ACBA adopts vaccination policy

By ACBA Staff

At its regularly scheduled meeting on Oct. 19, the Allegheny County Bar Association Board of Governors resolved an update to its COVID-19 protocol. The Board unanimously voted that effective Dec. 1, all individuals who seek to attend in-person ACBA/ACBF events or continuing legal education programs must provide proof of COVID-19 vaccination status, or proof of a negative COVID-19 test within 72 hours of the event or CLE program.

Members who attend in-person Board Meetings, as well as Committee, Division and Section Meetings must provide evidence of a COVID vaccination. Members may choose to attend Board Meetings, as well as Committee, Division and Section Meetings, virtually and will not need to provide proof of a COVID-19 vaccination.

This policy will be in effect until June 30, 2022, the end of the bar year.

“This vote was unanimous, and we didn’t take this lightly,” said ACBA President Joe Williams. “Over the last few weeks, we’ve considered the various perspectives of all members of our bar association on this matter. This policy is not meant to be exclusive. It is meant to be inclusive, so that all members can safely attend our events.”

“We acknowledge that information and data related to COVID-19 and the vaccinations continues to come to us each week and month. It’s our pledge that we will continue to track this information and the science relating to it, as we make decisions regarding this policy going forward.”

ACBA Executive Director David Blaner said that the Bar Association will be using software to help maintain this new policy. Procedures on how the policy will be implemented are still being developed and members can still do that while still protecting themselves, ACBA staff and our extended community.”

Find out what’s happening in the Pittsburgh Legal Community
CLEs • Committee Meetings • Social Events • Zoom Sessions • And more ...
Visit ACBA.org/calendar today.
The full text and headnotes for the cases below appear in the online, searchable PLJ Opinions located at www.ACBA.org.

Workers' Compensation Act—Summary Judgment—Immunty—Dual Capacity Doctrine
Injured worker brought a negligence suit against employer and owner of a skid steer which caused the plaintiff's injuries. Defendant moved for summary judgment premised on immunity from suit under the Pennsylvania Workers' Compensation Act (the "Act"). The Court found that the defendant was an employer as defined by the Act because the defendant controlled the work and could control the plaintiff's performance of the work. The court further found that the defendant was a fellow employee of the plaintiff. As such, based on the Act, the defendant was also immune from suit for negligence.

Timothy A. Ungarac, DMD d/b/a Smile Savers Dentistry, PC, Individually and on Behalf of a Class of Similarly Situated Persons v. CNA and Valley Forge Insurance Company, Ward, J. ........................................................................................................ Page 176
Declaratory Judgment—Business Insurance—Business Income Coverage—Contamination Exclusion—COVID-19
Declaratory judgment action wherein plaintiff's dental practice asserted entitlement to coverage under insurance contract for lost income sustained in relation to COVID-19 pandemic and resulting government shutdown orders. The trial court granted summary judgment in plaintiff's favor, holding that ambiguities must be resolved in plaintiff's favor, thereby entitling plaintiff to coverage under the "Business Income, Extra Expense, and Civil Authority" provisions of the insurance contract.

ACBA Job Board continues to connect jobseekers with opportunities

By Jennifer Pulice

When people are looking for careers in the Pittsburgh legal community, one of the first places they turn to is the Allegheny County Bar Association. The ACBA’s Job Board is one of the association’s premier resources that connects career opportunities with highly qualified legal talent. As of press time, there was a record setting 25 new jobs posted on the site.

The ACBA Job Board, located at jobs.acba.org, was designed to provide legal professionals with a streamlined job searching and posting experience. The job board – which can be accessed by both employers and job seekers – is one of the association’s most visited webpages, with more than 8,000 views per month.

The ACBA Job Board enables job seekers to:
• Search and apply to the best attorney and legal support jobs.
• Upload their anonymous resume into a resume bank that is viewable by prospective employers. Job seekers maintain control of their information and choose to whom they release their information.
• Receive an alert every time a job becomes available that matches their personal profile, skills, interests and preferred location(s).
• Access career resources and job searching tips and tools.

The ACBA Job Board enables employers to:
• Post their job at an affordable rate and ensure their job posting will be seen by an audience that is looking for legal job openings in the Pittsburgh region.
• Promote their jobs directly to job seekers who have registered with us to receive our weekly Job Flash email.
• Search the resume database and contact qualified candidates proactively.
• Benefit from social media marketing: Once an employer posts a job on the ACBA Job Board, ACBA staff also publicizes that position on our social media channels.

This month the association is offering a special to all employers who are looking to hire. Enter the code JOB30 and receive 30 percent off any of the first three job-posting packages (“30 Day,” “First Seen” and “Job Flash”) that we offer on the job board. This coupon code is valid until Dec. 1.

Members who have additional questions about the ACBA Job Board are welcome to contact me at jpulice@acba.org or 412-402-6623.
This year I’m thankful for my social privileges

By Joseph R. Williams

We have made it to November, which means that it is almost time for my favorite annual four-day weekend. That’s right, Thanksgiving is on Thursday, Nov. 25. Each year I look forward to spending time with family, eating carbs upon carbs and the kick-off to the holiday season.

While those opportunities are enjoyable, I try to remind myself that Thanksgiving is more than just a day where gravy becomes a condiment, and when the newspaper is stuffed with doorbuster promotions. Like many of you, I have so many things for which to be grateful. None, however, are as significant as the privileged life I have led.

For those who do not know, “privileged” describes benefits that belong to a person because he or she fits into a specific social group or has certain elements to their identity. Having privilege means holding an advantage that is out of your control. You may not even notice it. Personally, for years I did not notice many of my advantages. I likely have advantages that I have to worry about overcoming. Or negative stereotypes about my race might look like mine, or you could make me any of those things alone do not. My beliefs and conduct are the only way for all of us to win that fight “liberty and justice for all,” didn’t we? The only way for all of us to win that fight is for those important rights to exist irrespective of a person’s skin color, gender, socioeconomic status, religion or sexual orientation.

My white privilege. As a white child, I had the privilege of reading comic books where the people depicted looked like me. My teachers in school looked like me and taught me positive things about my race. I knew that if I ever encountered trouble, I could contact the police and they would help me. Most of the television shows and movies I watched were full of kids who looked like me and their TV parents looked similar to my own. When I obtained a driver’s license the only thing I feared about getting pulled over was my parents grounding me. As a young man, I never feared for my safety or my life when I went for a walk, shopped at a convenience store or visited a park. I went to a college and law school where most people still looked like me. Going on job interviews, I never worried that my race would lead to an uncomfortable question or play a role in whether I was offered employment. Now I go to work every day with people who, for the most part, look like me. The majority of my clients look like me. The judges before whom I practice typically look like me. If I ever had a personal matter before them, I know that they would treat me fairly. There are not violent or negative stereotypes about my race that I have to worry about overcoming.

My male privilege. Growing up, all of the superheroes in movies and comic books were other males. I never worried about raising my hand too much. I never worried about hiring my caretaker so that I can focus on my leadership opportunities, nobody will think less of me for hiring childcare or because my wife is the primary caretaker so that I can focus on my career. A judge has never told me to calm down and people never remind me to avoid being emotional. Not once have I worried about state legislature making decisions about my body.

My socioeconomic status privilege. I have never worried about going hungry or homeless. I take basic necessities for granted. I can live wherever I choose and expect that I will be welcome there. When clothes wear out, I buy new. When I break something, I can replace it easily. If I walk into nice stores, car dealerships, clubs or restaurants nobody ever gives me an odd look. I can save money. Sometimes I am careless with money. If I need help with money, there are people who will manage it for me or tell me how to manage it. I am only 37 and am saving for retirement. If I wanted a different job, I could afford to take a pay cut. If I am ever charged with a crime I can hire a defense lawyer to represent me and feel confident that I will be presumed innocent.

My religious privilege. As a Christian in the United States, most of the people around me have comparable beliefs. I never have to explain my religion to others. I never have to worry about finding a place of worship near me. I know that businesses will be closed and I will have a day off of work for all of my major holidays. Do my privileges make me racist or sexist or classist? No, the privileges alone do not. My beliefs and conduct could make me any of those things though. Do I have to feel guilty about my privileges? No, I only have to feel guilty if I continually fail to recognize them. Many of you likely experience at least one of these privileges. Your lists might look like mine, or you could probably think of other examples of privilege that I have not addressed.

Now that I have recognized my privileges, it is incumbent upon me to raise awareness. I can only be a good ally if I speak up. And as I speak, I hope that you will listen. After all, as lawyers we pledged to fight for “liberty and justice for all,” didn’t we? The only way for all of us to win that fight is for those important rights to exist irrespective of a person’s skin color, gender, socioeconomic status, religion or sexual orientation.
FALL FOUNDATION RECEPTION
continued from front page

Christian Immigration Advocacy Center: To offset the expenses of providing immigration legal services & training.

Christian Legal Aid: To provide legal counsel to every low-income community member that seeks out the clinic and qualifies for services.

Education Law Center: To recruit, train, inform, and support collaborative work with pro bono attorneys and community partners to provide legal representation and consultation to students, their families, and social service providers on education justice for students with disabilities who live and learn at the intersection of multiple identities, including Black girls and English learners. The project focus is to address lost learning opportunities during the pandemic.

Focus on Renewal: To fund monthly legal clinics for non-criminal matters for students, their families, and power of attorney.

Jewish Family & Community Services: To train pro bono attorneys to assist refugee clients with green card applications.

KidsVoice: An initiative to fund five pro bono partnerships: K&L Gates – Porter Wright to represent current and former foster youth for Magisterial District Judge (MDJ) cases; PNC's Legal Department will continue to handle guardianship, trust and estate matters as well as administer compensatory educational services funds for MDJ cases; Morgan Lewis will address employment, credit, and expungements; and Reed Smith will handle legal name changes for failed adoptions and transgender youth.

Neighborhood Legal Services: To assist women who are facing “sudden” economic hardship to stabilize the client’s circumstances by providing critical civil legal services.

North Hills Community Outreach: To provide direct legal assistance to low-income families and seniors in our communities.

Pennsylvania Immigration Resource Center (PIRC): To provide brief services to at least 14 individuals; direct representation to at least 14 individuals; and legal advice to at least 10 individuals in the Allegheny County area.

Pennsylvania Women Work: To provide immigrants and refugees with assistance with legal matters relating to their ability to obtain employment commensurate with their educational and employment backgrounds, including the transfer of professional and educational credentials.

Pittsburgh Mercy’s Operation Safety Net: To partner with local attorneys who have offered to provide pro bono services for a once-a-month legal clinic to those experiencing homelessness.

Women’s Center & Shelter: To provide civil legal representation to victims of intimate partner violence that will help them obtain safety, autonomy and restoration from the justice system.

In addition, Neighborhood Legal Services will receive a $3,428 Military Veterans & Elderly Fund grant for a project that will keep veterans in their homes, protect and secure income for veterans and their families, resolve debt issues, remove employment barriers, and resolve family conflicts involving children custody/support and domestic violence matters.

The ACBF services making the most serious impact must continue to grow.

Please consider taking the lead and making a gift today to grow the Endowment and help secure the future of this important work.

Visit ACBF.org/endowment today.

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Eleven ways to protect your business from payment fraud
Adopt smart strategies designed to stop cybercriminals in their tracks

By Dollar Bank

Cyberthieves target businesses of all types and sizes with payment fraud—illegal transactions using stolen information to make purchases or direct funds to unauthorized accounts. Bad actors are quick to zero in on vulnerabilities, so companies are tasked with making their financial operations as airtight as possible.

“Businesses are required to protect themselves. They are not covered by the Consumer Protection Act,” says Judy Murtha, Executive Vice President, Treasury Management, Dollar Bank, who has a front row seat to schemes and scams carried out against businesses by cybercriminals. “If your business falls victim to a fraudulent transaction, it will bear the brunt of that loss. It’s up to you to put safeguards into place.”

Murtha shares her insights into eleven of these safeguards. Some are fairly easy to implement; others require dedicated resources and collaboration across your teams.

With Your Bank

1. Use positive pay. This automated cash management service is offered by banks to reduce companies’ exposure to check and ACH fraud. Here’s how it works: When your company issues checks, you upload a file listing those checks—including each check number, payee, and dollar amount—to the bank. The bank stores that information for verification as checks come in for payment. If any information does not align, the bank issues an exception for you to approve or deny the transaction.

2. Request dollar-limit reviews. Set a dollar limit with your bank that lets them know when you should be called to verify ACH transactions to be paid from your account. Any transaction request exceeding that limit should trigger a call to you before funds are released.

3. Sign up for text message alerts. Just as they work for personal accounts, text message alerts can let you know when transactions occur in your corporate account. Some companies set up these alerts to be received by multiple individuals to ensure the appropriate level of oversight.

4. Move toward electronic payments. Companies continue to write a great number of checks, yet account information is more vulnerable to theft when it is physically circulating than when secure electronic payments are made.

Within Your Business

5. Limit physical access to data. Protecting the data in your office, as well as employee workstations, is particularly important when members of your team are working remotely and come into the office infrequently. Accumulating mail and other exposed information may be at risk. Know who is going into your business space and make sure customer data and other information is not accessible.

6. Use dedicated PCs for online banking. Many companies assign a designated computer for banking transactions. This computer is reserved exclusively for banking transactions; users are prohibited from doing any internet research, thus limiting the amount of malware that can be installed on that PC.

7. Create separation of duties. In a secure environment, no individual has sole responsibility over a particular function from end to end. Specifically, a business should assign custody of assets, authorization of payments, and documentation of those payments to different employees.

8. Tighten up administrative rights. Who has administrative rights to your computers? Keep in mind that these people can download and install programs, change the way systems operate, add accounts, and carry out a host of other activities that may be harmful to your business. It’s important to limit how many and which people

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By NLS Staff

Robert V. Racunas is retiring from Neighborhood Legal Services after 50 years with the organization, 42 of them as executive director. Racunas began his career as a summer intern from the University of Pittsburgh School of Law and was named Executive Director of Neighborhood Legal Services (NLS) in 1980.

“Bob’s decades of service and dedication to NLS is unprecedented and rare these days,” said Stephanie R. Reiss, Esquire, President of NLS Board of Directors. “I’m privileged to have had the opportunity to work with him and know that replacing him will be no easy feat for us.”

Before Racunas enjoys full retirement, he has been engaged to serve for a limited term as a consultant in an Executive Director Emeritus position in order to facilitate a successful transition in leadership.

In his five decades at NLS, Racunas cited the current global health crisis as the most challenging period of his career. “The need for our services didn’t come to a stop during the pandemic. I’m proud to say that not only did NLS continue to provide essential legal services during the statewide shutdown, but we in fact expanded our staff to reach 14,730 people, including veterans, the elderly, women, children, those with disabilities and people in danger of losing their home.”

Highlights of Racunas’ professional career include his role in establishing the Equal Justice Campaign, a private bar campaign aimed at increasing financial support for free legal aid and increasing pro bono involvement. Racunas and a former NLS colleague and elder law specialist Joseph M. Olimpi created the Older & Wiser program to help better educate seniors, their families and caregivers about rights and resources. The program received several awards, including the Emil Gumpert Award and $50,000 from the American College of Trial Lawyers.

As a major Pittsburgh sports fan, Racunas oversaw the organization’s 50th anniversary celebration in June of 2015 with the Gridiron Gold reception and dinner which honored the six quarterbacks from the Pittsburgh region who are in the Pro Football Hall of Fame – George Blanda, Jim Kelly, Dan Marino, Joe Montana, Joe Namath and Johnny Unitas. What made the event so exceptional was that Kelly, Marino, Montana and Namath agreed to be there in person … a first for Pittsburgh sports fundraisers. They were joined by John Unitas Jr. and Mrs. George Blanda. It took two years to find a date that accommodated everyone’s schedule including Art Rooney II who served as Honorary Chair. Other sports celebrities that attended included Franco Harris, Jerry Rice, former Penguins and 49ers owner Eddie DeBartolo, Coach Marv Levy, Rocky Bleier and Ronnie Lott, among many others. The Hall of Fame brought the six bronze busts for the quarterbacks to be on display, and NBC’s Andrea Kramer shared MC duties with local sports figure Elias Cannon. NFL Films recorded the entire event and produced a 25-minute special which is available through NLS. The event raised substantial funds for NLS and the quarterbacks’ chosen charities and brought attention to the importance of the organization’s work beyond the legal community.

During his accomplished career, Racunas became an active member of the Allegheny County Bar Association (ACBA) and chaired its Federal Court Committee. He has served as a member of the House of Delegates of both the Pennsylvania Bar Association and the Pennsylvania Lawyers Journal. Racunas also served as an adjunct professor at the Duquesne University School of Law for 20 years.

“I’m indebted to the incredible roster of professionals I’ve worked with over the years. I’ve learned as much from them as I hope they have from me. Just as importantly, I must acknowledge the generous, proud and brave clients I have met over the years. They will continue to be an inspiration,” said Racunas.

Robert V. Racunas

Articles wanted for the Lawyers Journal

If you have an idea for a substantive law article or would be interested in authoring one, please email Jennifer Pulice at jpulice@acba.org.
By Court Staff

The United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit is stepping up its efforts in providing civics education programs throughout the expanse of the entire Circuit. Through outreach to communities and educational institutions in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, and the United States Virgin Islands, an expanded and re-vitalized Courts, Community, and Rule of Law Committee will work with educators and citizens to enhance public understanding of the critical and non-political role that courts play in American society.

"That judges and courts make decisions based on a rule of law is essential to the most basic understanding of the American justice system," Third Circuit Chief Judge D. Brooks Smith remarked in announcing the Circuit’s recent undertaking. "Our judges have done very valuable work in civics education, both at the district level and through the former ‘Courts and Community Committee’ of the Judicial Council. We will build on that foundational experience in the years ahead through an enhanced and coordinated effort, across the Third Circuit, emphasizing the rule of law."

Judge Smith, who chairs the committee, called upon Senior Third Circuit Judge Marjorie O. Rendell of the Court of Appeals and District Judge Cynthia M. Rufe of the Eastern District of Pennsylvania to serve as co-vice chairs. Judges Rendell and Rufe have amassed a wealth of experience over the years in the field of civics education through their shared leadership of the Circuit’s predecessor Committee.

"I can’t overstate how much our programs will benefit from the expertise that Judge Rendell and Judge Rufe have developed from their work over the years," Chief Judge Smith added. "Not only are they respected jurists. They have also devoted themselves to instructing citizens of all ages on the rule of law and on how the federal courts administer justice."

Each district that comprises the Third Circuit is represented on the Committee. Other members are:

- Judge Cathy Bissoon – Western District of PA
- Magistrate Judge Sherry R. Fallon – District of Delaware
- Judge Mark A. Kearney – Eastern District of PA
- Judge Wilma A. Lewis – District of the U.S. Virgin Islands
- Judge Zahid N. Quraishi – District of New Jersey
- Judge Jennifer P. Wilson – Middle District of PA
- Circuit Executive Margaret A. Wiegand

The Courts, Community and Rule of Law Committee held an organizational meeting at the end of September in the new Third Circuit Learning Center located on the first floor of the Byrne Federal Courthouse in Philadelphia. The Center is equipped with state-of-the-art technology which will facilitate the Committee’s ongoing civics education and rule of law programming. Along with newly dedicated space and technology, a five-member administrative team will be working to support the Circuit’s outreach and civics initiatives.

Office Depot, OfficeMax discounts

Through the ACBA’s partnership with Office Depot and OfficeMax, individual members and entire firms can enjoy discounts of up to 55 percent on the purchase of office supplies and discounts of up to 70 percent on printing and copying services. Firms that spend $6,000 or more on office supplies annually are eligible for additional discounts. For more information or to enroll, see www/acba.org/OfficeDepot or contact David Jarvis at David.Jarvis@officedepot.com.
A review: “The Heiress of Pittsburgh”

By Hon. Maureen Lally-Green

“Wow,” I mentally murmured. “That was fabulous!” Not only is Ken Gormley’s The Heiress of Pittsburgh a marvelous thriller, it’s a novel that wakens deep memories and touches the heart. I heartily recommend it to you!

Why? It’s a novel about our City of Pittsburgh, back in the 1970s and now, and about life choices for those who left their hometowns to pursue law school and returned hoping to do some good.

It’s also a novel about “life in the law” here in Pittsburgh that, for me, triggers a kaleidoscope of memories.

And, it’s a novel about a Pittsburgher, born and bred with western Pennsylvania values, who has an indescribable ability to earn the trust of others. Even though the narrator of the story, attorney Shawn Rossi, doubts some of his own life decisions, his honesty and absolute trustworthiness shine through. Ultimately, his friends and family help him figure out how to begin passing those values and virtues along to a new generation.

That’s why The Heiress of Pittsburgh is worth every lawyer and law student reading it.

Ken Gormley has long been well-known in the legal community, both locally and nationally, for many things. He’s a law professor, constitutional scholar, former president of the ACBA, former dean of Duquesne Law School, bestselling author of non-fiction books, and currently president of Duquesne University. Now, he adds to that list of achievements “novelist” with the publication of this first piece of fiction. Truth be told, The Heiress of Pittsburgh is hard to categorize in a single genre. It’s part legal drama and part a love story about Pittsburgh and the people who inhabited the working-class world of Gormley’s youth – the world many of us experienced. Just as importantly, this book captures imagery of the past and a hope for the future in a way that is especially meaningful for those of us in the legal profession.

Scott Turow, one of the country’s preeminent authors of courtroom dramas, wrote about Gormley’s book: “The Heiress of Pittsburgh is a novelty, fulfilling legal thriller in which the story, the novel is built around a battle over a multi-million dollar estate that takes place in Allegheny County Orphan’s Court, portrayed as an archaic and even mysterious place. Even though the story itself is pure fiction, many of the descriptions and scenes will make regular people from the town where he grew up, thinking this was his noble calling. Like many people who reach mid-life and discover other opportunities to return home and represent regular people from the town where he grew up, thinking this was his noble calling. Like many people who reach mid-life and discover other opportunities to return home, he wishes he had taken a different path. Gormley uses flashbacks to take readers back to Gormley’s first novel, which was over 30 years in the making (in between a few other jobs during that time!). Authors John Edgar Wideman, Stewart O’Nan and Max King, Steelers president and prominent attorney Art Rooney II, and even legendary running back Franco Harris have added their plaudits.

To provide some more texture to the story, the novel is built around a battle over a multi-million-dollar estate that takes place in Allegheny County Orphan’s Court, portrayed as an archaic and even mysterious place. Even though the story itself is pure fiction, many of the descriptions and scenes will make local practitioners and judges smile as they watch the drama unfold in the courtroom of Senior Judge Warren Wendell. In one scene, Judge Wendell seeks to maintain some professional decorum here… We’re in Orphan’s Court. Do all of you understand the significance of that? She goes on to lecture counsel: “We don’t tolerate loud disruptions or shouting around here… because all of our clients are dead!”

Attorney Shawn Rossi, our narrator, is in a tough position. He’s representing his ex-colleague flame and her family in this estates battle, and he’s now regretting it. He’s also questioning why he threw away his life to work in a shabby little estates firm in Pittsburgh instead of going to New York or Los Angeles to earn big money like many of his Harvard classmates. Shawn’s wife has recently died of cancer and his daughters are struggling, and he wishes he had taken a different path. Gormley uses flashbacks to take readers back to Shawn’s time in law school in the 1970s, when he decides to pass up other opportunities to return home and represent regular people from the town where he grew up, thinking this was his noble calling. Like many people who reach mid-life and discover other opportunities to return home, he wishes he had taken a different path. Gormley uses flashbacks to take readers back to

Continued on page 10
Bankruptcy Symposium resumes as an in-person event
Annual gathering provides numerous programs and networking opportunities

By Ron Cichowicz

After the COVID-19 pandemic forced it to go virtual last year, the ACBA’s popular annual Bankruptcy Symposium will be a live event in 2021. The Symposium, presented by the ACBA Bankruptcy and Commercial Law Section, will be held from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Friday, December 10, at the Westin Pittsburgh. Besides featuring an array of timely and stimulating discussions, the day will conclude with the Section’s annual holiday party.

“We received a mixed reaction to last year’s virtual event,” said Abagale Steidl, an attorney with Steidl & Steinberg and this year’s Section Chair. “Some remarked that it saved them time and they didn’t need to be out of the office. But many missed the networking and social aspect of the Symposium, including the holiday party.”

This year’s event, the 34th annual Symposium, will bring attendees together and allow for networking, Alexis A. Leventhal, an attorney with Reed Smith and Symposium Chair stated.

Leventhal said attendees should expect the same quality of presenters and topics as offered in past years. “This truly is an event put on for us by us,” said Leventhal. “I’ve been working with a group of attorneys since January to create programs that are timely, interesting and inclusive, with an emphasis on getting new people involved.”

Traditionally the ACBA’s second biggest annual event behind the Bench-Bar Conference, the Symposium regularly draws approximately 200 participants each year, including attorneys from both within and outside the Bankruptcy Section. The event offers up to 6 CLE credits including 1 Ethics credit.

The day-long Symposium offers a number of interesting and valuable plenary and breakout sessions. Among the highlights are the following three plenary sessions:

Great Debates: Cases and Controversies
Attorneys from the greater Pittsburgh area will conduct three oral arguments before a panel of judges on issues and controversies currently circulating within the bankruptcy arena. After each side has presented its case, a panel of judges will discuss the arguments’ merits and analyze how they anticipate the issue will or will not be resolved.

J udges scheduled to participate are Carlotta Bohm, U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania; Joy Flowers Conti, U.S. District Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania; and Tiara N.A. Patton, U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Northern District of Ohio.

Pittsburgh is America’s Apartheid City

Presented by Professor and Attorney Jerry Dickinson, this keynote talk calls for a moral and ethical reckoning. He provocatively challenges his audience to reorient the lens for which some gaze at the city and region, that the city is not the nation’s most livable city. Rather, it is America’s apartheid city. Professor Dickinson draws upon his experiences as a Fulbright Scholar in South Africa and surveys his experiences and knowledge of the history of Pittsburgh’s segregated past, discrimination, gentrification and stark racial disparities to conclude that Pittsburgh is the archetype of a modern American apartheid city. But Professor Dickinson’s thesis is one of hope and aspiration, not despair. He sets forth a moral vision and the role
Revenues generated from attendance fees and sponsorships from local law firms are used to make charitable donations to Neighborhood Legal Services, the Attorneys Against Hunger campaign and the Bankruptcy Judges Memorial Scholarship Fund.

For more information on the Symposium or to register, visit ACBA.org/calendar.

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We get it.
Recent events have reminded us all that nothing is guaranteed. But history tells us with every downturn follows a recovery. Is your investment portfolio and financial plan updated and properly positioned to reap the benefits?

You can protect your assets from current risk factors such as inflation, interest rates, taxes and market fluctuation. It requires proactive investment management and a financial plan customized to your specific needs and risk tolerance.

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Bar Briefs

News and Notes

ACBA member and Barrister-At-Law Jeffrey Wertz gave the keynote lecture Oct. 16 to the Pittsburgh Chapter of The Dickens Fellowship on the subject of Charles Dickens of the Middle Temple. Wertz practices civil and criminal law. He became a member of the Honourable Society of the Inner Temple in 2010 and was called to the Bar of England and Wales in 2012.

People on the Move

Martin T. Shepherd, a litigation lawyer, has joined Pietragallo Gordon Alfano Bosick & Raspanti, LLP in the firm’s Commercial Litigation team and is head of the firm’s Diversity Initiative. As a cybersecurity innovator, Shepherd’s arrival adds further depth to the firm’s Cybersecurity and Privacy team.

In Memoriam

Peggy Michelle Smyrnes-Williams

Peggy Michelle Smyrnes-Williams passed away on Sunday, Oct. 10, 2021. Peggy was born on Nov. 22, 1952, the daughter of the late Margie and Michael Smyrnes. She attended Norwin High School, graduating Salutatorian, while also being a very accomplished concert pianist.

Pursuing this passion for music, Peggy went on to Duquesne University to earn a degree in the field. After teaching music locally for a few years at Baldwin, she returned to Duquesne for law school. Early in her legal career, Peggy chaired statewide committees on child abuse and neglect as well as the Liberty Bell Award, while also continuing to be involved with music as a member of the ACBA Players. Following her legal career, Peggy rerouted her charitable energy towards the Carnegie Museum of Natural History where she co-chaired events, such as the Gem and Mineral Show and the Hall of the American Indians opening.

Peggy took a break from the CMNH, refocusing her efforts in the arts and healthcare. She served two terms on the board of Ladies Hospital Aid Society – Montefiore for a total of ten years. In addition to her work with LHAS, she was also on the board of National Society of Arts and Letters, along with the Great Lakes Regional Metropolitan Opera National Council of Auditions – where she helped the process of auditioning local singers for the New York competition. She was also on the board of Pittsburgh Symphony Youth Orchestra, Pittsburgh Opera Theater and Pittsburgh Festival Theater. Toward the end of her life, Peggy continued to give her time to LHAS – co-chairing events to raise money for the University of Pittsburgh Department of Ophthalmology while also returning to CMNH as a board director for a couple of years.

Peggy’s love for people and organizing events extended into her home where she displayed her astute knowledge of cooking when hosting annual parties. Peggy loved to travel with her family, especially when it also involved close friends. She was also active in her church, teaching Sunday school for a few years and being an active member of the choir up until her illness. Peggy’s wit and intensity will be sorely missed; her unique capacities to welcome others and make connections as well as her indefatigable spirit of solution-making are irreplaceable. Peggy is survived by her beloved husband and son, Dr. Karl Williams and Michael E.C. Williams; she is also survived by her sister Kathleen White and brother in law Eric White.

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Workers’ Comp Golf Outing

On a beautiful fall day, 36 golfers played at Shannopin Country Club during the ACBA Workers’ Compensation Section’s annual golf outing on Oct. 13. Section Chair Michael Quatrini has been organizing the event for the last seven years. The event raises money for Kids’ Chance of Pennsylvania.

Our Health Care Power of Attorney and Living Will documents are available on the ACBA website for free at ACBA.org/POA-Living-Will.

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