



STARK COUNTY BAR JOURNAL

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Dianne Blocker Braun



Edwin H. Breyfogle



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Douglas N. Godshall

50 YEARS



Honorable W. Scott Gwin



Honorable
William B. Hoffman



Jon M. Hollingsworth



J. Scott Kettler



Honorable
Robert G. Lavery



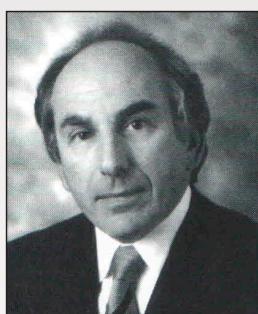
Richard J. Lolli



Thomas P. McCue



Leonidas E. Plakas



Stanley R. Rubin



Sara E. Strattan

Congratulations to our 50-Year Honorees in 2026!

SCBA January 2026 Office Schedule

Jan. 1 st - 2 nd	OFFICE CLOSED IN OBSERVANCE OF NEW YEAR'S HOLIDAY
Jan. 5 th	12:00 NOON Bankruptcy Committee Meeting
Jan. 8 th	9:00 AM Bar Applicant Interviews
Jan. 8 th	12:00 NOON Legal Aid/Pro Brono Committee Meeting
Jan. 9 th	12:00 NOON Professional Continuity Committee Meeting
Jan. 12 th	12:00 NOON Technology Committee Meeting
Jan. 12 th	4:00 PM Disputed Fee Committee Meeting
Jan. 13 th	3:30 PM Municipal Court Committee Meeting
Jan. 19 th	OFFICE CLOSED IN OBSERVANCE OF MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY
Jan. 20 th	3:45 PM Grievance Committee Meeting
Jan. 21 st	12:00 NOON Law Day Committee Meeting
Jan. 21 st	4:00 PM Executive Committee Meeting
Jan. 22 nd	12:00 NOON Military & Veterans Affairs Committee Meeting
Jan. 29 th	12:00 NOON Referral Service Committee Meeting

ELDER LAW COMMITTEE MEETING

There will be no Elder Law Committee Meeting in January. The next meeting is scheduled for March 10, 2026.

THE BAR JOURNAL

Official Publication of the Stark County Bar Association

FOUNDED IN 1900

Suite 400, Courtyard Centre
116 Cleveland Ave., N.W. • Canton, Ohio 44702

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Tina McCort, Executive Director & Editor
Chris Diaz, Bookkeeper & Editor

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2026 CLE Seminars

January 30, 2026 2026 Criminal Law Seminar
SCBA Conference Room
See Pg. 3

MARK YOUR CALENDARS DETAILS TO COME

Friday, April 24, 2026 30th Annual White-Williams
Bankruptcy Institute
Hartville Kitchen



Reminder: M - Z!
Complete your CLE by Dec. 31, 2026

THE STARK COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION



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The Bar Office E-Mail Addresses:

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Visit us at www.StarkCtyBar.com

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 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

Happy New Year! I hope everyone was able to take time to enjoy the festivities of the holiday season while cherishing family and a few peaceful and relaxing moments.



Our members' contributions to the Community Involvement Committee's Adopt-A-Family activity provided gifts to bring a bit of holiday cheer to a local family - a special thank you to the Family Law Committee whose members stepped up overwhelmingly. As usual, the holiday party was a great evening! This

year, the Social Committee organized a fundraiser for our scholarship fund through raffling off beautiful holiday centerpieces that were donated by our membership. Thank you to everyone who contributed in any way - we were able to raise approximately \$1,100 while sparking an intrigue by partygoers for ways of increasing giving!



While on the subject of scholarship, it is my absolute pleasure to report that over \$5,000 was raised for our Legal Scholarship Fund from

the proceeds of our production of 12 Angry Women. As I embarked upon my bar presidency in July, one of my desires was to increase scholarship giving, rooted in my personal experience. Upon graduating from high school, I was filled with optimism, a burning desire for success and a zest for knowledge - but nominal funds to match my great enthusiasm. I am ever mindful of the fact that my college education was made possible by the generosity of others, and I am so grateful to be a part of an organization that appreciates the importance of scholarship giving.

In December, I had the truly extraordinary privilege and honor of joining in the celebrations for the retirement of Judge Mary Falvey, who served as a Judge of the Canton Municipal Court since 1991, Judge Richard J.



Magistrate Beverly Proctor-Donald
President, Stark County Bar Association

Kubilus, who served as a Judge of the Canton Municipal Court since 1993 and Judge Edward Elum who served as a Judge of the Massillon Municipal Court since 1995. Thank you Judges for a combined history of nearly 100 years of honorable service to our Stark County Community. Godspeed to each of you! While these three judges completed a remarkable era, I was pleased to join in the swearing in ceremonies with the family, friends and colleagues of our fellow members commencing their journeys as Municipal Court Judges. As a part of my duties as Bar President, I was thrilled to present the Honorable Judges Jeremy Foltz, Katie Erchick Gilbert and Andrea Scassa



(continued on next page)

with their first robes on behalf of the Stark County Bar Association. Congratulations and best successes to each of you! As a side note, the 2026 Judicial Performance Polls for the Court of Common Pleas General Division, Family Court Division, Probate Court Division and Fifth District Court of Appeals Judges will be sent out in early January by ElectionBuddy. Be sure to give your input.



Please join me in celebrating our members who have practiced law in our community for at least 50 years! It is a remarkably exceptional accomplishment to join this elite rank of barristers rich in wisdom and knowledge. Thank you for your years of dedicated service and for

your valuable involvement with the Stark County Bar Association.

Results are in for the Stark County Bar Association "Rule of Law" vote by the membership body that took place from November 21, 2025 through November 30, 2025. With 81.30% voting "yes" and 18.70% voting "no" your voices have been heard. The Stark County Bar Association will add its name as a signatory to the Bar organizations' statement in support of the rule of law.

Finally, 2026 Dues bills were mailed out in December. Some of the benefits of membership include: member rates for online and in person CLEs; a free subscription to the monthly Bar Journal Magazine with 3 consecutive months of publication of your business card size ad related to your law practice; participation in the Lawyer Referral Service Program to build your practice while helping the community; networking at professional and social events; listing in our legal directory; free use of a conference room once a month; committee involvement with free CLEs and so much more. Law Students, Law School Graduates, Legal Administrators and Paralegals are also welcome to apply for associate memberships.

2026 Dues Bills Have Been Mailed ... What Is The Value of SCBA Membership?

CLE Seminars	\$360 Annual Savings
• Reduced Rates for Members! (12 hrs/yr.) • Annual Savings can Exceed Dues	
Stark County Bar Journal	\$20.00 Value
• FREE to Members • FREE Business Card Size Ad for Three Months (business related)	
Mailing Labels	\$150.00 Value
• Member and Non-member labels in alphabetical or zip code order.	
Conference Room	Up to a \$60.00 Value
• Members may use a conference room once a month at no charge.	
On-Line Legal Directory	Marketing Your Membership
Lawyer Referral Service.....	Grow Your Practice
• Client Referrals	
Public Speaking Opportunities	Great Value
Member Committees	Substantive & Service Oriented
Networking & Congeniality	Professional & Social Events
Professional Growth.....	PRICELESS!

Total Savings \$590.00!!

Stark County Bar Association



2026 CRIMINAL LAW SEMINAR

Friday, January 30, 2026 - SCBA Conference Room

8:45 A.M.	REGISTRATION - Water, coffee and donuts provided
9:00 A.M.	<u>LEGISLATIVE UPDATE</u> The Honorable Kristin Farmer <i>Stark County Court of Common Pleas</i>
9:15 A.M.	<u>U.S. AND OHIO SUPREME COURT CASE LAW UPDATE</u> Russ Bensing, Esq. <i>Cuyahoga County Criminal Defense Lawyers Association</i>
10:30 A.M.	BREAK
10:45 A.M.	<u>COURT APPOINTED BILLING SYSTEM (CABS) TRAINING</u> Alice Hill, Deputy Director - Reimbursement & Analytics Division Robert Love, Program Administrator - OPD Online and CABS <i>Office of the Ohio Public Defender</i>
11:30 A.M.	<u>ODRC: WHAT HAPPENS AFTER SENTENCING AND WHAT CAN I DO?</u> Dave Hanson, Esq., Supervising Attorney - Prison Legal Services John Griffin, Esq., Supervising Attorney - Prison Legal Services <i>Office of the Ohio Public Defender</i>
12:15 P.M.	ADJOURN



2026 Criminal Law 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 member's price.

Do you prefer to receive the seminar materials via E-mail 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 approved for 3.00 General CLE Credit Hours.

Notice:

Stark County Common Pleas Court Appointed Counsel Fee Applications

Beginning February 1, 2026, all appointed counsel fee applications submitted to any division of the Stark County Court of Common Pleas must be submitted electronically using the Ohio Public Defender's CABS software. Information about obtaining an account and using the software can be found on the Ohio Public Defender's website at <https://tinyurl.com/opdcabs>. This website provides a video library with instructions for using the system. If, after reviewing the instructional videos, additional support is needed, please contact Application Specialist, Ken Teleis, at krteleis@starkcountyohio.gov.

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This year, we will take the opportunity to recognize local practitioners who are celebrating 50 years in the practice of law. Our next attorney to be recognized for a largely commendable 50 years of practice is Douglas N. Godshall, Esq.

50TH Year Spotlight

Douglas N. Godshall, Esq.



Doug Godshall never claims to be the smartest lawyer in his family- that is an honor he bestows on his wife, Cathy, who was his classmate at Case Western Reserve Law School. He met Cathy in Contracts class, their first year of law school. She sat a row behind him and at a break one day approached him and asked, "How do you spell commitment?" The ice was

broken and the rest is history.

Congratulations to Doug on 50 years of practicing law and thank you for your service to our country. While Doug is well known in our legal community, some may not be aware that he is a veteran. He is a Green Beret and the President of the Special Operations Association, which was also started fifty years ago by Green Berets who ran reconnaissance missions in Laos, Cambodia, and North Vietnam. His top secret unit suffered more casualties per man than any other Army unit since the Civil War. He wears a Parachute Badge, the Combat Infantry Badge, a Purple Heart, and a Bronze Star with "v", one oak leaf cluster.

Doug returned to college after his service in the Army. He intended to concentrate on a professional path, but was undecided between journalism and trial law. He never gave a thought to any other branch of the law. He joined a political campaign in Philadelphia opposing Frank Rizzo and was tasked on election day with driving lawyers to courtrooms, where they assisted citizens who were denied the right to vote or election officials who were "assisting" voters in the voting booth. Good lawyers from good firms doing good work and getting good results depending on the Judge. A very positive day for the rule of law and lawyers. He went on to become a trial lawyer representing defendants in civil cases. His experience in civil litigation has morphed into a mediation practice for the last 15 years.

As far as the biggest changes that he has witnessed in the legal profession, nothing overshadows the impact and

lingering effects of the pandemic on our profession. On March 10, Governor Dewine and COVID closed the courts, exposing what Doug sees as two huge divides in our profession. The first was technology. Seniors were afraid of Zoom but had to train quickly, with some comical results. The necessity of the situation and resorting to remote accessibility led to a sudden lack of personal interaction in our law offices and courthouses. In his opinion, we will never return to pre-COVID collegiality. Second, we have realized that the civil jury trial is on the endangered species list. Some Judges claim that COVID was the cause. Peggy Foley Jones, a sixteen year Judge in Cuyahoga County, and now a brilliant mediator and arbitrator, has written that before COVID, only 1 % of civil matters went to trial. Somewhere in our history, trying civil cases, like Doug had done so often during his 50 year career, has become a rarity.

As a litigator, Doug savored getting a good result for a client at trial. As a mediator, he gets satisfaction when he is able to help counsel and clients settle a distressing lawsuit. His advice to young lawyers is that words of encouragement or thanks to the court and counsel is always appreciated. A note is a good idea and a handwritten note, even better! Let's all send a note to Doug showing him our appreciation for all he has done and wishing him many more years of contributing to our profession.



This year, we will take the opportunity to recognize local practitioners who are celebrating 50 years in the practice of law. Our next attorney to be recognized for a largely commendable 50 years of practice is the Honorable Robert G. Lavery

50TH Year Spotlight

Honorable Robert G. Lavery



Let's start with how you became an attorney, give us the background.

I graduated from Alliance High School, Bowling Green and finally Toledo Law School then I was admitted to the Ohio Bar. I was most influenced to become a lawyer from watching Perry Mason on television

growing up.

When you first graduated law school did you immediately know what area of law you were interested in practicing? Is that the area of law you started in? If not, how did you eventually get to the area of law that you primarily practiced in during your career?

I was first immediately interested in practicing in the area of real estate and business law in my hometown of Alliance. Later, after I held a part-time position as a municipal court prosecutor and bankruptcy trustee, my career path eventually changed.

Did you have any legal mentors you really relied on during your career and how did they help you develop your practice?

I was very fortunate to have Judge John Thomas mentor me in treatment programs; Judge Jack Gwin on community service, Judge Jim Williams on professionalism and Judge Charles Brown on politics.

What was one of the greatest legal achievements you look back on from your career?

One of my greatest legal achievements was as Judge of Alliance Municipal Court where I successfully presided over three different criminal trials with multiple defendants all reaching verdicts in a single day.

Is there a legal opportunity you wish you had experienced during your career?

I wish I had the opportunity to share my twelve years

experience as a retired visiting judge with other judges contemplating retirement.

What have been the things you treasure most about the practice of law over your career?

I will always treasure the countless relationships I developed over the past fifty years of my legal career.

Looking back over the last 50 years, what advice would you give a new lawyer with respect to the outlook for their own career?

Do not ignore your physical and mental health. Always be ethical and professional and remember that the legal system isn't perfect and life isn't always fair.



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Your Secret Weapon: Stark County Law Library

In today's fast-paced legal world, access to reliable, authoritative information isn't just helpful—it's essential. Accurate legal research underpins every motion filed, contract drafted, and argument presented in court. For many attorneys practicing in Stark County, having access to comprehensive, reliable legal resources can mean the difference between achieving a successful outcome for their clients and encountering costly oversights that could impact a case or a lawyer's professional standing. This is where the **Stark County Law Library** can give you the edge.

The Law Library is far more than a collection of books—it is a hub of knowledge, expertise, and professional support. Experienced law librarians guide attorneys to the most relevant Ohio statutes, appellate and trial court decisions, administrative codes, and secondary sources. They ensure research is thorough and citations are precise, reducing the risk of errors that could compromise a client's case or a lawyer's professional responsibilities. Whether you are part of a large firm or a solo practice, this guidance is invaluable. From historical case law to local court rules, jury instructions, and specialized treatises, the Law Library equips attorneys to provide the highest level of professional service.

Beyond supplying information, the Library strengthens advocacy. Well-prepared lawyers can craft persuasive arguments, anticipate opposing counsel's points, and advise clients with confidence. Librarians assist with research strategies, citation verification, and locating hard-to-find materials—saving attorneys time and helping avoid costly mistakes. The Library functions as a silent but powerful partner in client advocacy and professional responsibility.

For newer attorneys, in particular, the Library levels the playing field. By coming to court prepared with accurate research, up-to-date forms, and comprehensive information, they can confidently stand alongside seasoned practitioners. Access to the Law Library allows these attorneys to project competence, anticipate opposing counsel's arguments, and advise clients with authority, bridging experience gaps and reinforcing professional credibility.

The Law Library also supports ongoing professional development. Attorneys can access continuing legal education (CLE) materials, research guides, and legislative updates.

The **Stark County Law Library** is more than a repository of legal texts—it is a strategic partner in quality representation, professional responsibility, and effective client advocacy. For attorneys seeking reliable information and a professional edge, the Law Library is an essential resource. By equipping attorneys with the tools to be thoroughly prepared, it empowers both new and experienced practitioners to perform at their best and succeed in every courtroom.

Quick Tips for Using the Law Library:

Ask a Librarian:

Don't hesitate to reach out for research guidance—our librarians know the shortcuts and resources that can save you hours.

Check Local Practice Materials:

The Library holds Ohio and Stark County-specific resources that can give you an edge in filings and arguments.

Stay Current:

Sign up for alerts and updates to track changes in law and resources.

Plan a Visit:

Even a short stop can uncover resources you didn't know you had, boosting your next client interaction. The Law Library is open weekdays from 8:30-4:30.

Become a Member:

Joining the Law Library allows you to access its digital databases for remote research—your secret weapon can help you from wherever you are.

Membership is \$50 annually; call, email, or stop by to return an application and pay the fee.

Jenny Myers
Stark County Law Library
inform@starkcountyohio.gov

Notary Stamp Prices

The Stark County Bar Association is offering for sale Attorney and Non-Attorney Notary Public Stamps and Seals. If you are interested in purchasing these items, please contact the Stark County Bar Association at 330-453-0685, or visit our website at www.starkctybar.com.

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8. Felt Stamp Pad Black Ink.....(\$11.35 + \$0.35 tax) = *\$11.70

**Prices include 6.50% Sales Tax & Shipping Charges*

Associate Membership

Associate membership is available to paralegals, legal administrators, law students, and law school graduates who are not admitted to the Bar. The Bar Association urges all who employ anyone in this capacity to encourage them to join the Association and become active in our committees and programs related to their fields.

Any associate member in good standing shall be entitled to the rights of membership except that an associate member may not hold office, vote, evaluate judges or judicial candidates, or serve on the following committees: Personnel Committee, Grievance Committee, Disputed Fee Committee, Unauthorized Practice of Law Committee, Nominating Committee, Judiciary Committee, Professional Continuity Committee, Bar Applicants

Committee, Finance Committee, Notary Public Committee and Executive Committee.

Becoming an Associate Member requires that you be sponsored by a regular member of the Association, excluding law students. Law students are not required to pay dues.

First - Fourth year of membership . . . \$55.00
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The Stark County Bar Association offers conference rooms for use by attorneys (not groups), subject to availability. Members of the Stark County Bar Association may use a conference room once a month at no charge. Rental charges will apply to members who use the room more than once a month and to non-members of the Stark County Bar

Association. Rental charges are \$30.00 for a half day (up to three hours) and \$60.00 for a full day (up to six hours). Conference rooms must be reserved in advance by calling 330-453-0685. Cancellations must be received at least 24 hours in advance or the rental fee will be charged.

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Why not join the SCBA's Lawyer Referral Service?

If interested, please contact the Bar Office at 330.453.0685 or scbareferral@starkctybar.com. We accept members for all areas of law; currently though, we are in particular need of attorneys who can handle:

- Civil Matters
- Small Claims
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- Consumer Law
- Veterans' Benefits
- Retirement/Pension
- Landlord/Tenant

The service only gets 10% of the fees collected. In 2018, the SCBA LRS received a percentage fee check in the amount of \$23,333.33 as 10% of the fees collected from a referral.



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Full Page	\$250.00
Half Page	125.00
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Quarter Page	62.50
Per Column Inch	
Approximately 1 3/4" x 1"	10.00
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3 1/2" x 1"	20.00
3 1/2" x 2" (Business Card Size).....	40.00

DEADLINE: 15th of each month for following month's issue.

Advertising is free to our members for the first three months – limited to business card size or smaller ad. If you run the same ad consecutively starting January to December and you pay the entire year in advance, you will get December's ad free.

Back Cover ad – The size of the back page is 8 1/2" by 9". The price is still \$250.00. This is due to Post Office requirements.

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50 YEARS

1976

LOOKING BACK... TRIVIA, FUN FACTS & HISTORY

March Bar Exam.....	Eight (8) passed Exam
July Bar Exam.....	Forty (40) passed Exam
US President	Gerald Ford
Top Song	Tonight's The Night (Gonna Be Alright) Rod Stewart
Top Movies.....	Rocky, King Kong, A Star Is Born
Top TV Shows	Happy Days, Laverne & Shirley, M*A*S*H
Most Popular Toys	Stretch Armstrong, Lite-Brite, Pet Rock
Average Income per year	\$14,960
Average Cost of New Chevrolet Cordoba	\$4,900
Gallon of Gas.....	59 cents
Cost of First-Class Stamp.....	13 cents
World Series Champions	Cincinnati Reds
NBA Champions	Boston Celtics
Superbowl X Champions	Pittsburgh Steelers
Average cost of an ad during Superbowl	\$110,000
NCAA Football Champions	Pittsburgh Panthers
1976 Quote.....	“You talkin' to me?”



Major Events of 1976:

Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak formed Apple Computer; The ink-jet printer was invented; Sweden's most profitable corporation was the pop group ABBA; NASA launched its first space shuttle, the Enterprise; the US issued the first \$2.00 bill; minimum wage was boosted from \$2.10 to \$2.30; the first perfect Olympic gymnastics score by Nadia Comaneci; the United States celebrated its 200th anniversary with nationwide festivities on July 4th; Viking 1 landed on Mars, sending back the first close-up color photos.