, Mike Pulver. As a child, before I even understood what the practice of law entailed, I knew I wanted to become a lawyer so I could be just like my dad. As I got older, I began to recognize the pride and respect that he had for the legal profession, and how he was able to enrich the lives of his clients, friends and family by using his legal knowledge and skills to help others. Then, once I became a lawyer, I was fortunate enough to work with my father, who mentored me during the four to five



year stretch where we tried cases together. Outside of the technical legal skills I learned from him, the most important lessons I learned from him in the capacity of mentor/mentee were not dissimilar to the lessons he imparted on me as father/son: work hard and sacrifice, but don't neglect your family and friends; be honest, friendly and accommodating to everyone (clients, opposing counsel, judges, etc.), but don't allow yourself to be taken advantage of, and take the time to develop and nurture personal relationships. By living these principles, my father earned the respect of everyone he encountered throughout his legal career.

***What is your vision for the future of the BABC, and how do you see yourself contributing to it?***

My vision for the future of the BABC is that the BABC becomes

an institution where all of our stakeholders (private law firms, government and public interest departments, the judiciary, etc.) have members that are actively involved in the BABC and encourage their colleagues and associates to join the BABC and take on leadership roles. I envision a future where involvement in the BABC isn't something that employers passively permit, but something they actively encourage, where being a contributing member to the BABC is a rite of passage to a rewarding career as a Baltimore City legal practitioner.

## Meet Ryan Dietrich: Winner of the Presidential Award



On November 26, 2024, **Ryan Dietrich** was awarded the BABC's Presidential Award, and is the past-President of the Baltimore Bar Foundation. Below he talks about his involvement with the bar, what inspired him to pursue a career in law, and how he found a niche in the appellate arena.

***What inspired you to pursue a career in law, and what keeps you passionate about it?***

I always knew I wanted to pursue a career in the legal field. When I was a child, I would watch *The People's Court* and marvel at the way Judge Wapner seamlessly resolved all of the disputes that were submitted to him. I was the kid who "loved to argue," but I was also infinitely curious, and I saw the law and the legal process as the way to find the answers to all the questions. That curiosity and a need to understand everything – and to use that knowledge in furtherance of the public good – still drives me today.

***Can you tell us a bit about your professional background and your journey in the legal field?***

Despite knowing that I wanted to pursue a career in law, I didn't know any lawyers, and I really had no idea what kind of lawyer I wanted to be. So after college, I worked as a "legal project worker" for a large Washington, D.C. law firm. It was eye-opening to me—the work for me was mundane, and the attorneys seemed less than fulfilled with their own. Ultimately, I went to law school not because of my experience working for a law firm, but in spite of it.

During law school, my 1L summer internship was with the Baltimore City Law Department. It was fascinating to see the lawyers grapple not only with the everyday problems of city governance (i.e., people suing because they stepped in a pothole), but also the cutting-edge questions that arise as governments attempt to implement their policies. And perhaps as importantly, there I met many high-quality attorneys, several of whom are still there today (or otherwise active in the legal community).

My first post-law school job was a clerkship with Judge Glenn Harrell of the then-Maryland Court of Appeals. This was a fantastic experience—I not only got to work on emerging questions of civil and criminal law, but had a great mentor.

From there, I joined a mid-size Baltimore law firm as an associate doing commercial litigation. The work was fulfilling, but I increas-

ingly found myself thinking of the criminal appeals that I had worked on during my clerkship. So in January 2009, I joined the Criminal Appeals Division of the Office of the Attorney General of Maryland. There, I drafted over 400 briefs, and participated in more than 100 oral arguments in the Maryland appellate courts.

Then, in 2018, I switched gears and joined the Civil Division of the Attorney General's Office, which handles a lot of the high-profile and high-stakes civil litigation for the State. It was a challenge. I was thrust into a wide variety of subject matters that I hadn't really seen since law school, and I found a need to refresh myself on long-forgotten constitutional doctrines like the dormant Commerce Clause. Most notably, I have become the Office's expert on Second Amendment jurisprudence (despite that not really even being a thing when I graduated from law school).

At the beginning of this year, the Office of the Attorney General created an Office of the Solicitor General, which I have joined. Although many of my duties have stayed the same from the Civil Division, my main focus is again on appeals.

***Can you share a significant project or initiative you led that contributed to this recognition?***

Although I am active in the BABC, a lot of my focus over the last few years has been with the Baltimore Bar Foundation, where I served as president this past year (2023-2024). During my years in leadership, my focus was on governance—improving our financial structures and controls, revising our bylaws, and creating a better structure that would instill a culture of participation and involvement. Last summer I embarked on a unique fundraising effort: to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Foundation, in one day I ran 50 miles in Baltimore City, stopping at 50 places of legal significance. A chronicle of my journey can be found on the Foundation's website at <https://www.baltimore-bar.org/baltimore-bar-foundation/ryans-50-mile-run/>

***What do you see as the most pressing challenges in the legal profession today, and how can attorneys help address them?***

Upholding the prestige of the profession. A significant number of people still view attorneys as tools of the elite, and as a result they see justice as something that is rigged in the favor of the powerful. Although private attorneys must of course serve the clients that engage them, I think we all as attorneys have some duty to improve the profession generally, whether through providing pro bono service, educating the public generally about the law, or other volunteer work in the community.





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