

Prince William County Bar Association Honors Local Attorneys

The Prince William County Bar Association recently honored several attorneys with awards for their trial advocacy, professionalism, leadership and pro bono/community service work. Traditionally these awards are announced and presented at the PWCBA's biggest event of the year—the Dinner Dance. In the wake of COVID-19, 2020 is the first year the PWCBA was unable to hold this event, but the Association persevered and found a new way to honor these attorneys, virtually, via a YouTube Livestream.

From PWC Circuit Courtroom three, the Bar membership honored this stellar group of lawyers:

Kris Spittler served as the Bar's president in 2019 and the Association recognized her hard work and dedication with the Past President's Award. Since 1994, an attorney is honored each year with the Guardian ad litem of the Year Award. For 2019 the Association honored Ashleigh Izard. Trial Attorney of the Year Awards have been presented since 1989, and honor attorneys for their trial advocacy skills in the courts of the 31st Judicial Circuit. For 2019, the Association honored: Kathryn Fenske, as the Juvenile & Domestic Relations District Court Trial Attorney of the Year, Robert Harris III, as the General District Court Trial Attorney of the Year and Brian Boyle and Mark Crossland were both honored as Circuit Court Trial Attorneys of the Year.

The Prince William County Bar Association prides itself on community outreach and engagement, to include the development and delivery of pro bono legal services and need based services to those in the community. In 2003 the PWCBA established the Pro Bono/Volunteer Attorney of the Year Award.



Cathy Croft, (left) receives the Arthur W. Sinclair Professionalism Award, presented by Kathy Farrell, (right), her business partner for over 30 years.

This award recognizes the efforts of one attorney who organizes programs that provide pro bono legal services or provides direct pro bono legal representation. This year the association honored Andrea Morisi, as the 2019 Pro Bono/Volunteer Attorney of the Year.

The Virginia Women Attorney Association recognizes the commitment and importance of female attorneys who showcase generosity, leadership, trial advocacy skills, and are viewed as a mentors and trailblazers. These female attorneys are honored each year with the Justitia Award, an award given throughout the State of Virginia. The Prince William County Chapter of the VWAA presented the 2019 Justitia Award to Judge Janice Wellington. Judge Wellington's career spans several decades, and she has mentored many within the Prince William County Judicial system. In 1990, Janice Wellington became the first African American woman to be appointed to the Prince William County bench. Recently retired in July of 2020, the PWC VWAA

honored Judge Wellington for her dedication to justice and the women of Prince William County.

Since 1992, the PWCBA has honored one attorney each year who demonstrates the highest level of honor, integrity, competency and courtesy with the Arthur W. Sinclair Professionalism Award, named after a founding member of the Prince William County Bar Association (1941). The recipient of the 2019 Arthur W. Sinclair Professionalism Award was Cathy Croft. This year the award was presented by Kathy Farrell, an honor for both Farrell and Croft. For over 30 years, these women have practiced law together as partners and friends. As stated by Farrell, Croft exemplifies these standards and "she has helped me personally navigate the many difficulties of a stressful law firm and in the process really taught me how to persevere through these stressful times with some honor and some grace. I have also seen her consistent dedication and commitment to the legal community and our legal profession."

Stephanie Grana Elected VSB President-elect

Stephanie Grana, a partner with the law firm of Breit Cantor Grana Buckner in Richmond, has been chosen as the Virginia State Bar president-elect for 2021–22, and will take over the presidency of the Bar from current president-elect, Jay Myerson, in 2022.

Grana was elected in a race against David Neumeyer, of the Virginia Legal Aid Society in Lynchburg. When she begins her term, Grana will be the seventh woman to head the 50,000 lawyers of the VSB in its 84-year history.

Grana, a personal injury litigator, wanted to be a lawyer since childhood. Her father and brother were tragically killed in a plane crash in 2008, making Grana a plaintiff and, she believes, a more empathetic lawyer in the process. After attending the University of Richmond for both undergraduate and law school, Grana has devoted her career

to litigation and service to the bar.

Her volunteerism includes past presidencies of the Virginia Trial Lawyers Association; the American Board of Trial Advocates — Virginia Chapter; Lewis F. Powell Jr. American Inns of Court; and the Metropolitan Richmond Women’s Bar Association.

Grana currently serves on the VSB Executive Committee, Council for the 14th Circuit, the Budget & Finance Committee, and the Nominating Committee. She is also a member of the Boyd Graves Conference, the Virginia Model Jury Instructions Committee, and the “Working Group” to study expansion of the Court of Appeals.

Some of Grana’s goals for her presidency include:

- Promoting professionalism
- Increasing diversity among VSB leadership and committees



- Recognizing bias
- Working with judges to enhance bench/bar relations
- Continuing the work of prior presidents for improved access to justice

Grana is married to attorney Scott Bemberis, and they have three children.

New Virginia Lawyers Sworn in Virtually

For the third time since the pandemic, newly admitted Virginia lawyers have been sworn into the Virginia State Bar via a virtual Admissions & Orientation ceremony.



On January 6, 145 newly licensed attorneys and 27 reciprocity admittees were sworn in via videoconference by

Supreme Court of Virginia Chief Justice Donald W. Lemons. The new lawyers were joined in the ceremony by Virginia law school deans, Virginia State Bar President-elect Jay B. Myerson, and VSB Young Lawyers Conference President Missy York.

During the first ever virtual A&O Ceremony on June 17, 2020, 151 newly licensed attorneys and 81 reciprocity admittees were admitted to the Virginia

State Bar. In the December 2, 2020 ceremony, 353 newly licensed attorneys and 31 reciprocity admittees were sworn in.

Although the ceremonies were virtual, the achievement is very real, and we offer our sincere congratulations and heartiest welcome to our newest lawyers.

The virtual ceremonies may be watched at <https://vimeo.com/event/269965>.

Be Prepared: National Healthcare Decisions Day

If there is one thing that 2020 has taught us all, it’s anything can happen in the blink of an eye. National Healthcare Decisions Day is April 16 annually, and this year it is easier than ever to imagine the repercussions not only for yourself, but family and friends when you don’t have an advance care plan in place. Many Americans experienced it firsthand during the COVID-19 pandemic, thousands of people have gone from

walking and talking to being on a ventilator within a day. Without an agent or power of attorney, there is no one to see that your wishes are being followed while you are incapacitated.

Virginia lawyers can take advantage of the information specific to VA for their clients and themselves at <http://bit.ly/NHDD21>. Additionally, The Conversation Project has numerous resources available at www.nhdd.org.

