



Lawyers Association of Kansas City 2014-15 Year in Review



Educate | Serve | Lead

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Clay Norkey
2015-16 President

It is my pleasure and honor to serve as the 80th president of the Lawyers Association of Kansas City. For over eight decades, the Association has been a forum and an incubator for some of the area's most respected and accomplished attorneys. I am humbled to follow prominent Kansas City-area attorneys who have previously led the organization, such as **Steve Kyle, Linda Gill Taylor, Pat McLarney, Stan Weiner, Edgar Shook, Patrick Stueve, Larry Rouse, John Kilroy, Jr., and John Kilroy, Sr.**, to name just a few.

The LAKC has a storied history and a long-standing tradition of public service and support for the Kansas and Missouri courts. Founded during the turbulent 1930s and the infamous Pendergast era, the founders' primary motivation was to support the Missouri Supreme Court. At the time, attorney discipline was handled locally, which eventually led to rampant allegations of cronyism and corruption. In response, the Missouri Supreme Court took over attorney discipline to centralize and legitimize the process and make discipline more fair and consistent across the state. When some in Kansas City's establishment attempted to thwart the change, 135 of Kansas City's most respected lawyers collaborated to form the LAKC to show support for the Supreme Court and offer an alternative to the existing bar association, which many saw as complacent with the attempts to hinder the Supreme Court's authority.

Today, the LAKC continues its history of public service and support of the bar and the Supreme Court. No lingering quarrels exist among the cities' primary bar associations, and some have suggested that the two might consider merging. The LAKC, however, has a unique mission that is as vital to today's legal community as it was back in the heyday of Pendergast's political machine: to promote its unique vision of public service and to act as a stalwart supporter of the rule of law and our states' highest courts.

With attacks on the courts coming from all directions, recent calls for state-wide judicial elections in both Missouri and Kansas, and accusations of judicial activism, LAKC remains a vital and integral part of promoting the rule of law, professional integrity, and a positive image for the profession throughout the metropolitan area through its programming, service projects, and community involvement.

The LAKC's service-oriented projects promote the philanthropic and community-bettering aspects of its lawyer members, and include the annual **Run for Justice 5K** to benefit Legal Aid, the annual **LAKC Golf Tournament** benefiting a variety of charitable causes, and next year's state championship rounds of the **Missouri High School Mock Trial Competition**.

The LAKC has also been entrusted with awarding the prestigious **Justice Charles Evans Whittaker Award** to individuals who have made an extraordinary contribution to the legal community, both locally and nationally. Justice Charles Evans Whittaker was one of the founders of the LAKC, the only U.S. Supreme Court Justice from our area (a proud graduate of what is now UMKC Law School), and one of only two jurists in the modern era to have served at all three levels of the federal judiciary. The Association is proud to honor Justice Whittaker's legacy by recognizing members of the bar or the community who exemplify his commitment to excellence and improving lives through the legal profession or public service. In 2013, **Justice Sandra Day O'Connor** accepted the award and spoke before a sell-out crowd at the Kansas City Convention Center.

As we move forward, and to invigorate the organization and rekindle the spark that drove Kansas City lawyers to form the LAKC, I invited **Dr. Scott Helm** of the **UMKC Bloch School of Management** to lead the Board of Directors in a strategic-planning session — the first for the organization in at least 10 years. From there, the Board re-affirmed the LAKC's vision, mission, and three-pillar mantra:

Educate | Serve | Lead

We then launched an aggressive agenda of member outreach, first-class programming, foundation growth, legislative monitoring, and organization re-structuring to develop relevant and meaningful opportunities for our members to serve and prosper in the community.

But we need something more. We need *you*. Would you like to be part of the long tradition of service to the Bar and the community that LAKC represents? Would you like to become involved in community service, political monitoring, or supporting our courts? If so, email me at president@lakc.net or our Executive Director at info@lakc.net. I look forward to seeing many of you at future LAKC events. Here's to a prosperous and fulfilling year!

2014-15 Programs and Events

Continuing Legal Education

LAKC hosts a series of CLE luncheon programs annually. 2014-15 programs included the Annual IP CLE Seminar in February 2015 and the inaugural Opening Day CLE program in April.

Events

Annual Luncheon:

Designed to introduce summer associates to LAKC-YLS, and to provide current members with the opportunity to visit with new members. Our June 2014 luncheon featured Tyrone Flowers, founder of Higher M-Pact. Mr. Flowers received his juris doctorate from the University of Missouri -Columbia School of Law. His story and the history of Higher M-Pact can be found at www.higherpact.org.

Court Crawl:

Provides a behind-the scenes tour of the US District Court for the Western District of Missouri, the Missouri Court of Appeals and the Sixteenth Judicial Circuit Court of Missouri. The tour concludes with a Judicial Reception, providing an opportunity for the attendees to get to know each other and discuss what they learned during the Court Crawl.

Happy Hours:

LAKC-YLS hosted a variety of happy hours in 2014-15 to encourage networking and welcome new attorneys to the practice of law.

Golf Tournament

The 21st Annual LAKC Golf Tournament was held September 11, 2014 at the Meadowbrook Golf & Country Club. Over 15 teams participated in this annual event which raises funds for LAKC public service projects.

Judicial Reception:

The annual Judicial Reception held at the Chesterfield Bar in June 2014 was hosted by 24 area judges and attended by LAKC members and LAKC-YLS Court Crawl participants.



Public Service

Mock Trial:

The Missouri State High School Mock Trial Competition is designed to educate high school students about the legal system, justice and democracy. Teams are given a mock problem in late fall and compete by conducting a mock trial at local and regional levels in January and February, with the top teams advancing to the State competition in March. Students from a diverse group of Kansas City area high schools participate in the local and regional rounds sponsored by LAKC-YLS.

LAKC Run for Justice 5K

The 11th Annual LAKC Run for Justice 5K was held Sunday, May 3, 2015 at Theis Park. 300 runners and walkers participated in the event and \$3,500 was raised for Legal Aid of Western Missouri.



Santa's Snow Ball:

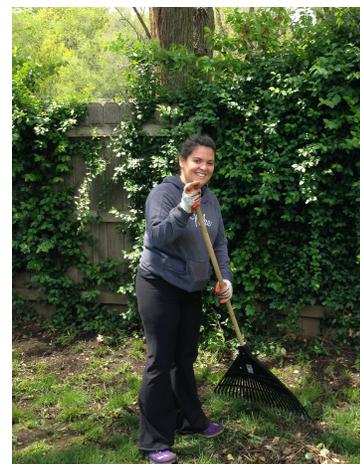
This annual event provides a holiday meal, party and presents for area homeless families. Over 200 children were served during the December 2014 event.

Service Projects:

Each spring and fall, the LAKC-YLS sponsors a different service project designed to benefit and give back to the community. The Spring 2015 service project included a clean-up day at Synergy Services.

Skippy & Skivvies Drive:

Each year, the LAKC-YLS coordinates the Skippy & Skivvies Drive among the metro's law firms and courts. Peanut butter and children's undergarments are the focus of the collection and proceeds benefit [Operation Breakthrough](#), a child care center for low-income families. Our 2014 collection netted the following for Operation Breakthrough: 20,346 ounces of peanut butter, 3,728 diapers, 3,314 wipes, 438 pairs of underwear, 173 pairs of socks and \$10,300 in cash donations.



2015 Firm Sponsors

LAKC would like to express our gratitude to the following Firm Sponsors for their support of our programming and public service initiatives. For more information on Firm Sponsorship opportunities, please contact Cory Unrein, Executive Director, info@lakc.net.

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Mission

Promoting exceptional jurisprudence, transforming lawyers into balanced professionals, and developing leaders to serve our community.

Vision

To support and build a diverse legal community in the Kansas City metropolitan area where lawyers become cordial and informed leaders who successfully balance work, service, and family.

Our Strategies:

We accomplish our purpose and mission through service projects, education, social events, forums, and position statements.
