Looking Back, Moving Forward

By Ben Schoettker, MCBA President

January is the time for reflecting on what we accomplished in the previous year and the renewed hope for greater achievements in the coming year. It was an honor to serve as the President of the MCBA in 2014. What we were able to accomplish is a reflection of the people that make up this great organization. I want to thank all of the officers, board members, Suzanne Dufey, Dot Robinson and each one of you for all the time, money and effort put forth in 2014. A leader is only as good as the people that surround him. This organization thrives because of each of you, so give yourselves a big round of applause. I am confident that the coming year will be one of the finest ever as Cowin Knowles will be serving as President.

As a group we were able to give back to our community in a big way in 2014. Our annual charity event raised over $60,000.00 that will be used to provide much needed social services for people in great need. Our Women’s Section, which was headed by Roianne Conner, in 2014 participated in the Joy to Life 5k Walk for Life, and participated in the Job Fair by collecting work clothing for people seeking employment. The Young Lawyers Section headed by Allen Sheehan put on their first annual Skeet Shoot Fundraiser for the Montgomery VLP. We provided Christmas presents to children in need through the Toys for Tots program. The MCBA has always given back and this year we did more than ever. Many thanks to those who helped; if you were unable to last year, please consider getting involved in events like these in 2015. It would be a great New Year’s resolution.

Of course there were plenty of opportunities to socialize with one another throughout the year at events like Coffee with the Judges, Biscuits Baseball Thirsty Thursday, Golf at Arrowhead Country Club, Baron’s Baseball in Birmingham, women’s section manicure/pedicure party (only one man showed up and I will leave him nameless), the women’s section family barbecue, and other socials at places like the Railyard Brewing Company and The Pine Bar. Make it a point in 2015 to get out and meet with your fellow lawyers.

The CLE opportunities in 2014 included our annual Bench and Bar program, a full day of legal CLE’s on the AUM campus, an advanced DUI clinic at Jones Law School, and many other free CLEs presented in the county courthouse.

(continued p. 4)
The MCBA Holiday Gala

Top left: MCBA members always give generously to the U.S. Marine Corps’ Toys for Tots drive.

Top right: Frank and Melissa Snowden with the Marines

The Montgomery County Bar Association

Award for Service and Achievement

The MCBA Award for Service and Achievement annually recognizes a Montgomery Lawyer who has distinguished himself or herself through service to the bar and the community. The Award honors a lawyer who demonstrates the highest standard of professionalism and is respected by his or her peers for their outstanding legal ability.

Nominee: ________________________________________________
Nominating Attorney: _______________________________________

Name Phone Number

Please explain why you are nominating this person. Attach additional pages if needed.

Deadline for Nominations: January 5, 2015
Award to be presented at the MCBA Annual Meeting in January 2015.

Mail Nominations to: Suzanne Duffey

  c/o Montgomery County Bar Association
  P.O Box 72
  Montgomery, AL 36104
(President’s column continued from p. 1)

Finally, the Montgomery Volunteer Lawyer Program continued to grow. Montgomery Bar Foundation President Tim Gallagher was presented with the Volunteer Lawyer of the Year Award leading the charge in initiating a new District Court Help Desk that will serve residents of Montgomery County in civil matters. The VLP increased the number of individuals served by more than 65 percent over last year. We still need more attorneys and law firms to participate, as the number of people seeking services is increasing.

Again I want to thank each of you for your participation in the MCBA in 2014 and wish you the greatest success in 2015.

Ben

MCBA President 2014
Candidates for Secretary/Treasurer

RHON JONES

Rhon is seeking election for Secretary/Treasurer of MCBA after serving as a Board of Directors member. Rhon is a lead attorney at Beasley, Allen, Crow, Methvin, Portis, & Miles, P.C. and has been one of the top environmental attorneys for plaintiffs in the nation. Since early 2010 he has devoted his practice to victims of the BP Oil Spill. He played a crucial role in the negotiation of the settlement for all business claims. Rhon has also represented plaintiffs damaged by a massive coal ash spill that decimated the area around the TVA Kingston Fossil Plant in 2008. He has authored more than 30 articles and papers for publication.

Rhon is an Advisory Board Member of the Family Sunshine Center, whose mission is to prevent domestic abuse. He is also a former member of the Board of Directors of the Janice Capilouto Center for the Deaf. He continues to actively support both. He is a graduate of Auburn University and The University of Alabama School of Law. He and his family attend and serve at First Baptist Church in Montgomery. He and his wife have four children.

TAMIKA MILLER

Tamika R. Miller is a native of Orlando, Florida. She graduated cum laude from Florida A&M University with a B.A. degree in Political Science in 2005 and graduated from Faulkner University, Thomas Goode Jones School of Law in 2010. While in law school Ms. Miller clerked for Hon. A. Kelli Wise, Justice for the Supreme Court of Alabama, served as the Editor-in-chief for the Jones Corner, a monthly article in the Docket – a publication by the Montgomery County Bar Association, and President of the Ernestine S. Sapp chapter of the Black Law Students Association (BLSA) among many other roles within the organization and throughout the law school campus. In addition, to her clerkship and many civic duties Ms. Miller was employed with the law firm of Vonda K. Bonham in Selma, Alabama, and C.F. Brock & Associates in Austell, Georgia. Ms. Miller was admitted into the Alabama State Bar in 2010. Upon graduation from law school she served as the clerk to the Hon. Judge Charles Price, Presiding Judge for the Montgomery County Circuit Court-15th Judicial Circuit, while serving pro bono clients through the Alabama State Bar Volunteer Lawyers Program. Ms. Miller currently is a partner with Miller Smith, LLC and works primarily in the practice areas of criminal defense, civil litigation, consumer-defense and bankruptcy.

Ms. Miller serves as a board member for the March of Dimes-Central Chapter, commissioner on the Montgomery County Pre-Trial Diversion Citizens Commission, along with serving clients through the Montgomery Volunteer Lawyers Program.
Candidates for MCBA Board of Directors

JIM BECK

Jim Beck is an attorney at Hill, Hill, Carter, Franco, Cole & Black, P.C. where he has practiced since 2009. His practice focuses on general and complex litigation as well as administrative law matters.

Jim is an active member of the Montgomery County Bar Association’s Young Lawyers Section, the Alabama State Bar Volunteer Lawyers Program, the Hugh Maddox Inns of Court, and he serves on the Alabama State Bar’s Veterans Support Task Force. Jim is also active in the Montgomery community as a member of the YMCA Boys Work Committee, a member of the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts Junior Executive Board, and an alumnus of Emerge Montgomery. Jim also enjoys coaching high school trial teams as part of the Alabama Youth Judicial program.

TIM GALLAGHER

Timothy J. Gallagher is a shareholder with the firm of Sasser, Sefton, & Brown, P.C. He practices primarily in the areas of commercial litigation, public utilities law, banking law, and creditor rights. Tim currently serves as the President of the Montgomery County Bar Foundation Volunteer Lawyers Program. As President of the Foundation, Tim has worked closely with the MCBA Board of Directors to increase and improve pro bono legal services in Montgomery. He is also a member of the Alabama State Bar Pro Bono and Public Service Committee, as well as the Pro Bono Celebration Task Force.

Tim is involved with the Jimmy Hitchcock Award Committee, American Red Cross, Relay for Life, and Habitat for Humanity, to name a few organizations. He is a graduate of the University of Alabama School of Law and Rollins College in Winter Park, FL.

FELICIA LONG

Felicia Long is a shareholder at Hill, Hill, Carter, Franco, Cole, & Black, P.C., where she focuses her practice on complex civil litigation and insurance defense matters. Felicia also maintains an appellate practice and has argued before the United States Court of Appeals, 11th Circuit. Prior to joining the firm, she practiced with another civil defense firm in the state and served as Law Clerk to Associate Justice Champ Lyons, Jr., Supreme Court of Alabama.

Felicia has been active with the Montgomery County Bar Association for a number of years, including serving as the chairman of the bar association’s annual charity event for several years. She is also active in the community and currently serves on the Junior League of Montgomery Board of Directors, Frazer Memorial United Methodist Church Board of Trustees, Metro YMCA Board of Directors, Red Cross of Central Alabama Board of Directors, and is a member of the Hugh Maddox Inns of Court. Over the past several years, she has also enjoyed teaching the youth in our community about the judicial system by serving as a coach for the Alabama Youth Judicial program.
Candidates for MCBA Board of Directors

SAM MCLURE

Sam McLure is originally from Marianna, Florida. He moved to Montgomery in 2004, and graduated from Huntingdon College with a B.A. in Business Administration. After graduating *cum laude* from The Faulkner University Jones School of Law in 2011, he established The Adoption Law Firm—a firm dedicated to zealously advocating for orphaned children to be adopted into loving homes. Sam and his wife, Mary Beth, were inspired to advocate for orphaned children through the adoption of their first son, Robi. Prior to the establishment of The Adoption Law Firm, he worked in the private sector, civil defense, and with the government.

WALLACE MILLS

Wallace D. Mills is a native of Bullock County, Alabama, and was raised in Montgomery. Wallace graduated from Saint James High School, and received his Bachelor of Arts in History, *cum laude*, from Auburn University in 1993. He received his Juris Doctor from Jones School of Law where he was a moot court finalist and served on the moot court board. Wallace has enjoyed a litigation-intensive practice, with an emphasis on federal and state employment, labor, and civil rights law as well as local government issues. Wallace was admitted to the Alabama State Bar in 1997. He is admitted to practice before the United States Supreme Court, The Eleventh U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, and the Northern, Middle, and Southern U.S. District Courts. Wallace is a Martindale-Hubbell AV rated “Preeminent” attorney and works in both the civil and criminal courts. Married to wife Kelly for 20 years, they have two children, and Wallace regularly serves as a YMCA youth soccer coach. Wallace attends Catalyst Community Church and has volunteered as youth advisor. Wallace has given his time to participate in the People’s Law School, Teen Court, Christmas in April/Rebuilding together and has been a member of the Capital City Kiwanis Club. Wallace is also an APOST-certified instructor and volunteers to teach civil rights at the Montgomery Police Academy.

SUZANAH MOORER

Suzanah Moorer is a native of Montgomery who graduated from LAMP high school in 2001. She attended the University of Alabama where she graduated *magna cum laude* and as a Blount Scholar. Upon graduation she was accepted to the Teach for America Program and moved to New Orleans, LA to teach middle school English in public school for two years. After completing the program, Suzanah returned to the University of Alabama to attend the School of Law where she was awarded the Order of the Samaritan, the Dean’s Public Interest Award, and a Certificate in Public Interest Law. After graduation, Suzanah clerked for the honorable Judge Tracy McCooey. Suzanah was hired by the Montgomery County District Attorney’s Office in 2013 to work in the juvenile division, where she continues to work. In her free time, Suzanah is an avid artist and enjoys playing the guitar.
Candidates for MCBA Board of Directors

ALLEN SHEEHAN

Allen was born and raised in Montgomery. A shareholder at Capell & Howard, P.C., he has practiced law in Montgomery and surrounding areas since 2007. Allen primarily practices general civil litigation in state and federal court. He is currently on the Board of Directors of the Kiwanis Club of Montgomery and is the immediate past president of the Montgomery County Young Lawyers Section. During his time as president of the Young Lawyers, he also served on the Board of Directors of the Montgomery County Volunteer Lawyers. In his free time, Allen enjoys writing about himself in the third person.

ASHLEY NICOLE SMITH

Ashley Nicole Smith was born and raised in Montgomery, AL. In May 2006, she graduated magna cum laude from The University of Alabama with a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and Political Science. She received her Juris Doctor from The University of Alabama School of Law in 2009 and was admitted to practice law in Alabama on September 25, 2009. She worked as a Legislative Analyst for the Alabama Legislative Reference Service for 3 years. She is licensed to practice law in Alabama, Florida, and Georgia. She is a partner at Miller Smith, LLC where she practices with Tamika Miller, Esquire.

MATTHEW WARD

Matthew Ward practices with William R. Chandler, Attorney at Law. A native of Montgomery, Matthew obtained his Bachelor’s of Science in Criminal Justice from Auburn Montgomery, where he was the Department of Justice and Public Safety’s Distinguished Honors Student.

Matthew then went on to obtain his Juris Doctor from Thomas Goode Jones School of Law in 2014. While at Jones, he was an editor of the Faulkner Law Review, the President of both the Jones Public Interest Law Foundation and American Association for Justice, the Vice-President of the Student Bar Association, and Clerk for the A. Patterson Chapter of Phi Alpha Delta. He currently serves as Clerk for the Central Alabama Alumni Chapter of Phi Alpha Delta.

Matthew is a member of the American Bar Association, the Alabama State Bar, and the MCBA, where he regularly attends and volunteers his time at the monthly pro-bono counsel and advice clinic. He was also awarded the 2014 Pro Bono Law Student Award by the Alabama State Bar’s Public Service and Pro Bono Task Force.
Young Lawyers Section Socialize  by Jesse Anderson, President

The purpose of the Young Lawyers Section is to stimulate the interest of young lawyers in Montgomery in the objectives and activities of the Montgomery County Bar Association. More simply, the YLS is supposed to act as a conduit for young lawyers to eventually be involved with the “big bar”. Thus, the YLS and the big bar are planning to have a joint social on Jan. 22nd at the Railyard Brewing Company.

While we often socialize as a separate group, it can be a good thing to comingle with the big bar after hours. Trust me, building a rapport with some of these salty veterans, like Jeff Smith, can really benefit you professionally. You can learn unique and insightful techniques that can be used in your practice of law…but mostly you’ll just hear old, outlandish trial/war stories about the “old days” and how things have changed. They used to try 2-3 jury trials per day back then, etc., etc., etc.

So, mark your calendars for after work on Jan. 22nd at the Railyard Brewing Company. The event will be sponsored by Haislip Ragan. I look forward to seeing you all there.

Happy New Year,
Jesse
YLS President 2015

Mark your calendar to attend the MCBA Winter Social

Thursday, January 22nd, 5:30-7:00
At the Railyard Brewing Company
12 W. Jefferson Street
ALL MCBA Members Welcome
New Year Brings New Opportunities

By Mike Martin, MVLP Executive Director

Happy New Year to all of you! We’re excited about 2015 and all the possibilities that are available for us to be provide legal help to the low-income clients we serve, and I invite you to join with us in making this year the best yet for the Montgomery Volunteer Lawyers Program.

It will be hard to match the growth we experienced in 2014, but with your help we can try. I’m pleased and proud to announce that we opened 332 cases last year, a 93% increase over 2013. That’s phenomenal service to our community, and it would not be possible without the dedicated attorneys who render pro bono legal assistance to those less fortunate. Thank you.

In December 2014, we began our monthly District Court Help Desk, designed to assist the self-represented litigants appearing in District Court. While we are not providing attorneys to appear in court, the Help Desk is available to help with advice and assistance with completing forms, motions, etc. The Help Desk is set for the second Monday of every month in Courtroom 2A in the Phelps-Price Justice Center, 8:30-11:30 a.m. If you can help out for as little as one hour during this time it will be of great help to us and our clients. Just give us a call at 265-0222 and let us know. A special thanks is due to District Court Presiding Judge Pamela Higgins for her assistance in helping us get this set up.

MVLP received special recognition – and a welcomed $5,000 check! – from the Beasley Allen law firm during their annual Legal Conference & Expo, when we were the recipients of the Beasley Allen Pro Bono Award. We are very appreciative of the continuing support, both financial and otherwise, that we receive from this law firm.

We also benefited from your participation in the roast of Judge Price, as MVLP was chosen as one of the three charities to receive a portion of the proceeds of this great event. The MCBA is a wonderful and supportive partner for MVLP and your backing of our program through your dues and event participation helps us to continually look for ways to expand our services. Thanks, too, go to Legal Services Alabama, the Alabama Civil Justice Foundation, Alabama Law Foundation and the City of Montgomery for their financial commitment to MVLP.

This month I want to recognize and thank those who helped staff our Advice and Counsel Clinic in December, as well as the District Court Help Desk. At the clinic, we had Kelly McTear (Jones School of Law), Matt Matthews (Anderson Law Firm), Maceo Kirkland (Legal Services Alabama), Joel Caldwell (Copeland Franco), Matthew Ward, Ashley Penhale (Copeland Franco), and Clinton Richardson (Capell & Howard). For the inaugural Help Desk, Tim Gallagher (Sasser Sefton & Brown), Mike Winter (Winter Legal Strategies), Kelly McTear and Matt Matthews. Thank you to all of our volunteers.

The new year brings many opportunities to render service to our community. Please consider offering your time and expertise to MVLP this year. Call us at 265-0222 and ask how you can help. The time demand is not very large, but the personal satisfaction is enormous.

Mike
The Following Attorneys Accepted Cases in December 2014

Richard Franklin Matthews, Jr.  The Anderson Law Firm, LLC
Clint Richardson  Capell & Howard, P.C.
Ashley Penhale (2)  Copeland, Franco, Screws & Gill, P.A.
John Craft  Faulkner University Jones School of Law
Kelly McTear (2)  Faulkner University Jones School of Law
Timothy Gallagher  Sasser Sefton and Brown, P.C.
Vania Hosea  Shahid & Hosea, LLC
William Zachary Messer  Varley & Messer LLP
Matthew Ward  Matthew Ward, Attorney at Law

The Following Attorneys Closed Cases in December 2014

Gary Backus  Backus Law Group
Ashley Penhale (2)  Copeland, Franco, Screws, & Gill, P.A.
Gregory L. Davis  Davis & Taliaferro, LLC
John Craft  Faulkner University Jones School of Law
Matthew Ward (2)  Matthew Ward, Attorney at Law

Thank you for giving your time and expertise!
Member News

Welcome to our new members:

Christopher Reader—Holtsford, Gilliland, Higgin, Hitson, & Howard, P.C.

Cornelia Baker—Baker Realtime Reporting

Logan R. Taylor—Law Office of Logan R. Taylor

The Law Office of G. William Gill announces the relocation of his office to the Renasant Bank Building, 8 Commerce Street, Suite 1110, Montgomery, AL 36104

Beasley, Allen, Crow, Methvin, Portis, & Miles, P.C. announced that Shareholders Leigh O’Dell and Ben Baker were selected as the firm’s Litigators of the Year. The annual recognition is presented to the attorney(s) who demonstrates exceptional professional skill throughout the course of the year and best represents the firm’s ideal of “helping those who need it most.” O’Dell practices in the firm’s Mass Torts section, while Baker practices in the Personal Injury/Product Liability section.

Also the firm the following attorneys were recognized as Lawyers of the Year in each practice area: Kendall Dunson, Personal Injury Section; Graham Esdale, Products Liability Section; Alison Hawthorne, Fraud Section; Navan Ward, Mass Torts Section; and Parker Miller, Toxic Torts Section.

Reminder:

MCBA Membership dues should be paid by January 31.

If you have not gotten an invoice, call 265-4793.

Office Space for Rent

Located in Old Alabama Town, rent includes receptionist, utilities, telephones, internet, copier, and conference room facilities.

Contact Donna at 334-263-2560 or donna@frankmwilsonpc.com for more information.

Downtown Office for Lease

Historic Molton House
434 N. McDonough Street
Old Alabama Town

- 7380 square feet
- Large executive offices
- Conference room
- Plenty of parking
- Convenient to state offices, courthouse, restaurants & hotels
By apt. 334.240.4513
Happy New Year from the Women’s Section
by Laura Eubank, President

The MCBA Women’s Section celebrated the holidays with our annual party on December 15, 2014, at Al’s Antique Galleries. Members enjoyed mingling and shopping for their friends and families while snacking on some delicious treats made by some of our Board members. This was also our last day to collect the items requested for our Family Sunshine Center Drive. As usual, the support and generosity of our members was overwhelming. I was able to drop off a huge carload of towels, sheets, blankets, car seats, etc. to the Family Sunshine Center the day after our party. They were extremely grateful for the donations that will help the people that come to the center in need of support and shelter. We appreciate Al Cantrell’s hosting us.

Our Board will meet at the beginning of January to start planning for the New Year. We are excited to continue finding ways to support and be involved with our local organizations. If any of the Women’s Section members or MCBA members have thoughts on how we can be of additional service to our community, please contact one of our Officers or Board Members.

Please also keep a lookout for details on our upcoming events, which will be sent via e-mail. We will likely have a winter event and then several social events and opportunities to serve our community this coming Spring! Also, please remember that dues for 2015 are due soon. Invoices will be sent out the first week of January. If you would like more information on how to become a member, please email us at mcba-women@gmail.com. Thank you again to all of our members that made 2014 a huge success for the MCBA Women’s Section. May you all have a very blessed New Year!

Laura Eubank


Below, a view of some of the delectable treats and the beautiful antique gallery.
THE ALABAMA CENTER FOR DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROVIDES FREE MEDIATION FOR ATTORNEYS AND THEIR CLIENTS WHO ARE IN MORTGAGE OR FAMILY CONFLICT

The Alabama Center for Dispute Resolution would like you to take advantage of free foreclosure prevention/mortgage modification mediation, and free family mediation for moderate to low income parties with children who will be living separately. The judges in Montgomery County are aware of both free programs.

The Foreclosure Prevention/Mortgage Modification Mediation Program, established through a grant from the Attorney General’s office as part of the national mortgage settlement, provides no-cost mediation for attorneys and their clients – allowing homeowners and servicers to discuss, with the help of a mediator, options for keeping the home or exiting gracefully. The Center pays the mediator for the time spent in mediation and in pre mediation conferences, and for the mediator’s transportation within a 100 mile radius. An informational brochure and list of trained mediators is available.

Mediators, who have had special training in the new Consumer Financial Protection Bureau servicing rules which became effective January 10, 2014, facilitate the conversations between the parties, assist with document exchange if necessary, and work on mortgage modifications (reduced interest rate, forbearance of arrearages, change in length of the mortgage, adding arrearages to back of the mortgage, etc.) or other options such as rent-backs or cash for keys. We have seen amounts between $3,000 and $10,000 for homeowners to vacate the home, and interest rates as high as 12%. We began mediating in May of 2014, and as of August 31, we have 81 cases in the system, and 34 or so mediated. Cases have been pre foreclosure, circuit court (including ejections), appellate courts, 211, bankruptcy.

The Family Mediation Program is a partnering of the Supreme Court of Alabama and the Center. The Center coordinates statewide mediation services for low to middle income families with children whose parents are in the court system. Through a grant from the Court, the Center pays the mediators. In this program we also promote attorney professionalism in family law and report mediator pro bono contributions. The goal is to have attorneys foster a cooperative spirit between parents by working with their clients and the mediator to develop a parenting plan for the judge and also a financial plan for family stability as they separate.

The Center maintains records and statistics. Most cases are DR cases. Family income must be $85,000 or less, gross. Parents will mediate parenting time and responsibilities, support of the children, and finances. Mediators must be registered on the Alabama State Court Mediator Roster and have taken the 40 hour divorce and family mediation course (www.abamamediators.org). Parents/attorneys should be first given a chance to select the qualified mediator, but if they are unable to agree, a judge may appoint. A brochure for attorneys and clients is helpful and available from the Center or http://www.alabamaadr.org/web/publicinfo/documents/ADRC_Family_Mediation_Brochure_1202.pdf
More Holiday Gala Memories

Pictured above left: Charlie Hawthorne and his fiancé Effie Moore

Pictured above right: Cornelia Baker (Baker Realtime Reporting) and Pat Harris

Pictured center: Assistant District Attorney, Azzie Taylor and Daryl Bailey, District Attorney

Below left: Montgomery VLP Director, Mike Martin with his wife and daughter

Below right: The Goat Hill String Band