

## A Call to Action

January 1, 2025. A new year represents many things to many people. Hope for a better year. New Year's resolutions — many make them, some achieve them. We may or may not declutter and organize our homes and offices. Get our affairs in order. This is the year we will improve our diets and lose weight. We want to learn a second language. We will get a pet and train it properly. I could go on and on.

The LBA is 125 years old in 2025. It is a cause for celebration, lots of cake and ice cream. Maybe bouncy houses and ponies? Okay, maybe not.

It is an opportunity. We, the LBA, as an organization and as members of our profession, can spotlight what we do. To live our mission:

- Promote justice, professional excellence and respect for the law;
- Improve public access to the judicial system;
- Provide law-related services to the community; and
- Serve our members.

During the coming year, the LBA Board and staff, along with our 125th Anniversary Committee, will present our members with opportunities to achieve our mission throughout Louisville. Please watch your e-mails, eBriefs, *Bar Briefs* and social media for these events.

I ask that the membership support our committees. Our volunteers and staff work throughout the year to provide programming in the form of CLEs, events, forums, participation in local events and networking opportunities.

With eight committees and 22 sections, get involved. If you are not a member of a section, please consider joining one or more to benefit from meeting others in your field. And since each section is required to present a CLE program, take the opportunity to be a presenter.

The committees provide programs and guidance in different areas, such as member Health and Wellness, and Diversity and Inclusion; and support core LBA functions like Continuing Legal Education and the Kentucky Lawyer Referral Service.

As an LBA member since law school, I met other attorneys and started networking before passing the bar. Now I am in the position to pass on

not only legal related knowledge but life related wisdom. The LBA has partnerships and works with the UofL Brandeis School of Law. We work with the Law and Government Magnet at Central High School and with law-related academies and programs at Seneca and Waggener. Our members assist with pro bono projects both on the LBA's behalf and in conjunction with the Legal Aid Society, the Jefferson County Public Law Library and Brandeis.

This President's Page is not intended to be an advertisement for the LBA, but a call to action. Nothing makes a board of any organization happier than knowing the members "have your back" and will be there to work on the next project or be at the next event. I also realize that I'm preaching to the choir. Our members are active in the community, as is evidenced every time you mention a member's name and the response is, "they are already doing 'X'." We are asking you to consider doing "X +1."

Consider any one or more of the following:

- Volunteer for a committee
- Join a section for an area of law you do not already practice in
- Sign up for the Kentucky Lawyer Referral Service
- Form a pickleball team and aim for the LBA championship
- Become an LBF Fellow and volunteer for their Board

You get the idea. We have beautiful, updated facilities; stop by, use the conference rooms, get a cup of coffee while waiting for a hearing or motion hour. While there, meet a new member or say hello to an old friend.

Looking forward to seeing you at our birthday events!



Maria A. Fernandez  
LBA President



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## INTRODUCING 2025 LBA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

### Samuel Wardle



Assuming the role of president-elect is Samuel Wardle. He is a litigator at Frost Brown Todd who primarily focuses on complex insurance-coverage disputes between policyholders and insurers. His work in this area includes everything from "occurrence" disputes and Kentucky uninsured and underinsured motorist coverage exclusions to personal property valuation litigation and insurer liability for broker negligence.

Wardle received a degree in journalism from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and started his career as a reporter. He also taught English as a second language in China and worked as a wilderness instructor in Canada prior to enrolling and graduating, *summa cum laude*, from the University of Miami School of Law in 2013.

He is a past chair of the LBA's Litigation Section, for which he received the "Section of the Year" award and has recently joined the Communications Committee. He also devotes a significant portion of his time to pro bono work and volunteerism.

### Jennifer Kleier



Moving up to vice-president/ treasurer is Jennifer Kleier, a partner at Karem & Kleier Law. She has worked in private practice since 2015 as a litigator and practices in the areas of family law, criminal law, guardianship and estate/probate. Prior to working in private practice, she served as a public defender for the Louisville Metro Public Defender's Office for five years.

Jennifer received her undergraduate degree from Murray State University and her Masters in Sports Administration from UofL before graduating from Brandeis School of Law in 2010. She is chair of both the LBA's Gender Equity and Health & Wellness Committees. She was recently honored as the WLA 2023 Member of the Year and previously honored by the LBA as chair of the Committee of the Year for the Gender Equity Committee. She is a graduate of the LBA's Leadership Academy and was honored to be an associate member of the Louis D. Brandeis Inn of Court from 2016-19. She currently serves as Chair of the Board for UP for Women and Children, a drop-in day shelter in Louisville serving unhoused women, children and marginalized genders.

### Sean Deskins



Joining the Executive Committee as secretary is Sean Deskins. Sean is an attorney with the Oldfather Law Firm, concentrating in plaintiffs' litigation including medical malpractice, products liability, employment law and legal malpractice. His practice also includes complex business and trusts and estates litigation. Following law school,

Sean spent a year serving as a Fulbright Scholar in the Slovak Republic where he taught courses on the American legal system and human rights law. Upon returning to Kentucky, Sean worked as a law clerk to the Honorable Jennifer B. Coffman, Chief Judge, United States District Court for the Eastern and Western Districts of Kentucky. Sean received both his undergraduate and law degrees from the University of Louisville and is an active UofL alumnus. He previously served as president of the UofL Law Alumni Council and as chair of the LBA's Young Lawyers Section, which was honored as a Co-Section of the Year during his term. Sean also recently wrapped up a two-year term as the LBA's representative to the American Bar Association's House of Delegates and continues to serve as a member of the ABA's Commission on Disability Rights. Sean and his wife, Ashley, live in Louisville with their dog, Forrest.