

# BAR BULLETIN

September - October 2022

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NORFOLK & PORTSMOUTH  
BAR ASSOCIATION



## President's Message

*By Kristan Burch*

It has been exciting to be a very small part of the investitures of two new Norfolk General District Court Judges in the month of August. On August 5, 2022, the NPBA presented a gavel to the Honorable Jamilah D. LeCruise at her investiture. On August 26, 2022, the NPBA presented a gavel to the Honorable Leondras J. Webster. There were many NPBA Judges and members on hand for both investitures.

In 2017, Judge LeCruise was awarded the Walter E. Hoffman Community Services Award by the NPBA, and she was the Chair of the Young Lawyers Section of the NPBA from 2019 to 2020. In addition, she served on the Executive Committee for the NPBA before she took the bench. Before opening her own law office, Judge LeCruise was an Assistant Public Defender for the City of Norfolk, handling hundreds of criminal cases. She earned her undergraduate degree, cum laude, from the University of Richmond and earned her Juris Doctor from the William & Mary School of Law.

Judge Webster worked as a high school intern in the Norfolk Circuit Court and later became a Deputy Clerk. Before becoming a Judge, he worked in the Office of the Norfolk Commonwealth's Attorney, focusing on the City's drug court, mental health court, and veteran's court. He also worked as a defense attorney for civil and criminal cases, and he served as a Substitute Judge in Norfolk, Portsmouth, and Isle of Wight. He earned his undergraduate degree from the University of Virginia and his Juris Doctor from William & Mary School of Law.

While there was no formal ceremony with a gavel presentation by the NPBA, the Honorable Robert B. Rigney was elevated from the Norfolk General District Court to the Circuit Court. Before joining the Norfolk Courts as a Judge in 2019, Judge Rigney was in private practice at Protyrou and Rigney for more than thirty years.

In other news, our monthly luncheons will resume on the Eight Floor of the Norfolk Courthouse on Thursday, September 15, 2022. Our speaker will be Peggy Kriha Dye, General Director and CEO of the Virginia Opera, and she will be speaking on the World Premiere project of creating an opera about Loving v. Virginia. On Thursday, October 20, 2022, we will be joined for lunch by Jessica Aber, the United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia. And on Thursday, November 17, 2022, our guest speaker will be Stephanie Grana, the President of the Virginia State Bar.

The luncheons are free to NPBA Judges and members, and you can stay after the luncheons to earn an hour of CLE credit. Please look for announcements for upcoming luncheons and sign up if you are able to attend as we have limited seating capacity on the Eighth Floor of the Norfolk Courthouse.

There is much ahead for the NPBA, from luncheons to CLEs to pro bono offerings to social events, so we hope to see you at an NPBA event soon. If you are interested in serving on an NPBA Committee (<https://norfolkandportsmouthbar.org/Committees>), please contact the NPBA.

The Executive Committee is looking forward to another full year of events and pro bono offerings so we hope to see you in the fall.

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

### YLS Summer Social Happy Hour

9/8/22 5:30pm Luna Maya

### Pro-Bono Legal Answers Telephone Clinic

10/4/22 4:00pm

# MONTHLY LUNCHEONS ARE BACK!

The NPBA luncheons are an opportunity to hear from local and state leaders while socializing with your peers. Luncheons are held on the third Thursday of the month at the Norfolk Courthouse, 8th Floor Rotunda, from 12:00 – 1:00 p.m. The luncheons are FREE TO ALL MEMBERS, but you must register. Registrations are open for the September – November luncheons.

## September 15

Peggy Kriha Dye, General Director and CEO of the Virginia Opera  
*Topic: World Premiere project of creating an opera about Loving v. Virginia*  
<https://norfolkandportsmouthbar.org/event-4955504>

## October 20

Jessica Aber, U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia  
<https://norfolkandportsmouthbar.org/event-4955522>

## November 17

Stephanie Grana, President of the Virginia State Bar  
<https://norfolkandportsmouthbar.org/event-4955525>

## January 19

Speaker Pending

## February 16

Dr. Adams-Gaston, President of Norfolk State University

## March 16

Speaker Pending

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## VIRGINIA BEACH ATTORNEY'S OFFICE SPACE FOR RENT

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[Rruloff@srgslaw.com](mailto:Rruloff@srgslaw.com)  
or text 757-635-1888



# CLE COMMITTEE

*Chair: Kerry K. Stolz*

*Co-Chair: Gaela Normile*



**Attention all procrastinators:** have no fear, free CLEs are almost here! The Norfolk & Portsmouth Bar Association's CLE Committee has a number of free CLE presentations scheduled for this September and October. The CLE Committee is offering programs on a wide range of topics, including ethics, employment law, trusts and estates, cannabis law, reproductive rights, and workers' compensation. Attendees will receive up to 2 CLE credits per presentation. We are also returning to in-person CLE presentations in the First Floor Training Room of the City of Norfolk Courthouse (150 St Paul's Blvd, Norfolk, VA 23510). Keep a lookout for more information to come about dates and times!

In addition to the 2-hour CLE presentations, the CLE Committee has also coordinated 1-hour CLE presentations to follow the NPBA's monthly luncheons. As a reminder, the monthly luncheons are held the third Thursday of the month from 12:00 pm to 1:00 pm.

If you are interested in joining the CLE Committee or giving a CLE presentation, please reach out to the CLE Committee's co-chairs, Kerry Stolz (kstolz@PenderCoward.com) and Gaela Normile (gnormile@vanblacklaw.com).

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## Upcoming CLE Courses

Legal Ethics in Post-Pandemic Practice – 1 CLE Credit \*Pending\*

Presenter: Bretta Z. Lewis, Wolcott Rivers Gates

**September 15, 2022 1:15 – 2:15 p.m. (Post-Luncheon CLE)**

<https://norfolkandportsmouthbar.org/event-4953752>

Cannabis in the Commonwealth and Beyond – 2 CLE Credits \*Pending\*

Presenters: Anne Bibeau and Jonathan Gallo, Woods Rogers Vandeventer Black PLC

**September 20, 2022 2:00 – 4:00 pm**

<https://norfolkandportsmouthbar.org/event-4953717>

Estate Planning and Administration: A View from 40 Plus Years in the Trenches – 2 CLE Credits \*Pending\*

Presenter: John Midgett, Midgett Pretti and Olansen, PC

**September 27, 2022 2:00 – 4:00 p.m.**

<https://norfolkandportsmouthbar.org/event-4953758>

ART Law in a Post-Dobbs World – 2 CLE Credits \*Pending\*

**October 17, 2022 2:00 – 4:00 pm**

<https://norfolkandportsmouthbar.org/event-4953764>

Trial Practice in GDC and Circuit Court – Personal Injury and Beyond – 2 CLE Credits \*Pending\*

Presenters: The Honorable Robert B. Rigney, Presiding Judge, Norfolk Circuit Court, John G. Baker, Esq. and Griffin M. O'Hanlon, Esq., Cooper Hurley Injury Lawyers

**October 25, 2022**

<https://norfolkandportsmouthbar.org/event-4953792>



## YOUNG LAWYERS SECTION

*By Katherine M. Lennon, Chair*  
[klennon@ff-legal.com](mailto:klennon@ff-legal.com)  
757-227-5900

YLS events are in full swing! We had a successful joint social with the Young Lawyers Sections of the Virginia State Bar and Virginia Beach Bar Association at Maker's Craft Brewery on July 28, 2022. We were thrilled to meet several new faces in addition to catching up with those familiar with our events.

We had another productive monthly planning meeting at Elation Brewing on August 25, 2022. Many of us stuck around for trivia after the meeting with an impressive showing from several of our members. As always, we encourage any young lawyers who are interested in joining us to come to our next meeting! E-mail invites are forthcoming.

On September 8, 2022, YLS is hosting our annual end of the summer social. The social will take place at Luna Maya at 5:30 p.m. We will be collecting donations for the ForKids organization. We are pleased to see a significant number of RSVPs for the event already. We look forward to seeing everyone there.

YLS has several events and ideas in the works for the coming months, including our Breakfast with the Bench, Annual Fall Reception, and several ideas of ways to give back to our community. Please keep an eye out for e-mail invitations. As always, please feel free to reach out to me with any questions, comments, or ideas.



## Available for In-Person Mediations and Arbitrations\*

Zoom sessions are also  
available upon request



757.403.8150



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# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## New Criminal Case Procedures

The Norfolk Circuit Court has revised its Criminal Case Procedures.

The revised procedures can be found on the Court's website at <https://www.norfolkcircuitcourt.us/criminal/criminal-case-procedures/>

## 123 Williams Mullen Attorneys Listed in 2023 Edition of The Best Lawyers in America®

Richmond, VA (Aug. 18, 2022) – Williams Mullen is pleased to announce that 123 of the firm's lawyers in 67 practice areas were selected for inclusion in the 2023 edition of The Best Lawyers in America®.

Williams Mullen had the most Virginia lawyers listed (99). 10 practice areas also had the most lawyers in Virginia listed, including banking and finance (9), commercial litigation (14), corporate (23), banking and finance litigation (7), construction litigation (6), intellectual property litigation (6), real estate litigation (4), mergers and acquisitions (13), real estate (21) and tax law (6).

In addition, 12 attorneys were also named "Lawyers of the Year" by Best Lawyers® in their respective localities and practice areas.

*Congratulations to **John Cooper & Bailey Gifford** who with co-counsel won*

***\$6 MILLION***

*at mediation for our client who suffered catastrophic injuries in Hampton Roads, VA. The complex premises liability issues were highly contested.*

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**John Cooper**



**Bailey Gifford**

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# SPECIAL FEATURE

## Understanding Norfolk Circuit Court Staff Responsibilities

Lauren DeLoatche

Intern to the Honorable David W. Lannetti, Chief Judge

If you open the hood of a well-tuned Norfolk Circuit Court, you will find a vast number of hardworking individuals who serve as master mechanics. The supporting staff members work very closely with the judges to ensure the essential flow of information within the courthouse and each courtroom. Although these operations often take place behind the scenes and outside the view of attorneys, each role is crucial for efficient daily procedures and facilitates necessary communication between attorneys and courthouse staff.

### **Judicial Programs Manager**

Elizabeth Amaya, the Judicial Programs Manager, oversees all courthouse operations. From an attorney's perspective, this includes, but is not limited to, incorporation of technology and courtroom scheduling. While the courtrooms are already equipped with an overhead document camera (i.e., ELMO), HDMI and VGA hook-ups for computers, and "annotation" touch screens (which allow witnesses to draw on the display screens), other forms of technology can be accommodated in the courtroom, such as medical MRI and CT scan printouts. If this is necessary, attorneys must contact Ms. Amaya with an itemized list to request judicial approval for counsel to bring additional items through security without any issues. The Judicial Programs Manager also schedules judicial settlement conferences with retired judges (as available).

### **Judicial Docket Administrator**

The Judicial Docket Administrator, Wendy Spivey, is constantly juggling dates, times, attorneys, and judges in her quest to produce the daily docket for the Chief Judge's approval. When certain civil lawsuits are filed, or if a multiple-day trial is anticipated, Ms. Spivey assigns the case to one of the circuit court judges, and attorneys are promptly notified of which judge has been assigned. When an attorney requests a civil hearing, he or she must reach out to the Judicial Docket Administrator within two weeks to schedule an appropriate date and time that the judge can accommodate. Attorneys should notify Ms. Spivey if a pre-assigned motion is resolved, or if a pre-assigned case settles; Ms. Spivey then will notify the docket clerk in the Clerk's Office to remove the matter from the docket. For all trials, whether jury or bench, it is crucial that attorneys provide an accurate estimation regarding the duration of the trial because judges' calendars are only blocked off for the number of days requested. Between 2:30 and 3:00 pm every business day, Ms. Spivey reveals the lineup for the next day's events, and the clock starts ticking as the other players—Law Clerks, in-court clerks, judges, and attorneys—prepare for the following day. The docket, which is published online by the Clerk's Office at approximately 4:00 pm each day and is available in the courthouse lobby the next morning, notifies parties and their attorneys of where their matter will take place, at what time, and before which judge.

### **Law Clerks**

Each year, four law clerks (currently Allison Allgood, Lyla Bloom, Kole Donaldson, and Rachel Griffin) have the privilege of assisting the eight circuit court judges by helping them navigate the daily proceedings in their courtrooms and managing a myriad of other legal tasks. Each law clerk splits his or her time between two judges primarily and is entrusted with legal assignments such as drafting, editing, and cite checking orders and letter opinions; reviewing motions; and preparing judges for upcoming cases. Law clerks are not permitted to engage in ex parte communications, so attorneys should refrain from reaching out to them with questions regarding a case without all other counsel present (the best practice is to email the law clerk and copy all counsel of record and unrepresented parties). Attorneys should also send courtesy copies of pleadings to a judge's law clerk if a judge has been assigned for the related hearing. Because there is a slight delay between filing with the Clerk's Office and the document being scanned into the electronic database available to judges, emailed copies ensure that the judge and law clerk are aware of and can review the motion prior to the hearing. If attorneys intend to use technology in the courtroom for an upcoming trial, they may schedule a time with one of the law clerks to test equipment prior to the trial date.

# SPECIAL FEATURE CONT.

## **Judicial Assistants**

The three Judicial Assistants—Amy Cloudsley, Hollie Huffman, and Michelle Strittmatter—assist the judges with administrative matters and oversee the calendars of their assigned judges to support attorney and case needs. Each assistant manages the schedules of two to three judges. Oftentimes, Judicial Assistants serve as the primary point of contact between attorneys and judges. If an attorney is running late or will not be in court for some reason, they should let the Judicial Assistant (and the applicable person in the Clerk's Office) know promptly. Judicial Assistants also schedule conferences and meetings for judges (unless Ms. Spivey handles it) and pass on continuance and WebEx requests (for virtual appearances) to judges for possible approval. In addition, attorneys should reach out to Judicial Assistants to get the judge's approval if they wish to add additional motions to a scheduled hearing.

## **Drug Court Administrator**

Alexandria Roberson, the Drug Court Administrator, oversees the day-to-day operations of Norfolk Circuit Court's three therapeutic dockets (Drug Court, Mental Health Court, and the Reentry Docket). Attorneys can reach out to Ms. Roberson when a judge has ordered—normally at the attorney's request—that their client be screened for any of the therapeutic dockets. Before a client is screened, attorneys must coordinate with the Commonwealth's Attorney's office to verify that the client does not have disqualifying prior offenses or pending matters in other jurisdictions. The Drug Court Administrator may also communicate directly with potential clients and family members who are interested in enrolling in any of the programs.

## **The Clerk of Court & His Staff**

George Schaefer, the Norfolk Circuit Court Clerk, and his staff on the 7th floor are responsible for populating the electronic database that is the backbone of the “paperless” operation of the courthouse. Any and all documents that need to be filed in a case go through the clerk's office to the Virginia Judiciary E-Filing System (VJEFS), which can be used by attorneys to track case submissions, receive status and other notifications by email, request service of process, and calculate and pay fees online. If documents for filing are not received electronically, which is preferred, they are scanned into the database upon receipt. Attorneys and citizens can visit the clerk's office when they need something filed, need copies of filed documents, have questions about jury duty or appearing in court as a witness, or have general questions about the courthouse. Of course, the clerk's office also supports various other functions for Norfolk citizens, including accessing land records and judgments; receiving various payments; processing passports, concealed weapons permits, and name change requests; and providing marriage commissioners. An “in-court” clerk normally is in the courtroom assisting the judge with all criminal matters (and with some civil matters).

## **Sheriff's Deputies/Bailiffs**

Norfolk Sheriff Joseph “Joe” Baron and his deputies are responsible for the overall security of the courthouse. One or more deputies are normally in the courtroom as bailiffs whenever a judge is present. By constantly communicating with one another, deputies ensure the safety of judges, courthouse staff, and the public. Deputies also facilitate the transfer of inmates from the Norfolk City Jail (and sometimes from other jails) to various holding cells in the courthouse and then to the various courtrooms. It is imperative that attorneys coordinate with the clerk's office to ensure that a transportation order is entered far enough in advance of a desired appearance to ensure that the inmate is transferred timely; attorneys also need to coordinate with the courtroom deputy to ensure that incarcerated defendants have clothes and are dressed for jury trials.

A proper understanding of courthouse operations promotes the effective and efficient administration of justice. The Norfolk Circuit Court is dedicated to maintaining a system that best serves both attorneys and their clients because, among other things, an orderly process helps promote confidence in the judicial system. Like a well-oiled pit crew, each member of the judicial staff plays an essential role in keeping the wheels of justice rolling.



# JUDGE JAMILAH LECRUISE INVESTITURE



# JUDGE LEONDRAS WEBSTER INVESTITURE





# The McCammon Group

is pleased to announce our newest Neutral



## Hon. Westbrook J. Parker (Ret.)

*Retired Chief Judge, City of Suffolk Circuit Court*

The Honorable Westbrook J. Parker has recently returned to The McCammon Group (McCammon) after serving as the Executive Director of The Camp Foundation for over a decade. An experienced mediator and arbitrator, he originally joined McCammon in 2010 after twenty-four years of distinguished judicial service on the Circuit Court bench for the City of Suffolk. Prior to the bench, Judge Parker was in private practice handling a wide variety of cases including but not limited to personal injury, product liability, contracts, and trusts & estates. He has admirably served his community in several capacities including as Chairman of the Pandemic Flu Preparedness Commission, Member of the Board of Directors of the Franklin-Southampton Charities, President of the Franklin Area Flood Fund, Member of the Elms Foundation, and Past President of the Camp Foundation. Judge Parker now brings this record of dedication and service back to McCammon to serve the mediation, arbitration, and judge pro tempore needs of lawyers and litigants throughout the Commonwealth and beyond.

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