MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT:

JUDGE ROBERT B. RADER
CONTINUING A LEGACY OF EXCELLENCE

THIS MONTH I had the opportunity and distinct privilege to address the members of the Senior Lawyers. Most of us know this group as the “Senior Survivors,” a title that was affectionately bestowed by the late George Anderson who spearheaded the organization for so many years. Membership in this esteemed group is technically reserved for those members of the Wake County Bar who are age 60 or over and willing to publicly admit it. However, you will find this group to be quite welcoming to guests of any age.

One of my more recent visits with the Senior Survivors was at the invitation of Earl Purser and Robert McMillan. Naturally, Robert McMillan, being the consummate gentleman and host, insisted that he and Earl would drive and pick me up at the Courthouse. As we proceeded to the NCSU University Club, the site of many WCBA Holiday parties and functions in the past, the conversation was enlightening and naturally full of humor. As we stopped at a traffic light on Wade Avenue, Earl pointed out that he used to date a girl who lived in a house at that intersection. Robert responded, “Well Earl, you could say the same about almost any intersection in town.” Earl quickly replied, “Ah now you hush Robert!” Needless to say, the conversation and exchanges between Robert and Earl were well worth the trip.

As we gathered for lunch, I began to look around the room to see just how many of the attorneys I personally knew or had interacted with over the years. As I was engaged in conversation with Bo McDonald, Gene Boyce, Al Purrington and others at my table, I noticed Wright Dixon entering the room. Wright at the time was confined to a wheel-chair and was being assisted into the room by Charlie Blanchard. While happy to see both, I was a bit overwhelmed by this image. Here were two legendary attorneys who have served in virtually every leadership capacity imaginable at the

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT:
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local and state bar level, who had more often than not represented adversaries in the courtroom, and who now face considerable physical challenges brought on by the hands of time, yet both remained committed to overcoming these limitations in order to join their fellow attorneys for a bit of fellowship and comradeship. Wow!

To attend a Senior Survivors meeting and reflect on those in attendance is awe inspiring. The collective knowledge, experience and wisdom is overwhelming. The dedication and service of so many of these fine attorneys to the profession and their fellow lawyers makes me extremely proud to be a lawyer and particularly to be a member of the Wake County Bar Association.

Over the past year, I have attended leadership training sponsored by the N.C. Bar Association, the American Bar Association and the National Conference of Bar Presidents. As a participant at those programs, I have had the opportunity to interact with leaders from Bar Associations throughout the country. The one thing that has become crystal clear to me is that we absolutely have one of the finest, strongest and most extraordinary bar associations in the country. That success is, in large part, directly attributable to the hard work of those such as the Senior Survivors who over the years have devoted their time and energy for the betterment of the profession and the bar.

As we begin a new year and the gavel of leadership has passed, I have been asked on several occasions what my vision is for the WCBA. My vision is straightforward. First and foremost, I want to see the WCBA continue a legacy of excellence. I want to build on the foundations that have been laid by those who have gone before us to make a great bar even better. I want us to explore new ways to serve the profession and the community. I want us to nurture and strengthen our mentoring program so that new lawyers entering the profession will have the skills, abilities and be better equipped to transition from law school into productive members of the profession. I want us to continue to make the promotion of civility, professionalism and the highest ethical standards among our members a top priority. I want us to expand and enhance the benefits of membership in the WCBA such that our ranks grow and membership is viewed by all as a wise investment in our professional careers. I want us to support NCBA President Catherine Arrowood in her efforts to secure adequate funding for the courts in order to ensure the proper and orderly administration of justice in our great state. I want us to embark on a new strategic planning initiative to chart the course for the WCBA over the next five years and beyond.

I am confident that working together we can make great strides toward making this vision a reality. I must admit that this goal has been made a bit easier by the very successful leadership of our Immediate Past President Gray Styers. By all accounts, Gray was a very dedicated, hard-working and highly effective President and quite frankly a hard act to follow. Under Gray’s leadership the WCBA accomplished a tremendous amount in 2014. For that, we are all eternally grateful. Over the forthcoming months Mark Finkelstein, President of the Tenth Judicial District Bar, and I will be working together with the Board of Directors and our various committees to maintain and build on the success that we experienced over the past year.

Finally, let me express my sincere appreciation to you for the trust that you have placed in me. I am deeply honored and humbled to serve as President of the WCBA. I look forward to working with each of you this year as we continue the Wake County Bar Association’s legacy of excellence. WBF

BENCH-BAR COMMITTEE MEETING ON WEDNESDAY, MARCH 4

The meeting will be held from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. in the jury lounge on the eleventh floor of the Wake County Courthouse. The committee invites the bench and bar to communicate any ideas for issues that the committee should consider to Sam Forehand at (919) 755-0500 or SAF@ForehandLaw.com.
WE ALL NEED TO KEEP RESOUNDING A STEADY BEAT FOR GREATER CIVILITY AND PROFESSIONALISM IN THE LAW

BY MARK LAMANTIA | LAMANTIA, MARSLIO & Verna, PLLC

AT THE VERY END of the production Bang the Drum Slowly, the character Henry Wiggens, after the funeral of a teammate and friend, whom he teased and often mistreated, states rather resolutely:

He wasn’t a bad fella, no worse than most, and probably better than some—and not a bad ballplayer neither, when they gave him a chance, when they laid off him long enough. From here on in, I rag on nobody.

Both the movie (1973) and an earlier dramatization for television (United States Steel Hour) received some critical acclaim. However, they are better known for the effect that they had on the careers of stars Paul Newman, George Peppard (1956) and an upcoming Robert DeNiro (1973). Both are based on the novel of the same name written by Mark Harris. While the story itself is perhaps not all that remarkable, its lessons are tangible and it emphasizes that a life well lived is ultimately about character. Henry Wiggens’ last famous line above is a splendid expression about the value and importance of civility.

I am hesitant to draw too many comparisons between the sports world and the practice of law. Nonetheless, both undeniably involve, ideally require and rely upon a certain amount of sportsmanship, fair play, honor and integrity. If as Merriam-Webster defines it, civility is “polite, reasonable and respectful behavior”, then it is clear that civility is essential to achieving professionalism. We can never over-emphasize its importance. And, as Mr. Wiggens comes to understand, civility is something that must begin with each of us setting the tone.

We all know the principles involved. For example, at the very least, all members of the Wake County and Tenth Judicial District Bar should recognize the following excerpts from the Creed of Professionalism:

We are in a privileged position, and therefore we work under special obligations. To forget or to set aside these obligations is to dishonor our profession.

My word is my bond. Integrity is an absolute. Fairness and civility are essential.

To my colleagues in the practice of law, I offer concern for your welfare. As we work together, I will respect your personal and family commitments. I will share my learning and experience so that we may all improve our skills and abilities.

To the courts and to those who assist them, I offer respect, candor, and courtesy. ... I will serve as an officer of the court, encouraging respect for the law and avoiding the abuse or misuse of the law, its procedures, its participants, and its processes.

To opposing parties and their counsel, I offer honesty, fairness, and courtesy. I will seek truth and strive to resolve our clients disputes in a dignified manner. I will pursue the most efficient and least costly solutions to problems and avoid unnecessary delay.

Perhaps even more basic, in his book All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten, Robert Fulghum lists as the first seven things that he learned in kindergarten were to:

1. Share everything.
2. Play fair.
3. Don’t hit people.
4. Put things back where you found them.
5. Clean Up Your Own Mess.
6. Don’t take things that aren’t yours.
7. Say you’re SORRY when you HURT somebody.

Still, as Mr. Fulghum further observes in his book, “It doesn’t matter what you say you believe—it only matters what you do.”

Despite our collective knowledge and intellectual recognition of these principles, it is clear we have a long way to go in our efforts toward greater civility and professionalism. We also have even greater challenges to face with the manner in which social media has exploded and is being used. The erosion of civility in the legal profession, and the importance of recapturing or improving it for reasons of professionalism, has been chronicled for some time now, here in North Carolina and elsewhere. For example, in his 2012 article Professionalism – The Loss of Civility in the Legal Community published in the winter 2012 edition of the North Carolina State Bar Journal, Pitt County resident superior court Judge Clifton W. Everett Jr. lamented that:

The handling of civil litigation matters, which encompasses discovery practice, deposition matters, and especially the motion practice, is the most onerous and burdensome duty I have to perform as a judge... My observation from the bench as a trial judge is that very little interaction, cooperation, conversation, or accommodation goes between litigant attorneys. It appears that neither side—the plaintiff nor the defendant—is anxious to resolve any civil litigation until the proper amount of “time” has been spent filling the court file with reams of paper.

...On the rarest of occasion do lawyers attempt to resolve matters in the motion field or discovery field, or the perceived sanction field, by conversation prior to coming to court. There is an air of hostility and suspicion between many lawyers who appear before me, and it is readily evident and apparent to the court. This attitude makes a day on the bench for this old judge hard and tiring, and it detracts from the professionalism that should be evident between colleagues at the bar even while representing different opinions and points of view.

And, as referenced some five years before him, Guilford County retired senior resident superior court Judge Doug Albright, in an article in the Spring 2007 North Carolina State Bar Journal, observed that:

Professional civility, common courtesy, polite cordiality, and mutual respect

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NEWLY LICENSED ATTORNEYS SWORN IN

BY ANN-MARGARET ALEXANDER | EVENT COORDINATOR, SWEARING-IN COMMITTEE

ON OCTOBER 30, the Wake County Bar Association sponsored a ceremonial session of the Superior Court for Wake County for the purpose of swearing in 65 newly licensed attorneys. The Session was held in the Fletcher Opera Theater, Duke Energy Center for the Performing Arts. Court was opened and called to order and the Honorable Paul G. Gessner heard motions from sponsors of the newly admitted lawyers. Members of the Wake County Bar Association and, in particular, its Leadership Development and Swearing-In committees, volunteered to move the Court to admit to the Bar new lawyers who needed personal sponsors. These 65 individuals are now fully and duly licensed to practice law in the courts of North Carolina.

The Honorable Barbara A. Jackson of the North Carolina Supreme Court addressed the new attorneys with her thoughts on the important ideals of professionalism. Justice Jackson discouraged the new attorneys from pursuing a legal career as a business and to choose instead to focus on their legal career as a profession and a calling. She clarified that the three ideals of professionalism, including organization, continued learning, and the spirit of public service. She explained that there would always be someone available to provide an opportunity to learn if the attorney was open to learning. She advised the new lawyers to recognize and acknowledge their deficits and to seek out mentors that would help them grow as a lawyer. Finally, she encouraged each new attorney to engage in public service as part of their duty to the profession.

The Swearing-in Ceremony Committee and Wake County Bar Association hosted a reception following the session of Court where new admittees mingled with volunteer attorneys and celebrated with their colleagues and families.

All that being said, I feel privileged to be a member of the Wake County and Tenth Judicial District Bars, and of the Professionalism Committee. Because of some of my multi-jurisdictional licensing over the years, I have had the opportunity to belong to and experience other state and local bars and associations. I believe that this is truly one of the best bars in terms of civility and professionalism and has a true dedication to that mission. As Mr. Fulghum also observed,

I get tired of hearing it’s a crummy world and that people are no damned good. What kind of talk is that? I know a place in Payette, Idaho, where a cook and a waitress and a manager put everything they’ve got into laying a chicken-fried steak on you.

I appreciate that there are many here who have positively influenced me by putting everything they have into the example they set for civility and professionalism. Let’s all make sure we join in that effort every day, not get complacent, and pay it forward. From here on in, I’ll try to rag on nobody, how about you? WBF
THE GIFT OF READING
BY NICOLETTE FULTON | ASSOCIATE CITY ATTORNEY, RALEIGH

THIS PAST HOLIDAY SEASON 17 WCBA attorneys gave 34 Wake County first and second grade students a very special gift, the gift of reading. The WCBA Lawyers Read program in its pilot semester worked with local elementary schools Briarcliff, Fred Olds, and Partnership to solidify grade level reading for their primary grade students.

The spring semester of the Lawyers Read program is starting, and we have more schools wanting to be involved. This spring semester we will be adding Joyner Elementary and Millbrook Elementary (7:30 a.m. volunteer start time) to our list of schools. That's right, five schools!

With five schools, we need to make sure there are an ample amount of volunteers. Volunteering is easy! All you need to do is email Tom Worth at curmudgtcw@earthlink.net with your contact information and Top 3 choices (ranked in order), and come to a one hour Training Session. If you have already attended a Training Session, just email Tom Worth your information and ranked Top 3 choices. After the final Training Session, we will make the school assignments.

Here are some key dates:

• January 26 at 5 p.m.: One Hour Training Session at Partnership Elementary School
• February 6: First day
• April 24: Last day (Regular Calendar)
• May 1: Last day (Partnership Elementary)

We understand that lawyers have busy schedules. The Lawyers Read program allows for flexibility. Should you have work or family obligations, just let us know.

If you have any questions you may contact John Mabe at JMabe@nexuspruet.com or me at nicolette.fulton@raleighnc.gov. We look forward to seeing you in January! WBF

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DO I NEED A WEBSITE? BY CAMILLE STELL

THIS IS A QUESTION I’m often asked. And the answer the lawyer really wants to hear is “no.”

What holds lawyers back from creating websites? I believe the top reasons holding lawyers back are:

- lack of technical knowledge
- concern about the cost
- the time investment, namely, the time spent learning about the technology and then creating the content for the website

Let’s address each of the 3 issues.

How do you combat the technology learning curve? First, there are resources available to help you. If you are a member of the NC Bar Association, you can reach out to the Center for Practice Management and talk with practice management advisors Erik Mazzone or Joyce Brafford. Erik and Joyce serve as practice management consultants for law firms and they have helped many firms with technology issues. They also have a list of preferred technology consultants that they work with and have referred many times.

You can ask fellow lawyers or fellow business people in your community how they went about building their website. Did they “do-it-yourself” on SquareSpace? Did they hire a website company or marketing company? Did they hire a technology consultant to give them advice?

Lee Rosen, North Carolina lawyer and the author of the Divorce Discourse blog has written many blog posts about creating websites. Visit his blog at www.divorcediscourse.com and search the keyword “websites” to read many informative posts about building a website.

How do you budget for a law firm website? That’s a tough question. I know from talking with many lawyers who are hanging out their shingle that they would like to buy a $1,000 website. There doesn’t seem to be anyone selling those. However, a $40,000 website isn’t your only option. Keep asking lawyers who built their websites until you find someone who says they can build it for under $10,000. Keep asking and you may find someone great who will build it for under $5,000.

How do you budget your time to develop a website? I’ve developed several websites, both in law firms where I’ve worked and at Lawyers Mutual. I can tell you that I always underestimate the time needed to create content. While your website company can create your design or build a template, you have to decide what your message will be. The default for most lawyers is to build a site that talks about them, where they attended school, their accolades and their areas of practice often in terms that only other lawyers understand. Instead, think about building a website that is client focused and answers the questions that clients have. This takes time. From the beginning of a conversation with a website designer to the launch of a new website, you are probably talking 3-8 months, depending on how much content you put on your website, and how committed you are to meeting the deadlines that will get you to a launch date faster.

Spend time viewing lawyer websites, viewing websites of companies that you frequent online or websites that you love to get ideas of what to avoid and what to do.

Additional questions will arise during the building of the website. If you don’t have a firm logo, do you want to create one? How much of the back-end work do you want to be able to do on your website? Do you want to have to pay a company for every change that is made or do you want the ability to manage some of the changes yourself?

This is also a good time to consider writing a blog and including it on your website or participating in social media and sharing that on your website.

Some lawyers would say websites are optional. I believe there’s a better answer than that. WBF
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INAUGURAL BOWLING EVENT A BIG SUCCESS

LAST SUMMER, the Wake County Bar Association’s Athletics and Social Committees hosted a joint event called “Bowling and Beer” at The Alley on Hillsborough Street in Raleigh. By all accounts, it was a successful and action-packed evening of fun, friendly wagers and smelly shoes. More than 50 of our members from the bench, law firms, in-house and solo-practice mingled, dined and competed for several hours.

Although no formal champion was crowned at the event, the team led by Judge Bob Hunter (joined by Kelly Williams, Edd Roberts and Jason Tuttle) posted some formidable scores and dominated at least one friendly competition.

Thank you to everyone who participated in and planned the event and to The Alley for offering a terrific evening of bowling, beer, pizza and wings. We look forward to more high stakes bowling next year! WBF

Shanahan Law Group is currently interviewing candidates for a North Carolina attorney position. This position requires a minimum of five years’ experience in Commercial Lending, including Commercial Real Estate, SBA loans and Banking. For information about our firm, please visit www.shanahanlawgroup.com. Interested candidates may confidentially submit their resume to Judy Oakley at joakley@shanahanlawgroup.com.
THE SEVENTH ANNUAL WAKE BAR AWARDS were held in October and were a huge success. Each year we’ve been told “Legal Aid needs your help so much it’s not funny” – this year, we rose to the challenge and the event itself was absolutely hilarious. The Wake County Bar Awards Planning Committee helped our Association raise a record-breaking amount of $50,001!

The local “celebrities” of the legal community were roasted, hosted and made us fall out of our chairs laughing. Highlights included a certain outgoing President proving his musical abilities and MC skills, a pop music rendition with cups presentation by a group of special judges, and many group and solo acts. We certainly have a lot of talent in our Bar Association. If you would like to check out the “Cups” song or other favorite performances from the Bar Awards, go to the Wake County Bar Association channel on YouTube, where this and other notable WCBA moments are catalogued.

A special thank you to all the sponsors, performers, volunteers, silent auction donors, and of course, the Planning Committee. WBF
WCBA MEMBER NEWS

Mital M. Patel has joined Wyrick Robbins Yates & Ponton LLP’s emerging growth companies practice. Mital graduated, cum laude, with a BS in Computer Science from NC State University in 2005 and received his JD from Elon University School of Law in 2009 as a member of its Charter Class. He is an entrepreneur himself, as the founder of Triangle Business Law, a boutique law firm focused on the needs of entrepreneurs in the Research Triangle region. Among his many initiatives, Mital is a lead organizer of the Triangle instances of Startup Weekend and of Startup North Carolina. At Wyrick Robbins, he will continue his focus on services to entrepreneurial companies.

Williams Mullen is pleased to announce that experienced business attorney Phillip B. Kennedy has re-joined Williams Mullen as a Partner in the Business and Corporate section. He will be working out of the Raleigh office.

Mr. Kennedy’s practice is focused on general corporate matters, commercial transactions, corporate finance, public and private equity, mergers and acquisitions, strategic planning, public disclosure compliance and international law. Prior to joining Williams Mullen, Mr. Kennedy served as Assistant General Counsel for a global manufacturer and supplier of products used in the pulp and paper industry.

Smith Moore Leatherwood attorney Matthew Nis Leerberg was recently certified by the North Carolina State Bar as an Appellate Practice Specialist. Leerberg is one of only 29 lawyers in the state who have achieved this distinction, joining fellow Smith Moore Leatherwood attorneys Beth Brooks Scherer and James G. Exum, Jr. as board-certified, Appellate Practice Specialists.

The 2015 Edition of U.S. News - Best Lawyers® “Best Law Firms” has ranked Cranfill Sumner & Hartzog LLP (CSH Law) as a Metropolitan Tier 1, Tier 2 and Tier 3 law firm in multiple practice areas. This is the second consecutive year that all three CSH Law offices received a Tier 1 ranking from U.S. News - Best Lawyers® “Best Law Firms.” In addition, CSH Law practice groups in Raleigh and Charlotte received more rankings in Tier 1 or Tier 2 than in previous years. The firm has also launched a website for its Workers’ Compensation Practice Group. It was unveiled during the firm’s 2014 Client Education Conference: Workers’ Compensation & General Liability Law Updates. The site includes workers’ compensation resources such as a blog, E-Alerts for updates on workers’ compensation law, a listing of continuing education courses and references including materials such as a downloadable copy of the NC Workers’ Comp 2014 Quick Reference Guide. http://www.cshworkerscomp.com.


Smith Debnam announced that three of the firm’s partners, Rose H. Stout, John W. Narron, and W. Thurston Debnam, Jr., have once again been recognized among the nation’s top lawyers in the 21st Edition of The Best Lawyers in America®. This edition marks the ninth straight year that Stout and Narron have earned a spot on the list for their work in family law, and the second year in a row Debnam has been listed for his work in corporate law.

Anna Hedgepeth, Business Development and Marketing Manager for Cranfill Sumner & Hartzog LLP, was recently named the Member of the Year for the Southeast Chapter of the Legal Marketing Association (LMASE) at the LMASE Regional Conference in Nashville. In addition, the LMASE Raleigh City Group was named City Group of the Year.

Anna has been active in the LMASE Raleigh City Group since 2012 and has assisted with various roles including sponsorships and spearheaded the first LMASE Cares event in August at the Ronald McDonald House of Durham. She will serve as Chair-Elect of the Raleigh City Group beginning in January.
### WELCOME NEW MEMBERS:
**THE NEWEST MEMBERS APPROVED AT THE DECEMBER 2014 MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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Leslie Marion | Smith Debnam Narron Drake
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Kayla Marshall | Smith Anderson Blount Dorsett
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Giles Rhodenhisser
Judge Anita Richardson | US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
Ian Richardson | Law Office of Daniel T. Barker
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Amanda Sherin | Poyner Spruill LLP
Grier Simmons
The Wake County Bar Association Young Lawyers Division successfully completed the Fifteenth Annual Clothing Drive, which ran November 17 through December 5. The clothing collection, sorting and distribution took place on December 5-6 in donated space at the Morrisville Outlet Mall. The drive collected thousands of gently used clothing, linen and household items, which were donated to 13 local charities: The Bargain Box, Brooks Avenue Church of Christ, Catholic Parish Outreach, Dress for Success, Durham Rescue Mission, First Baptist Church, The Healing Place, Helping Hand, Holly Hill Hospital, Raleigh Rescue Mission, Salvation Army, Vidas de Esperanza and World Relief. Thank you for the generous donations, and a special thank you to all of those who donated time, services and muscle throughout the drive. The generosity of spirit from the WCBA community made this year’s drive an overwhelming success.

UPCOMING SOCIAL
Don’t forget to save the date for our February Social on Thursday, February 5 at Zinda: New Asian, located at 301 Fayetteville Street from 6-8pm.