



STARK COUNTY BAR JOURNAL

VOLUME 29 ■ NUMBER 2

FEBRUARY, 2023

→ (330) 453-0685

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✉ scb@starkctybar.com



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Welcome to the Stark County Bar Association

Not a member? See what you are missing!

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Our **Vision & Mission**

The Stark County Bar Association was founded in 1900 and has proudly served the Stark County community for more than 120 years. The purpose of the Stark County Bar Association is to work for the general good of the community, to improve the administration of the law in the interests of the public, to promote good relations among the members of the bar, and to further the professional interests of our members.

Our **Leadership**

Magistrate Stephan P. Babik took office as President of the Stark County Bar Association when his one-year term began on July 1st. Magistrate Babik became the 105th President, succeeding former president, Attorney Aletha M. Carver. At the Installation Ceremony held on June 29th the Association's Elected Officers and Members were sworn in for the 2022-2023 term.

Contact **Us**

Our staff is here to serve the members of the association and look forward to working with you. Please feel free to contact the bar office if you ever have any questions. This is what we are here for.

Community **Involvement**



2023 Law Day



EVICTIOn ASSISTANCE



Stark County Bar Association
Legal Scholarship

Visit our new site and learn more about your association.

Find the seminars currently being offered, information and registration for upcoming social events, client referral opportunities, notary public education and registration including notary supplies, links, and other helpful information.

SCBA February 2023 Office Schedule

Feb. 1 st	12:00 NOON	Family Law Committee Meeting
Feb. 2 nd	12:00 NOON	Community Involvement Committee Meeting
Feb. 3 rd	11:00 AM	Bankruptcy Committee Meeting
Feb. 9 th	12:00 NOON	Legal Aid/Pro Bono Committee Meeting
Feb. 13 th	4:00 PM	Disputed Fee Committee Meeting
Feb. 15 th	12:00 NOON	Law Day Committee Meeting
Feb. 15 th	4:00 PM	Executive Committee Meeting
Feb. 17 th	4:00 PM	Senior Lawyer Committee Meeting
Feb. 20 th		Office closed in observance of Presidents' Day
Feb. 21 st	3:45 PM	Grievance Committee Meeting
Feb. 23 rd	3:30 PM	Judiciary Committee Meeting

2023 Upcoming CLE Seminars

- March 29, 2023 2023 Municipal Court Seminar
SCBA Conference Room
See Pg. 3
- April 5, 2023 2023 Family Law Seminar
SCBA Conference Room
See Pg. 4
- April 14, 2023 The 27th Annual White-Williams
Bankruptcy Institute
The Hartville Kitchen
Details in next issue.

CLE Self-Study Rule Changes

Effective January 1, 2023, the Supreme Court of Ohio adopted rule changes that will permanently remove the CLE self-study caps for attorneys.



Reminder: A - LI
Complete your CLE by Dec. 31, 2023

THE STARK COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION



NOTARY EDUCATION CLASS & TESTING

Classes and Testing offered every 2nd & 4th Tuesday
Stark County Bar Association Office
By Appointment Only

1 Hour Renewal Education Class • 9:00 AM – 10:00 AM

3 Hour New Notary Public Education Class
12:00 Noon – 3:00 PM

TESTING 3:00 PM - 4:00 PM

Online classes and testing
available at our website: www.StarkCtyBar.com

The Bar Office E-Mail Addresses:

Tina@StarkCtyBar.com
SCBAReferral@StarkCtyBar.com
CLE@StarkCtyBar.com
SCBANotary@StarkCtyBar.com

Visit us at www.StarkCtyBar.com

THE BAR JOURNAL

Official Publication of the Stark County Bar Association

FOUNDED IN 1900

Suite 400, Courtyard Centre
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Stephan P. Babik, Bar President
Tina McCort, Executive Director & Editor
Paulie Wagner, Referral Secretary & Editor

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The Bar Journal is published monthly for all bar members. Free to members, \$20.00 per year to others.

All communications and editorial material should be directed to the Bar Association office by the fifteenth day of the month preceding publication.

Opinions and positions expressed in the signed material are those of the author and may not necessarily reflect those of the Stark County Bar Association, its officers, staff or board of editors.

From Our President

3Rs Becomes A Reality For The Stark County Bar Association

Of the topics that I wanted to discuss this month, one was at the forefront, and I took to my Gmail account to better recall the genesis of how this program came into being for the Stark County Bar Association. The oldest email I found related to the general topic, but unrelated to the Stark County Bar Association, was from September 22, 2010. A former co-worker at my first official job (Best Buy on Whipple Avenue) had passed the bar exam and reconnected via email. I was encouraging him to become active in what is known as the “3Rs Program” that was being presented by the CMBA.

Fast forward eleven years, almost to the date, and the next email chain relating to the 3Rs Program was sent by Richie Harper, an Associate Member of the Stark County Bar Association and the Training and Initiatives Manager for the Stark County Prosecutor’s Office, on September 20, 2021. At the time, Richie had the idea to bring the 3Rs Program to Stark County and Past President Aletha Carver was looping me into the conversation as she was assisting him, as it would likely carry into my term as President.

The 3Rs Program stands for Rights, Responsibilities, Realities. The goal of the program is to bring volunteer attorneys and members of the Stark County Bar Association into local high schools to provide general instruction on topics such as government, the constitution, law, and civil rights. More importantly, the program connects attorneys with students who may not otherwise have direct exposure to professionals working in the legal profession. I had volunteered in this program when it was offered by the CMBA and found it to be very rewarding.

Fast forward another year and four months or so and Aletha and I were standing just inside the entryway door at McKinley High School on January 19, 2023. Through Richie’s efforts, as well as those of Associate Member Christian Turner, Prosecutor Kyle Stone, and many others, the 3Rs Program had become a reality for Stark County. Later that morning, Aletha and I went on to provide instruction to 20 or so students in Mrs. Tamara Lewis-Baranyai’s classroom. Later in the day, Richie was joined by Assistant Prosecutor Jessica Logothetides in providing instruction to another class. Nice work, Richie – I am excited to see where this program goes from here!



Stephan P. Babik

President, Stark County Bar Association



2023 Law Week – “Cornerstones of Democracy: Civics, Civility, and Collaboration”

Changing gears but keeping with the theme of dedication and hard work within our Association, I am continually impressed at the work Attorney Todd Evans, Attorney Richard Kuhn, Judge Elum, and all the members of the Law Day Committee do to make this event a success each year. This year, on Wednesday, May 3, 2023, we will welcome Attorney General Dave Yost as our keynote speaker and are in the process of planning

(continued next page)

a CLE to follow that will include Judges of the Stark County Court of Common Pleas General Division. Without a doubt, Law Week requires a great deal of planning and preparation, and I cannot thank Todd, Richard, Judge Elum, and all the members of the Law Day Committee enough for their continued efforts.

New website: “404 Error Page Not Found” Not Found

In other news around our Association, in early January 2023, the Stark County Bar Association launched its new website. This was an undertaking that I began working on about two years ago. Towards the end of 2022, our hosting company notified us that our old website was outdated and would no longer support necessary security updates. Our Executive Director Tina McCort gave me the necessary motivation to let go of fears of imperfection and issues with the new site and just launch it already! As it turns out, the new site didn’t immediately break, go offline, and lead to the collapse of the Stark County Bar Association. Instead, it looks professional, loads more quickly, and has the potential to carry our association forward to allowing for online membership renewal and event registration. Presently, we are working with our hosting company to identify a more robust membership directory that will better showcase our members. In

this regard, members may want to start thinking about updating their profile pictures for the new membership directory.

Past Presidents of the Stark County Bar Association

Finally, as you are aware, in February of each year, in the State of Ohio and beyond, we celebrate President’s Day to commemorate individuals who have served as President of the United States. Within our Association, we take this opportunity to pay recognition and appreciation to our members who have previously served as President. Please join me in thanking each Past President of the Stark County Bar Association for their dedicated service. After 123 years, our Association remains strong as a direct result of their leadership and hard work.¹

¹ In two years, the Stark County Bar Association will have been in existence for 125 years. Attorney Angela Vagotis will be President of the Stark County Bar Association in 2025 and, as Chair of the Social Committee, she knows a thing or two about putting on a party. Rumor has it, she is already working on something special!

2023 Dues Bills Are Now Due . . .

What Is The Value of SCBA Membership?

CLE Seminars	\$360 Annual Savings
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduced Rates for Members! (12 hrs/yr.)• Annual Savings can Exceed Dues	
Stark County Bar Journal	\$20.00 Value
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• FREE to Members• FREE Business Card Size Ad for Three Months (business related)	
Mailing Labels	\$60.00 Value
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Member and Non-member labels in alphabetical or zip code order.	
Conference Room	Up to a \$60.00 Value
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Members may use a conference room once a month at no charge.	
Total Savings \$500.00!!	
On-Line Legal Directory	Marketing Your Membership
Lawyer Referral Service.....	Grow Your Practice
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Client Referrals	
Public Speaking Opportunities	Great Value
Member Committees	Substantive & Service Oriented
Networking & Congeniality	Professional & Social Events
Professional Growth.....	PRICELESS!



Stark County Bar Association

2023 MUNICIPAL COURT SEMINAR

Wednesday, March 29, 2023 • SCBA Conference Room

12:30 P.M.

REGISTRATION

1:00 P.M.

CANTON MUNICIPAL COURT

Honorable Curt Werren

Magistrate Jeremy J. Foltz

Magistrate Derek C. McClowry

Magistrate Christy M. Pierson

Practice in the Canton Municipal Court - Policies and Procedures

1:50 P.M.

MASSILLON MUNICIPAL COURT

Honorable Edward J. Elum

Honorable Joel C. Fichter

Magistrate Andrea M. Scassa

1. Basic Forms to Survive and Updates/Changes to the Law
2. Landlord/Tenant Current Issues, Hearings, and Mediations
3. Coordinated Probation/Community Control Orders

2:40 P.M.

BREAK

2:55 P.M.

ALLIANCE MUNICIPAL COURT

Honorable Andrew L. Zumbar

Policies, Procedures, and Updates

3:45 P.M.

MENTAL HEALTH COMMITMENTS FROM CRIMINAL
MUNICIPAL COURT CASES WITH SAMPLE FORMS

Honorable Dixie Park, *Stark County Probate Court*

4:15 P.M.

ADJOURN



2023 Municipal Court Seminar

*Members: \$90.00

Associate Members: \$75.00

Non-Members: \$165.00

Name _____ Atty. Reg. No. _____

Address _____

Email _____

***PLEASE NOTE:** If you are currently a member of any local bar association, you may attend at our members' price.

Do you prefer to receive the seminar materials via Email or Hard Copy on the day of the seminar? Circle One.

Please mail checks to: Stark County Bar Association

116 Cleveland Avenue, N.W., Suite 400, Canton, Ohio 44702-1728

NO REFUNDS UNLESS RESERVATION CANCELLATION IS RECEIVED 24 HOURS IN ADVANCE OF SEMINAR.

Application has been applied for 3.00 General CLE credit hours.



Stark County Bar Association

2023 FAMILY LAW SEMINAR

Wednesday, April 5, 2023
SCBA Conference Room

8:30 A.M.

REGISTRATION

Doughnuts, coffee & water provided.

9:00 A.M.

FACES OF MENTAL ILLNESS

Aimee Thomas, Ph.D., J.D., P.C.C.-S

Lighthouse Family Center, Ltd.

Magistrate Catherine M.W. Bell

Stark County Family Court

10:30 A.M.

BREAK

10:45 A.M.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Scott Lundregan, Esq.

Legislative Counsel/Director of Policy, Ohio State Bar Association

11:45 A.M.

COMMON PITFALLS OF GRIEVANCE COMPLAINTS

Richard S. Milligan, Esq., SCBA Bar Counsel

Milligan & Pusateri Co., LPA

12:15 P.M.

ADJOURN



2023 Family Law Seminar

Wednesday, April 5, 2023

*Members: \$90.00

Associate Members: \$75.00

Non-Members: \$165.00

Name _____ Atty. Reg. No. _____

Address _____

Email _____

***PLEASE NOTE:** If you are currently a member of any local bar association, you may attend at our members' price.

Do you prefer to receive the seminar materials via Email or Hard Copy on the day of the seminar? Circle One.

Please mail checks to: Stark County Bar Association

116 Cleveland Avenue, N.W., Suite 400, Canton, Ohio 44702-1728

NO REFUNDS UNLESS RESERVATION CANCELLATION IS RECEIVED 24 HOURS IN ADVANCE OF SEMINAR.

Application applied for 3.00 CLE credit hours, including 2.0 Professional Conduct CLE credit hours.

LAW DAY SPONSORSHIP

2023 Law Week May 1 - May 5

The Law Day Committee is asking local attorneys and law firms if they would be willing to make a donation in the amount of \$400.00 to help sponsor our Law Day Events. As you may know, we offer various events during this week:

- | | | |
|----------------------------|---|--------------------|
| ■ Essay and Poster Contest | ■ Moot Court Competition | ■ Tour de Courts |
| ■ Televised Ask-A-Lawyer | ■ CLE Seminar | ■ Ohio Justice Bus |
| ■ Law Day Luncheon | ■ “Why I Want To Become A Lawyer” Essay Contest | |

This year our Keynote Speaker for the Law Day Luncheon will be Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost.

In return for your valuable sponsorship, you will receive four tickets to the Law Day Luncheon on Wednesday, May 3, 2023 and will also receive recognition in the Law Day Program and in the Stark County Bar Journal. Don't miss out on what is an important event for our bar association.

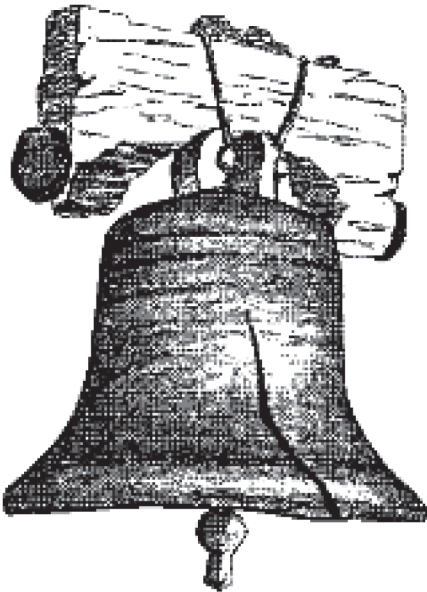
If you are able to help sponsor these events, please forward a check in the amount of \$400.00 made payable to the Stark County Bar Association, Attn: Tina McCort.

Thank you in advance for your support. We hope to see you at these events.

Law Day Committee

The Liberty Bell Award

*In Celebration of Law Day
May 1, 2023 - May 5, 2023*



The Liberty Bell Award is presented annually by the Stark County Bar Association to individual(s), particularly non-lawyers, who have rendered outstanding service to the community. All fields of endeavor are intended for promoting a better understanding of our Constitution and the Bill of Rights; encouraging a better respect of the law and the courts; stimulating a deeper sense of individual responsibility so that citizens recognize their duties as well as their rights; contributing to the effective functioning of our institutions of government; and fostering a better understanding and appreciation of the rule of law.

For further information, please contact Teresa P. Cusma, Liberty Bell Award Committee Chairman at 330-324-3982. Nominations will close Friday, March 31, 2023.

Stark County Bar Association

400 Courtyard Centre Building
116 Cleveland Avenue NW
Canton, Ohio 44702-1728
330-453-0685 • SCB@StarkCtyBar.com

Report of Bar Applicant Committee

On January 5th the Bar Applicant Committee conducted interviews of 6 candidates.

The breakdown of activity is as follows:

Candidates interviewed and approved for a subsequent bar examination	6
Re-Examination application approved	4
Supplemental applications approved	4
Total approvals granted.	14

Committee members present and conducting interviews were Chairman James M. Conley, Taryn Douglas, Honorable Jim D. James, Kristen S. Moore, Scott P. Sandrock, and Barry Wakser.

We thank the members for taking time from their busy schedules to assist in conducting the interviews!

Stark County Bar Association Legal Scholarship

The Stark County Bar Association offers a Legal Scholarship. Consideration is given to the following:

- Students enrolled or accepted as a full or part-time student at an educational institution accredited to award a Juris Doctorate degree;
- Students pursuing a course of study designed to result in a Juris Doctorate degree; and
- Students in good academic standing in Law School or in prior academic work, as determined by the Scholarship Committee.

The Scholarship Committee also gives priority consideration to students with demonstrated financial need; students from the Stark County area; and students likely to pursue a law career in the Stark County area.

Stark Community Foundation administers our Scholarship, and the Scholarship Application may be found on their website at www.starkcf.org. The Application Deadline is April 1, 2023.



The 27th Annual White-Williams Bankruptcy Institute

April 14, 2023 | 8:25 a.m. – 4:40 p.m. | The Hartville Kitchen

LIVE SEMINAR

More Details In Next Month's Bar Journal.

Change Of Address

Gruber, Haren, Thomas & Co. merged with Arnold and Associates to form:
Arnold, Gruber & Haren, Ltd.
4580 Stephen Circle, NW, Suite 100
Canton, OH 44718
PH: 330-563-4149

Attorneys:

Richard Arnold (rarnold@aghattorneys.com)
Michael S. Gruber (mgruber@aghattorneys.com)
Jamie M. Haren (jharen@aghattorneys.com)

Jason N. Bing (jbing@aghattorneys.com)
Todd B. Kotler (tkotler@aghattorneys.com)
Jill C. McQueen (jmcqueen@aghattorneys.com)

New Members

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PH: 330-493-8833
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Hunter G. Miller, Esq.

Associated with: Plakas Mannos
200 Market Avenue North, Suite 300
Canton, OH 44702
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FAX: 330-455-2108
Email: hmiller@lawlion.com

Vincent L. Slabaugh, Esq.

Associated with: Sole Practitioner
P. O. Box 836
Malvern, OH 44644
PH: 330-863-9455
FAX: 330-863-9430
Email: vslabaughatty@gmail.com

New Associate Members

Emily Maury

Sponsored by: Vincent L. Slabaugh, Esq.

Marci J. Moore, Paralegal

Sponsored by: Lucas W. Murray, Esq.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE:

SlimansPrintery.com

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with all change of
RESIDENCE and BUSINESS
address information.

New Member Spotlight • Don't Forget to Welcome...

David T. Robinson, Esquire

Why did you join the Stark County Bar Association?

Stark County is home to me. While I am not a Stark County native, due to living just within the Summit County boundary, Stark County is where many of my formative years were spent and it's where I intend to make my home. I joined the Stark County Bar Association to ingrain myself in the area and to hopefully give back to the community I grew up in. My hope in joining the Stark County Bar Association is to meet and get to know the peers in my community, while keeping my eye on events and programs that present an opportunity to better the community.

What practice areas interest you the most?

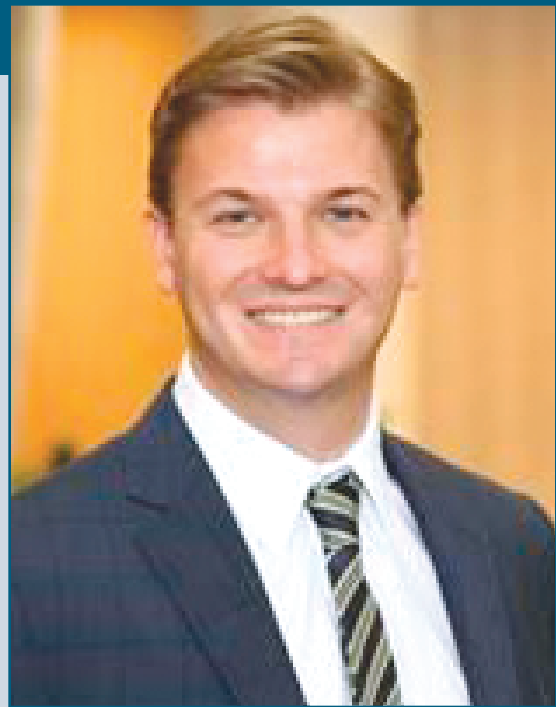
My primary interest has always been in transactional work because my dream has always been to help business owners navigate the sometimes murky waters of running a business. I primarily focus my practice in the fields of mergers and acquisitions, general business law, and real estate. Through specializing in these fields, I believe I will obtain the tools and knowledge required to effectively pursue my dream of counseling and advising business owners through any decision they face.

Who are some of your heroes in the legal profession?

My number one hero in the legal profession has always been my brother, Ryan Robinson. Even before either of us thought of entering the legal profession, Ryan was my role model. He was the one who introduced me to the idea of being a lawyer. I saw his hard work, dedication and the type of work he was able to do and that inspired me. Seeing that was like a guiding light showing what I could accomplish in this life.

What was your most rewarding experience during law school?

In all honesty, completing law school was the most rewarding. I went to law school during the Covid-19 pandemic, so that made an already tough assignment a bit harder. The pandemic created less than ideal conditions for learning and at times generated high levels of frustration. However, the payoff of completing law school was amazing. I felt a sense of accomplishment and pride. There was an added feeling of resolve knowing that I was able to complete school,



David T. Robinson, Esquire

University of Akron, 2018

University of Akron School of Law, 2022

Admitted to the Bar in 2022

Associated with Buckingham, Doolittle and Burroughs

while dealing with some harsher conditions than the usual student.

What is your favorite legally-related movie or book?

While it was not a movie, my favorite piece of legally-related entertainment is probably the television series *The People vs OJ Simpson*. I was born after the initial decision in the trial was rendered, so I have no recollection of how the case unfolded. Getting to watch the events surrounding the trial, the trial itself, and how both the prosecution and defense crafted their arguments was very intriguing.

Are you a Stark County native? If "No" What brought you to Stark County?

As stated previously, I am not actually a Stark County native because I grew up just within Summit County's boundaries. However, many of my formative years were spent in and around the North Canton and Canton

area. I always enjoyed coming down to the restaurants and stores that the area had to offer. Stark County is where much of my life remains, with most of my family and friends still residing in the area. I intend to remain in Stark County and ingrain myself in the community, so that I can help give back and build it up for the next generation to take up residence in the area.

What is your favorite place to spend an evening or meal in Stark County?

I am a sucker for a good movie, so one of my favorite places to spend an evening is at Tinseltown watching whatever the latest and greatest movie may be. Typically, a trip to the movies for me is followed up

with a meal at either Fiesta Acapulco or Palumbo's. I love to eat and these places never disappoint.

If you could represent any client today, who would it be and why?

I don't know that there is any particular person I would want to represent as a client, but there are certainly a few cases that I would have liked to sit in on. The first one that comes to mind is Johnny Depp vs Amber Heard. Like most of America, I was captivated by some of the outtakes, news stories, and sound bites that came out during the trial. To be in that court room or to be on either side of the case, would have probably made for a wild ride.



UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT • NORTHERN DISTRICT OF OHIO

PUBLIC NOTICE

APPLICATION FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE ACT PANEL OF THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF OHIO

The Criminal Justice Act ("CJA") Plan of the United States District Court for the Northern District of Ohio sets forth provisions for furnishing representation in federal court for any person financially unable to obtain representation in accordance with the Criminal Justice Act, 18 U.S.C. § 3006A. Pursuant to Section X(A)(1)-(2) of the CJA Plan, "[t]he existing, previously established panel of attorneys who are eligible and willing to be appointed to provide representation under the CJA is hereby recognized; and [t]he court will approve attorneys for membership on the CJA Panel after receiving recommendations from the CJA Committee."

Pursuant to Section X(C)(3)(a)-(e) of the CJA Plan, to be considered for appointment to the CJA Panel:

"Applicants ... must be members in good standing of the federal bar of this district and the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals; ... must maintain a primary, satellite, or shared office in this district; ... must possess strong litigation skills and demonstrate proficiency with the federal sentencing guidelines, federal sentencing procedures, the Bail Reform Act, the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure, and the Federal Rules of Evidence; ... must have significant experience representing persons charged with serious criminal offenses and demonstrate a commitment to the defense of people who lack the financial means to hire an attorney; and [a]ttorneys who do not possess the experience set forth above but believe they have equivalent other experience are encouraged to apply and set forth in writing the details of that experience for the CJA Committee's consideration."

Attorneys wishing to be considered for membership on a CJA Panel who meet the eligibility requirements may submit an application **no later than March 31, 2023** to cjaapplication@ohnd.uscourts.gov.

The application for membership on the Criminal Justice Act Panel may be obtained through the Court's website at <https://www.ohnd.uscourts.gov/appointment-counsel-cja>.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER



COMMUNITY LEGAL AID JOB OPENINGS

Pro Bono Project Attorney (VLSP Staff Attorney – full time)

Summer Associate (May 22 - July 28, 2023)

Please read the entire descriptions detailed in this link:

<https://recruiting.paylocity.com/Recruiting/Jobs/Details/1353308>

www.CommunityLegalAid.org

HOW I COPEd WITH MY DEPRESSION

Anonymous

It happened gradually. I was waking up during the night more than usual with thoughts I could not control. Then I was having trouble falling asleep because of the thoughts I could not control. When I was awake, I started having trouble concentrating. My husband would speak to me and I would not comprehend what he was saying. I would zone out. I started to slack on my work. Procrastination started to become a daily habit. Then I turned inward and started telling myself how horrible of a person I was.

The thoughts became constant. Some of the lies I was telling myself were: I am terrible at my job, my friends think I am a loser, my husband is no longer in love with me, my son will become a drug addict, my parents are going to die soon and I cannot handle it, I am a terrible parent, the world is going to end, I should just end my life so that no one has to deal with me, I am a bad friend, I am worthless, I have no purpose.

I started comparing myself to others—in parenting, in jobs, in looks, in weight, in motivation, in being a good partner and friend. According to my observations, I was the worst at all of these. I was a bad person. I did not deserve good things. All of my thoughts were focused on everything I did wrong in my life.

I started thinking about past occurrences where I made a mistake or I said something wrong or I hurt someone else's feelings. The one time I told my grandma to leave me alone; the time I told my brother what a jerk he was; the time I became impatient with a client. How could I be such a horrible person, I would ask myself. I started dwelling on the past.

Then I isolated myself. I shut myself off from the outside world. I did not call my friends or family, and I made excuses to stay at home. I did not want to be anyone else's problem. I did not want to talk to anyone else about it because I did not want them to feel as if they were responsible to help me. I figured there was nothing anyone else could do to help me. I even shut my husband out. I told him I did not feel well—that I had headaches, stomachaches, a sore throat, anything to keep me from talking or to leave the house.

I told myself that I did not deserve to be depressed. I had many positive things in my life: a supportive husband, healthy children, a roof over my head, a steady job, a support system of good friends and family. I have all of these but why do I feel so miserable?

Nothing terrible had recently happened to me. I do not have a traumatic past. My parents have always been supportive and loving. Why was I so depressed? Even in my depression I felt like an imposter.

I tried taking melatonin, ashwagandha and other supplements to help me sleep. When these did not help, I became more hopeless. I tried counting backwards from 999 and meditating, but my negative thoughts kept interfering. I would fall asleep for an hour and then be awake for three, dreading the next day. I became agitated and so tired. I quit exercising.

When I would finally answer the phone or respond to a friend's text, I was not myself. People at work and even friends and family told me to "smile," "cheer up," "just snap out of it." All of these expressions made me feel worse. No one understood. If I could just snap out of it, I would! I did not want to feel this way. I did not enjoy being miserable.

I made myself go to my annual physical and I told my doctor how I was feeling. She diagnosed me with clinical depression and recommended an antidepressant, which I really did not want to take. I was afraid of the side effects and afraid of what others would think of me. When I told a close friend who works in the mental health field about my diagnosis, he asked me, "If you had diabetes and it required you to take insulin, would you?" I said yes, because my life would depend on it. He then asked, "So what is the difference with taking an antidepressant? You need it to be well, to function, to live without depression and anxiety." He had a good point.

I filled my prescription and thought about how I was going to get past this difficult part of my life. I started to slowly recover. I made small goals each day, such as to exercise for 30 minutes, call a friend, take a shower, write down something I was grateful for, do the dishes, finish

that brief. When I accomplished a goal, I crossed it off my list and it gave me a sense of purpose.

It did not happen overnight, but I slowly started to feel like I was getting myself back. I walked the dogs and came home feeling refreshed. I called a friend who also has depression and I told her everything. It was comforting and therapeutic to talk to someone else who understood. I talked to my mom and was surprised to learn that she had depression when she was my age. She taught me some healthy coping mechanisms. I started meditating and taking it seriously and started to feel a sense of calm warming over me. I started eating healthy foods.

After about six weeks, I could tell that the antidepressants were helping. I was sleeping more soundly and I started to become more motivated. I did not wake up with a negative thought. I started to get excited about what goal I was going to check off my list that day. I started thinking more positively. I was

not anxious to go to the grocery store or to go out with friends.

I know that I might always have anxiety and depression, and that is ok, because now I know that I can cope with it. With the help of medicine, a balanced diet, daily exercise and a support system, it is possible to overcome depression. There will always be things that I cannot control: what other people do, how other people think, the past. But I can control my mindset and my wellbeing.

If you find that you are depressed, stressed, anxious, or overwhelmed, seek help. The Ohio Lawyers Assistance Program helps lawyers, judges and law students manage life's stresses. OLAP has saved lives, careers, marriages and families. All inquiries are confidential. (800) 348-4343 / ohiolap.org

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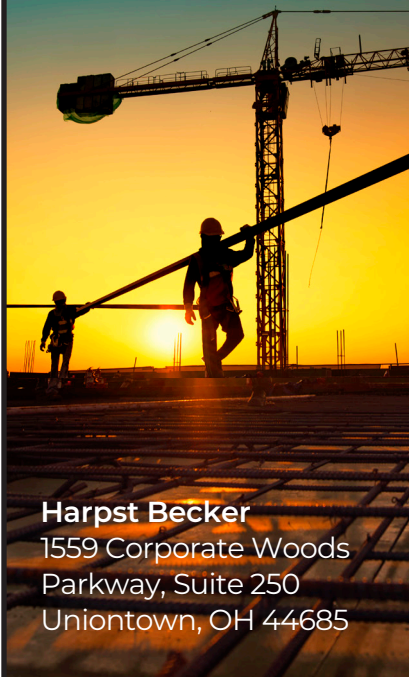
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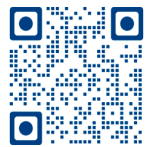
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