Parting Thoughts from the President

As my term as President of our bar concludes, I want to thank you for allowing me to serve in this position. It has truly been an honor to represent the lawyers of Montgomery during the past year. I believe we have met many goals we set at the beginning of the year. These goals could not have possibly been met without the outstanding support of our other officers, Paul Clark and Kendall Dunson, along with the great support provided by our Board of Directors. Most of all, thanks to our Executive Director, Suzanne Duffey, and her assistant and Docket editor, Dot Robinson.

As you know, one of our biggest goals was to increase the level of organized pro bono activity by the members of our bar. We created the first ever pro bono legal clinic that has now been in operation two months. We hope this will continue to develop into a long term and successful program of the Montgomery County Bar Association. Please try to commit this year to volunteering for the clinic at least one month this year.

Another goal that we hope to meet by the end of March 2010 is to have at least 40% of our bar register with the Alabama State Bar Volunteer Lawyers Program. Currently, we have approximately 20% of our lawyers enrolled and so we need 100 more lawyers to step up to the plate. If you are a member, thank you. If you are not, please consider completing the registration form that is included in this newsletter. The registration takes less than 5 minutes.

Common concerns I hear from lawyers about registering with the VLP are that they will be assigned a matter outside of their practice area or that they will unwittingly create a conflict that will prevent them from handling their usual clients' cases or even that they may not be covered for a malpractice claim. All of these concerns are unfounded. As you will note, you are allowed to specify practice areas for which you will handle pro bono cases (most of which take less than 10 hours). The State Bar has enacted special conflict rules that minimize any potential conflicts or disqualifications from handling a subsequent matter on behalf of or adverse to a party involved in your VLP matter. While most malpractice policies expressly cover pro bono matters, the State Bar provides coverage for malpractice while performing services on behalf of the VLP. I really encourage you to register for the VLP and encourage other colleagues to do the same.

Finally, I congratulate Paul Clark on being elected President of our bar for 2010. Paul is a great lawyer and will do a fantastic job leading our bar in 2010! He has lots on his plate with continuing the legal clinic and planning the Fifth Annual Charity Fundraiser in addition to all of the other usual programs our bar offers. Please help him by volunteering.

Best wishes for a healthy and prosperous 2010.  

Pat
Faulkner University’s Jones School of Law Becomes Third Accredited Law School in Alabama

Faulkner University’s Jones School of Law has been granted full approval by the American Bar Association (ABA) as an accredited institution of legal education, according to Dean Charles Nelson. The decision was handed down from the ABA Dec. 6. The ABA approval makes Jones School of Law only the third accredited law school in Alabama. “This is a significant milestone for the school and one which marks us an outstanding law school. It not only allows our graduates to take the bar exam in every state, but it also means that we will draw students to the school from every state and from foreign jurisdictions,” says Nelson.

Governor Bob Riley commended the University on its accomplishment: “I congratulate Jones School of Law on receiving ABA accreditation. It is essential that we have an institution here in the Capital City providing quality legal education and producing outstanding lawyers.” Andy Matthews, Assistant Dean for Student Services, concurs with Cobb concerning the impact of the ABA approval: “The Law School’s ABA approval will have positive, far-reaching economic and educational implications for the River Region and state of Alabama,” Matthews explains that providing a nationally recognized legal education program in Montgomery will add to the academic reputation of the area attracting highly qualified faculty and students. These faculty and students will contribute as a resource not only to the legal community, but also to the local community, enhancing the economic growth of Montgomery. Currently, the Law School’s class of first-year students is comprised of 150 students who hail from 22 states. Fifty percent of the class are out-of-state students.

Since its initial application for accreditation, Jones School of Law has maintained a significant record of growth and accomplishment that includes a vast amount of scholarly publication by its faculty and consistently high bar passage rate among its students. The Law School has been ranked by National Jurist publication as a “Best Value” law school which is based on a combination of tuition rate, employment rate, and bar passage rate and has been ranked by preLaw magazine in the top 50 law schools for clinical opportunities; The Princeton Review also includes the Law School in its “Best Law School” edition each year.

MCBA HOLIDAY GALA

Once again the members of MCBA expressed their generosity by donating 250 toys for Toys for Tots.

Shown are (left) MCBA Executive Director, Suzanne Duffey with the Marines who collected the toys, and (right) Adrian and Mandy Johnson.
Meet the Candidates—Secretary/Treasurer

Mike Winter

Mike Winter is a solo practitioner with Winter Legal Strategies, LLC. Currently he serves on the Board of Directors for the Montgomery County Bar Association. Mike is also a District Vice-President for the Alabama Criminal Defense Lawyers Association (ACDLA). In recent years, he has received a Merit Award and a President’s Award from ACDLA. Mike specializes in criminal and appellate law.

Mike Winter has also been elected to the Board for the Federal Bar Association. In law school, he served as President of the Student Bar Association, earned the award as the most outstanding member of his class, graduated magna cum laude, and worked as an editor on the Law Review for two years. His first job in the legal field was as a law clerk to the Chief Justice of the Alabama Supreme Court.

Mike’s goal for the MCBA is to continue the progress achieved by the great officers that he has worked with— in terms of improving collegiality and their service to the community. Mike is participating in the new Volunteer Lawyer Program with the MCBA and State Bar.

Adrian Johnson

Adrian D. Johnson is an attorney with the firm of Parnell & Crum, P.A. where he practices in the areas of insurance subrogation, commercial litigation, and construction litigation. A graduate of Auburn University and the Cumberland School of Law, Mr. Johnson was admitted to the Bar in 2001 and served as law clerk to the Honorable John B. Bush. Mr. Johnson currently serves on the Board of Directors of the Montgomery County Bar and served as President of the Young Lawyers Section of the MCBA from 2006-2008. He was a member of the Class IV of the Alabama State Bar Leadership Forum and currently serves on the Alabama State Bar Judicial Liaison Committee and History and Archives Committee. Adrian is a member of the Hugh Maddox Inn of Court. In addition to his professional activities, he is active in the community. He was appointed by Governor Riley to the Black Belt Action Commission, and he serves as President of the Advisory Council for the Family Service Center in Lowndes County. Adrian and his wife, the former Mandy Jones of Montgomery, are members of Hayneville Baptist Church where he is a deacon and Sunday School teacher.

This is Your Organization

At Montgomery County Bar Association we serve at your pleasure. The organization is only as strong as its members. We strive to make the CLE programs relevant and to provide plenty of opportunities for members to network and socialize, as well as to serve the community. If you have ideas for CLE programs, please share them with us. If you wish to serve on a committee, please talk with Suzanne Duffey, our Executive Director. Our website is another way that we are trying to serve you. If you do not have your photo in the pictorial directory, please send us one or call our office to schedule a time for Suzanne to take your picture. Be sure to get your areas of practice listed on the website, too. This is free advertising. We appreciate you and want to make our Bar the best in the State. Contact us as 265-4793 or Suzanneduffey@mc-ala.org or Dotrobinson@mc-ala.org.
Meet the Candidates—MCBA Board of Directors

Monet McCorvey Gaines

Monet McCorvey Gaines is a native of Montgomery, Alabama. She received her JD from the University of Alabama School of Law in 2001. Since then she has worked as a Law Clerk for the U.S. Dept. of Housing & Urban Development Board of Contract Appeals in Washington, D.C. and as an associate with the firm Thomas, Means, Gillis, & Seay, in Montgomery. Currently Monet works for the Attorney General’s Office in the Opinions Division. Monet is an active member of her community; she serves on the Board of Directors for St. James School and as the Den Leader for Cub Scout Pack 207, which is affiliated with Aldersgate Church. During her spare time Monet enjoys spending time with her husband, JR, and their two children, Trey and Michaela.

Rhon E. Jones

Rhon Jones manages the Toxic Torts Section of Beasley, Allen, Crow, Methvin, Portis, and Miles, P.C. He has also maintained a consumer/insurance, business litigation and class action practice. He has authored approximately 20 papers on various legal issues and has been a speaker for numerous legal seminars. Rhon has also served as an adjunct Professor at Jones School of Law. He was also a law clerk to Federal District Judge Robert Varner.

Rhon Jones earned his B.A. from Auburn University and his JD from the University of Alabama. He serves on the Executive Committee of the Alabama Trial Lawyers Association and is Chairman of the Litigation Section of the Alabama State Bar. He serves on the board of the Family Sunshine Center, and is a member and Sunday School teacher at First Baptist Church.

Jayne Harrell Williams

Jayne Harrell Williams, a Montgomery native, is a shareholder with Hill, Hill, Carter, Franco, Cole, and Black. She is a graduate of Florida A&M University and Georgetown University Law Center. The bulk of Jayne’s practice is devoted to representing school boards across the state. She primarily handles cases involving employee discipline and employment discrimination defense. She is currently Chairperson of the Montgomery County Bar Association’s Grievance Committee and is Vice-President of the Alabama Council of School Board Attorneys. She is married to Anthony Williams, and they have one son, Miles Davis.
MCBA YLS NEWS—LOOKING BACK...LOOKING AHEAD

Bill Robertson, President, MCBA YLS

One of the many reasons I cherish this time of year is because it is a season of reflection. I am not sure if it is the ending of another calendar year, or the spirit of the holiday season that causes us to look back on times past and take stock of our lives. Whatever the reason, we can all be proud to look back on the achievements of the MCBA and be thankful for the many great things it does for the public and for us as lawyers.

As for the YLS, it has been another great year for our section. We continued our spirit of giving by way of our annual charity golf tournament where we donated $4,300 to Brantwood Children’s Home. We also continued with out commitments to fellowship and networking through several socials and our annual Braves trip. Thanks to all of you who helped make this past year another successful year for our section.

Looking ahead to next year, it will be another busy year for the YLS. In addition to our golf tournament, Braves trip, and our socials, we will be having our first annual meeting and social in February as well as our bi-annual elections in September. The first annual meeting and social event will take place the evening of Thursday, February 11th at the new Alley Station ballroom located in the new alley downtown (above Saza). This will be a worthwhile event for all young lawyers to attend, as it includes a brief meeting followed by live entertainment as well as food and refreshments.

As I have stated before, the YLS benefits tremendously from your input, attendance and most importantly, your involvement. Therefore, I hope all MCBA young lawyers will make plans to attend this event to help our organization get started in the right direction for 2010. If you have any questions, please contact any of the YLS officers, specifically: YLS President, Bill Robertson (bill.robertson@beasleyallen.com), YLS Vice-President, Louis Calligas (lcalligas@balch.com), or YLS Secretary/Treasurer, Megan McCarthy (mmcarthy@nixholtsford.com). We hope to see you on February 11th.

Bill Robertson, YLS President

MCBA HOLIDAY GALA

Below, Mr. and Mrs. George Schrader enjoy the festivities. Right, Jeff Duffey and Judy Van Heest chat.
FA-LA-LA
HOLIDAY FUN
AT MCBA GALA

The members of the Montgomery County Bar Association once again displayed their generosity by giving 250 gifts for the Toys for Tots drive. Members of the U.S. Marine Corps were on hand to accept the gifts. Pictured below are new members Barry White and Mark Smith with their wives.
To many people, the start of the New Year signals a clean slate. The days ahead feel full of potential. This is why it is traditional to make a New Year’s Resolution or two. As you consider your resolutions, I’d like to urge you to make Access to Justice a priority.

Since deciding to emphasize this important service during my term as Bar President, I have been encouraged by the response from lawyers throughout the state. During the Pro Bono Week in October, lawyers in every judicial circuit participated in activities to provide free legal services to the poor, or to raise awareness about pro bono programs available in their community. More than 3,200 hours of service were contributed during Pro Bono Week alone, totaling more than $400,000.

Building on this momentum, the Montgomery County Bar Association (MCBA) Pro Bono Committee, with the Alabama State Bar Volunteer Lawyer Program (VLP), has implemented a pilot program in Montgomery County to provide a monthly free legal services clinic. The clinic will operate on the first Tuesday of each month and began in November 2009. Volunteer lawyers were able to help 36 people at the first two clinics. Each life we touch will have such an impact on other, and on the community. Our work helps make Alabama a better place for all of us to live.

The VLP is an important tool to provide free legal services to the poor, or to raise awareness about pro bono programs available in their community. More than 3,200 hours of service were contributed during Pro Bono Week alone, totaling more than $400,000.

Additional information about the VLP is available at the Alabama State Bar website. Three thousand attorneys are currently participating in the VLP. I was particularly encouraged to learn that at Beasley Allen’s recent Legal Strategies Conference, we had almost 80 new attorneys join the VLP. That is outstanding! If you have already joined, won’t you consider putting this at the top of your New Year’s Resolution list?

Many people say that a society should be judged on how it treats the least among them. As lawyers, we are leaders of society and have a duty to try to help the less fortunate. Through your continued service, we will continue to be able to provide true access to justice for “the least of these” in our community.

Tom Methvin, President, Alabama State Bar, 2010

“Many people say that a society should be judged on how it treats the least among them. As lawyers, we... have a duty to try to help the less fortunate.”

Tom Methvin

MCBA Annual Meeting and Board Elections

January 21, 2010 at 12:00 p.m. at Wynlakes Country Club

Cost for luncheon- $20 each– Reservations are required.

You do not have to attend the meeting to vote for Board Officers and Directors. You may cast your votes at the MCBA office in the Law Library, 4th Floor of the main Courthouse, January 18, 19, and 20 between 8:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. and between 1:00 p.m. and 4:30 p.m. You may attend the meeting without eating.
January 2010
Montgomery County Bar Association
P.O. Box 72
Montgomery, AL 36101-0072

Phone: 334-265-4793
Fax: 334-265-9536
Www.alabar.org

The Montgomery County Bar Association
Annual Meeting
January 21, 2010
Noon
Wynlakes Country Club
You must RSVP and pre-pay for your lunch.
Cost- $20.00 for lunch

Reservation:
Name_____________________________  Pd. Cash___  check #_________
Firm ____________________________________________________________

Firms may send one check, but must list the members’ names.