

## Thanks to the Great People Behind a Great Bar Association

I don't know if its the good streak of great weather, the great night of sleep I just had, the at least 20,000 plus steps a day I'm getting or just catching up with old friends, but I find my mood excellent. Part of it has to be surrounding myself with good people. I'm not sure who or how it was said, but I know that we become the company we keep. In this arena, I excel. I always make sure I'm not the smartest, most ambitious or generous person in any room. It pushes me to be a better person.

With this in mind, I want to recognize how deep the talent pool is on the Louisville Bar Association Board of Directors. It is incredible. We're a bar that continues punches way above our weight class in any city our size. Our programming and community engagement is excellent. As such, I want to highlight our board members and thank them for their service.

Aaron Marcus is a thoughtful leader who carefully weighs issues in front of him. Kenyon Meyer just screams competency, excellence and fun. Mike O'Connell gives so many young lawyers, including yours truly, their start in the practice of law and is remarkably caring about the welfare of the city of Louisville. Same with Leo Smith at the Public Defender's Office, who lives a life of service to the community. He's stepping down from the board this month and we'll miss him. Huge shoes to fill.

Judge Ann Bailey Smith is among the most sober-minded and kind-hearted, fantastic judges I know. Judge Santry is an amazingly respected Family Court Judge and fun; she keeps the Board in stitches while contributing to the bar. Chelsea Granville Reed had me at the first meeting when she chaired the LBA Litigation Section – it remains one of our most involved sections. Susan Phillips is a giant of the medical malpractice field and so generous. Once I was at a deposition at her office when there was an active shooter downtown, and she offered me a glass of wine until the shooter was caught. I declined, but what a host! Like Susan, Tanner Watkins is a KBA representative to our board, but he has a hidden talent as an auctioneer. Judge David Hale single-handedly brought federal practitioners back in the LBA fold. Abby Green worked diligently on the Kentucky Lawyer Referral Service, in between trial wins. Tricia Lister has been an active board member between elections and community service to the city.

Dean Melanie Jacobs, a very impressive person and friend. My respect for her is endless; and she strengthened the LBA's connection to UofL Law School. Zach Hoskins, also between trials and nerding out on comics, is a dedicated board member. I have been adverse to him on a number of occasions and he is an honest and outstanding lawyer. Same with Andrew Pellino; I recently had my first case with him. He's a fantastic family man, and looks and acts like Captain America. Upon the advice of Mark Fenzel, someone I admire, I brought Bruce Paul on the LBA Board. Intellectual property lawyers are way smarter than this simple car wreck lawyer. In addition to bar service, I keep catching him on his way to present at some conference.

I went to law school with Justin Key and he is not only a great pickleball partner, but an excellent and dedicated family law lawyer. He never shields from volunteering his limited time to the LBA. In fact, we served together as section chairs and vice-chairs of the LBA's Solo & Small Practice Section, early in our practice. Sean Deskins works for Ann Oldfather and, like Abby, has a lot of high-value successful trials. He also is active with the ABA and serves as a dear friend and confidant to me. Same with Joe Stennis, I've known him since law school, he was awesome then and now. I'm especially grateful for his efforts in the Bar Center fundraising campaign.

Matthew Swafford is an engaged member with critical thinking skills. And for this personal injury lawyer, it is always good to know a guy working for an insurance company. Same with Al'Lisha Hanserd, always good to know someone in subrogation and I am thankful for her active participation. Gerina Weathers is making history at the Commonwealth Attorney's Office; I know that won't be her last stop. Charles Stopher's leadership at the Louisville Bar Foundation is inspiring, and he might be the world's most likeable guy. I've been lucky to know him since elementary school.

Briana Bluford's work on the Bylaws Committee has been invaluable and I am proud of her work with the Young Lawyers Section, even with working with the Kentucky Lottery; she's got a lot on her plate. Amy Cabbage has an impressive track record of public service. And we welcome Judge Mary Wolford to her first year of service and welcome her to the bench.

I look forward to Maria Fernandez' presidency. She has been LBA-focused for at least fifteen plus years, that I personally know of, and likely much more. I was thrilled to get Jennifer Ward Kleier on the Executive Committee with her commitment to mental health. Kate is an impressive partner at an impressive firm and has been a great neighbor, past president and a bit of a therapist to me. She has an eye on detail that serves us well, ensuring tax compliance. Sam Wardle: forget it. Great lawyer, I have cases against him and referred him cases. Huge amount of respect for him and his heavy lifting on the Bylaws Committee.

Getting input from others, especially as impressive as the members of the board are, is crucial for making big decisions. Their advice allows me and the LBA to be open to evolving when presented with new views and insights.

Like I said, the Louisville Bar Association's talent pool runs deep. We continue to accomplish great things for the bar and community and function as a bar in larger cities with more resources. It is important to pause and show my personal gratitude for each of these people and the board as a whole. Like you, I hold these people in esteem and am grateful for their service.



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Bryan R. Armstrong  
LBA President