

The Citation

A Monthly Publication of the Savannah Bar Association

Editors: Lindsey A. Lovingood and Denton C. Hill

Dates to Remember:

- January 5, 2012
Hot Topics Seminar at DeSoto Hilton
- January 5, 2012
Monthly Luncheon at DeSoto Hilton (12:00 p.m.)
- January 11, 2012
Investiture of Judge Karpf and Recognition of Judge Brannen Chatham Co. Courthouse (9:30 a.m.)
- January 17, 2012
YLD Happy Hour TBA
- February 9, 2012
Monthly Luncheon at DeSoto Hilton
- February 24-25, 2012
High School Mock Trial Competition Chatham Co. Courthouse

SBA Begins 2012 With Annual Hot Topic Seminar

The Savannah Bar Association will start the new year by hosting the annual Hot Topics Seminar at the DeSoto Hilton on Thursday, January 5, 2012. The program will run from 8:20 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., and will feature several of Savannah's prominent attorneys presenting on a variety of topics. Attendees will receive 7 total hours of CLE Credit. For more information, to view a complete agenda, or to register for the Seminar, please visit the SBA website at www.savannahbar.org.

All SBA members are invited to attend the monthly luncheon, held in conjunction with the Hot Topic Seminar, on **Thursday, January 5, 2012 at 12:00 p.m.** The SBA is honored to have Chatham County District Attorney Larry Chisolm as the speaker at this month's luncheon.

Justice Benham Award Given to Wanda Andrews

By Bill Broker

The Annual Justice Robert Benham Award for Community Service will be presented to **Wanda Andrews** on February 28 at the State Bar of Georgia in Atlanta. The nomination was a joint effort of the GA Association of Black Women Attorneys (Savannah Chapter), the GA Association of Women Lawyers (Savannah Chapter), the Port City Bar Association and the Savannah Bar Association.

The Award brings to light the work of Georgia judges and lawyers who have made significant contribution to their communities and thereby demonstrate the positive contributions of members of the Bar beyond their legal work. Past Savannah recipients include the **Hon. Louisa Abbot, Hon. James F. Bass, Jr., Dolly Chisholm, Michael Edwards, Albert Mazo, and Lisa White.**

Wanda is well-known in the community for her work on behalf of victims of domestic violence and her advocacy on behalf of victims themselves and the programs that support victims. She has trained numerous attorneys, judges, shelter workers, law enforcement officers and others as to the rights of those victimized and is a much sought-after authority on the subject.

Members of the Savannah Bar Association are invited on **January 11, 2012** to recognize Judge Brannen's years of service as he assumes senior status and for the investiture of the Honorable Michael L. Karpf as Chief Judge of the Chatham County Superior Court. The ceremony will be held in Courtroom J, Chatham County Courthouse, at 9:30 a.m. All those interested in attending must R.S.V.P. promptly to Crystal Cooper at ccooper@chathamcounty.org as space is limited.

Judge Brannen: More Than Just the Time I Served

By Denton Hill

On January 1st, the Honorable Judge Perry Brannen, Jr. took the next step of his long and illustrious legal career as he moved into senior judge status and concluded his run as the longest serving Superior Court judge in Chatham County. Given the opportunity to speak with him, he will quickly tell you that his legal career has been more than just how long he served, though. While Judge Brannen has always wanted to be an attorney, which is only natural considering his family's legacy in the Savannah area legal community, he also served in the military prior to becoming a lawyer. The young Perry Brennan, Jr. served two years in the Army during the Vietnam War during which time he achieved the rank of Captain in an astonishing 20 months, foreshadowing his quick rise to the bench, and received the Army Commendation Medal for his service. After his military service, Brannen began practicing law, first by working as an Assistant District Attorney for a year, and then going to work for the firm of Brannen, Clark, & Hester, where he was engaged in a very broad practice.

While his appointment to the bench and his time thereon were the subject of a recent Savannah Morning News article, the article failed to mention several points that could only be appreciated by his peers of the Savannah Bar Association. Specifically Judge Brannen was the President of the Council of Superior Court Judges from 1989 through 1990, he served on the Judicial Council of Georgia, and was an Administrative Judge in the 1st District. Judge Brannen found products liability cases to be his most interesting, simply because such cases always provided him with in-depth exposure to the scientists and engineers behind the products in question. The Judge stated that he has always enjoyed learning the "what, whys, and hows" of another's profession.

Judge Brannen believes the timing of such a big change in assuming senior status is right for him both personally and professionally. Personally, Judge Brannen hopes to use his newly gained free-time to rekindle those interests that he has put on the back burner, such as photography, travel, and music, and possibly develop some new ones. Professionally, Judge Brannen's senior status allows him to sit in any court in Georgia, but functionally he fills a special back-up role in a number of scenarios including a sitting judge being conflicted out of a case, filling-in do to scheduling issues, or sitting as a jurist for any number of other circumstances. Moving forward though, Judge Brannen hopes to get into private mediation and use those skills he developed over the course of his career in the realm of ADR, just as soon as he completes his certification.

Ten members of the Savannah Bar and Judiciary were nominated to fill the vacancy of Judge Brannen's seat: **Wanda Andrews**, Georgia Legal Services, **Honorable Michael H. Barker**, Chatham County Magistrate Court, **James B. Blackburn, Jr.**, Wiseman, Blackburn & Futrell, **Tony Center**, Law Office of Tony Center, P.C., **Lisa G. Colbert**, Assistant Chatham County Attorney, **J. Hamrick Gnann, Jr.**, Gannam, Gnann & Steinmetz, Pooler Municipal Court Judge, and Chatham County State Court Judge pro tem, **Peter D. Muller**, Goodman, McGuffey, Lindsey & Johnson, LLP, **Isabel Pauley**, Atlantic Judicial Circuit Assistant District Attorney, **Honorable Tammy Stokes**, Chatham County Recorder's Court, and **Timothy R. Walmsley**, Hunter Maclean. Of the nominees, five will be submitted by the Georgia Judicial Nominating Commission to Governor Nathan Deal, who will then appoint a replacement to the Chatham County Superior Court.

SBA Recognized By Law-Related Education Program

The Law-Related Education (LRE) Program thanked the Savannah Bar Association for its efforts in supporting students in taking a journey through justice. The Journey Through Justice Program is an interactive learning experience for students and teachers in grades 3-12.

Thanks to the efforts of the SBA through the Dunbar Harrison Fund, both West Chatham Middle School and Savannah High School of Liberal Studies were able to participate.



To the Right: Students from West Chatham Middle School (top) and Savannah High School of Liberal Studies (above) learn about the law with the help of the SBA and LRE.

Local Attorneys Selected for Legal Elite

Richard Barid and **Howard Spiva** were recently selected as two of *Georgia Trend's* "Legal Elite" for 2011. The newest members of Georgia's "Legal Elite" were voted on and selected by their peers in several recognized practice areas for the ninth edition of the list. Of more than 34,000 licensed attorneys in Georgia, 330 attorneys were selected in eight practice areas. Richard was selected in the Taxes, Estates, & Trusts practice area and Howard was selected in the Personal Injury practice area.

Richard has practiced in Savannah for over 15 years and founded his current firm, Smith Barid, LLC, in 2006. Richard's practice focuses on estate planning, elder law (Medicaid and VA benefits matters), and special needs planning. Smith Barid, LLC is an estate planning, elder law, and special needs planning law firm based in Savannah, Georgia. From offices in Savannah, they serve clients all over Georgia.

Howard is from Savannah, Georgia, and has practiced for over 28 years. Howard limits his practice to serious and catastrophic personal injuries and wrongful deaths. He has a litigation practice with an emphasis on traumatic brain injuries and claims involving children.

To compile this list, *Georgia Trend* staffers mailed ballots to a sampling of lawyers who are members of the State Bar of Georgia and whose practice areas correspond to those featured. The ballot was also available on the *Georgia Trend* website and could be submitted electronically to the magazine. The list was determined solely by lawyers' votes.

Reductions Underway at Savannah GLSP

By Bill Broker

A 15% reduction in Legal Services Corporation (LSC) funding, coupled with continued reductions in money available to the Georgia Bar Foundation, will cause us to see a smaller GLSP office emerge with the new year. The LSC cut is the largest in 15 years. The attorney staff will drop from the nine attorneys on board this time last year, to six in 2012. A deferred associate completed her year with GLSP and two additional attorneys are leaving. Funding is such that they cannot be replaced. Additionally, two support staff persons will be leaving.

The office remains strong with a core of experienced and dedicated attorneys and support personnel. Attorneys will continue to represent low-income people in its 11-county service area, but availability of staff will simply be reduced. Domestic violence, the elderly, and economic security will continue to be areas of emphasis.

The office will continue to rely on Pro Bono activity from the local bar and, of course, financial support is always welcome. For further information, feel free to contact **Bill Broker** at (912) 651-2180 or bbroker@glsp.org.

YLD News and Highlights

By Jennifer C. Mock

The Savannah YLD has many exciting events planned over the next few months. On **January 17, 2012**, the YLD will hold a Trivia Night at Loco's on Broughton Street. Details will be distributed to the YLD closer to the event date. In February, the YLD will host a CLE/Happy Hour held in conjunction with the State Bar of Georgia YLD and is currently scheduled for **February 16, 2011**. The next Savannah YLD Board Meeting will be **January 10, 2012** at Oliver Maner LLP at 5:30pm. All are welcome to attend and provide input for our future events.

The State Bar of Georgia YLD's Annual Signature Fundraiser, Black Tie and Blackjack, will be held in conjunction with the Midyear Meeting on **January 9, 2012**, at the Capital City Club in Atlanta. All proceeds will go to benefit Georgia Legal Services, and tickets can be purchased at www.glsp.org. Although this event is hosted by the State Bar of Georgia YLD, everyone is invited to purchase a ticket and attend.

Volunteers Needed for High School Mock Trial Competition

As local high school students prepare to compete in the annual High School Mock Trial Competition, local attorneys are needed to serve as judges on **February 24th and 25th** at the Chatham County Courthouse. Each courtroom will have one presiding judge and three scoring evaluators. Volunteers must allow ample time to prepare for the competition by thoroughly reviewing the case materials which will be provided, and have at least four hours set aside for each scheduled round on the day of competition. All judgment will attend an orientation session prior to each round. To volunteer, please complete the form on the last page of the Citation and return the same to **Will Claiborne**, Regional Coordinator, at will@claibornesurmay.com.

Announcements

Thomerson Macchiaverna & Smith P.C. is pleased to announce the opening of the firm's Greenville, South Carolina office located at 418 River Street, Greenville, South Carolina 29601. **Francesca Macchiaverna** is now the managing partner of the Savannah, Georgia office, and **Christopher H. Smith** has joined the Savannah office as a partner. Thomerson Macchiaverna & Smith P.C. received an honorable mention by the Savannah Morning News as a Newcomer of the Year business.

Brennan & Wasden LLP is seeking attorneys with 3+ years of experience to assist with its professional liability and business litigation practice groups. Those with deposition and courtroom experience will receive preference. Georgia Bar required. Please submit a cover letter and resume to **Wiley Wasden III** at wwasden@brennanandwasden.com.

Thomerson Macchiaverna & Smith P.C. is seeking a Commercial Litigation Associate needed to hit the ground running in the firm's Savannah office. Qualified candidates must have at least 2-3 years experience, including motion practice and trials. Excellent writing skills and ability to work independently required. Please email a cover letter and resume to **Jennifer Scogin** at jscogin@tmlawpc.com no later than January 31, 2012.

Just as a reminder, The Citation is always seeking submissions for the newsletter. We encourage you to submit your professional and personal announcements; law-related advertisements; and other written submissions. Articles or announcements about particular philanthropies you are involved in are welcome. Suggestions about ways to improve are always welcome. And, of course, we love to receive photographs to share with our readers! Bear in mind that our readers include not only current SBA members, but also many judges and law school students as well. Please contact us at SavannahBarNewsletter@gmail.com with submissions or questions. Thanks!

JUDGING PANEL VOLUNTEER FORM



2012 REGIONAL COMPETITIONS

I am volunteering for the SAVANNAH competition, February 24 – 25, 2012 at the Chatham County Courthouse.

I would prefer the role of: [] Presiding Judge [] Scoring Evaluator

I would prefer the following time: [] Friday evening [] Saturday morning [] Semi-Final [] Final Round

I have had _____ (#) **ROUNDS** of judging experience as: [] Presiding Judge [] Scoring Evaluator

I have had _____ (#) **YEARS** of judging experience as: [] Presiding Judge [] Scoring Evaluator

HSMT Coaching Experience: [] Yes [] No # of Years? _____ Team? _____

I have a “conflict” with the team(s) from (*Identify by school name*) _____

Name: _____

Firm/Business: _____

Address: _____

City, State Zip: _____

State Bar Number: _____

E-Mail Address: _____

Cell Phone: _____

Please return this completed form to Will Claiborne, Regional Coordinator, via fax to 236-1884 or email to will@claibornesurmay.com – Questions, call Will at 236-9559

Your competition materials will be emailed directly to you before the competition. The Judging Panel Manual may also be found online at www.georgiamocktrial.org under the Mock Trial Materials tab