



President's Column

By **Nicole Burlison Knepper**
Padberg Appelbaum Knepper

As the newly appointed President of the Lawyers Association, I am excited to lead this group through another year of social events and merriment. The LASL Picnic was

in June and despite the heat, we all had a great time. We have Judicial Appreciation coming up on September 26, 2024. And the infamous Gridiron will take place on Friday, November 22, 2024, at the Marriott Grand Hotel. I'd like to use this opportunity to encourage our members to participate in the Gridiron. Until last year, I had only been a dedicated attendee of the show. I had never volunteered to sing, dance or contribute to the show in any way other than a video or two. It seemed like a big commitment and I could always think of a reason not to join. But as a person with two kids in sports, I'm here to tell you it's possible. Rehearsals are scheduled late enough that you will have time to feed the kids before heading out. Our Directors **Chantal Mehill** and **Tom Neill** work hard to keep the rehearsals efficient and moving. And dinner and drinks are provided – on the house – at every rehearsal.

If singing and dancing on stage or acting in a video is intimidating to you, you are not alone. I was reluctant to join last year, but as the weeks went on I found myself looking forward to rehearsals. I was impressed by the cleverness of the songs and the talent of the singers and dancers. And I fit in perfectly with the dancers—the ones in the back row anyway. I met new people and we all shared law stories and life stories as we learned the show. I'm very grateful I didn't miss out on the experience. So as we gear up for another Gridiron season, I encourage you to step out of your comfort zone and join us this year.

Judicial Appreciation— Sept. 26

The annual Judicial Appreciation Dinner honors judges celebrating their 25th anniversary on the Bench. This event will be held on Thursday, September 26, 2024 at the MAC Downtown and includes dinner.

Members of the Bench being honored that evening will be: The Honorable **Ellen Levy**, 21st Judicial Circuit, Commissioner **Mary Greaves**, also with the 21st Judicial Circuit, and The Honorable **Daniel Pelikan**, 11th Judicial Circuit.

LASL will invite members of the Bench to join us. Sponsorship details will be announced shortly.

Election Results

The results of the association's annual Election in May for the 2024-2025 program year are:

President – **Nicole Burlison Knepper**, Padberg Appelbaum Knepper

President-Elect – **Jennifer Woulfe**, Galloway Johnson Tompkins Burr & Smith

1st Vice President – **Rebecca Cary**, Childress, Ahlheim Cary

2nd Vice President – **Chantal Mehill**, UB Greensfelder

Secretary – **Graham Dobbs**, Gray Ritter Graham

Treasurer – **Mandy Kamykowski**, Kamykowski & Taylor

Hayley Hughes (Gausnell, O'Keefe & Thomas) was reelected to a 3-year At-Large position on the Executive Committee and **Mariel Taylor** (Kamykowski & Taylor) was elected to a 3 year At-Large position on the Executive Committee.

Ashlyn Calhoun (MG+M Law Firm) was appointed to a 2-year At-Large position on the Executive Committee.

Upcoming Events

Thursday, September 26
Judicial Appreciation Dinner
5:30 p.m.
MAC Downtown

Friday, November 22
Gridiron—6:00 p.m.
Marriott Grand Hotel

Tuesday, December 10
Holiday Party—5:30 p.m.
Location to be Determined

The Lawyers Association of St. Louis

Officers

Nicole Burlison Knepper, President
Jennifer Woulfe, President-Elect
Rebecca Cary, 1st Vice President
Chantal Mehill, 2nd Vice President
Graham Dobbs Secretary
Mandy Kamykowski, Treasurer

Executive Committee Members

Ashlyn Calhoun
James Eason
Andrew Eastman
Hayley Hughes
Nick Meriage
Mariel L. Taylor

Past Presidents

Teri Appelbaum
Jennine Adamek Moore
Dan Rousseau

Executive Director

Jim Susman

Sustaining Members

The Lawyers Association of St. Louis would like to thank the following Sustaining Members:

Jennine Adamek Moore
Teri Appelbaum
Joseph A. Bartholomew
William R. Bay
Mark J. Becker
Jill S. Bollwerk
Patrick J. Boyle
Anne-Marie Brockland
Hon. Rex M. Burlison
Denis C. Burns
Jared Byrne
Matthew C. Casey
Phillip Cervantes
James W. Childress
Mary Coffey
Morry S. Cole
Ann G. Dalton
Thomas C. DeVoto
M. Graham Dobbs
Douglas P. Dowd
Edward L. Dowd, Jr.
Don M. Downing
Jack Downing
Peter J. Dunne
James Eason
George Fitzsimmons
James A. Fox
Aaron French
Gretchen Garrison
Michael S. Geigerman
Maurice B. Graham
Thomas J. Gregory
Steven Groves
Gary A. Growe
Justin D. Guerra
Amy Gunn
John R. Gunn
Patrick R. Gunn
Donald Gunn, Jr.
Robert T. Haar
Patrick J. Hagerty

Linda Hahn
Craig Hansen
Hon. Renee Hardin-Tammons
Hon. Heather J. Hays
Lisa A. Herder
Hon. Philip M. Hess
Hon. Craig Higgins
Hon. Bruce Hilton
James P. Holloran
David G. Hughes
John M. Hughes
Richard L. Hughes
Mandy J. Kamykowski
Nicole Burlison Knepper
Scott L. Kolker
Marc S. Kramer
John A. Lally
Michael Langella
Rob Litz
Hon. Annette Llewellyn
Joan M. Lockwood
John F. Mahon, Jr.
W. Dudley McCarter
Hon. Christopher McGraugh
Hon. Matthew Melton
Stephen F. Meyerkord
Callan Moench
Nancy R. Mogab
Morgan C. Murphy
Hon. Mark H. Neill
Hon. Maggie Neill
Tom Neill
Genevieve Nichols
Gerald Noce
Hon. Glenn Norton
Andrew A. O'Brien
Matthew P. O'Grady
Hon. Steven R. Ohmer
Gerald R. Orbals
Matthew Padberg
Ted L. Perryman

G. Keith Phoenix
Jenny Pitzer
Hon. Angela Turner Quigless
Daniel A. Raniere
Hon. Robin Ransom
James E. Rhodes
C. Timothy Rice, Jr.
Stephen H. Ringkamp
Dan Rousseau
Daniel T. Ryan
Jason Sapp
Craig A. Schlappizzi
Donald L. Schlappizzi
Michael Schroeder
Tom Schwartz
Mary Anne Sedey
Anthony Simon
John Simon
Jennifer Steinmeyer
Bob Susman
Jennifer Suttmoeller Bernacki
Phillip A. Tatlow
Mary Taylor
William S. Thomas
Bob Tucker
Bharat Varadachari
Paul N. Venker
Kenneth Vuylsteke
Hon. Barbara W. Wallace
Hon. E. Richard Webber
Jeff Wehmer
Benjamin Westhoff
Sharon R. Wice
Hon. Michael Wolff
Hon. Rochelle Woodiest
Stephen R. Woodley
Jennifer Woulfe
David Zevan

Milton F. Napier Awards Presented to Washington University and St Louis University law schools



Megan Melvin of the St. Louis University School of Law is presented with the Milton F. Napier Award from **Jennine Adamek Moore**, Past President of The Lawyers Association at the Award of Honor Dinner. **Jessica Gaughan**, the Napier Award winner from the Washington University Law School was unable to attend the awards presentation.



Gridiron

Save the Date

Friday, November 22

Heat Doesn't Slow Down Annual Picnic



Gabe Gore's Message— "Answering the Call to Serve"

By Bill Thomas

Gausnell, O'Keefe & Thomas, LLC

On February 15, 2024, the Lawyers Association of St. Louis and the Mound City Bar Association presented their 29th Annual **Honorable Theodore McMillian** Black History Month Dinner at the modern Live! By Loews Hotel at Ballpark Village in downtown St. Louis.

This event is a credit to the founding principles of the Lawyers Association, organized in 1934, and that of the Mound City Bar, established 12 years before, to improve the administration of justice; uphold the honor of the legal profession; promote professional development; and provide service to the community. But, perhaps most significantly, both organizations recognized the singular importance of diversity and inclusion in the practice of law. Diversity of voices and opinions was the vision of those early founders of the Lawyers Association, who saw a need to allow admission to any lawyer, no matter their race, gender, religion, or area of practice.

Judge McMillian, who passed in 2006 (Lawyers Association Award of Honor recipient 1970) is of one of the Lawyers Association's greatest members, and the event honors his lasting memory and incredible legacy. In addition to his many amazing accomplishments, Judge McMillian was the first African American Circuit Judge and Court of Appeals judge in the State of Missouri, and also the first to serve on the 8th Circuit Court of Appeals. But, it is where he got his start as a lawyer that was the centerpiece of this year's event.

The program was introduced by **Jennine Adamek Moore**, president of the Lawyers Association, and **Chalanda Scales-Ferguson** president-elect of the Mound City Bar. The featured speaker of the night was Circuit Attorney for the City of St. Louis, **Gabe Gore**.

Mr. Gore began his legal career as a law clerk for the 8th Circuit Court of Appeals, clerking for Judge John Gibson, who was good friends with Judge McMillian at the time. Judge McMillian offered Gore some advice: "go get a job with **Ed Dowd, Jr.**," who was the Assistant U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District. It was a monumental decision, as Gore remained with Dowd, through a couple law firms, and ended up a partner at Mr. Dowd's current firm, Dowd Bennett, one of the premier law firms in the region. Gore's return to work as a prosecutor takes him back to his roots and also the strong traditions of the office of Circuit Attorney in the City.

As indicated above, the Circuit Attorney's office is itself part of the history of this event, in that Judge McMillian began his legal career there after graduating top of his law school class from St. Louis University. He had trouble finding a job, and none other than Ed Dowd, Sr., Gabe's boss's father, was the Circuit Attorney, and offered McMillian a job. McMillian was a judge in the City of St. Louis in three years, and he was off on his amazing career.

Gore has reinforced the traditions of the office of the Circuit Attorney since taking over, in that he also hired retired Judge **George Draper, III**, who was a Circuit Judge, Court of Appeals Judge, and most recently the presiding judge of the Missouri Supreme Court, now retired. Draper III joins the office as chief training officer, and follows a family tradition of his own, in that his father, George Draper, II, was a colleague with Judge McMillian along with another future federal judge, **Hon. Clyde Cahill, Jr.**

Gore remarked, "The names of trailblazers like Judge McMillian are touchstones. They echo through time, conveying the sense of where we come from, who we are, the communities to which we belong, and our history and our place in the world." He emphasized that he stepped away from his successful law practice to become Circuit Attorney, at the time a beleaguered office, because of his commitment to the legacy of the office. He emphasized, "As much as Black History Month is a time to honor the iconic figures whose struggles and triumphs changed our history, it is also a call to action. What actions can we take today to move society forward to the pursuit of equality and justice? For me, it is an answer to call to service."

Gore is an incredible example of the power of that call, and the strength of character it takes to answer it. His life has been one of service to others, and now, in just six short months, he has rekindled relationships with the Mayor's office, the City Police Department and community groups who needed some leadership to correct the issues the City is facing with crime and distrust of law enforcement and the legal system. He credits the office's recent successes with the incredible response he has received from others who have "answered the call to serve." For lawyers in his office, and in general, he concluded his remarks with this charge:

"Our work is demanding, is complex, and is unceasing. But working together, we can build a safer, more just society for everyone. Working together, we can make history. In conclusion, Black History Month is a time to recognize the accomplishments that have brought us to the present moment, to acknowledge the challenges that remain, and to build a more equitable future."

Black History Month Photos



Debbie Champion Honored at Award of Honor Dinner

By Jennnifer Woulfe

Galloway Johnson Tompkins Burr & Smith

WHEREAS, **Debbie S. Champion** has practiced law since 1988 in the City of St. Louis; and

WHEREAS, Debbie S. Champion has served the St. Louis Community for 37 years in the capacity of a trial attorney, a community volunteer and a board member for Lift for Life Academy, the first Charter School in the City of St. Louis; and

WHEREAS, Debbie S. Champion has been nominated and received the Award of Honor by The Lawyers Association of St. Louis; and

WHEREAS, The Award of Honor is given annually to an outstanding trial attorney whose service to the profession and community merits recognition not as a reward, but as an example that may inspire others to similar service; and

WHEREAS, The Lawyers Association of St. Louis is a professional membership organization for trial attorneys in the St. Louis metropolitan area; and

WHEREAS, The City of St. Louis recognizes Debbie S. Champion as an outstanding member of the St. Louis community.

Now, therefore, I, Tishaura O. Jones, Mayor of the City of St. Louis, do hereby proclaim March 9, 2024, as:

"DEBBIE S. CHAMPION DAY"
IN THE CITY OF ST. LOUIS

Not a bad start to the evening.

Yes, March 9, 2024 shall go down in history as Debbie S. Champion Day, the day the Lawyers Association of St. Louis bestowed the coveted Award of Honor on that legal juggernaut from Kentucky, that smooth southern belle (no, not Amy Gunn), on none other than Debbie Champion.

Debbie hardly requires an introduction. Who else has the power to push the Lawyers Association west of Skinker Boulevard? To get Ryneerson Suess to pick up the bar tab? To convince Spencer Farris to wear a dress? Okay, maybe that last one is not that impressive. However, as we saw on March 9, there is no shortage of people wanting to sing Debbie's praises. For the first time in AOH history, I thought we were going to have an all-out brawl as a line of speakers fought over the title of "Debbie's best friend." We heard fun, heartwarming stories of Debbie as a child, Debbie the law student/young lawyer, and of course, Debbie the premiere litigator. We met

several members of Debbie's family who made the trip north to join her on this important day and learned about some of the greatest supporters in her life, not the least of which being her mother, Betty Rose, and husband, Jeff. And finally, for those of you who have never experienced this singularly panic-inducing event, we learned what it means to have a green sheet from Debbie in your inbox.

Debbie, you truly deserved this honor. The long line of current and former associates and colleagues who gathered at the front of the stage (in which I was proud to be included) is a true testament to the impact you have had on the St. Louis legal community and beyond. Congratulations.



More Award of Honor photos on Page 7



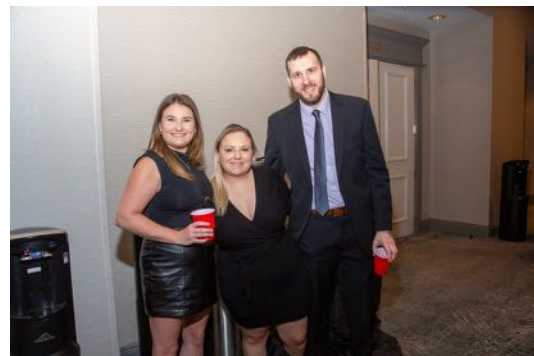
Award of Honor Photos



City Lawyers Win Annual Softball Game



Gridiron 2023 Pre-Show Festivities



Gridiron 2023

