CBA Report
NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2026

MENTAL HEALTH
AND THE LEGAL FIELD



Three Years Post Suicide Attempt: What Have I Learned?
pg. 5

Burnout Is Not Weakness
pg. 7

Beyond the Diagnosis: Proving Mental Health Disability Claims in SSDI Cases
pg. 9



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FEATURES

4
TAKE THE TRIP
By Terry Coates



5
THREE YEARS POST SUICIDE ATTEMPT: WHAT HAVE I LEARNED?
By Bruce Simpson



7
BURNOUT IS NOT WEAKNESS
By Scott R. Mote



9
BEYOND THE DIAGNOSIS: PROVING MENTAL HEALTH DISABILITY CLAIMS IN SSDI CASES
By Mia Arnold and Alli Cooper



12
10 WAYS TO FIGHT THE WINTER BLAHS
By Amy Kurlansky

IN EVERY ISSUE

13 | 2027 Mock Trial
14 | A Look Back
15 | Chat with the Chair
16 | Cincinnati Bar Foundation
19 | Legal Community News
20 | Continuing Legal Education
21 | Ethics Hotline
22 | Member News
25 | Memorials

Take the Trip



Terry and his spouse, Katie, at Havasu Falls in Arizona.

I get that we are all super involved navigating client, family, work, and friend obligations, but we should take a little time away from work. A study of nearly 40,000 attorneys concludes that 47.5% of lawyers reported high or very high work-related burnout.[1] Ten years ago, as a younger attorney, I never would have said this. I was head down, working constantly with no end in sight. Looking back, I wasn't living in the moment or protecting my mental wellness, and that was a mistake. With a strong push from my wife and the ability to complete more work away from the office in the wake of COVID, I understand I need time away from work to refocus, gain perspective, and to realize there is life outside of work.

> "I return to the office more focused and efficient after time off."

With this in mind, I recently returned from a four-day, 50+ mile hiking trip in the Grand Canyon. Previously, I would've found about 15 work-related excuses for postponing such a trip. But, as I've tried to focus more on valuing time outside the office, I am reminded that the firm will continue to evolve without me glued to my phone and/or computer all day, every day. In full disclosure, I did have wifi every evening and caught up on any urgent issues via email at least once a day. The point is that I had no cell reception for roughly four days and the world didn't stop.

I encourage everyone to set aside time and take the trip you've been meaning to take. The cases and clients will be here when you get back. I've found clients are fine with you having limited availability for periods of time so long as you communicate that to them and possibly designate a colleague for them to contact in the event of anything urgent that might arise during your unavailability.

I return to the office more focused and efficient after time off. Perhaps it's because I'm thinking clearer and/or more relaxed, but I am more productive if I have time away from the office.

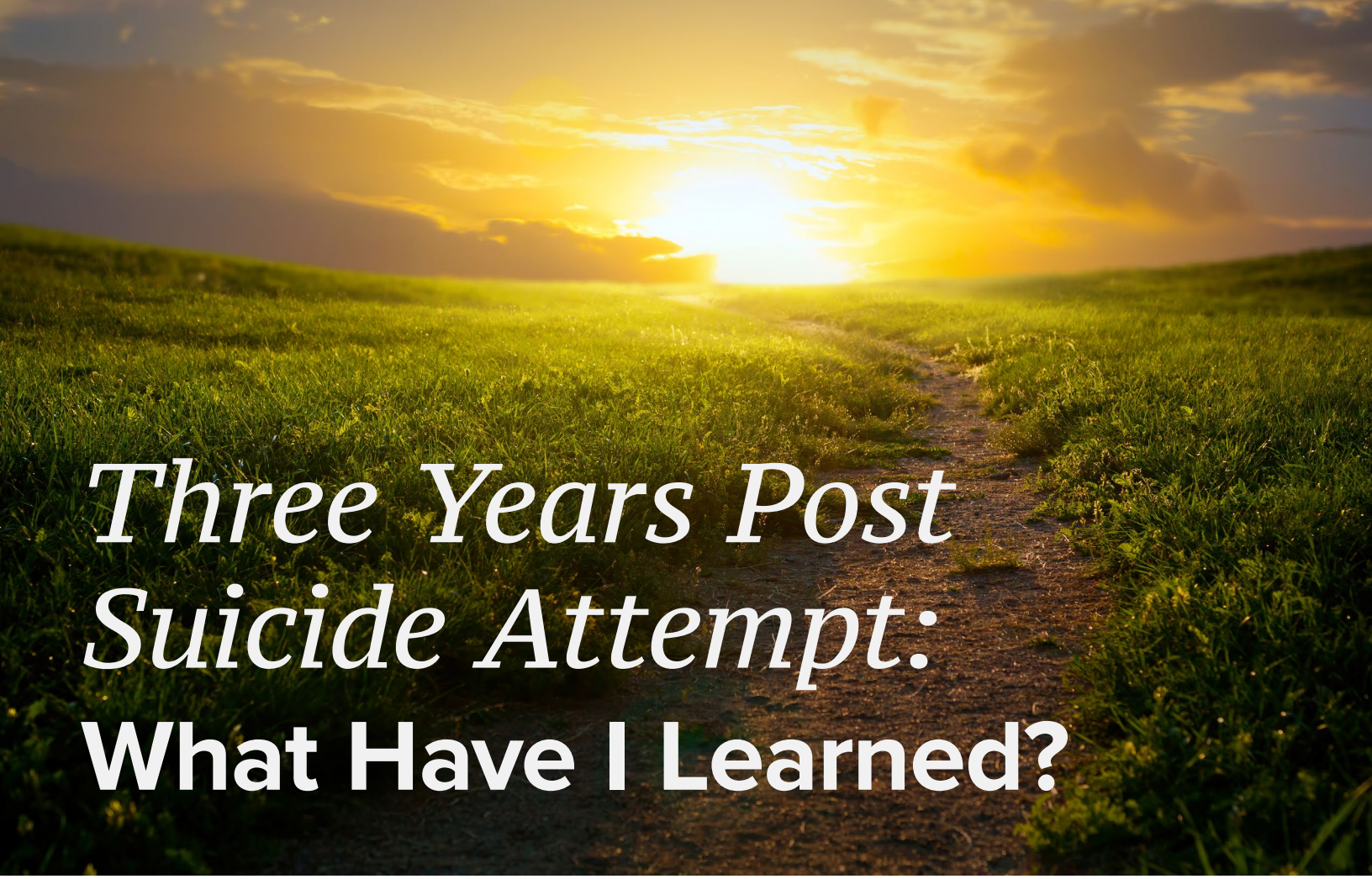
Law firms are starting to encourage time away from the office. A friend of mine in Miami, Florida is currently on his second three-month mandatory sabbatical from a Big Law firm where he's an executive committee member and a practice group leader. He's traveling extensively internationally during his sabbatical and told me he very much appreciates the time away from the office.

Understanding that we all need a little time away, log into the HUB and let me know where you're headed next.

1 *"When demands equal distress: An updated understanding of lawyer mental health and well-being," Krill, Patrick R. & Anker, Justin J., Journal of Affective Disorders, Volume 415, Article 122479 (Oct. 2, 2026); available at* https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0165032726013327#s0165 *(last visited Oct. 5, 2026).*



By Terry Coates, 2026-2027CBA president.



Three Years Post Suicide Attempt: What Have I Learned?

Editor's Note: This article discusses suicide and mental health challenges. The subject matter may be difficult for some readers.



By Bruce Simpson

Three years ago, I tried with all my might to end my life. By all rational assessments, I should be dead. Yet I am grateful to be alive. I have been to the deepest, darkest, most forbidden place no human being should venture. I cannot find the words to adequately explain the awfulness that can engulf someone with persistent depression and later suicidal ideation. I am grateful for the chance to share my story and hope it helps me connect with even one reader who is suffering in silence, as I did for most of my life.

Mental health treatment works. Before I survived my suicide attempt, I was convinced it was for weak people. On the outside, I projected bravado and confidence. I learned early in my legal career that clients expected, and law firm managers demanded, the image of an invincible warrior. I became a good actor. Many others are like me. No matter how tough we think we are, we remain vulnerable to life's frailties, just as our clients and everyone else on this planet. If you think otherwise, you are only deceiving yourself. I learned the hard way. I urge you to learn from my mistakes.

Some of what you will read from this point forward may seem unbelievable. What I share is true. I write only to help, with no other agenda. I do not charge for any of my mental health advocacy. I advocate for others like me because I am grateful to be alive and because I know people with mental illness can be helped.

After successfully test-firing a brand-new loaded .357 Magnum, I placed it against the side of my head and pulled the trigger. I have no logical explanation for why that weapon did not fire when the hammer struck the bullet.

Likewise, I have no intellectually acceptable explanation for why, a few hours later, when I tried to kill myself again, I experienced an all-encompassing sense of calm and peace that washed over my body and extinguished the compulsion to kill myself. At the same time, my zeal to end my life abated. I received a comforting message inside my head that said, "Bruce, you are not going to kill yourself. You are going to be okay, and you are going to be equipped to handle the aftermath of your suicide attempt. You are going to be fine." Stunned, I thought, "What is this?" I am still trying to understand all that happened that night.

After my suicide attempt, I was arrested and handcuffed in front of my family and neighbors. I was involuntarily committed to a state psychiatric hospital, where I stayed for four days. After my release, I met with my clients in a case in which I had committed malpractice and which prompted my attempted suicide. I apologized and informed them of the statute of limitations for suing me. I then reported my conduct to the Kentucky Bar Association and was subsequently fired by my law firm. I was 73 years old, unemployed, and facing a mountain of debt. I tried to escape my depression by gambling. I am a gambling addict, though I have not gambled in three years.

Within nine months of my suicide attempt, I progressively improved thanks to mental health treatment. During this time and since then, I have been on a mission to understand how I got into such a miserable, suicidal condition and why I did not seek help. I have read many books about mental illness and its treatment. I have watched hours upon hours of YouTube video presentations about every form of mental illness and the therapies to treat them. I also confess, as a former agnostic, that I have read numerous books written by late Christian pastor, Dr. Tim Keller and listened to many of his sermons. I have learned a lot in the last three years, and I am still learning.

> “No matter how tough we think we are, we remain vulnerable to life’s frailties.

In August 2023, I chose to publicly share most of my story in my local newspaper, the Lexington Herald-Leader. I also discussed my lifelong battle with mental illness and suicidal thoughts in the September edition of the Kentucky Bench and Bar, and in the December 2023 edition of the American Bar Association Journal. I decided to share the most intimate, tortured secrets of my life because, in the nine months following my suicide attempt, I learned of the significant adverse impact the stigma attached to mental illness has on people like me. This stigma deters many from seeking help.

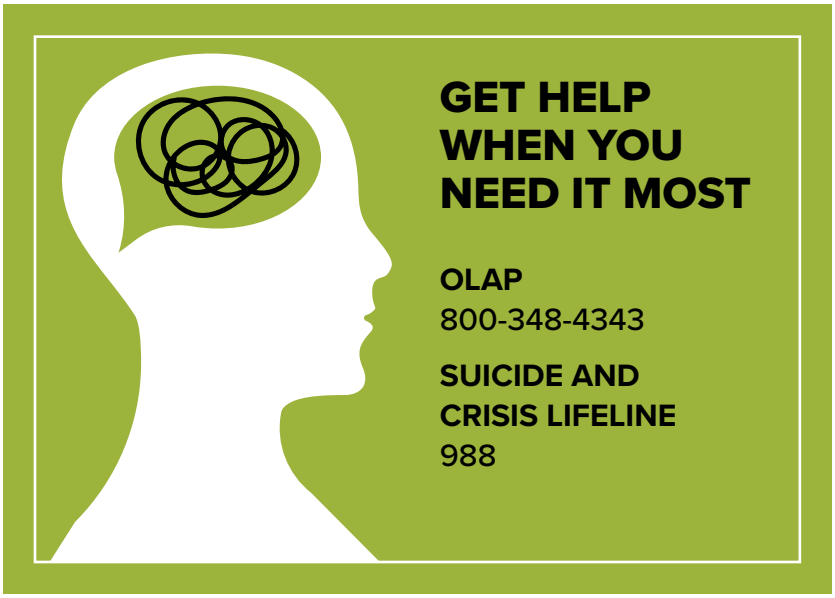
As for me, I always thought I was born with a “Bruce Simpson personal inadequacy problem” that I had to cope with as best I could. I learned to mask my depression. I still functioned at a high level, but inwardly I knew I was a walking improvised explosive device, ready to kill myself if I ever perceived a legitimate threat to the reputation others told me I had as a “good lawyer.” My identity, self-worth, and reason for living became largely dependent on others’ validation. I had unknowingly set myself up for a catastrophe.

I know the depths of despair. I also know how difficult it can be to ask for help and that sometimes you feel paralyzed and unable to do anything to help yourself. It is the nature of the illness. I get it, but I know you can be helped, and you are not alone. Some of us need more help than others, just as people with a heart condition, diabetes, or myriad of other physical illnesses do.

Finally, I want you to know how devastating suicide can be to those you love. I was fully convinced at the time I attempted suicide that it was best for everybody if I were dead. There was no doubt in my tortured, twisted mind about it, but I have lived to witness how wrong I was. My wife and daughters are still afraid I might try it again. I am deeply concerned that I may have made suicide more acceptable if one day they become overwrought. Had I had the capacity to appreciate the detrimental effects that even attempted suicide would have on my family, I would never have done it.

If you find yourself in crisis, talk to a trusted friend, go to the emergency room at a nearby hospital, or call 988. Help is available 24 hours a day. The people who take these calls are trained to handle them.

If you are struggling mentally, do your due diligence and find a competent clinical psychologist, psychiatrist, or therapist trained to address your personal history. This is important, as not every mental health professional is trained to address every mental illness. The most important lesson I learned is that people in a mental health crisis must at least talk to someone.



Bruce Simpson is an attorney and trained adult peer support specialist. He has spoken with lawyers and others in crisis from across the United States and 12 foreign countries. He can be reached at bruce@bsimpsonlaw.com



BURNOUT IS NOT WEAKNESS

Most lawyers are accustomed to setting aside their own needs to meet the demands of their work. Clients are waiting, deadlines are approaching, emails keep arriving, and there is always another call to return or problem to solve. Over time, many lawyers become exceptionally good at functioning while tired, stressed or mentally overloaded.

That ability is often viewed as part of being a professional. The problem is that burnout often hides behind competence. When you continue showing up, serving your clients and meeting your obligations, it can be difficult to recognize when exhaustion has become something more than a particularly demanding stretch at work.

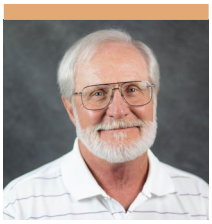
Burnout does not usually begin with a breakdown or a moment when everything suddenly stops working. More often, it develops gradually, which makes it surprisingly easy to normalize.

A lawyer once described it this way to OLAP.

"I thought I was just tired. Then I realized I hadn't actually felt rested in years."

He was still getting his work done, meeting deadlines, responding to clients and maintaining a successful practice. From the outside, nothing appeared to be wrong. Internally, however, he noticed that the work started to feel different. To remain engaged required more energy, while the satisfaction that once came from practicing law seemed increasingly difficult to find.

After pushing through exhaustion for so long, feeling exhausted had simply become normal.



By Scott R. Mote

BURNOUT OFTEN HIDES BEHIND PROFESSIONALISM

The legal profession rewards endurance. Lawyers learn early that there will be long days, difficult clients, demanding cases and periods when work has to take priority. Being able to perform under pressure is often considered part of being a good lawyer.

That makes it easy for burnout to hide behind high functioning.

You continue doing the work, meet deadlines, answer emails, and return the calls. You take care of your clients. At the same time, smaller changes may begin appearing beneath the surface.

Perhaps your patience is shorter than it used to be, and concentrating requires more effort. A client call that once would have been routine now feels

To speak confidentially with OLAP:

PHONE: **800-348-4343**
EMAIL: **bendslow@ohiolap.org**
WEBSITE: **ohiolap.org**

draining. Sunday evening arrives and you are already thinking about everything waiting for you Monday morning. Even when you take time away from work, you have trouble truly disconnecting from it.

It is easy to attribute those feelings to being busy, getting older or simply practicing law. Sometimes, however, they are signs that you have been operating under sustained stress without enough opportunity to recover.

BURNOUT DOES NOT MEAN YOU ARE WEAK

Lawyers are problem-solvers. Clients come to you because they need answers, guidance and reassurance. That dynamic can make it particularly difficult to acknowledge when you are the one who needs support.

Burnout can feel like evidence that you are no longer handling the demands of the profession as well as you should. You may look around and see colleagues who appear to be managing similar workloads and wonder why you cannot simply push through.

Burnout is not a measure of strength or professional ability. It can develop when sustained demands continually exceed the opportunities you have to recover from them.

Lawyers routinely absorb conflict, urgency, uncertainty and other people's problems. A difficult conversation ends and another begins. A stressful hearing is followed by a client call. One deadline is met and another takes its place. There is often little opportunity to process one experience before your attention is required somewhere else.

Over time, that constant output has an effect.

It is important to recognize the signals rather than treating them as evidence that you simply need to work harder.

WHAT BURNOUT CAN LOOK LIKE

Sometimes burnout makes you feel detached from work that once felt meaningful. You may become more cynical or irritable, have difficulty concentrating, or wake up already feeling mentally exhausted by the day ahead.

It can show up physically through headaches, disrupted sleep or persistent fatigue. You may notice yourself relying more heavily on alcohol, food, medication or other habits to relax at the end of the day.

Changes may also appear outside the office. You have less patience with your family. You decline invitations because you are too tired. Hobbies begin to disappear from your schedule. Even when you have free time, you may find that you do not have the energy or interest to do much with it.

Because these changes tend to develop slowly, it is possible to adapt to them without realizing how different life has become.

WHY PAYING ATTENTION MATTERS

Chronic exhaustion can affect more than how you feel about work. It can make concentration more difficult, shorten your patience and make it harder to remain fully engaged with clients, colleagues and the people in your personal life.

You may find yourself rereading something several times because you cannot focus. Small decisions begin requiring more effort. Problems that once felt manageable become disproportionately frustrating.

Meanwhile, the work continues.

That is one of the reasons burnout can persist for so long among lawyers. There may never be a moment when you simply cannot function. Instead, functioning requires progressively more of you.

Burnout rarely improves because you become even better at enduring it.

SMALL ADJUSTMENTS CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Addressing burnout does not necessarily mean leaving your job, changing careers or making dramatic changes to your practice. Often, the first steps are much smaller.

You might need clearer boundaries around when you respond to email or take client calls. Perhaps you need to use the vacation time you have been accumulating instead of waiting for the mythical week when nothing important is happening. It may mean protecting time for exercise, sleep, hobbies, friendships, family or anything else that allows your mind to spend some time away from practicing law.

It can also mean taking a closer look at the expectations you have placed on yourself. Not every email requires an immediate response, and not every problem needs to be solved tonight. Being available to clients does not require being available every hour of every day.

Most importantly, pay attention when the things that once helped you recover no longer seem to be enough. Persistent exhaustion, changes in mood, increased substance use or feeling increasingly disconnected from your work and personal life may be signs that it is time to talk with someone.

YOU DO NOT HAVE TO HANDLE EVERYTHING YOURSELF

Lawyers spend much of their careers being the person other people turn to when something has gone wrong. It can be uncomfortable to reverse that role, but asking for support gives you an opportunity to address what is happening before exhaustion begins affecting more areas of your life.

You also do not need to wait until you are in crisis.

OLAP provides confidential support for lawyers dealing with stress, burnout, mental health concerns, substance use or simply the feeling that something has changed and they are not quite sure what to do about it. Sometimes a conversation is enough to help you step outside the cycle of simply getting through the next deadline and begin thinking about what you need.

OLAP IS HERE TO HELP

The Ohio Lawyers Assistance Program provides confidential support to Ohio lawyers, judges and law students facing mental health concerns, substance use issues, stress, burnout and other challenges that can affect personal and professional well-being.

If this article resonated with you, consider reaching out. You do not need to have a diagnosis, know exactly what is wrong or wait until a concern has become a crisis. Sometimes recognizing that you have not felt like yourself lately is enough reason to start a conversation.

Scott R. Mote, Esq. is Executive Director of the Ohio Lawyers Assistance Program.



BEYOND THE DIAGNOSIS:

Proving Mental Health Disability Claims in SSDI Cases

Mental health conditions are among the most common impairments in Social Security disability claims, yet they remain some of the most difficult to prove. Unlike many physical conditions that can be supported by imaging, surgical records, or visible symptoms, mental health impairments often limit a person's ability to function in ways that are harder to see and measure.

A Diagnosis Alone is Not Enough

To qualify for Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), a claimant must show their symptoms create functional limitations severe enough to prevent sustainable work. That means the claimant must translate conditions such as depression, anxiety, cognitive impairments, or personality disorders into evidence of how they disrupt concentration, reliability, punctuality, decision-making, social interaction, and daily life.

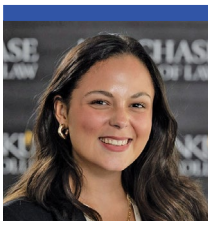
For representatives, the challenge is turning those experiences into a clear, credible record. One of the hardest parts of proving a mental health claim is showing the diagnosis impacts the claimant's ability to work in a significant way. Unlike some physical impairments, where imaging or laboratory results may provide persuasive medical findings, mental health claims turn on evidence of specific work-related limitations that is usually harder to document.

The numbers underscore the point. According to the 2024 Annual Statistical Report on the Social Security Disability Insurance Program, musculoskeletal impairments and physical injuries accounted for 33.9% of disabled beneficiary awards in 2024, while mental disorders, such as depressive, bipolar, and other related disorders, and schizophrenia spectrum and other psychotic disorders, accounted for only 6.9%. These numbers show that despite being among the conditions frequently alleged as disabling, cases involving mental health-only claims are being awarded at a much lower rate.[1] This gap does not mean mental illnesses are less serious, but it does reflect how much harder those claims are to prove. When evaluating any claim, the Social Security Administration looks at whether the alleged symptoms limit concentration, persistence, pace, social interaction, adaptation, and the ability to maintain full-time work, not the diagnosis alone.[2] In mental health-related cases, those elements can be difficult to see due to their often invisible symptoms.

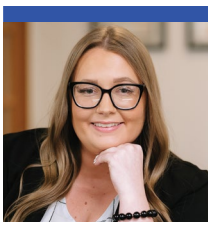
Look Beyond the Diagnosis

To prove these claims, the representative should find physical evidence of the severity and consistency of the claimant's symptoms over a documented and sustained period. Here, longitudinal evidence matters because mental health conditions rarely move in a straight line and the representative should look deeper than the psychiatric visit records.

They should ask themselves what story this record is telling and how the information fits in with the claimant's other medical records. They should evaluate the facts and be ready to address the weaker



By Mia Arnold



By Alli Cooper

spots in the case. This involves looking carefully at the provider's notes and observations. Simply reading the narrative or history of present illness section is not enough, what did the provider notice about the claimant? Was the eye contact noted as 'good' or 'fleeting?' Was the claimant dressed appropriately with good hygiene? Did the claimant show up on time to the appointment?

What was the claimant's mood and verbal affect? If the provider noted those aspects as subpar, the representative should be prepared to point that out to SSA and argue how that would translate to the work setting when the claimant is dealing with customers, coworkers, or supervisors.

Put the Evidence in Context

If those aspects were listed as 'normal,' the representative should avoid dismissing those facts. Instead, they should lean into them and be prepared to give SSA an explanation on how a good demeanor is not sustainable for the claimant. Studies of continuing disability reviews found many beneficiaries whose benefits ended after medical improvement later returned to re-apply for SSDI, suggesting that temporary stability does not always equal sustained work capacity.[3] It is worth noting providers often see claimants on their better days when they are able to get out of bed, get dressed, and present themselves on a designated day and time. Even though the claimant may be able to do that once per month for an appointment, they likely cannot do that for several days per week to maintain employment.

Similarly, it is common to see evidence of the claimant's good days in the medical records. That evidence is dismissed as 'bad facts' and used against the claimant. For example, the medical records may note that a claimant attended a family gathering, completed household chores, or went grocery shopping in a crowded store. However, those activities are often one-off situations that the claimant cannot do consistently. The representative should be prepared to make the point to SSA that treatment records often capture only a moment in time. A claimant may appear well during an appointment yet struggle with stress, tasks, criticism, social interaction, or consistent attendance.

Treatment compliance often creates another barrier to approval. Medical records may show missed appointments, medication changes, inconsistent therapy, substance-use concerns, or gaps in care. These situations are often used to question the claimant's credibility if they are not explained, but it is important to point out that what looks like noncompliance on paper may reflect the impairment itself. Depression can drain motivation, panic can make transportation or waiting rooms impossible, paranoia and trauma can interfere with trust, and cognitive limitations can affect memory, organization, and insight. Serious symptoms may shape the claimant's nearly everyday life, yet appear only briefly, inconsistently, or not at all in office notes. For that reason, the representative should look for other evidence that brings the medical records to life and shows the true human story of the claimant.

Bring Their Daily Life into the Record

The strongest proof that connects the medical file to the claimant's daily limitations comes from the people who know the claimant best and regularly observe their struggles. Those indi-



viduals can write third-party statements outlining their experiences with the claimant, ways they help, and what they know about the claimant's abilities in their daily life. These sources can demonstrate the pattern a short medical record may miss, a need for reminders, missed obligations, difficulty managing routine tasks, inconsistent hygiene, panic in public, withdrawal from others, decompensation with stress or change, and an inability to function reliably outside a structured setting. The goal is to create a record that shows not only what the claimant has been diagnosed with, but how those symptoms affect the claimant's ability to live and sustain work.

A Residual Functional Capacity (RFC) form is another good source of proof. An RFC is a form filled out by a treating provider that describes the claimant's ability to do certain activities, including their ability to concentrate, maintain attendance, complete a workday, handle stress, interact appropriately, and adapt to changes in routine. These phrases directly correlate with the analysis SSA does when they evaluate a disability claim. These forms should be filled out by a treating provider who is familiar with the claimant. The forms are most effective when they are specific and descriptive. Provider opinions should address concrete work-related limitations rather than stating a claimant is "disabled."

These opinions can help connect medical records to the claimant's life outside of the doctor's office. RFC forms, in combination with medical records, third-party statements, and the client's own testimony can paint a vivid picture of the client's life and levels of daily functioning. When these sources work together, the case becomes more than a collection of records. It becomes a meaningful explanation of how the claimant's mental health conditions affect them in their personal lives and how that would translate into a work environment. The representative should take the time to fully analyze these details and consider what evidence they could gather to turn invisible symptoms into a clear, vibrant record that tells the claimant's story. Strong case development helps SSA decision-makers see the connection between diagnosis, daily struggle, and work-preclusive limitations.

Because mental health limitations are often difficult to see in a single appointment or record, the strongest cases are built by showing the claimant's functioning over time. The goal is not to prove a diagnosis exists, but to show how the condition affects the person's daily life, reliability, and ability to work. Effective case development brings the medical evidence, claimant's story, and real-world observations together, so the record reflects the whole person rather than isolated symptoms.

Medical records should be developed longitudinally. One mental-status exam may appear normal, but the broader treatment history may show repeated medication changes, poor sleep, panic, mood instability, worsening stress, or temporary improvement. Reading the records as a pattern helps explain why a claimant who looks stable in one visit may still be unable to function consistently in a workplace. It also helps connect treatment gaps or inconsistent care to the impairment itself, rather than allowing those gaps to be misunderstood as a lack of effort. Written materials, including function reports and pre-hearing briefs, should organize those details into a clear narrative. The most persuasive statements avoid vague descriptions like "claimant has anxiety attacks" and instead explain what happens, such as how often symptoms occur, what support is needed, how long recovery takes, what tasks go unfinished, and why the person could not maintain regular attendance or pace in those moments. This approach keeps the focus on function, not only symptoms.

> The goal is not to prove a diagnosis exists, but to show how the condition affects the person's daily life, reliability, and ability to work.

Thoughtful case development matters. By focusing on functional limitations, building evidence, obtaining specific provider opinions, and including third-party observations, representatives can create a fuller and more persuasive record. These methods connect medical evidence to the human reality behind the claim, giving the SSA decision-makers a clearer picture of why the claimant cannot maintain competitive employment. Behind every claim is a person whose limitations may not be visible but are still life-altering. A strong record gives that person the chance to be seen clearly, understood fairly, and represented with the dignity their case deserves.

1 *Annual Statistical Report on the Social Security Disability Insurance Program, 2024 (2024), https://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/statcomps/di_asr/2024/sect03.html.*
2 *Ty Turner & Marion (Taffy) McCoy, Social Security Disability and Mental Health (Presentation to the U.S. Dep't of Lab. Advisory Council on Employee Welfare & Pension Benefit Plans, Sept. 21, 2023)*
3 *Howard H. Goldman, William D. Frey & Jarnee K. Riley, Social Security and Disability Due to Mental Impairment in Adults, Ann. Rev. Clinical Psychology (2018), https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-clinpsy-050817-084754.*

Mia Arnold is a Law Clerk at Lawrence & Associates and NKU Chase College of Law J.D. Candidate 2028. Alli Cooper is a partner and head of the Social Security department at Lawrence & Associates.

10 Ways to Fight the Winter Blahs

For many, fall means changing leaves and pumpkin spice lattes. But as the days grow colder, shorter and darker, many of us could use a little extra help keeping our spirits up. Below are 10 suggestions to help fight the winter blahs:

1 PRIORITIZE SLEEP

Law practice is busy. And many of us are getting too little sleep. Seven to nine hours of quality sleep are recommended for most adults. Make sure to prioritize your sleep to help improve your resilience and overall mood.

2 EXERCISE

Not only does exercise strengthen your body, but it also helps improve your mood. Do it solo or with friends. Take a class at your local gym or community center, or you can take a walk outside. Speaking of…

3 SPEND TIME OUTDOORS

Nature is grounding, and spending time outside has been shown to improve mood. Listening to birds can calm your nervous system. And the extra sunshine from being outside can improve your mood on those darker days.

You can find (FREE) online meditations specifically designed for lawyers through the Mindfulness in the Law Society or Warrior One.

4 WORK ON A HOBBY

Hobbies have been shown to boost your mental well-being, improve cognitive function, and reduce your risk of chronic disease. Feel free to break out that old band instrument, paint a portrait of your pet, crochet that scarf, build that puzzle, or enjoy whatever makes you happy.

5 ENJOY A LOCAL MUSEUM

Greater Cincinnati seems to have a museum for everyone on everything. Sometimes, just breaking out of the routine for an afternoon is a mood lift.

6 WATCH A TV SHOW, MOVIE, OR SPORTS

Fall is fun for soccer, football, and baseball. Winter brings basketball into the mix. If that's your thing!

7 LEARN SOMETHING NEW

Anything. On any topic you'd like. Keep learning and growing. You can find all kinds of discussion groups around town, or you can sign up for (free) classes or discussion groups at your local public library.

8 TAKE TIME TO READ

Studies show that reading decreases stress by 68% and also can help you sleep better.

9 HANG OUT WITH LOVED ONES

Whether it's the family you're born into or the one that you find, socializing can help us get out of our own heads, get into the moment, and remind us we are part of a wonderful community.

10 TAKE A PAUSE

Whether that looks like setting a boundary around your "me" time so you're not too overscheduled or starting a mindfulness or meditation practice, moments of solitude can help you pause and regroup.

And, if you do want to start or enhance your mindfulness/meditation practice, don't forget to sign up for the CBA Health and Well Being program.



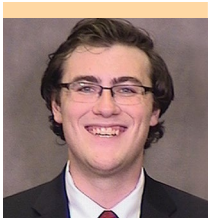
By Amy L. Kurlansky

Amy L. Kurlansky has served as the Reference Librarian at the Hamilton County Law Library since March 2018, after 20 years of practicing law. She is a graduate of the CBA CALL program and serves as an appointed member of the CBA Admissions Committee, and as the Chair of the CBA Health and Well Being Committee.



2027 Ohio High School MOCK TRIAL

Logan Ricci v. Buckeye Department of Youth Services



By Jacob Harrod

In the 2027 Ohio High School Mock Trial competition, students will explore the intersection of solitary confinement, the juvenile justice system, and the Eighth Amendment of the United States Constitution. The case centers around Logan Ricci, a detainee at the Cardinal Youth Rehabilitation Center, and time spent in an alternative detention space known as the Centering and Reset Space. The case involves an application for a preliminary injunction, as Logan seeks to prevent further harm to themselves and others detained at the facility. Students will consider whether the conditions of the room constitute cruel and unusual punishment within the meaning of the 8th Amendment and, if so, what remedies are appropriate. As high school students from the greater Cincinnati area prepare to argue this case problem, we need the help of our amazing Cincinnati Bar Association (CBA) colleagues to provide guidance, feedback, and perspective.

As in year's past, we are excited to be hosting this year's competition at the Hamilton County Courthouse! We appreciate all the efforts put in by our legal community in helping us with last year's competition. The CBA's Young Lawyers Section is looking for more than 60 volunteer lawyers for the 2027 Mock Trial Competition. Local attorneys give back to the community by sharing knowledge and enthusiasm for the practice of law as volunteer judges in the competition. Whether you are a seasoned volunteer or have no experience with the Mock Trial competition, your assistance is critical to the success of the program.

For more than 30 years, this program has given students a practical introduction to the justice system, the Constitution, and the legal process by giving them the opportunity to participate in mock trials as either lawyers or witnesses. Over the course of the simulated trial, students present opening statements, cross-examine, are cross-examined, and more.

The CBA will, once again, host the district and regional competitions for greater Cincinnati. For this to be successful, volunteer attorneys are vital to preside as judges over both rounds of competition. During the trial, judges observe, grade, and provide feedback on the performances of the students. The level of dedication and enthusiasm from the students is always impressive. Students truly appreciate the participation and thoughts of local attorneys. You can be a part of this exciting opportunity to impact local high school students.

The program is sponsored locally by the CBA's Young Lawyers Section and fully endowed by the Cincinnati Bar Foundation. More than 350 students from approximately 22 area high schools participate each year. As chair of the Young Lawyer Section's Mock Trial Committee, I encourage each of you to take this opportunity to be involved and support local students interested in the practice of law.

This year, the district competition will take place on Friday, January 29, 2027, with rounds in the morning and afternoon. The regional competition will follow on Friday, February 19, 2027, with rounds in the morning and afternoon also. If you are interested in volunteering as a judge, please contact Ethan Barnes at the Cincinnati Bar Association at ebarnes@cincybar.org.

For more information on the 2027 case, please visit the Ohio Center for Law Related Education's website at oclre.org/aws/OCLRE/pt/sp/hsmt. If you have enjoyed judging in the past or wish to become even more engaged with a high school mock trial team, consider becoming a legal advisor. Please contact the Ohio Center for Law Related Education at 614-485-3507 for more information.

We hope you will join us!

– Jacob Harrod (Legal Counsel, *Fifth Third Bank*)

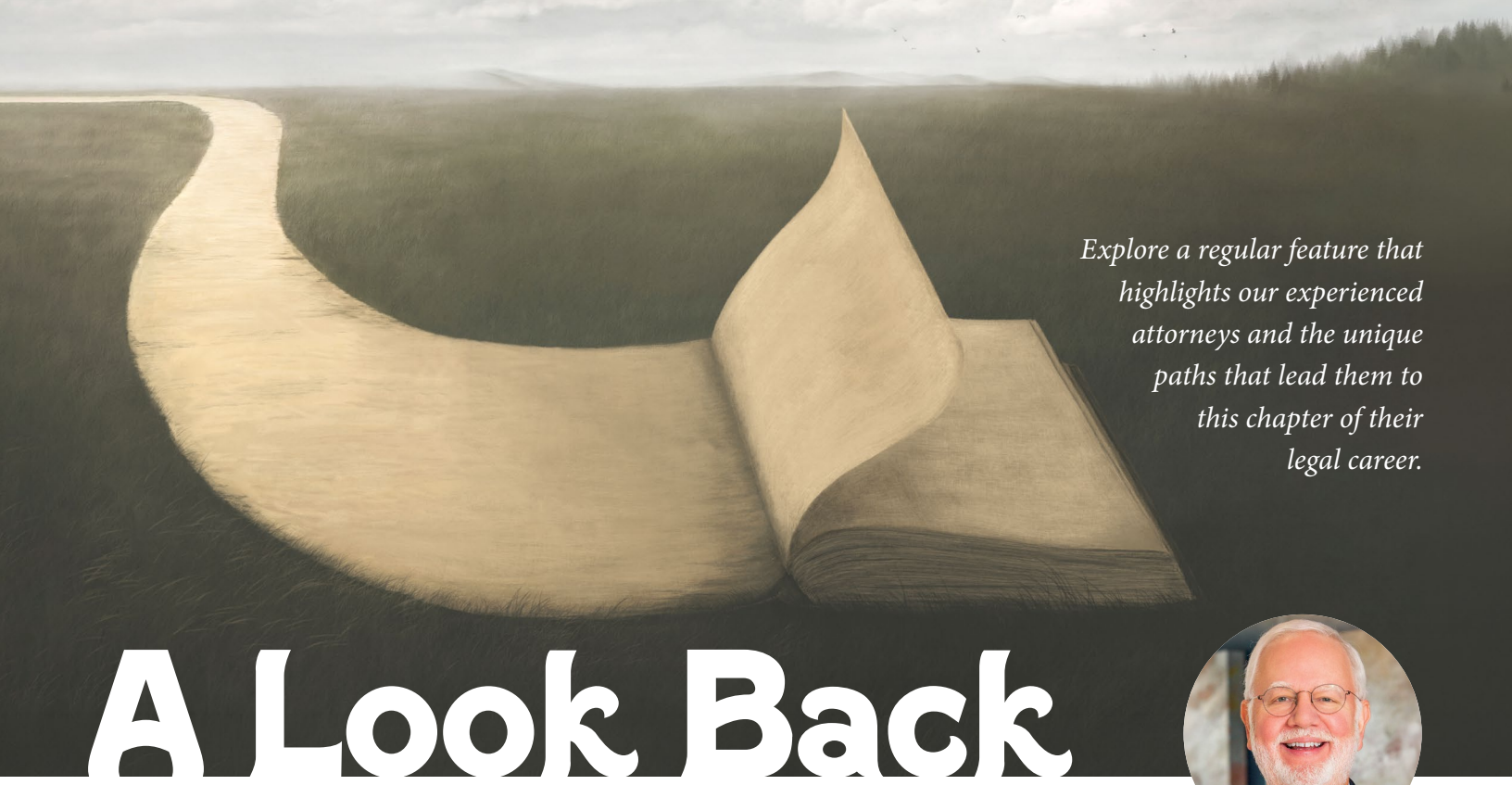
The numbers don't add up without YOU!

350	22	60
high school students	local high schools	attorney and student judges

District competition
January 29, 2027

Regional competition
February 19, 2027

If you are interested in volunteering as a judge, please contact Ethan Barnes at the Cincinnati Bar Association at **ebarnes@cincybar.org**.



Explore a regular feature that highlights our experienced attorneys and the unique paths that lead them to this chapter of their legal career.

A Look Back

With J. Michael Debbeler

I always wanted to be a lawyer. My father graduated from the YMCA Night Law School in 1942. Growing up, two good friends had fathers who were lawyers. I married a law school classmate (Lisa, my wife, is now a psychoanalyst!).

I graduated from U.C. Law School in 1980. I taught skills courses there to first-year law students for a year. After teaching, I worked for a small firm and then joined Graydon Head & Ritchey in 1998 (now Bricker Graydon Wyatt LLP), retiring in September 2025. I mainly practiced in litigation, bankruptcy, and real estate. I spent a lot of time doing case law updates at seminars in each of the latter two fields, itself a form of teaching, which I really enjoyed.

What Has Changed

Experienced lawyers often talk about the early use of an IBM Selectric as a word processor, their first fax machine, their first computer and life before cell phones. I recall the early travel to hearings in Lexington, Dayton, Columbus, etc. for hearings in bankruptcy court, undisturbed by using a cell phone. I would listen to the radio or music on the trip and enjoyed the break from "doing work." I would call back to the office for my messages, and use a pay phone, to return calls.

As the use of technology has changed, the increased speed of the practice of law has been apparent. Electronic filing (adopted early in federal court) meant filings could occur at any time of the day or night. Seemingly constant communications by email insured it was difficult to set a boundary between work life and personal time. Then clients started texting.

The "speeding up" of the practice of law changed me and the lawyers around me. A sense of urgency now blanketed everything clients asked of us. The time for being immersed in family life, friendships, outside reading, moments of reflection, and even fitness became much harder to obtain.

The pandemic also taught us to be "remote." The satisfaction of working with people in person was lost while the speed and efficiency of virtual practice was gained.

I was involved in a recent contentious Chapter 11 bankruptcy in Brooklyn, which lasted 15 months, regarding a Cincinnati hotel. The case was conducted entirely by Zoom. I never appeared in the Brooklyn courtroom. I would never have met the judge in person had I not met her at a bankruptcy conference, mid-case. I had a great discussion with her. The practice of law needs human interaction along with Zoom's efficiency.

What Has Never Changed (and I Hope Does Not)

Local bankruptcy lawyers have a saying: We can disagree but not be disagreeable. Except on exceedingly rare occasions, I have had a wonderful, collegial relationship with the lawyers I practiced with, and against, throughout the region. It may be the nature of our practice, adversarial but "litigation lite," or that some lawyers may represent a debtor one day and a creditor the next. It could be the relative speed at which negotiations occur and matters are concluded.

I also have an appreciation for the men and women of the bankruptcy bench before whom I have appeared. I was always treated with courtesy and respect by them in the courtroom. My discussions outside of the courtroom with them were friendly and professional. Their hard work, and friendship, made my bankruptcy practice very rewarding.

What I hope does not change is the opportunity for genuine, meaningful relationships with other lawyers and judges.

J. Michael Debbeler is a retired partner with Bricker Graydon Wyatt LLP and the owner of Debbeler Law LLC.

CHAT WITH THE CHAIR

Daniel A. Perry

CHAIR | BUSINESS/CORPORATE LAW



What did you want to be when you grew up?

It depended on the week. Some weeks it was a professional basketball player, a rock musician, or Purdue football coach, and some weeks it was something completely different. Funny enough, a lot of those childhood ambitions never left. These days I coach youth basketball, still play guitar, and as you can see, routinely go to Purdue football games. I didn't end up on stage, on a basketball court, or even on the sideline at Purdue football games, but I've learned you don't have to choose just one version of yourself. Being an attorney turned out to be the job that lets me keep all the others.

What made you want to be an attorney?

My inspiration was my father. He grew up in Mooresville, IN, a rural community at the time, and he comes from a long line of people who worked hard for everything they had. He never finished college, but that didn't stop him from building a career as a Certified Financial Planner, which he still pursues in Indianapolis. Growing up, I watched him sit down with families and help them plan for retirement, for their kids' futures, and for the businesses they had spent their lives building. He took that trust seriously, and he showed me that helping people protect what they've worked for is honorable work. Along the way, I noticed how often those conversations also needed a lawyer: a will had to be written, a business needed the right structure, a plan that had to hold up when it mattered most. That's when I knew what I wanted to do. In many ways, my practice today is the legal side of the work my dad has done my whole life. What kept me in it is the variety of problems you get to solve. Over the past 15 years, my practice has covered corporate and securities work, tax, trusts and estates, Medicaid planning, and litigation across Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana, and Tennessee. The common thread is that clients come to you at the most important moments for their families and their businesses. A founder is raising capital. An owner is planning a succession. A family is trying to protect what they've built. Being trusted with those moments is what drew me to the profession, and it's still what I love about it.

Tell us about an important lesson you've learned during your law career.

The best lawyering happens before there's a problem. Early in my career I handled a lot of disputes, and many of them traced back to a shareholder agreement that was never signed, a succession plan that was never written down, or an estate plan that didn't account for the family business. Litigation taught me where documents fail. That has made me a far better planner because I draft everything now with the question, "How would this look in a courtroom?" in my mind. The other lesson is to never stop learning. I am constantly looking at taking additional CLEs, reading on my area of law, and always doing more than the state bar requirements for continuing legal education.

What are your goals this year as Chair?

I have three priorities for the group this year. First, I want our programming to address what our clients are actually facing. Currently, one of the biggest issues in my practice, and in our region, is ownership transition. Many closely held businesses in the area were built by owners who are approaching retirement, and the transfer of those businesses will be one of the largest in history. I'd like to offer practical sessions on succession planning, buy-sell agreements, and sell-side M&A for the lower middle market. Second, I want us to lead on technology. AI is changing how corporate work is completed, from due diligence to drafting, and lawyers need practical guidance on using it responsibly and effectively. Third, I want to build bridges. Corporate clients rely on teams that include their attorneys, CPAs, financial advisors, and bankers. I'd like to create opportunities for our members to connect with those professionals, and with each other across firm sizes and across the river. Our corporate bar is strongest when solo and small-firm practitioners, in-house counsel, and large firm lawyers are all in the room together. That's especially true for newer attorneys looking to build their networks.

Dan Perry is an attorney at Wood + Lamping LLP

Cincinnati Bar ASSOCIATION | Cincinnati Bar FOUNDATION

2026 Senior Counselors' Celebration



Standing L to R: Brett Goodson, George Wilkinson, Ray Faller, Michael Hirschfeld, Alfred Nippert Jr., Greg Young, James Sullivan, Robert Armand Perez Sr., Charles Meyer, Lawrence Barbiere, Timothy Hurley. Seated L to R: Todd Bailey, Jim Lawrence, Jan Frankel, Nancy Gill, Norton Roberts, Candi Taggert, Gary Goldman, James Brun, Edward Collins. Not pictured: Gary Moore Eby, Edward McTigue, Lou Solomine.

We had a wonderful afternoon at our 2026 Senior Counselors' Celebration, honoring the dedication and contributions of those who have made a lasting impact on the legal profession. It was a pleasure to hear from our honorees and celebrate this year's award recipients. Thank you to everyone who attended and helped make the event so memorable!



LAIL Award recipients, Ray Faller and Jim Lawrence



Chuck Meyer, Leila Case, and Evan Meyer



Lou Solomine



Derek Freitas, Barry Visconte, Chris Kahn



John Cobey, Jan Frankel, Ray Faller



Pam Popp, Kathy Brinkman, Doloris Learmonth



George Jonson and Linda Woeber



Sandie Blessing and James Sullivan



Candi Taggert



Sherry and Brett Goodson



Gary Moore Eby and Cornelia Matzkofz



Edward Collins



George Wilkinson, Greg Harrison, Brian Perry, Joan Verchot, Wilkinson, Chris Benintendi



Lawrence Barbiere and family

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Memorial & Honor Gifts

The Cincinnati Bar Foundation gratefully acknowledges the following gifts:

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In Honor of

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J. David Rosenberg

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John & Lynelle Czarnecki

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Paul Muething

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Thanks to those joining the Annual Advocates Circle

PLATINUM
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GOLD
W. Andrew Patton
Charles Meyer

SILVER
J. Michael Laumann
William Clements
Adam Hall
Paul Muething
Peter Ney
Kathleen Brinkman
Barbara Watts

Holiday Giving Basket

Nov. 3 – Dec. 9

Each November, the Greater Cincinnati legal community unites with local organizations to spread holiday joy to children in need.

Help us continue the tradition by dropping off or shipping a new, unwrapped gift from the list by December 9.





How it Works

1. SELECT a wish list e-tag from holidaygivingbasket.com
2. PURCHASE a $30-$40 gift
3. SHIP or DROP it by Dec 9

Benefitting
Boys & Girls Club
ProKids
Hope Ignites
Toys for Tots

Nominating Committee Solicits Recommendations for the CBA Board of Trustees

The Cincinnati Bar Association's Nominating Committee is soliciting recommendations for nominees for election to certain officer and trustee positions to commence at the 2027 Annual Meeting. The committee requests nominations for the following positions:



Vice President: Automatically succeeds to president-elect and then to president. Must have been a trustee, secretary or treasurer within the five-year period immediately prior to the election.

Secretary: One-year term, limit of one term. Incumbent is ineligible for re-election.

Treasurer: One-year term, limit of three consecutive terms. Incumbent is ineligible for re-election.

Trustee: General. Two-year term, limit of two consecutive terms. Four positions open with three incumbents eligible for re-election.

Trustee: Corporate. Two-year term, limit of two consecutive terms. Incumbent is ineligible for re-election.

Trustee: Under 12 years of practice. Two-year term, limit of two consecutive terms. Incumbent is eligible for re-election.

Please complete the nomination form found in the "Nominating Committee" section at **cincybar.org**. Send questions and/or nominations to **nominations@cincybar.org**. All nominations must be received no later than January 8, 2027.

CBA Award Nominations

Do you know someone deserving of recognition in the legal community? Check out the descriptions below and submit your nominations on our website at **cincybar.org/awards** by January 31, 2027.



THEMIS AWARD
The highest honor bestowed by the CBA for extraordinary service to law and the community.

JOHN W. WARRINGTON COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD
This award recognizes a CBA attorney member or members who have performed extraordinary volunteer service in the community. The recipient is selected by the Community Service Board Committee of the CBA in honor of attorney John W. Warrington.

JOHN P. KIELY PROFESSIONALISM AWARD
This award recognizes a trial lawyer for possessing outstanding trial skills and demonstrating the highest degree of professionalism, civility, and ethical standards in his or her daily practice. The award is presented each year by the Professionalism Committee of the CBA in honor of attorney John P. Kiely.

TRUSTEES AWARD
Since 1989, this award is given to a CBA attorney member for outstanding service to the CBA, the legal profession, and the community. The recipient must display a high level of commitment, dedication, or courage.



Basic Estate Planning & Probate Institute

November 19, 2026
1:00 p.m. – 5:15 p.m.

4.0 hours of New Lawyer Training
CLE credit, including 1.0 hour of Professionalism credit (pending)

Cincinnati Bar Association
225 E. Sixth Street | Cincinnati, OH 45202

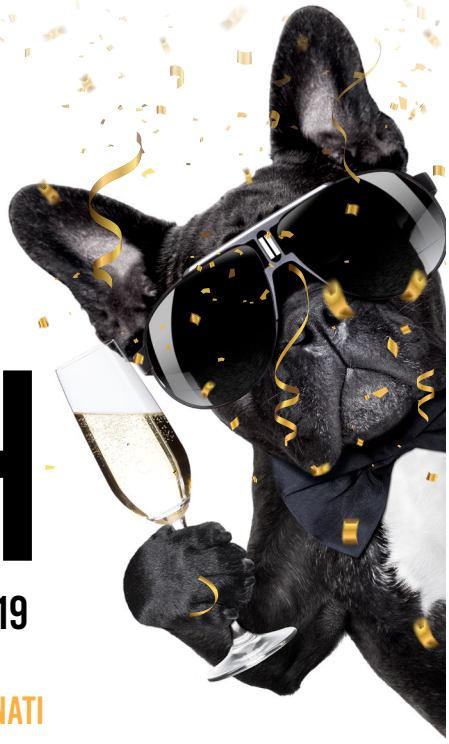
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Cincinnati Bar
YOUNG LAWYERS SECTION

BAR BASH

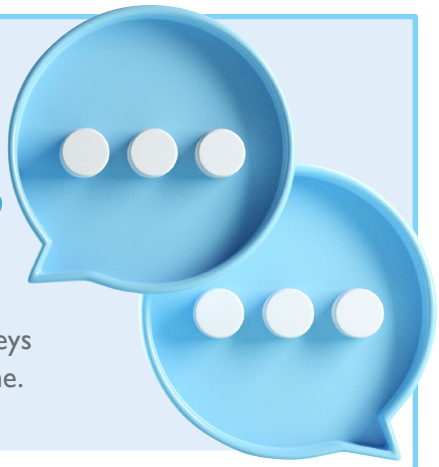


THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 19
5:30 - 7:30 P.M.
IGBY'S, 122 E 6TH ST, CINCINNATI

RAISE YOUR GLASS TO CELEBRATE OUR NEWLY ADMITTED ATTORNEYS!

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ETHICAL QUANDARY?



The CBA is proud to offer ethical guidance to Greater Cincinnati attorneys through our Ethics Committee's hotline.

November

Gregory S. French	513-641-4692
Leah Darpel	513-655-3500

December

Aaron VanderLaan	859-292-7656
Jacob Purcell	513-461-3445

The members of the CBA Ethics & Professional Responsibility Committee listed above are available to help you interpret your obligations under the Ohio Rules of Professional Conduct. Questions posed should be framed hypothetically and should relate to your own prospective conduct. The committee also accepts requests for written opinions.

SAVE THE DATE

November 17th
Corporate Governance Refresher: Board Duties, Conflicts, and Documentation Best Practices
12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.
Live Interactive Webinar

December 1st
Immigration Law Update
9:00 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.
Live Interactive Webinar

December 3rd
67th Annual Southwest Ohio Tax Institute
Morning
In-person at CBA

December 4th
Real Property Law Institute — Session 1
9:00 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.
Live Interactive Webinar

December 9th
Bankruptcy Law Institute
9:00 a.m. – 4:15 p.m.
In-person at CBA

December 10th
Workers' Compensation Law Update
9:00 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.
Hybrid (in-person at CBA or Live Interactive Webinar)

December 11th
Real Property Law Institute — Session 2
9:00 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.
Live Interactive Webinar

December 17th
Labor & Employment Law Review: Notable Case Decisions
12:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.
In-person at CBA



Grace Royalty



Karen L. Litkovitz

Grace Royalty Named U.S. Magistrate Judge

Chief Justice Sarah D. Morrison announced **GRACE ROYALTY** will serve as United States Magistrate Judge for the United States District Court for the Southern District of Ohio. Royalty is filling the vacancy being created by the retirement of United States Magistrate Judge **KAREN L. LITKOVITZ** in October, who will continue to serve the Court on recall status.

KMK Law® Elects Three New Partners: Kourtney P. Brueckner, Nicole E. Cloyd, and Carey K. Steffen







KOURTNEY BRUECKNER focuses her legal practice on family law, addressing issues such as divorce, child custody, and antenuptial agreements. Brueckner is trained and takes cases in collaborative law, a process that assists participants through a process to find personalized solutions in a non-litigation setting. Brueckner earned her J.D. from Ohio Northern University Pettit College of Law in 2016.

NICOLE CLOYD focuses her legal practice on business transactions, data privacy and cybersecurity, and intellectual property and technology. Cloyd is a Certified Information Privacy Professional/United States, Certified Information Privacy Manager, and Certified Information Privacy Technologist through the International Association of Privacy Professionals. Cloyd earned her LL.M. in Intellectual Property from Texas A&M University School of Law in 2021 and her J.D. from the University of Kentucky J. David Rosenberg College of Law in 2019.

CAREY STEFFEN focuses her legal practice on residential and commercial real estate law, with more than 25 years of experience in title insurance claims defense, litigation, and foreclosure law. Steffen is certified as a specialist in Real Property - Residential Law by the Ohio State Bar Association and is a licensed title insurance agent and authorized agent for Riverbend Commercial Title Services, a KMK Law subsidiary. Steffen earned her J.D. from Salmon P. Chase College of Law at Northern Kentucky University in 1999.



Share firm news with us at **communications@cincybar.org**





Lawrence & Associates Names Two New Partners

KATIE JAGGERS and **ALLI COOPER** have recently been named partners at Lawrence & Associates. Jaggers has been with the firm for five years and is head of the Litigation department. She received her J.D. from NKU Chase College of Law. Cooper is head of the Social Security department and has been with the firm for four years. She received her J.D. from NKU Chase College of Law. They've both played important roles in serving their clients and growing their respective practice areas.

KMK Law® Welcomes Associate



KMK added **COLETTE M. HUE** to the firm as an associate in its Business Representation & Transactions Group. Hue will advise public and private companies in all aspects of general corporate and business law matters including mergers and acquisitions. Hue earned her J.D. from Salmon P. Chase College of Law, Northern Kentucky University, summa cum laude, where she served as an editor for the Northern Kentucky Law Review. She earned her B.B.A. in Finance & Marketing from the University of Cincinnati, magna cum laude. Hue is admitted to practice law in Ohio.



L to R: Alison De Villiers, Austin LiPuma, Taylor Dreigon

New Boutique Law Firm Opens

De Villiers LiPuma LLC prides itself on its experienced, community-focused approach to personal injury cases by providing personalized legal support to guide clients through recovery and secure the justice they deserve. We look forward to serving the Cincinnati community.



Pro Seniors Honors Eric D. Bender with Inaugural Justice Award

PRO SENIORS is proud to announce the creation of the Thomas G. Bedall, Esq. Justice Bridge Champion Award, a new annual recognition honoring a private attorney from the Pro Seniors Helpline Referral Panel whose exceptional commitment to pro bono and reduced-fee legal services helps expand access to justice for low-income older adults.

The award is named in honor of Thomas G. Bedall, whose more than three decades of service have left an indelible mark on Pro Seniors and the older adults it serves.

Pro Seniors is honored to announce Eric D. Bender, as the inaugural recipient of the Justice Bridge Champion Award. Since joining the Pro Seniors Helpline Referral Panel in 2006, Bender has accepted 240 pro bono and reduced-fee referrals, averaging twelve cases annually while maintaining a busy private practice. His willingness to serve clients who might otherwise be unable to afford legal representation exemplifies the spirit of the award and Pro Seniors' mission of bridging the justice gap for adults.

Welcome

The CBA Board of Trustees has approved the following for membership:

Margaret Adele Janszen
The Janszen Law Firm

Alicia MacRae
Hochscheid Law LLC

Alexander T. Jones
Schroeder Maundrell Barbiere & Powers

Ryan K. Moore
Taft Stettinius & Hollister LLP

Emily Gamber
Hamilton County Juvenile Court

Anne G. Rodrigo

Maggie Christine Ohmer
Stagnaro Hannigan & Koop Co. LPA

Bruce I. Petrie
Bricker Graydon Wyatt LLP

Eden Elizabeth Thompson
United States Secret Service

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Lisa Michelle Mertz
Hope Harbor Legal, LLC

Melissa Rae Ellison
Marshall Dennehey

Micah Evan Kamrass
Manley Burke LPA

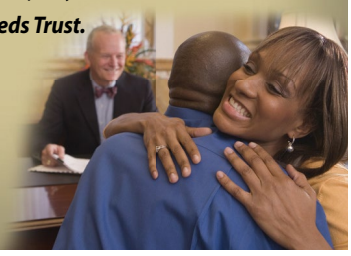
John E. Christopher
Manley Burke LPA

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The Disability Foundation offers an alternative to disinheritance through three pooled trusts available only to disabled residents of Ohio. These trusts allow individuals with disabilities to buy the things they want and need, without worrying that their purchases might cause them to lose their government benefits. We offer both first and third-party trusts.

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THE DISABILITY FOUNDATION
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The CBA Lawyer Referral Service Needs Panelists

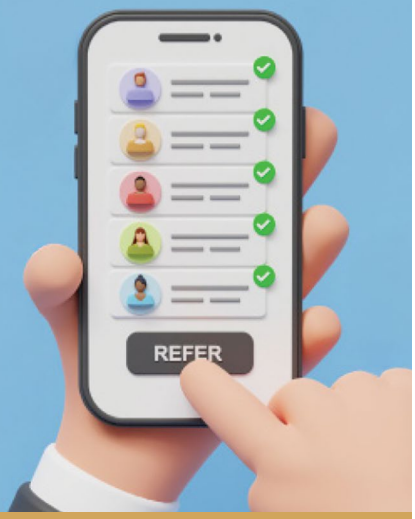
Real Estate

Negligence/ Tort Law

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Intellectual Property

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This service generates an average of $10,000 annually to panelists.



Pierce E. Cunningham

1934-2026

Pierce E. Cunningham died August 15, 2026, just three days before his 92nd birthday.

Pierce was a larger-than-life figure, one of the premier old-time trial attorneys in Cincinnati. He began trying cases in 1960 and engaged in litigation and dispute resolution for his entire career. After graduating from St. Xavier High School, College of the Holy Cross, and Georgetown University Law School, Pierce started with Hartford Insurance and as an assistant Ohio attorney general. He formed a law firm with his brother, Frank, which merged into Clark & Eyrich (later Kepley McConnell & Eyrich). He developed a reputation as a standout trial lawyer, having received the largest verdict in a plaintiff's case in Cincinnati at about the same time he obtained a defense verdict in one of the most significant local civil cases. He became heavily involved in both the City of Cincinnati and Hamilton County zoning commissions.

His reputation drew the attention of Frost & Jacobs (now FBT Gibbons), He joined Frost as a partner who headed the firm's litigation department and remained there for 15 years. In his early 60s, he joined Baker and Hostetler as Of Counsel. Then, in his 70s, he joined DBL Law as Of Counsel. As he put it, "I've worn the uniforms of a number of teams."

A member of the American College of Trial Lawyers, he tried over 100 jury cases, across multiple fields, such as zoning and land use, contracts, personal injury, antitrust, fraud, environmental, professional malpractice, and government official law. He represented several attorneys and government officials. As one of them said, "Pierce, people see you enter the room and they immediately want you to be their lawyer."

Pierce was not a technician; he disdained what he called "box checkers." Instead, he was a superior strategist, a simplifier who contended that in any major dispute, only a relatively small number of documents held the key. He had a deft way of cross-examining witnesses, where he drew the factfinder's attention to the witness's own inability to hold up, and not to the lawyer appearing to browbeat the witness.

A big sports fan, Pierce loved baseball, tennis, and boxing. His enthusiasm for baseball led him to become a contender for commissioner of Major League Baseball.

When not serious in a legal proceeding, Pierce was often hilariously funny. Humorous observations about life simply rolled out of him, no matter the circumstance.

Pierce is survived by his wife of 68 years Roberta Cunningham; his son, James; his daughters, Ellen and Anna; five grandchildren; and seven great-grandchildren. His older son, Pierce Jr., and his son-in-law, Marc Bohlke, predeceased him.

As was read at Pierce's funeral, "Let not your hearts be troubled." Pierce, we miss you.

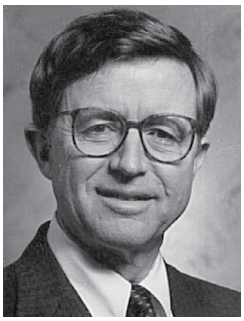
David W. Burleigh

LEGAL AID SOCIETY OF GREATER CINCINNATI

Legal Aid Seeks Board Nominees

The Legal Aid Society (LAS) of Greater Cincinnati is looking for CBA members who might be interested in serving on their Board of Trustees. Legal Aid is a not-for-profit law firm dedicated to reducing poverty and promoting family stability by providing effective legal services in seven counties across southwest Ohio. If interested, please contact LAS Executive Director Mary Asbury (masbury@lascinti.org) for more information.





Lewis Gerrans Gatch

1934-2026

Anyone who had a conversation with Lew Gatch knew within a few minutes that he was an attorney. For Lew, being an attorney was not just the way he made a living. To a significant extent, being a lawyer defined who Lew was as a person, but he always maintained balance in his life. He was a devoted to his wife, Noralee, in a marriage of 69 years. He was an engaged father of his three children, Leah, John, and Elizabeth.

His life was full and useful. He obtained his undergraduate degree from Princeton University, his Juris Doctor from the University of Michigan. He served two years in the U.S. Army as an artillery officer. Lew maintained law practices in both Cincinnati and in Northern Michigan, near Traverse City. His chosen areas of practice were estate planning, planned giving, and probate and trust administration. The work he did fit with his obvious interest in, and skill at, communicating with others. Lew often gave seminars on estate planning and for years he hosted a weekly radio show that often focused on estate planning and other legal issues. His paralegal of many years, Meg Argo, commented that every day at the office was different, and that he was a great boss. She also related that Lew's interest in technology meant that he adopted every new piece of equipment that would made his practice more efficient and better.

As a longtime member of the Literary Club in Cincinnati, Lew presented several papers. Not surprisingly, the last paper had as its topic the trial and conviction of three men from Cincinnati who perpetrated crimes of defrauding older people. In addition to everything else in his life, he found time in his busy life to enjoy many outdoor sports and activities.

The 91 years of his life were filled with family, meaningful work, and just plain joyfulness. He lived a good life.



Thomas Spencer Shore, Jr.

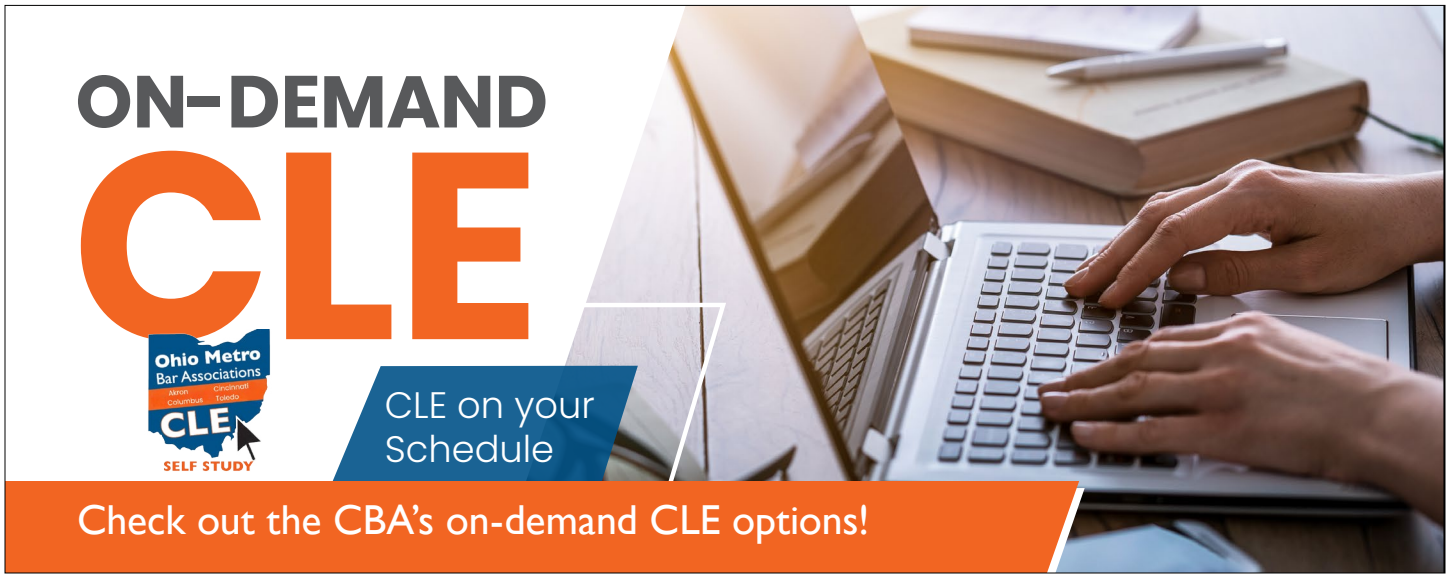
1939-2026

Tom Shore nearly perfectly represented the generation of attorneys who began their careers in the 1960s. It was a time when formality in the way an attorney dressed was a signature of the profession. Wearing anything except a suit and tie to the office was unthinkable. While the world changed in that regard, Tom did not. He also maintained throughout his career, the formality in speech and manners that characterized the generations of lawyers who had preceded him. In contrast to the more formal aspects of his personality, Tom's sly sense of humor seemed to say that he was amused by the world in which he lived.

He was an educated man who attended Phillips Academy in Andover, Massachusetts. Subsequently, he graduated from Brown University in 1961, Northwestern University School of Law in 1964. His career was spent with the Cincinnati firm, Rendigs, Fry, Kiely & Dennis where he distinguished himself as both as an attorney and as a leader. His service to the community through various organizations was extensive. For many years he taught legal ethics to a generation of law students at Salmon P. Chase College of Law. Tom was also a serious athlete. He completed in numerous marathons including the Columbus and Boston Marathons.

He was a family man whose marriage to Peggy spanned 65 years. Tom and Peggy raised four children: Thomas S. Shore III, J. Christopher Shore, Daniel Shore, and Mary Margaret Shore Tornga. He and Peggy enjoyed being the grandparents to nine grandchildren.

His life was a good life by any measure.



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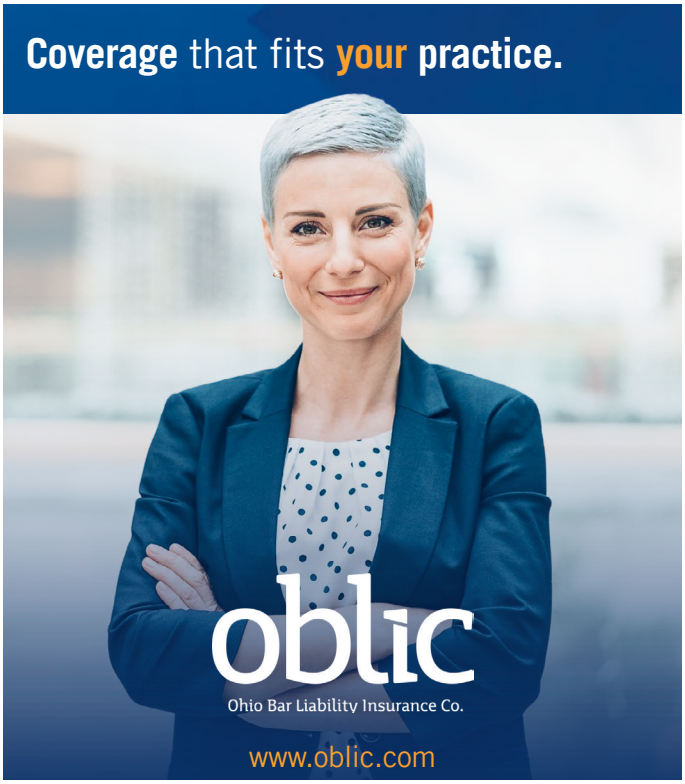


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