

Please Nominate for the LBA Annual Awards and Join us on November 18.

Every year, the Louisville Bar Association has the privilege of recognizing some of the outstanding members of our legal community through the LBA's annual awards. But before we can recognize them, we need your help.

The LBA is accepting nominations for its 2026 annual awards.

These awards are about more than professional accomplishments. They recognize the qualities that make a strong legal community: service, civility, integrity, mentorship, advocacy, professionalism and a commitment to making our profession and our community better.

I encourage you to think about the lawyers and judges you work with every day. Who has gone out of their way to help a colleague? Who treats opposing counsel with respect, even when the stakes are high? Who quietly provides legal services to people who could not otherwise afford them? Who has opened doors for the next generation? Who has made our profession more diverse and inclusive?

Those are the people we should be recognizing.

Justice Martin E. Johnstone Special Recognition Award

This is the LBA's highest recognition, honoring a member who has made a significant impact on the Louisville community through professional or volunteer efforts and exemplifies what it means to be a lawyer.

The award is named for Justice Martin E. Johnstone, whose career took him through every level of Kentucky's state court system. Past recipients include former federal Judge John G. Heyburn II, Raymond Burse, Ted King, Margaret Keane and, most recently, my boss, Jeremiah Byrne.

Judge Benjamin F. Shobe Civility & Professionalism Award

The Shobe Award recognizes lawyers and judges who demonstrate the highest standards of civility, honesty and courtesy in their dealings with clients, opposing counsel, the courts and the public.

Judge Benjamin Shobe was himself a trailblazer. Among other accomplishments, he was part of the legal team that successfully challenged the University of Kentucky's exclusion of Black students from its graduate and professional schools. He later became Jefferson Circuit Court's first Black chief judge.

Past recipients include Justice William E. McAnulty Jr., Margaret Keane, Judge Lisabeth Hughes, Judge Denise Clayton and the late J. Michael Brown.

Robert & Frank E. Haddad Jr. Young Lawyer Award

This award recognizes a trial lawyer who has been practicing for fewer than five years and has demonstrated the ability to handle complex or unusual trials or appeals while earning the respect of judges and colleagues.

The award honors brothers Robert and Frank Haddad, two highly respected Louisville trial lawyers who were also committed to mentoring younger members of the profession.

The list of past recipients includes Steven Romines, Daniel Alvarez, Sarah Clay, Madison Shoffner, Natalie Johnson and Melina Hettiaratchi. It is a reminder that many of the lawyers who become leaders in our profession begin making their mark early in their careers.

Judge of the Year Award

The Judge of the Year Award dates back to 1988 and recognizes a member of the judiciary who demonstrates integrity, professionalism, scholarship and service to the community and the legal profession.

The list of recipients reads like a history of Louisville's judiciary, including Judges Benjamin Shobe, William McAnulty Jr., Martin Johnstone, John Heyburn II, Angela McCormick Bisig, David Hale and Susan Schultz Gibson.

Paul G. Tobin Pro Bono Service Award

This award recognizes an LBA member who has given time and talent to improve the quality of society through legal work, particularly by helping provide legal services to people who otherwise could not afford them.

Paul Tobin was a pioneer in indigent defense in Kentucky. After a career

as a military lawyer and judge, he came to Louisville and helped establish Kentucky's first staffed public defender office.

Past recipients include Judge Geoffrey Morris, Margaret Keane, David Friedman, Jeffrey Been, Judge Shelley Santry and Elizabeth Irish. Their work reflects a simple but important principle: our professional obligation does not end with the clients who can afford to hire us.

Daniel M. Alvarez Champion for Justice Award

This award recognizes a lawyer who has demonstrated a strong commitment to serving people and communities whose voices might otherwise go unheard, including immigrants, LGBTQ individuals, incarcerated juveniles and indigent criminal defendants.

The award is named for Danny Alvarez, himself a former LBA Young Lawyer Award recipient, who ran a trailblazing and impactful practice before his tragic and premature death in 2018. If you were fortunate, as I was, to know Danny, you know what an honor it is to receive the award named after him.

Past recipients include Judge Sadiqa Reynolds, Lonita Baker, Nima Kulkarni, Judge Ellie Garcia Kerstetter and Shannon Fauver.

Judge Richard A. Revell Family Law Award

The Revell Award recognizes attorneys at the forefront of developments in family law who demonstrate dedication to families and children, public service and innovation.

Judge Richard Revell was a longtime Louisville family court judge and a significant figure in the development of family court in Jefferson County.

Past recipients include Dee Pregliasco, William Hoge III, Judge Tara Hagerty, Stephen George, Louis Waterman and Emily Logan.

Please Nominate Someone

Looking at the names associated with these awards, one thing becomes clear: the LBA has a long tradition of recognizing people who make the legal profession better for everyone else.

Now it is our turn.

If you know someone who deserves to be recognized, please take a few minutes to nominate them. You do not have to be a senior lawyer to make a difference, and you do not have to be a household name to deserve recognition. Sometimes the most deserving people are the ones whose contributions happen quietly, without much attention.

The deadline for nominations is October 12. You can find the nomination form on our website at <https://www.loubar.org/lba-annual-awards/>.

And after the nominations are in, I hope you will join us on November 18 at 11 a.m. for the LBA Member Appreciation and Awards Luncheon at the Ice House as we celebrate this year's award recipients. You can RSVP for the lunch by visiting our calendar at <https://loubar.ce21.com/calendar>.

We will also recognize the 2026 LBA Leadership Academy graduating class: Matthew P. Dearmond, Erika M. Fisher, Maci B. Followell, Gregory F. George, Michael Grant Grissom, Brian P. Lee, William T. Lloyd, Annie S. Myers, William E. Nixon, Annale R. Taylor, Sophia N. Wilson and Anna C. Zwicky.

These 12 lawyers completed the Leadership Academy in June after spending six months developing their leadership skills, learning from lawyers, judges and community leaders, and working together on a service project at Home of the Innocents. They represent the next generation of leaders in our legal community, and I look forward to celebrating their accomplishments alongside this year's award recipients.

The awards luncheon is one of my favorite events on the LBA calendar because it gives us an opportunity to stop for a moment and recognize the people who make our profession what it is.

So please think about the people you work with, practice against, appear before and learn from.



Luncheon

LBA Member Appreciation
and Awards Luncheon

November 18

11 a.m. - 1 p.m.

The Ice House

(see page 18)

Nominations

Visit www.loubar.org/lba-annual-awards/ for a description of each award and to nominate someone prior to Monday, October 12!

Samuel W. Wardle
LBA President