

# BENCH & BAR

A Publication of The Lawyers Association of St. Louis

[www.lawyersassociationofstlouis.org](http://www.lawyersassociationofstlouis.org)

September 2018



## President's Column

Bharat Vardachari

It is with great honor and privilege that I am writing my first newsletter article for the Lawyers Association of St. Louis as the President of this great organization. It is a humbling experience when I look at the incredibly accomplished lawyers that have preceded me.

I am speaking to our organization's seasoned lawyers in particular. We all have an absolute obligation to mentor our younger lawyers. I have been fortunate enough to learn from outstanding attorneys, and what they have instilled in me from an early age is that being a lawyer is not just an 8:00-5:00 job that ends once you leave the office or the courthouse. It is important to encourage new lawyers to take active positions in bar associations as a way to develop and mature professionally and as an individual. The Lawyers Association of St. Louis is unique in that its most basic function is to provide an opportunity for lawyers and judges to spend time with each other on a social level away from the rigors, stress and, at times, the adversarial nature of our profession. Simply being in the company of other attorneys and judges in settings outside the traditional venues will enhance our young lawyers and encourage them to take ownership in the practice of law.

The Association has a rich history. We were the first St. Louis organization to have African-Americans as members and our functions are branded so well that events such as Judicial Appreciation (**taking place on September 20**), Gridiron in November, the Black History Celebration in February and Award of Honor in April have all become traditions in their own right.

*Continued on Page 8*

## Judicial Appreciation—September 20

Join members of The Lawyers Association as it honors members of the Bench at its annual Judicial Appreciation dinner on Thursday, September 20. The program will be at the MAC – Downtown. Cost is \$50 for association members and \$60 for non-members.

Peter Dunne, a Past President of the association a Director Emeritus of the Gridiron Show will be the featured speaker.

Sponsors for the event (through 9/12/2018) are:

Alaris  
Baker, Sterchi, Cowden & Rice, LLC  
Behr, McCarter & Potter, PC  
Blitz, Bardgett & Deutsch, LC  
Brown & Crouppen, PC  
Brown & James, PC  
Bryan Cave Leighton Paisner, LLP  
Carmody MacDonald, PC  
Cervantes & Associates  
Fox & Vuylsteke, LLP  
Gray, Ritter & Graham, PC  
The Gunn Law Firm, PC  
HeplerBroom, LLC  
Hinshaw & Culbertson, LLP  
Kamykowski, Gavin & Smith, PC  
Kolker & Labovitz  
Meyerkord & Meyerkord, PC  
Mogab & Hughes Attorneys, PC  
Pitzer Snodgrass, PC  
Pohlman Reporting Co.  
Rossiter & Boock, PC  
Sandberg, Phoenix & von Gontard, PC  
The Simon Law Firm, PC  
Thompson Coburn, LLP  
USA & M  
Zevan, Davidson, Roman, LLC

### In Memoriam

**Leonard P. Cervantes**  
**1949-2018**

**Past President**

**Award of Honor Recipient**

**Founder of the Hon. Theodore McMillian Black History  
Month Dinner**



## We're Indebted to Len

William Thomas



On June 23, we lost a legend of the trial bar, an incredible personality and one of the biggest supporters, benefactors and representatives of this organization; Mr. Leonard P. Cervantes. Lenny was ever present at every event, was a past president of the Association (2002-2003), and recently,

recipient of its highest recognition, The Award of Honor (2014). His contributions to this great association I love was deep and abiding, and from my perspective, he will be remembered as one of its most impactful members. We owe him many things, from our newest logo, which was his idea and design, to one of our signature events, the Black History Month Dinner. Most of all, we owe him for not just joining this association, with such great history of inclusion and collegiality, but by joining in in everything it stands for, and making it better for those who will follow him.

The man we lost was a great shining example for the times. He was the son of a first generation American. His father and uncle proudly served in the U.S. Armed Forces, then raised families under modest means, with the hope they would all have a better future. Len had many brothers and sisters, three of them attorneys, and he came to St. Louis looking to make a name for himself as a trial lawyer representing injured people who needed help. He was a zealous advocate, a tough opponent at trial, and was always working tirelessly to further the cause of our profession. He was friends with judges and lawyers, many of them the same lawyers he would argue with in court on Monday morning. And he too loved this organization for what it is and what it stands for: a place where lawyers of all walks of life could come together and be friends.

In 1995, Len had an idea - an idea to create an event that recognized and celebrated the many achievements of African-American lawyers in our region,

and what better way that to dedicate that event to another of this association's greatest members, the Hon. Theodore McMillian, who served as the featured speaker that first February evening 23 years ago. Len appreciated the special place this association serves, as one founded on diversity, inclusion and service. I am sure Len and Judge McMillian are together now, smiling on all of us as we prepare to celebrate our judiciary with another of our great events, the Judicial Appreciation Dinner.

I came to know Len much closer when we worked together on his Gridiron Show in November 2002. Len was gracious in his delegation of the events of that evening to the cast, crew, writers and directors of the show, and it was a memorable night. The show's title, "How to \$ucceed," was itself a tribute to the man who had done just that, despite all the effort it took to get him there. In the run up to the show, a well-known local lawyer who shall remain nameless, (but who's last name rhymes with "Pole-steyke"), came to me and suggested a song for the show. The song was an 80's mega-hit by Robert Palmer, "Addicted to Love." The treatment this lawyer was suggesting was a quite simple one: just remove all references to the word "Love" in the song, and replace them with the man's name: "Len." So the proposed parody song would go:

"Whoa, you like to think that you're immune to the  
stuff, oh yeah

It's closer to the truth to say you can't get enough  
You know you're gonna have to face it, you're ad-  
dicted to Len"

Perhaps regrettably, the idea was scrapped for a pirate number which bombed, a Sonny and Cher song and an Oklahoma parody. In retrospect, and in closing, as I suggest in the title of this article, we are gonna have to face it. We are indebted to Len. A great man, a great lawyer, and one of the greatest members of this great Lawyers Association. We will miss you, Len.



## Upcoming Events

Thursday, September 20  
Judicial Appreciation Dinner  
5:30 p.m.  
MAC – Downtown

Friday, November 16  
Gridiron Dinner & Show  
6:00 p.m.  
Chase Park Plaza

January 2019  
Bowling Tournament  
Saratoga Lanes

February 21, 2019  
The Honorable Theodore McMillan  
Black History Dinner  
The Westin Hotel  
5:30 p.m.

## Sustaining Members — Thank you

The Lawyers Association of St. Louis is grateful to the following members who are Sustaining Members of the association.

Theresa A. Appelbaum  
Brent Baldwin  
Anthony R. Behr  
Patrick J. Boyle  
Thomas M. Burke  
Hon. Rex M. Burlison  
Jared Byrne  
Gerard T. Carmody  
Matthew C. Casey  
Thomas J. Casey  
James W. Childress  
Mary Coffey  
Morry S. Cole  
Michael Corrigan  
David Corwin  
Hon. Michael P. David  
Daniel T. DeFeo  
Matthew J. Devoti  
Thomas C. DeVoto  
Edward L. Dowd, Jr.  
Don M. Downing  
Peter J. Dunne  
Jason Eason  
Hon. John R. Essner  
George L. Fitzsimmons  
Raymond R. Fournie  
James A. Fox  
Aaron French  
Michael S. Geigerman  
Maurice B. Graham  
Thomas J. Gregory  
Steven Groves

Gary A. Growe  
Justin D. Guerra  
Amy Gunn  
John R. Gunn  
Michael P. Gunn  
Patrick R. Gunn  
Donald Gunn, Jr.  
Patrick J. Hagerty  
Linda Hahn  
Craig Hansen  
Hon. Phil Hess  
Hon. Bruce Hilton  
David G. Hughes  
John M. Hughes  
Richard L. Hughes  
Scott L. Kolker  
Marc S. Kramer  
John A. Lally  
Rob Litz  
Joan M. Lockwood  
John F. Mahon, Jr.  
Hon. Christopher McGraugh  
Geoffrey Meyerkord  
Stephen F. Meyerkord  
Nancy R. Mogab  
Gretchen Myers  
Hon. Mark H. Neill  
Hon. Maggie Neill  
Genevieve Nichols  
Gerard T. Noce  
Andrew A. O'Brien  
Matthew J. Padberg

Ted L. Perryman  
G. Keith Phoenix  
Stephen J. Potter  
Hon. Angela Turner Quigless  
Tarun B. Rana  
Daniel A. Raniere  
James E. Rhodes  
Hon. John J. Riley  
Stephen H. Ringkamp  
Robert F. Ritter  
Hon. David Roither  
Daniel T. Ryan  
Craig A. Schlappizzi  
Donald L. Schlappizzi  
Tom Schwartz  
Anthony Simon  
John Simon  
Hon. Nathan Stewart  
Robert M. Susman  
Joe Taylor  
William S. Thomas  
Robert E. Tucker  
Hon. Lisa Van Amburg  
Paul N. Venker  
Diana M. Vuylsteke  
Kenneth Vuylsteke  
Hon. Barbara W. Wallace  
Hon. E. Richard Webber  
Sharon R. Wice  
Stephen R. Woodley

## 62nd Annual Gridiron—Friday, November 16 The Khorassan Room—Chase Hotel



*If you'd like to perform in the Gridiron Show join other cast members at the first rehearsal on Monday, Sept. 24 at 7 p.m. at the VFW Hall (1717 S. Big Bend, south of Highway 40) on Monday, Sept. 24 at 7 p.m.*





## Award of Honor

In April 2018 Ray Fournie became the 79th person to be honored with the legal community's highest achievement, The Lawyers Association's Award of Honor. Those in attendance heard comments from Steve Meyerkord, Gerry Ortvals, Dennis Reagan, the Honorable Barbara Wallace and Tom Schlafly.

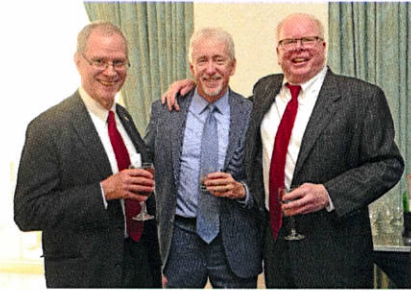
Entertainment was provided by The Courthouse Steps.

Ray was honored for his dedication to the legal community and writing and directing the Gridiron Show for 16 years. Ray is also a Past President of The Lawyers Association.





## Award of Honor Cocktails





## County Lawyers Win Softball Game Again! Or Did They?





Regardless of who won the game they certainly enjoyed the food and booze and prizes.





## Congratulations....

... to Nicole Burlison Knepper of Padberg, Corrigan & Appelbaum for being named the Lon Hocker Award Winner.  
... to Rebecca Cary of Childress, Ahlheim & Cary, and Rob Chandler of Baker, Sterchi, Cowden & Rice, on the birth of their son and welcoming two additional sons into their family.

## Napier Awards Presentation

The Milton F. Napier Awards for Excellence in Trial Advocacy were presented at the Award of Honor in April. Jared Byrne presented the certificates and a check to Michelle Mowry of the Washington University School of Law and Desiree Austin-Holliday of the Saint Louis Law School. The Napier Awards have been presented annually by the association since the 1960s.

### *President's Column—continued from Page 1*

I have noticed that we do not see many young lawyers at these great gatherings and that is a problem for which we all bear responsibility. I hope that you strongly encourage your young lawyers to come to these functions so they can meet judges around the area, talk to lawyers that they may not come across otherwise and become a recognizable face as they attend more functions. Membership cost is negligible (free for first year lawyers) and the benefits from attending these events are tangible. The Lawyers Association functions are not designed to be profitable, but instead, to provide a place to let those in this unique profession enjoy each other's company. To that end, I truly hope our membership will make the conscious effort to bring our young lawyers to Judicial Appreciation so that we all can celebrate our judiciary.

I am excited and honored to have this position, and I hope that the leaders of our community and their firms, both large and small, will encourage young lawyers to become involved going forward.



Left photo—Desiree Austin-Holliday from Saint Louis University. Below left photo—Michelle Mowry from Washington University.



Nearly 175 lawyers attended a CLE seminar hosted by The Lawyers Association of St. Louis and USA&M at the SLU Law School in August. Proceeds from the CLE will be donated to Legal Services of Eastern Missouri.

### **The Lawyers Association of St. Louis**

#### ***Officers***

Bharat Varadachari, President  
Justin Guerra, President-Elect  
Teri Appelbaum, 1st Vice President  
Dan Rousseau, 2nd Vice President  
Jennine Adamek Moore, Secretary  
Jennifer L. Woulfe, Treasurer

#### ***Executive Committee Members***

Rebecca A. Cary  
M. Graham Dobbs  
Chantal S. Fink  
Nicole Burlison Knepper  
Timothy F. McCurdy  
Erin E. Milligan

#### ***Past Presidents***

Jared Byrne  
Hon. JB Lasater  
Ken Vuylsteke

#### ***Executive Director***

Jim Susman  
314/991-Laws (5297)  
susgroup@gmail.com  
P.O. Box 411122  
St. Louis, MO 63141