2009 MCBA President Pat Sefton

Our country is probably experiencing one of the greatest economic downturns in most of our lifetimes. During these times the poor, and the charities that serve that the poor, often get the harshest brunt of the downturn. If we reflect on why we chose to be a lawyer, I suspect most of us would say that we entered the profession with the idea that we wanted to be able to help people. As lawyers, we are really blessed with the opportunity to not only help people, but often succeed economically while we are doing it.

I consistently see fellow Montgomery lawyers involved in individual acts of community service and charity. That makes me proud to be a lawyer. While all of this is admirable, I think it is also important that our bar collectively participate in charity and community service. The goal was set more than three years ago under the leadership of Judge Jimmy Pool and Don Jones to begin an annual charity fund raiser that would involve all the lawyers in Montgomery working together to benefit a particular charity to be selected annually by the Board of Directors of the Montgomery County Bar Association. That project has been tremendously successful over the past three years, and we have raised close to $80,000 for charities during that time. A primary goal of mine this year is to continue expansion of those efforts. This year, MCBA’s Board has chosen Brantwood Children’s Home as the designated charity for our fund raiser. The event will be April 18 at Wynlakes, and I urge you to plan on attending and considering an additional sponsorship on behalf of yourself or Your law firm. More information concerning this event appears in this month’s edition.

Our Board will evaluate this year what additional efforts we can undertake to increase participation by Montgomery lawyers in the Alabama State Bar Volunteer Lawyer Program. Nobody can argue that there is a significant need for basic legal services for many in our community that cannot be met by any means other than lawyers simply giving their time without charge. It is my hope that people will reflect on this year, perhaps the worst economic times in fifty years, as a milestone in charity and service from the lawyers of Montgomery. When you are called upon to donate and serve (and you will be), please remember what it was that caused you to become a lawyer.

Finally, our Board will be undertaking the process of developing a strategic plan for the next three years. We welcome your input and please speak with any of our Board members or officers with any ideas you may have. I can be reached by email at psefton@sasserlawfirm.com or by phone at 532-3400. I look forward to serving you this year. Thanks again for your confidence.

Pat Sefton

I want to take this opportunity as my term begins to thank you for allowing me to serve as your President for the coming year. I have heard many lawyers and judges that I respect make the comment that they participate in the activities of the Bar because they “just like lawyers.” I must say that is the best explanation for why I decided to involve myself in the Montgomery County Bar Association. Most of my friends are lawyers and I like being with my friends.

It is with that thought that when I was asked to jot down a few of my goals for our Association this year, it occurred to me that we ought to be about the business of continuing to provide opportunities for lawyers to meet, greet, and be friends. Technology is great but it is far easier to work with another lawyer in person that you know well than it is to “shoot” an email to someone you’ve never met-- let alone spoken with on the telephone. As a result, my first goal alone spoken with on the telephone. As a result, my first goal will be to encourage even more opportunities for lawyers and judges to interact outside the practice of law. We will have a number of opportunities for fellowship this year and I encourage you (and particularly lawyers new to our Bar) to participate.

What the world needs is a desk that flushes!
My term as President of the Montgomery County Bar Association has now ended. I was pleased to learn that my overall approval rating upon leaving office was slightly higher than that of President Bush when his term ended recently.

In all seriousness, it was a pleasure and a huge honor to have the opportunity to serve the MCBA in 2008. There is no doubt that the MCBA is a strong organization moving in the right direction. As in any organization, younger members are a major key to future success. The energy and the commitment of numerous young MCBA lawyers to help our organization and our entire community was inspiring. Additionally, the energy and commitment from the “older” lawyers, specifically the members of the “50 Year Club” is simply amazing. During the last year, I have had the opportunity to learn about numerous lawyers within the “50 Year Club”, and the contributions of those men and women can never be exceeded. They were great lawyers and great people. Montgomery County has been very fortunate to have so many incredible lawyers practice in this area, but it is clear that we have many outstanding lawyers in Montgomery County now and will in the future.

At this point, Pat Sefton will take over the role as President of the MCBA. He is a fantastic guy who will push the MCBA to higher levels. However, he cannot do it alone. I ask every member of the MCBA to pledge to help this year, whether it be in the charity fundraisers, the CLE programs, the community involvement programs, or any of our numerous events and activities.

In closing, I want to thank each of you for the opportunity to serve the MCBA. It will be a lifetime memory for me, as it has been such an honor to serve an organization comprised of so many outstanding people.

Past President, Alex Holtsford, is presented with a plaque by incoming President, Pat Sefton.

Frank McFadden, honored for 50 yrs. As a lawyer.

The Alabama Supreme Court in October approved several amendments to the Alabama Rules of Civil Procedure. Among the changes are (1) requirements that email addresses be included on the certificate of service under Rule 5; (2) that electronic filings are included within the three day additional time period contemplated in Rule 6; (3) subjecting electronic signatures to the requirements of Rule 11 applicable to a manually signed pleading; (4) allowing clerk’s entries of default to be made electronically; and (5) providing that electronic transmission of an order by a judge constitutes both rendition and entry of an order. Similarly, entry of an order into the State Judicial Information System now constitutes entry of an order under Rule 59.1.


December 1, 2008 a new face and voice greeted the callers and visitors to the MCBA office. Dot Robinson, also a former teacher, comes to MCBA from Heritage Baptist Church where she was the receptionist and ministry assistant to Senior Adults for two years. Dot is married to Joe Robinson. She has a son and daughter-in-law and the cutest granddaughter ever born. (Just ask to see the pictures.) Dot has a family of attorneys and attorneys-to-be; her son works at the Federal Court House and is in law school. Dot enjoys serving the members.
Les Bon Temps
Montgomery County Bar Association’s
4th Annual Charity Event
Saturday, April 18, 2009
6:00 pm-9:00 pm
Wynlakes Golf and Country Club
To benefit Brantwood Children’s Home

Platinum Sponsor: $2,000, 12 complimentary tickets
Gold Sponsor: $1,000, 8 complimentary tickets
Silver Sponsor: $500, 4 complimentary tickets
Bronze Sponsor: $250, 2 complimentary tickets

Make checks payable to The Alabama Civil Justice Foundation
The ACJF is a tax exempt foundation; your contribution should be tax deductible.

New Board Members Elected at Annual Meeting

The Montgomery County Bar Association’s Annual Meeting was a time of transition in the leadership and a time of recognition for deceased attorneys and attorneys attaining the 50 year mark in the legal profession.

Outgoing President, Alex Holtsford (pictured below) recognized those attorneys who have passed away in the past year and presented framed memorial certificates to the family members who were honored guests at the luncheon. Those attorneys who were remembered are: Robert Coleman Black, William Styne Brewbaker, Jr., Margaret Scholten Childers, Douglas Charles Freeman, Leonard Gilbert Kendrick, Albert Lewis Roemer, Donald Eugene Spencer, Jr., Samuel Wayne Taylor, and Calvin Mercer Whitesell, Jr.

Those honored for fifty years of legal practice were Charles Swinger Conley and Frank Hampton McFadden. A brass star paper weight engraved with the attorney’s name and the date admitted to the Alabama State Bar was presented to each.

Bill Robertson, MCBA Young Lawyer President, introduced Kim Herbert, Director of Brantwood Children’s Home (pictured below). Ms. Herbert thanked the MCBA for choosing Brantwood as the charity recipient for this year’s MCBA Annual Charity Event. She expressed how timely this gift would be as they are in need of new vans to transport the children to various activities.

Incoming MCBA President, Pat Sefton introduced the keynote speaker. Judge Mark Fuller is the Chief United States District for the Middle District of Alabama. Judge Fuller (pictured below) informed the members of trends in Federal Court cases and updates in technology in the Federal courtrooms.

Alex Holtsford announced the results of the Board elections. Kendall Dunson was unopposed and will be the Secretary/Treasurer. Karen Chambless was reelected to the Board; new members of the Board are Adrian Johnson and Ben Schoettker.
MCBA is pleased to offer these CLE programs at no cost to our members. You must pre-register for these classes. Call 265-4793 or email dotrobinson@mc-ala.org to register. More programs will be listed at a later date. The cost for Non-members is $50 per hour.

Feb. 17 (Tues.) Financial Tips for the Self-Employed Attorney—David Gallahar (Morgan Keegan) 1 hr.

Mar. 5 (Thurs.) Elder Law: Medicaid & Estate Dispensation—Bill Butler (Alabama Medicaid Division) 1 hr.

Mar. 19 (Thurs.) DUI and Traffic Laws Update—Patrick Mahaney—(Law Office of Patrick Mahaney) 1 hr.

Apr. 1 (Wed.) Workers’ Compensation Law Update—Ben Pool—(Law Office of Ben E. Pool) 1 hr.

Apr. 16 (Thurs.) Social Security Disability Law and Ethics—Brenda Vann—(Office of Brenda Vann) 1 hr.

Apr. 29 (Wed.) Putative Father’s Rights—Shirley D. Howell, Professor, Jones School of Law—1 hr.

May 14 (Thurs.) Alabama Guest Suit Statute—Alex Holtsford, Nix, Holtsford, Gilliland, Higgins, & Hitson 1 hr.

May 28 (Thurs.) Handling Client Trust Accounts—Sam Partridge, Alabama State Bar

Make your reservations today.