

THE PROMULGATOR

The Official Magazine of the Lafayette Bar Association



THE PEOPLE WHO MAKE THE PRACTICE WORK CELEBRATING PARALEGALS *plus* PRO BONO MONTH

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OCTOBER 2026 | VOLUME 39 | ISSUE 5



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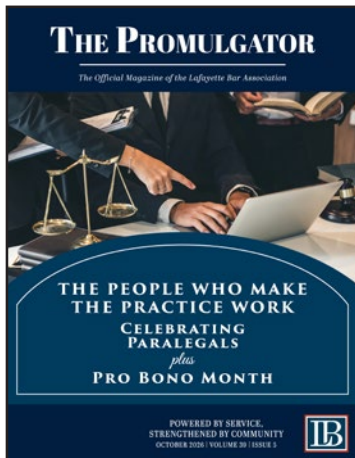
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OUR MISSION is to serve the profession, its members and the community by promoting professional excellence, respect for the rule of law and fellowship among attorneys and the court.

THE PROMULGATOR is the official magazine of the Lafayette Bar Association, and is published six times per year. The opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the views of the Editorial Committee.



ON THE COVER

This October issue of The Promulgator focuses on service from our all-important paralegal professionals as well as pro bono services offered by our strong legal community. The National Celebration of Pro Bono Week of Service takes place from October 25 – 31, recognizing the vital role pro bono attorneys play in enabling civic participation and protecting individual rights.

ARTICLES

President's Message.....	4
Executive Director's Message.....	5
Foundation Chair Update	6
Family Law Section Update	7
Young Lawyers Section Update....	7

FEATURES

Alice Landry Basden	14
Lawyers, Paralegals & Ethics.....	17
The People Who Make the Practice Work	18-19

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UPCOMING EVENTS

15TH JDC JUDICIAL CANDIDATE FORUM

LBA Office,
October 9

CITY COURT JUDICIAL CANDIDATE FORUM

LBA Office,
October 15

CLAY SHOOT TOURNAMENT

Wilderness Gun
Club, October 16

WILLS FOR HEROES

LBA Office,
October 24

15TH JDC DA CANDIDATE FORUM

South Regional
Library, October 21

CHAMPIONS OF JUSTICE AWARDS BREAKFAST

Petroleum Club
of Lafayette,
October 30

LBA BOARD INSTALLATION

Vermilionville,
November 5

LBA CHRISTMAS PARTY

LBA Office,
December 2

CLE BY THE HOUR

December 9, 11, 14,
16, 18, 21, 23, 28, 30

To register for events,
visit lafayettebar.org or
call (337) 237-4700.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As my year as president draws to a close, I find myself less inclined to count the days than to count the people. The success of our Association has never been a function of any one person's efforts, but a product of active membership and staff who make the challenges look easy, and a legal community that still believes professionalism and fellowship are vital to the efficient delivery of justice.

All that makes our community a beacon of success was on full display at the 2026 Bench Bar Conference. The conference was a tremendous success. Our Bench Bar Committee—Judge Roya Boustany, Judge Cynthia Spadoni, and Jennifer Ardoin—delivered a more affordable and engaging program that returned the conference to its roots of providing a balanced perspective from the Bench and practitioners. Every panel featured a view from the Bench, and our judiciary answered the call in force.

What made the Conference special, however, was not only who sat on the dais but the conversations that continued throughout the event: the same conversations that travel home with us and make justice more efficient when we return to crowded dockets and stacks of expandos. All attendees saw why this Bar has the reputation it does. If you were there, thank you. If you sent a colleague, thank you twice.

The year began in the spirit of service and celebration with our Holiday Party, followed by our CLE-by-the-Hour program, which featured 72 presentations, 8 hours of ethics, and 10 hours of professionalism. Without missing a beat, we celebrated Red Mass and Court Opening, where we welcomed more than 30 newly admitted attorneys into the fold and honored twelve colleagues who passed during the previous year. The ceremony remains among the most meaningful on our calendar. I am grateful that the tradition has continued.

The spring and summer brought work that does not make headlines yet still defines us. We held Bench Bar Quarterly, organized a successful clothing drive for UL Lafayette's Career Closet, and hosted CLEs providing educational opportunities

on issues facing our members. We also made time for fun this year with our Mardi Gras gathering at the Bar, as well as the Birdie with the Bar golf tournament, which raised crucial funds for our Foundation's pro bono programs.

None of this happens by accident. Immediate Past President Stuart Breau handed us a Bar that had not missed a beat, and his leadership set the standard I tried to keep and build upon. Section chairs, committee members, CLE speakers, sponsors, and the members who simply showed up—at Mass, at a lunch, at a clothing drive, on a golf course, or in Point Clear—are the reason this Association is known as one of the finest in Louisiana, not because of its size but because of its willingness to serve.

Thank you to Jan Swift and her all-star staff—Marilyn, Bailey, Becky, and Melanie—for the long hours that make Bar operations of our scale look seamless. They remain the reason a Board full of lawyers can routinely agree on the decisions that drive our success.

My family was welcomed into this legal community 43 short years ago with open arms. That sense of community is not an heirloom to be admired but a trust to be renewed, year after year, by each of us who are privileged to practice in our Bar.

Thank you for allowing me to serve as your president. I leave the position proud of what we accomplished together and confident that the members who follow will keep this Bar a shining example for others to follow. I look forward to seeing you at upcoming events, no longer at the podium but exactly where I started: among colleagues who still believe this work is worth doing well and worth doing together.



Trey Hightower

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

October gives us an opportunity to recognize two important parts of what makes the legal profession strong: the professionals who work alongside our attorneys every day and our profession's commitment to serving those who otherwise might not have access to legal help.

In this month's *Promulgator*, we are placing a special focus on our paralegal professionals. Their contributions to the practice of law cannot be overstated. Talented paralegals bring knowledge, organization, continuity, and professionalism to law firms and public agencies throughout Acadiana. They manage complicated files, communicate with clients, assist with discovery and trial preparation, keep matters moving forward, and, in many cases, become the institutional knowledge of a law practice.

They also make attorneys better at what they do.

That is why I encourage our law firms to invest in and support their paralegal professionals. Encourage them to participate in continuing education. Support their involvement with the Lafayette Paralegal Association and with their fellow paralegals. Most importantly, recognize that they are professionals whose skills and experience have tremendous value.

A strong legal community is not built by attorneys alone. It is built by everyone who contributes to the delivery of quality legal services.

October is also National Pro Bono Month, making

this an especially appropriate time to reflect on another cornerstone of our profession: service.

For many people in our community, the cost of legal representation can put meaningful access to justice beyond their reach. A relatively small commitment of an attorney's time can have an enormous impact on someone facing a family crisis, housing issue, financial hardship, or other legal problem without the resources to hire counsel.

Our legal community has a long tradition of stepping forward to help; fortunately, many understand that our profession is ultimately about service. I hope National Pro Bono Month will encourage each of us to consider where we can do a little more. One case, one clinic, one consultation, or a few hours of service can make a meaningful difference in another person's life.

This October, let us celebrate those who help our law practices succeed, support their continued professional growth, and recommit ourselves to using our own skills to serve those who need us most.



Jan Swift

The advertisement features a background image of a law library with bookshelves filled with books and a leather chair. On the left, there is a large blue square with a white border containing the letters 'LB' in white. Below this, the text 'MEDIATION CENTER' is written in white. A list of services is provided in white text. In the top right corner, a white banner with red text says 'STARTING AT \$100 PER ROOM'. In the bottom right corner, the 'LB' logo is repeated next to the text 'LAFAYETTE BAR ASSOCIATION & FOUNDATION'.

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ACCESS TO JUSTICE

A report of the Lafayette Bar Foundation,
provided by Foundation Chair Dean Cole



LAFAYETTE BAR
FOUNDATION

This is my final report as chair of the Lafayette Bar Foundation as my two-year term comes to a close. It has been an honor and privilege to lead our Foundation and all of the incredibly generous and dedicated attorneys who provide pro bono legal services to the most needy in our community. It is humbling to observe the willingness of so many to take time out of their busy lives and careers to help others without compensation.

I first want to thank our coordinator of Pro Bono Services, Marilyn Lopez, whose organizational skills, experience, and dedication keep the pro bono machine running smoothly. I've also been privileged to have the advice and support of our Executive Committee members, incoming president Kenny Oliver and secretary/treasurer Kyle Gideon. These leaders will make sure that the Foundation continues to support our community and provide even better programs.

It has also been my pleasure to work with Sachida Raman and his outstanding staff at Acadiana Legal Services Corporation. They are always available to provide advice and support in our pro bono efforts. A prime example of our work together was the initiation of the

Expungement Program for those unable to afford legal counsel. The program, honoring the late Honorable Judge Jules Edwards, is critical for providing a path forward for our community members who have paid their dues but need expungements to move on with their lives.

The Lafayette Bar Foundation will be hosting a Wills for Heroes event on Saturday, October 24, 2026, where local veterans and police officers can have their wills prepared free of charge. We are in need of attorney volunteers, notaries public, and general volunteers to assist as many participants as possible. Also, our Champions of Justice Awards Breakfast is scheduled for October 30 at the Petroleum Club at 7:00 a.m. Justice Cade Cole of the Louisiana Supreme Court will be our keynote speaker, and all are welcome to attend this tribute to those who have gone above and beyond in providing pro bono services. I would also encourage any of you who are interested to speak to Marilyn about the sponsorship opportunities for the Champions of Justice Awards.

Again, it has been my pleasure to serve as chair of the Foundation, and I know there are many, many more great years to come.

THERESA DE BÊCHE & ASSOCIATES

Theresa de Bêche, RN, MN, LNC
Legal Nurse Consultant

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FAMILY LAW SECTION

AN UPDATE FROM PRESIDENT

LOGAN ISTRE

We'd like to thank our speakers, Maggie and Kade Simar, who presented on Legal and Medical Education on Sexually Transmitted Diseases; Brad Felder, who presented on Classifications of Assets in Community Property Partitions; and Dr. David Landry, who presented on Child Custody Evaluations.

We are excited to announce our slate of officers for the upcoming 2026–2027 fiscal year. Our slate includes:

Incoming President: Brittany LaCombe
Incoming Vice President: Jonathan Jarrett
Incoming Treasurer: Maggie Simar
Incoming Secretary: Jennifer Valois
Immediate Past President: Logan Istre
Incoming Members at Large: Rachel Godley, Richard Mere, Wesley Galjour, and Kayla David

We are excited to see our peers stepping into their new positions and to see where our Section is

headed under our new leadership!

Our Section wants to remind practitioners that some important updates in family law officially took effect on August 1, 2026. First, Louisiana Revised Statute 9:355(A)(2)(b) creates a rebuttable presumption that courts should order shared custody unless it is determined that shared custody is not feasible or in the best interest of the minor child. Second, Louisiana Civil Code Article 138 codified the Bergeron standard; if a court renders a considered decree, a heightened standard applies to modifications for a period of five years from the rendition of the judgment.

Finally, we are excited to see that our very own Section member, Hearing Officer Shawn Eller, will be taking the Division “H” seat in the 15th Judicial District Court as one of our two domestic court judges. He will be taking the bench in January 2027, when our very own Judge David Blanchet retires from office.



YOUNG LAWYERS SECTION

AN UPDATE FROM PRESIDENT

J.P. GRAF

If you did not make it to the Bench Bar Conference this year, you missed a good time.

Bench Bar is one of our best opportunities each year to connect in the “real world,” albeit one with a spa, golf course, and room service. Most of the time, we interact in clearly defined roles: opposing counsel, judge, client representative, or advocate. Bench Bar gives us a chance to step outside those roles for a few days and simply spend time together.

This year's attendees included judges of every rank and venue—from the Louisiana Supreme Court to The Crowley Blight Judge. Few conferences can boast that kind of judicial diversity.

One of the highlights was raising a glass to Judge Thomas Duplantier and Judge Douglas J. Saloom as they approach or recently entered retirement. Both have devoted many years of service to the bench, the Bar, and the legal community, and it was fitting to celebrate them among friends and colleagues. We wish them both the very best in retirement.

The official program was great. I also heard reports of a late-night piano party, but sadly, I am unable to verify them independently.

A tremendous amount of work goes into making Bench Bar possible. A very big thank-you to everyone who helped put it together, especially Jen Ardoin, Judge Boustany, Judge Spadoni, Bailey Moyer, Jan Swift, and Marilyn Lopez. We are equally grateful to our sponsors, who are recognized elsewhere in this issue. Please support the people and businesses that support our Bar.

Maybe I am biased, but I just do not think other Bars have it as good as we do. We have a genuinely collegial group of lawyers and judges who can disagree in the courtroom and still enjoy spending time together outside of it. That is worth appreciating.

If you missed it this year, we'll forgive you. See you next year.

YOU ARE INVITED TO
2026 Installation Banquet
of the Lafayette Bar Association & Foundation
Thursday, November 5, 2026

5:30 P.M. - 8:30 P.M.

Vermilionville

300 Fisher Road, Lafayette, LA 70508

Andrew Quackenbos

AS PRESIDENT OF LAFAYETTE BAR ASSOCIATION
AND THE 2026-2027 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Kenny Oliver

AS CHAIR OF THE LAFAYETTE BAR FOUNDATION
AND THE 2026-2028 FOUNDATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Ross Roubion

AS PRESIDENT OF YOUNG LAWYERS SECTION
AND THE 2026-2027 YLS BOARD & COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Brittany LaCombe

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CHAMPIONS OF JUSTICE

2026 Awards Breakfast

P L E A S E J O I N U S



This FREE event is dedicated to recognizing the volunteer attorneys of the Lafayette Bar Foundation Pro Bono Programs. We encourage all attorney members of the Lafayette Bar Association & Foundation to join us in supporting your fellow pro bono attorneys! Louisiana Supreme Court Justice Cade Cole will be the Keynote speaker.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 30, 2026

7:00 AM
Petroleum Club of Lafayette
111 Heymann Blvd
Lafayette, LA 70503

With special thanks to The First National Bank of Jeanerette for generously sponsoring the attendee gifts for this year's Champions of Justice.

Awards proudly sponsored by Oliver & Way.



Scan To Register or RSVP at
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Candidate Forums

HOSTED BY THE LAFAYETTE BAR ASSOCIATION



Kristian Earles
Former 15th JDC Judge

15TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT DISTRICT ATTORNEY

Wednesday, October 21, 2026
6:00–7:30 p.m.
South Regional Library Auditorium
3101 Johnston Street,
Lafayette, LA 70503



Don Landry
District Attorney



Scan to RSVP

15TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT

DIVISION I



Will Keaty,
J.D.



David Way,
J.D.

Friday, October 9, 2026
11:45 a.m.–1:15 p.m.
Lafayette Bar Association
2607 Johnston Street,
Lafayette, LA 70503
Open to Members of LBA



Scan to RSVP

DIVISION M



Dyan Schnaars,
J.D.



Judge
Susan Theall

LAFAYETTE CITY COURT

Thursday, October 15, 2026
11:45 a.m.–1:00 p.m.
Lafayette Bar Association
2607 Johnston Street, Lafayette, LA 70503
Open to Members of LBA



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Ryan Harris



James Klock



Emilia Pardo

Contact events@lafayettebar.org
or 337-446-2194 for more information

These events will be moderated
by Scott Brazda, KATC



Bailey Moyer, our super-talented Events Coordinator, celebrated her birthday on August 25 with her favorite Chantilly cake! We are grateful to have Bailey on our team. Her tireless efforts to ensure that all of our events run flawlessly are truly appreciated!



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Going Above and Beyond in Lafayette.

Jones Walker LLP is pleased to welcome two new partners, **Tommy Smart** and **Steve Lanza**, and three new special counsel, **David Fink**, **Mark Oliver**, and **Doug Truxillo**, in the Lafayette office.



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David M. Fink



Mark B. Oliver



Douglas W. Truxillo

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PRO BONO WEEK EVENTS

WILLS FOR HEROES

Saturday, October 24th
9:00 AM-11:30 AM
at the LBA office

Scan to Volunteer!



VOLUNTEER AT ST. JOSEPH DINER

Mondy, October 26th
11:30 AM-1:00 PM to serve lunch



FREE LUNCH AND LEARN CLE

Tuesday, October 27th
12:00-1:00 PM
at the LBA office
(more information to come)



COUNSEL ON CALL

Thursday, October 29th
LBA office
9:00-11:00 AM



GEAUX CASUAL FOR PRO BONO CONTEST

Oct. 25 - 30
lafayettebar.org/donate



CHAMPIONS OF JUSTICE

Friday, October 30th
7:00 AM-9:00 AM
The Petroleum Club



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THE GRAPEVINE

Chambers USA recognized **Gordon Arata** attorneys **Stephen P. Beiser, Magdalen B. Bickford, Michael E. Botnick, Bob J. Duplantis, Ewell "Tim" E. Eagan, C. Peck Hayne Jr., Terrence K. Knister, Armistead M. Long, Anthony Marino, Cynthia A. Nicholson, Scott A. O'Connor, Doug Rhorer, and Marion W. Weinstock** in its 2026 Louisiana legal guide. Chambers ranked four of the firm's practice areas: Bankruptcy/Restructuring, Energy & Natural Resources: Oil & Gas, Litigation: General Commercial, and Real Estate.



Oak Grove Estate Planning is excited to welcome **Anne Elise Doise** to the firm. Anne Elise will focus her practice on estate planning and successions, helping individuals and families plan for the future and navigate the estate administration process.

Her updated contact information is:

anneelise@oakgroveestateplanning.com, 337-443-0700

Oak Grove Estate Planning, 324 Settlers Trace Blvd., Lafayette, LA 70508

Jones Walker LLP is pleased to welcome two new partners, **Tommy Smart and Steve Lanza**, and three new special counsel, **David Fink, Mark Oliver, and Doug Truxillo**, in the Lafayette office. Tommy, Steve, and Mark join the Corporate Practice Group, David joins the Litigation Practice Group, and Doug joins the Maritime Practice Group.

All five attorneys join Jones Walker from Onebane, a boutique law firm that has served South Louisiana since 1977, and bring established practices and long-standing relationships developed through decades of serving clients across Acadiana.



Do you have a new member at your firm, a new addition to your family, or just any life updates that you'd like to share?

Submit it for The Grapevine and you'll be featured in our next *Promulgator*!

Email your submission to marketing@lafayettebar.org.



A LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

As summer gives way to fall, there is always a sense of settling back into familiar rhythms. Calendars fill up, routines return, and—at least in theory—the pace becomes a little more predictable.

This issue of *The Promulgator* focuses on a group of professionals who help keep those rhythms going all year long: paralegals. Their work is often behind the scenes, but their impact on a law practice is anything but small. Great paralegals keep cases moving, clients informed, deadlines on track, and lawyers organized—sometimes despite our

best efforts.

In this issue, we celebrate the paralegals who are such an important part of our legal community, while also looking at the lawyer's responsibility to supervise, support, and invest in the professionals with whom we work.

As we head into a new season, it seems like a fitting time to recognize the people who help keep our practices—and our profession—moving forward.

Happy fall, and I hope you enjoy this issue.

Warm regards,
Clare Roubion

clareroubion@roubionlawfirm.com
337-258-0101

Editor, The Promulgator



Alice Landry Basden:

Law, Family and an Unexpected Calling

As a little girl in New Iberia, walking to school under the moss-laden oak trees on the banks of Bayou Teche, Alice Landry Basden had big dreams. She wanted to be in the thick of things—immersed in the mechanics of government, reporting on politics, analyzing constitutional issues, informing others of legislative and executive decisions. In short, Alice wanted to be a legal affairs journalist. At first, her path seemed straightforward and her goals attainable. But then, life happens, as they say, and Alice found herself back in South Louisiana in a career perfectly suited to her newfound interests and her family's needs.

The tenth of eleven children, Alice graduated from Mt. Carmel and enrolled at Tulane University, her father's alma mater, where many of her siblings and other relatives also earned their degrees. She double-majored in English and political science. Although she did not intend to practice law, she planned to continue her studies at Tulane Law School. After all, she was surrounded by lawyers: her father, "Smitty" Landry, had his office just down Main Street from their family home, and five of her siblings had already become lawyers. So in 1989, Alice became the sixth.



Alice spent years laying the groundwork for her chosen career path of legal affairs journalism. She went to Washington, D.C., for an internship with *The MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour*, where she worked closely with Jim Lehrer. He asked her to accompany him on an interview with Justice



Lewis Powell. Alice recalled her excitement as they climbed down the steps to a bunker in the basement of the Supreme Court building, where the interview was to take place. A few years later, then-retired Justice Powell was the commencement speaker at Alice's graduation from Tulane Law School, and she was able to speak with him once again.

***“Something was missing
in her life and she felt a call
to come home.”***

Alice returned to Washington, D.C., after graduation to work for C-SPAN, the cable news network covering Congress. The responsibilities of the job were a perfect combination of her government and journalism interests. She had a variety of responsibilities and relished the political atmosphere. But something was missing in her life, and she felt a call to come home.

Alice moved to Baton Rouge in 1995 and began working for House Legislative Services. Her job was to prepare drafts of legislation at the request of House members; she was specifically assigned to health and welfare matters. In her five years with House Legislative Services, Alice married

Tim Basden, moved to Breaux Bridge, and had the first of their four children. In 2001, it was time for a reset. Tired of the commute to Baton Rouge, Alice resigned and decided to catch her breath until the next opportunity came along.

She didn't have to wait long. Although pregnant at the time of her interview, Alice was hired as the Louisiana Department of Health regional attorney for the Lafayette Region. Her job is primarily to facilitate the Health Department's services through the court system.

Alice is an integral part of the Office of Aging and Adult Services, which provides a method for reporting allegations of abuse or neglect of disabled adults between the ages of 18 and 59. (Elderly Protective Services administers similar programs for older individuals.) Alice's office works to investigate, substantiate, and resolve such allegations, which may or may not result in the protected adult being removed from the home and placed in a more secure facility. The result may be the implementation of in-home services, community services, or supportive housing. Her office works in tandem with agency specialists to separate the vulnerable adult from an abuser.

When Alice started working for the Department of Health, she knew very little about the long-term care services available to families in Louisiana. She quickly learned about the varied resources available to persons with intellectual and developmental needs. Little did she know

how valuable and personal that information would be. Within a year, she gave birth to her second child. He has special needs, uses a wheelchair for mobility, and communicates through assistive technology devices. Suddenly, Alice became aware of the vital nature of the Department's offerings. Alice's segue into health and welfare law wasn't just a career change. It has become a mission to ensure that disabled adults in Louisiana get the services they need and that vulnerable adults are protected from abuse, neglect, and exploitation. Moreover, the Department of Health has turned out to be a wonderful environment in which to balance legal work with family life.

Coming from a big and boisterous family of lawyers (and nonlawyers), Alice and Tim live life to the fullest. Alice follows Green Wave sports, especially when Tulane plays UL at Cajun Field. They enjoy PASA performances and local arts events. A few years

ago, they traveled with family and friends to Culver City, California, for the taping of *Jeopardy!* The Basdens' oldest child, Alix, was chosen to be a contestant. On an



unexcused absence from the University of Notre Dame, Alix, now a third-year law student at Duke, won second place. It was the experience of a lifetime for the entire family.

Alice balances her demanding practice with a vibrant personal life that fuels her professional drive. She embraces each challenge with optimism and faith. She seems to genuinely love the dynamic nature of her work and the fulfilling life she has built around it, bringing a joyful, well-rounded energy to everything she does.



Written by:

Brenda Piccione, Partner
Piccione & Piccione
brenda@piccionelaw.com

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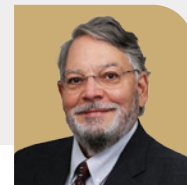
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Lawyers, Paralegals & Ethics: Who Is Responsible for What?

By Clare S. Roubion

Ask a good paralegal who really knows a file, and you may get a better answer than if you ask the lawyer.

That is not an ethics problem. It is often the sign of a good law practice.

Paralegals perform substantive legal work every day—communicating with clients, investigating facts, drafting documents, organizing discovery, preparing for trial, and, quite often, knowing exactly what is going on when the lawyer asks, “Where are we on that?”

The ethics rules do not tell lawyers not to delegate. They require lawyers to supervise the work they delegate and remain responsible for the representation. The line between good delegation and too much delegation is usually pretty easy to see. But not always.

Consider three examples.

The client asks, “What do you think my case is worth?”

The lawyer is unavailable. The client knows the paralegal has handled hundreds of similar cases and asks whether \$50,000 is a good settlement.

The paralegal thinks it is and says so.

That one is easy. The paralegal can gather information from the client, provide updates, explain procedures, and relay the lawyer’s advice. But independently evaluating a settlement offer or advising the client whether to accept it crosses into the lawyer’s professional judgment.

The fact that the paralegal may know exactly what the lawyer is going to say does not change who has to say it.

Opposing counsel asks for an extension, and the paralegal says yes.

This one depends.

If the lawyer has told the paralegal that routine scheduling requests can be handled without checking each time, that is very different from the

paralegal independently deciding how to handle substantive issues because “I know what she would do.”

Good supervision does not require a lawyer to personally approve every email that leaves the office. It does require everyone to know which decisions have been delegated and which ones still require the lawyer.

The paralegal drafts the motion.

Not only is this okay, but this is one of the reasons to have a good paralegal.

A paralegal can research the issue, prepare the first draft, organize the exhibits, and point out the fact the lawyer somehow missed after reading

the file three times.

The lawyer reviews the work, exercises professional judgment about the final product, and takes responsibility for it. That is delegation working exactly as it should.

And that last example is important. Rule 5.3 should not be read as an instruction to keep talented paralegals confined to administrative work.

Good supervision

should allow capable paralegals to do more meaningful work, not less.

That requires some investment by lawyers, too. Send paralegals to CLEs. Include them in strategy meetings. Teach them the ethical rules that affect their work. Give them opportunities to develop expertise. Continuing education and professional development make paralegals better at their jobs—and make the lawyers they work with better at theirs.

The best lawyer-paralegal relationships are not built on the lawyer checking every email or hovering over every assignment. They are built on clear expectations, good training, communication, and trust.

A lawyer can delegate an awful lot. The lawyer just cannot delegate being the lawyer.



THE PEOPLE WHO MAKE THE PRACTICE WORK



Lawyers tend to talk a lot about lawyers.

We talk about good lawyers, bad lawyers, young lawyers, experienced lawyers, judges, clients, opposing counsel, and almost every other participant in the legal system. But there is a group whose work is often far less visible, even though many law practices could not function without them: paralegals.

Ask an experienced paralegal what lawyers misunderstand about the job, and a theme emerges quickly. It is not simply that paralegals do more than lawyers realize. Some of their most valuable work is the work lawyers never have to think about—because someone else already did.



Heather R. Vice, J.D., a paralegal at Liskow & Lewis and administrator of the American Inn of Court of Acadiana, has worked in the legal

profession for approximately 30 years. Her path is unusual: after earning undergraduate and graduate degrees, she ultimately earned her law degree. Her career has included work in several practice areas and, after moving to Louisiana, significant involvement in the paralegal profession.

When asked what lawyers sometimes fail to appreciate about paralegals, Heather described the enormous amount of “invisible work” happening behind the scenes.

While the lawyer is concentrating on legal strategy or the larger direction of a case, the paralegal may be managing deadlines, documents, clients, court requirements, filing systems, and

dozens of smaller details necessary to make that strategy possible. Much of it stays off the lawyer’s radar for a simple reason: it has already been handled.

Shelley Stelly, an estate planning paralegal at Oak Grove Estate Planning, came to the profession by a different route. After moving back to Louisiana and looking for work, a family friend who was a lawyer hired her as a paralegal. A year or two later, her father—also a lawyer—“poached” her, as she puts it. She spent the next 14 years working as his paralegal.



Shelley learned the profession largely by doing it. Over time, that meant everything from property research and client meetings to billing and the everyday mechanics of a law practice. That experience taught her something lawyers sometimes miss: the person performing the day-to-day work often knows things about the practice that the lawyer does not.

“You can have procedures all day long,” Shelley explained, “but sometimes they don’t work that way in real life.”

A good paralegal knows which procedures actually work, where a process repeatedly breaks down, how long a task realistically takes, and what needs to happen before the next step can occur. Paralegals may also see a different side of clients. Clients do not always interact with staff the same way they interact with their lawyer, Shelley noted, which can give a paralegal a different—and useful—perspective on the representation.

MORE THAN A LIST OF TASKS

Heather has noticed another distinction over the course of her career. In her experience working in the Northeast, paralegals were regularly involved in substantive work, including research and assisting with briefs. In Louisiana, she has more often seen work of that nature assigned to associate lawyers, with paralegals used more heavily for administrative tasks.

That, she believes, can be a missed opportunity.

“We want to learn,” Heather said. “We want to take on responsibility and become better at what we do.”

That might mean attending a deposition, sitting in on a strategy meeting, learning a new practice area, developing expertise in e-discovery or legal technology, or taking ownership of a project. None of that changes the lawyer’s responsibility for the representation. It simply makes better use of the skills and experience of the people working alongside the lawyer.

The benefit is not simply professional fulfillment. Education and experience produce paralegals who can anticipate the lawyer’s next step instead of always waiting to be told what to do.

Heather described the difference this way: when something goes wrong, an experienced paralegal does not simply walk into the lawyer’s office and announce a problem. She can say: Here is the problem. Here is what I found. And here are a few possible solutions.

That makes the lawyer’s job easier—and the representation better.

INVEST IN THE PEOPLE YOU DEPEND ON

If law firms want that kind of paralegal, they have to help develop one.

Continuing education, professional

organizations, specialized training, mentoring, and access to technology all give paralegals opportunities to deepen their knowledge and become more valuable members of the legal team.



*Brittani Comeaux and Kaye Pooler
at annual Lafayette Paralegal
Association Social*

Those opportunities exist right here in Lafayette. The Lafayette Paralegal Association offers approximately 10 continuing-education seminars each year. Heather served as the organization's vice president from 2016 to 2018 and president from 2018 to 2020.

Yet she remembers an attorney once asking her whether the paralegal association was basically a place where paralegals sat around and talked about their bosses.

The comment stuck with her because of what it suggested: "Do you even see it as a profession?"

For lawyers, continuing education is simply part of professional life. We attend CLEs, participate in Bar associations and Inns of Court, develop specialties, and learn from other lawyers throughout our careers. We should recognize the same value in professional development for the paralegals whose knowledge and experience we rely upon every day.

Shelley's experience reinforces the point. After years of working as a paralegal, she studied for and passed Louisiana's notary examination. She described studying for the exam as an experience that showed her both how much she had already learned

without realizing it and how much more there was to learn.

"It allowed me to put a lot of different pieces together and connect dots that I hadn't connected before," she said.

Firms can foster that kind of growth in relatively simple ways: paying for continuing education and professional memberships, providing training on new technology, encouraging specialization, including paralegals in substantive work when appropriate, and asking what tools or resources would help them do their jobs better.

And there is an even simpler investment: listen to them.

For Shelley, a good lawyer-paralegal relationship begins with "a lawyer who listens"—someone who takes a paralegal's concerns and suggestions seriously rather than merely talking about teamwork.

Even a highly capable, independent paralegal will eventually reach a point where she needs an answer or decision from the lawyer. Until she gets it, the work may stop. Likewise, a lawyer who does not understand a paralegal's workload may impose an unrealistic deadline without realizing what else is already on that person's plate.

Heather made a similar point. A paralegal may have multiple documents, PDFs, emails, court-filing systems, and matters open at once when a lawyer walks in and begins rattling off another series of assignments. Sometimes the professional courtesy paralegals want is the same courtesy lawyers want when they are concentrating: Do you have a minute?

THE PART TECHNOLOGY CANNOT REPLACE

Technology will undoubtedly change some of this work. Both Heather and Shelley see artificial intelligence and other technology creating opportunities for greater efficiency.

Shelley can easily envision AI

helping pull information from multiple documents, summarize material, or assist with drafting. But she also sees the danger of becoming so dependent on technology that people stop looking at the calendar—or the document—themselves.

Sometimes, she said, "you still need eyeballs on it."

Technology also cannot fully replace what experienced paralegals bring to a practice: judgment, institutional knowledge, relationships, humor, reassurance, and the ability to recognize what a particular person needs at a particular moment.

Heather described that quality as knowing when the lawyer needs an answer, when the lawyer needs a reminder, when the client needs reassurance—and sometimes when everyone simply needs five minutes and a cup of coffee.

Perhaps that is what lawyers should understand most.

A great paralegal is not simply someone who completes the tasks a lawyer assigns. A great paralegal understands why the task matters, anticipates what comes next, recognizes problems, knows the clients, and keeps the details from falling through the cracks.

And that kind of paralegal does not develop by accident. Experience matters, but so do opportunities to learn, to take on responsibility, to participate in professional organizations, and to be treated as a professional member of the legal team.

The best law firms recognize that value and invest in it. Because if we expect paralegals to help our practices grow, we should give them the opportunity to grow, too.

**For more information
on the Lafayette Paralegal
Association, visit lpa-la.org
or contact Program/Social
Chair Kaye Pooler at
kanderson46@myyahoo.com.**



The LBA Real Estate & Transaction Section welcomed Lafayette Parish Assessor Justin Centanni on July 21, 2026, for a CLE on Ad Valorem Taxation.

Attendees learned practical takeaways, including why January 1 is the valuation date, why Homestead Exemptions aren't automatic, how purchase price doesn't solely determine property value, and how estate planning decisions can affect property tax benefits.

A special thank-you to Tim Ryan and Williams Anderson Ryan & Carroll LLP for sponsoring this outstanding program!

Join the Real Estate & Transaction Section for just \$35 per year! Our members have the opportunity to earn six CLE credits throughout the year with outstanding speakers and valuable networking opportunities. Contact jan@lafayettebar.org to learn more.

IMPORTANCE OF VOLUNTEERISM CLE JULY 30, 2026



Shannon Dartez, former LBA president, hosted and presented a CLE class on July 30, 2026, highlighting the importance of volunteerism within the LSBA. Shannon discussed the many opportunities available for attorneys to serve through mentoring, leadership, professionalism initiatives, and community service, emphasizing how volunteerism strengthens both the profession and the communities we serve.

FAMILY LAW SECTION CLE SEPTEMBER 18, 2026



The Family Law Section CLE brought our legal community together on September 18 for three CLE hours of education, discussion, and networking. Thanks to Maggie Simar, Bradford H. Felder, Dr. David Landry, and special guest Kade Simar for an informative and engaging program!



**PICKLEBALL
TOURNAMENT**

SEPTEMBER 11, 2026



**LAFAYETTE BAR
ASSOCIATION**
YOUNG LAWYERS SECTION

The YLS Pickleball Tournament on September 11 was full of big plays, friendly competition, and some seriously impressive skills. Everyone showed up ready to compete, and our winners took home a little something special for their efforts!

A huge thank-you to everyone who came out, played, cheered, and supported our event. And a special shout-out to our amazing sponsors who helped make it all possible!



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AUGUST 20-22, 2026

This year's Bench Bar, held at the beautiful Grand Hotel Resort & Spa in Point Clear, Alabama, on August 20-22, 2026, had to be one of the best ever! Celebrating its 26th anniversary, Bench Bar brought together 21 members of the judiciary representing City Courts, District Courts, Courts of Appeal, and the Supreme Court, who generously

took the time to join us and provide outstanding CLE programming with members of our legal community. Bench Bar is truly a meaningful and fun way to enjoy networking and opportunities to connect. Special thanks to all of our sponsors, presenters, and attendees who made this year's event a true success!



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Jan Swift and Jared Nelson



Judge David Ayo and Lesley Beam



Judge Jonathan Perry, Judge David Ayo and Jamie Rhymes

On September 21, 2026, U.S. Magistrate Judge David Ayo joined us for our Bench Bar Quarterly series, offering insight into courtroom preferences, expectations of counsel, and effective advocacy strategies. Current LBA members are invited to attend these luncheons and receive a complimentary professionalism CLE credit.

Special thanks to Galloway Johnson Tompkins Burr & Smith for sponsoring the luncheon.



The Lafayette Bar Foundation's Counsel on Call program continues to make a difference in our community. Counsel on Call is made possible by funding from the Louisiana Bar Foundation.

Thanks to all who continue to volunteer their time and lend a helping hand through Counsel on Call. Your generosity, time, and commitment to helping others in our community are truly appreciated.

Contact marilyn@lafayettebar.org if you are interested in learning more and perhaps signing up!



Amber Narcisse and Brittany LaCombe



Brandon Bradley



Ryan Goudelocke



Marie Claire Vaccarella, Karly Dorr, Phillip Smith, and Jimmy Hollier



Josh Barnhill



Chris Castro

Maritime & Energy Panel



David F. Bienvenu



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Frank X. Neuner, Jr.



Steven B. Rabalais



Randall "Randy" Theunissen

An Update from the Lafayette Bar Foundation

PRO BONO HONOR ROLL

The following attorneys have volunteered with the Lafayette Bar Foundation in the past two months through various pro bono programs.

Joshua Barnhill – The Law Office of Joshua S Barnhill, LLC

Qiana Bynum – Galloway Johnson Tompkins Burr & Smith

Christopher Castro – Castro Law Firm

Karly Dorr – NeunerPate

Tyler Frederick – Dudley DeBosier Injury Lawyers

Corrie Gallien – Gallien Law

Ryan Goudelocke – Goudelocke Law

James Hollier – NeunerPate

Logan Istre – The Jarrett Firm

David Kaufman – Attorney at Law

Brittany LaCombe – Domengeaux Wright Roy & Edwards

Gregory Landry – Attorney at Law

Amber Narcisse – Attorney at Law

Jared Nelson – Galloway Johnson Tompkins Burr & Smith

Taneisha Riggs – Law Office of Taneisha W. Riggs

Dyan Schnaars – Schnaars Law Firm, LLC

Maggie Simar – Attorney at Law

Phillip Smith – NeunerPate

Marie Claire Vaccarella – NeunerPate

LSBA District Access to Justice Challenge—District 3

As your District 3 representative on the LSBA's Young Lawyers Division Council, I am excited to share an important initiative and challenge issued by LSBA President Curtis R. Joseph Jr. to members of the Board of Governors and Young Lawyers Division Council across Louisiana.

President Joseph has challenged us to serve as ambassadors for the LSBA and its Access to Justice ("ATJ") initiatives by strengthening the connection between local bar associations and access-to-justice opportunities and mobilizing attorneys to provide pro bono and reduced-fee legal services to those who need them.

District 3 is competing with districts across Louisiana to demonstrate our commitment to service and expanding access to justice. Throughout the year, our district will earn points based on our members' participation in and recruitment of volunteers for various LSBA ATJ programs. The Challenge offers ways to participate so that each attorney can select opportunities that best align with their availability, interests, and ability to serve. Points will be tracked throughout the year, and the winning district will be recognized at the 2027 LSBA Annual Meeting/Summer School.

I am proud to report that District 3 is currently leading the statewide Challenge! Our strong start was driven in part by our hosting of an LSBA Volunteer Recruitment CLE in partnership with former Lafayette Bar Association president and current District 3 Board of Governors representative Shannon Dartez.

You can earn points for District 3 by volunteering for or recruiting attorneys to participate in Lawyers in

Libraries, registering for and answering questions through Louisiana Free Legal Answers, signing up for the Modest Means Directory, accepting a Modest Means referral, serving as a Mock Trial judge, participating in Wills for Heroes, or signing up for one of the many volunteer opportunities provided by the Lafayette Bar Association and Foundation.

One upcoming opportunity makes it especially easy for our local attorneys to get involved. During Pro Bono Week, members can join the Lafayette Bar Foundation and LSBA Young Lawyers Division for a Wills for Heroes event on October 24, 2026, from 9:00–11:30 a.m. at the Lafayette Bar office.

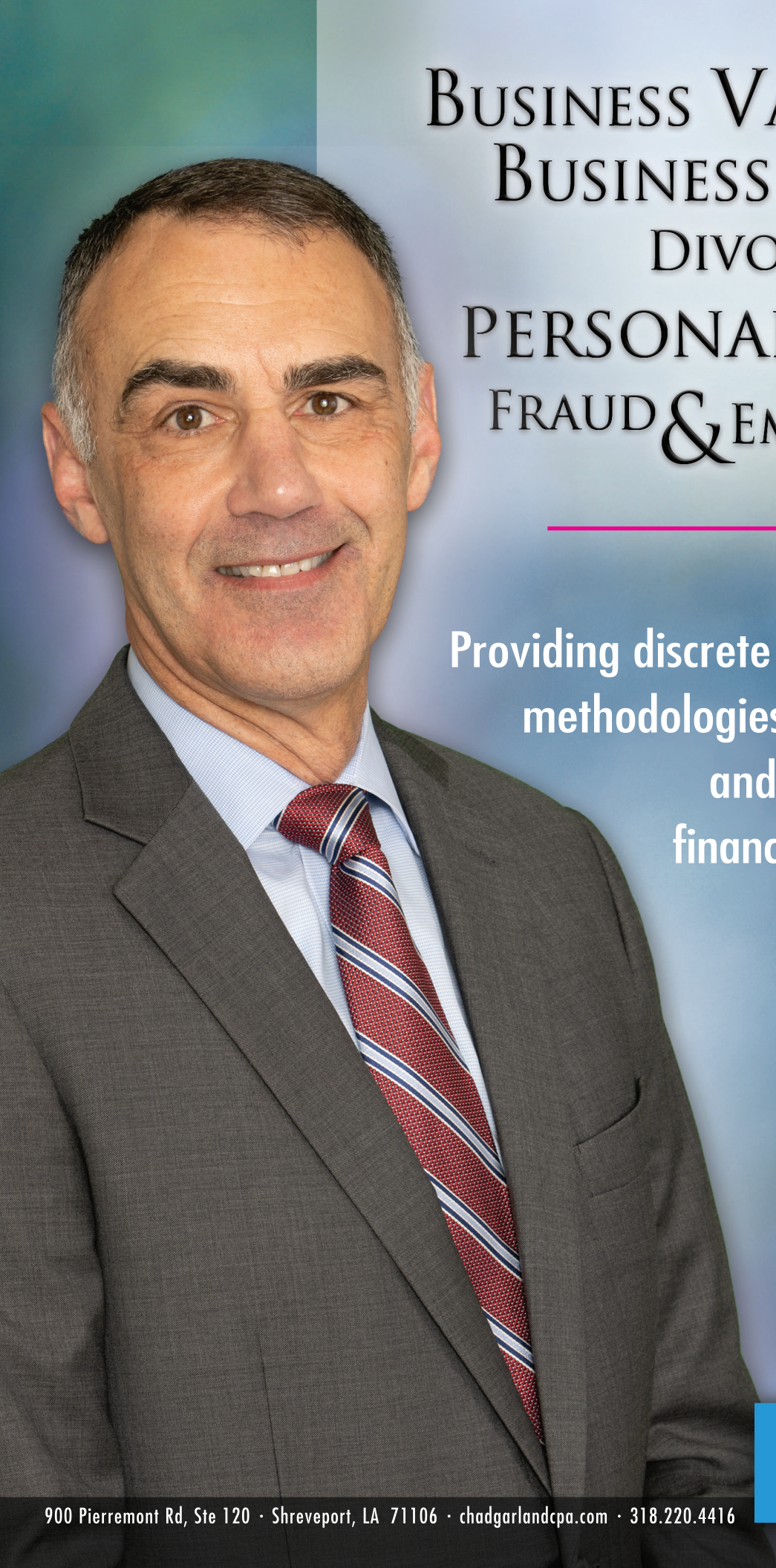
Please scan the QR code to sign up and volunteer for Wills for Heroes.

Marilyn Lopez will help keep track of District 3's volunteer activities for submission to the LSBA. Please be sure to share your participation and volunteer efforts with Marilyn at marilyn@lafayettebar.org so that we can accurately capture our district's contributions and receive credit for the points we earn throughout the year.

District 3 has already demonstrated what we can accomplish when our legal community comes together. Let's continue that momentum, expand access to justice throughout our communities, and make District 3 proud.

—Jared Nelson, LSBA YLD District 3 Representative



A portrait of a middle-aged man with short, graying hair, smiling. He is wearing a dark gray suit jacket, a light blue dress shirt, and a red tie with thin blue and white diagonal stripes. The background behind him is a soft-focus blue and green.

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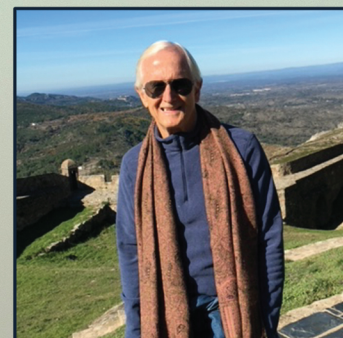
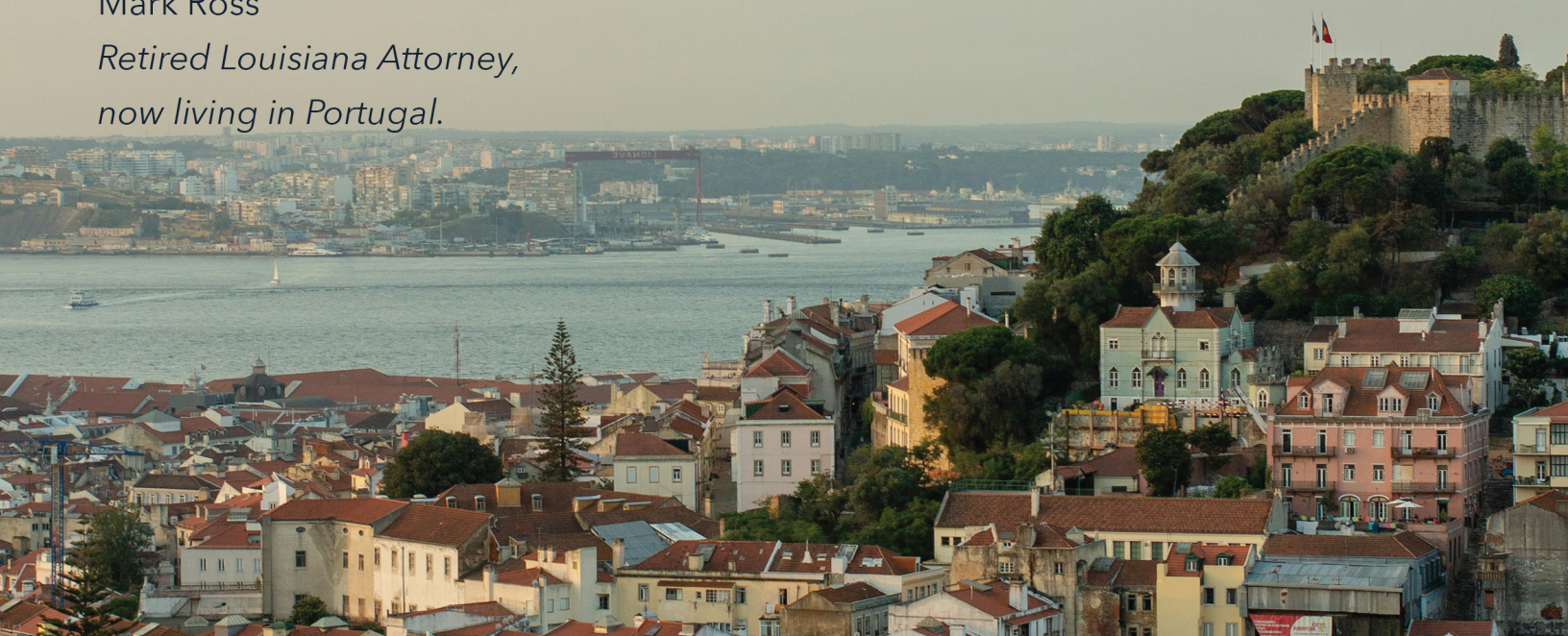


Greetings from Lisbon,

"I associated with Blake R. David in two of my largest value cases. In one matter Blake's dynamism literally tripled the value of the case. In a second case he increased the value from \$850,000 to \$1,850,000."

Mark Ross

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