



FBA TODAY

Newsletter of the Montgomery Chapter of the Federal Bar Association

Volume 2, Issue 1

Spring 2010

FBA supports new criminal court initiative

Program focuses on community reentry

Your Montgomery FBA has joined with the Middle District of Alabama to help ex-offenders succeed with reentry into the community.

In January, the district began a pilot reentry court program designed to help ex-offenders who are at high risk of re-offending. Chief Magistrate Judge Susan Russ Walker oversees a program for drug offenses, while District Judge W. Keith Watkins has a program for non-drug felony offenses.

Federal reentry courts are evidence-based programs for individuals who have been released under supervision after completing their required prison sentences for felony offenses. Judge Watkins, in his first reentry court session, described it as a “consensual contract” between the court and the individual.

Participants in reentry court must work or perform community service, avoid violating the law and conditions of their release, attend any required mental health or drug treatment programs, and submit to random drug-testing. They also “can self-eliminate at any time,” Judge Watkins said in court.

The judges are intensively involved in the program, as participants appear frequently in court before the judge to review their progress. Judge Walker noted that research suggests that participants in such programs receive more certain and immediate consequences for negative behaviors than individuals in most other types of criminal justice programs, engage in less drug use, and have lower rates of re-arrest.

By completing the intensive reporting regimen, successful graduates of the reentry program may qualify for a year off their term of supervision. Additionally, the judge may administer positive rewards for doing well or negative sanctions for doing poorly.

The FBA is partnering with the reentry court program by offering rewards and recognition for positive performance in the program. Studies show that reinforcement of positive behavior change through such incentives can be highly effective. FBA members attend the reentry court sessions to present the rewards to participants. ***If you would like to volunteer an hour or two a month, please contact the chapter! Additionally, we are looking for donations of gift cards, zoo or Biscuits baseball tickets or other similar items as rewards, along with clothing for participants to wear to job interviews.***



Participant Jeremy Mann & chapter President Austin Huffaker



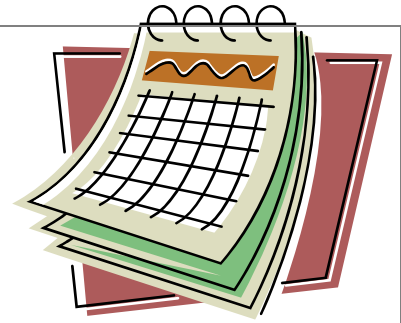
INSIDE

Page 2: Upcoming events & new members

Page 3: Member spotlight—Brent Woodall

Page 4: President's Corner

Mark your calendar for . . .



- **The Montgomery chapter's Federal Practice seminar**
 - December 2010, at the Embassy Suites hotel
 - Agenda will include E-discovery, State of the District & more—send us suggestions on topics *you* want!
 - Cost discounted for FBA members!
 - Watch the newsletter and your e-mail for more information!
- **The FBA National Convention, Sept. 23-25, 2010, in New Orleans**
 - See the website for details!
- **Other FBA events**

May 12-14, 2010

19th Annual National Seminar on the Federal Sentencing Guidelines

Presented by the FBA and the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers

Location: The Renaissance Vinoy Resort, St. Petersburg, Florida

[View full brochure](#)

May 14-15, 2010

Annual Immigration Seminar

Sponsored by the FBA Immigration Law Section and co-sponsored by the Memphis Mid-South Chapter of the FBA, the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA), and the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Tennessee, through its Court Improvement Fund.

Location: The University of Memphis School of Law, Memphis, Tenn.

[Register Online](#)

[View Brochure](#)



To our newest members

The Montgomery Chapter of the FBA is thrilled to welcome Steven K. Herndon & Matthew R. Griffith of the Hinton & Herndon law firm in Montgomery.



TILT ("Totally Irrelevant Legal Trivia") Goes to the Movies!

All information comes from the American Film Institute,

<http://www.afi.com/>

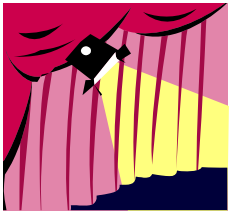
#1 Movie Hero: Atticus Finch, in *To Kill a Mockingbird*

#1 Courtroom Drama: *To Kill a Mockingbird*, 1963

#25: "*Mockingbird's*" ranking on the Top 100 Movies list

1: Number of movies from the last two decades that made the courtroom drama list

Most recent movie on the courtroom drama list: *A Few Good Men*, 1992



Member Spotlight: Brent Woodall

In the second semester of his second year of law school at Alabama, W. Brent Woodall had a heart attack.

While at 34 he was somewhat older than the average law student, Woodall knew he was still too young for cardiac arrest. "I just did too much," Woodall says: He was on the trial team, taking a full load and working for a judge. Although his heart attack was on Sunday and he was back in school on Thursday, "I had already decided it ain't worth dying for." So Woodall made some lifestyle changes—something he had *lots* of experience with.

By the time he became an attorney, Woodall's résumé also included working in industrial sales, being active in Republican politics and succeeding Sean Hannity as the host of a north Alabama TV show. After graduating from law school in 2002, Woodall spent six years with the Alabama Attorney General's office, working in the public corruption and white collar crime division. He joined the U.S. Attorney's criminal division in August 2008 and the FBA last year.

Growing up in a lower middle-class family in Decatur, Woodall began working as a teenager and worked his way through several levels of school. With his degree in Justice Studies from Athens State University, he became the first in his family to graduate from college. In the early 1990s, he did some shows on the local community cable channel while active with the Young Republicans in Morgan County and so was asked to be a guest on Sean Hannity's 1992 pilot for radio station WVNN. When Hannity left soon after for Atlanta's bigger market, Woodall was offered the chance to take over.

Woodall spent a year interviewing, among others, political candidates such as Pat Buchanan and developing his on-air persona, which he describes as "more like Junior Samples" than Sean Hannity. After a break of about 10 months from the radio show, he resumed his talk-show duties and for five years hosted a live show at 10:30 p.m. every Sunday.

Law school seemed a natural evolution from broadcast work, Woodall says. "It was something I always wanted to do because I enjoy talking to people." Additionally, both professions require something of a flair for the dramatic, he adds, and his talk-show duties prepared him well for legal advocacy.

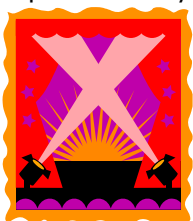
Like radio or TV, being in the courtroom is "like being on stage," he says, and in both fields, "you have to be very quick on your feet . . . you have to analyze what the other person is saying and decide how you respond."

Woodall, who lives north of Wetumpka, and his wife, Marie, have one daughter, Hannah Grace, 6. He enjoys fishing, bluegrass music and dancing. He joined the FBA in large part because of First Vice-President Terrie Biggs, whom he's known for almost 20 years.

One benefit of FBA, Woodall says, is the opportunity to interact with other attorneys on a more personal, less formal level. As a prosecutor, he's been disturbed by the "lack of civility" attorneys sometimes display in the courtroom, and he sees the FBA as one way to counteract that. "You get to know the other attorneys . . . [and] develop a good working relationship with them," Woodall says, adding that the Brown-Bag lunches sponsored by the FBA are especially valuable in this area.



Terrie Biggs (l.) & Brent Woodall



Know someone we should spotlight? Have a suggestion for the newsletter or news to share? Contact the chapter officers or e-mail susanlturley@gmail.com



President's Corner, By Austin Huffaker

WELCOME to another edition of our Chapter's newsletter. I am pleased to announce our Chapter's partnership with the new re-entry program spearheaded by Judge Walker and Judge Watkins with the help of the U.S. Attorney's office. Since the program began in January, Chapter representatives have attended every bi-weekly program meeting. So far, the program is on track to graduate at least three participants. Last week, our Chapter announced that it will sponsor a night with the Biscuits—tickets, food and beverages—for participants who successfully complete the program and their children.

From my observation of the participants, despite their past, they truly appear to be on the right track to better their situations through efforts such as regaining their driver's licenses, paying fines, attending substance abuse programs and mental health counseling, and finding jobs. For individuals with little outside support, this often proves difficult. Therefore, our Chapter has joined with court personnel, probation officers and the U.S. Attorney's office to give the participants guidance to achieve their goals. From our perspective, this can range from simply attending the re-entry program meetings in a show of support to assistance in reviewing a job application to tutoring in math.

On behalf of our Chapter, I strongly encourage you to help us with this program, whether it be a donation of clothes (for interviews), some of your time, or a monetary contribution to be applied toward Chapter expenses in supporting this program. If you would like further information, please feel free to contact one of the Board members.

Also, we are in the early stages of organizing a federal practice seminar, with a likely date of mid-December. Read future editions of the Newsletter for updates.

Contact the National Headquarters of the
Federal Bar Association at:
1220 North Fillmore Street, Suite 444
Arlington, VA 22201
(571) 481-9100 (phone)
(571) 481-9090 (fax)
fba@fedbar.org
<http://www.fedbar.org>

Contact local leaders
President R. Austin Huffaker, Jr.
Rah2@rsig.com
1st Vice-President Terrie Scott Biggs
tsb@chlaw.com
2nd Vice-President Matt Bledsoe
mbleadsoe@ago.state.al.us
<http://www.fedbar.org/montgomery.html>



With the upcoming Supreme Court vacancy, check out these sites:

- <http://www.scotusblog.com/> Sponsored by Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP, this blog contains orders and opinions, commentary and analysis, new filings, the court calendar, petitions to watch, and so on.
- <http://www.oyez.org/> According to the site, the "Oyez Project is a multimedia archive devoted to the Supreme Court of the United States and its work," offering "all audio recorded in the Court" since 1955."
- <http://www.supremecourt.gov/> The Court's own website.
- <http://supreme.justia.com/> This site offers recent opinions, a list of Court-related blogs, and links to Court resources and news.
- <http://blogs.wsj.com/law/> The *Wall Street Journal's* blog "covers the notable legal cases, trends and personalities of interest to the business community."