Chapter Exchange

LAW STUDENT MENTORSHIP PROGRAMS

Kansas and Western District of Missouri Chapter

We held a happy hour on Dec. 15, 2017, at the Robert J. Dole Federal Courthouse in Kansas City, Kan., from 4-6 p.m. We had a good turnout of about 20 people, including many mentors and mentees, and everyone enjoyed mingling over food and drinks. We also enjoyed celebrating our mentees making it through the fall semester successfully, as each of our member law schools completed their final exams on the date of our event. Our mentors in attendance included several federal judges, private civil practitioners, criminal defense attorneys, prosecutors, and law clerks. Our mentees included students from each of our member law schools—Washburn University, the University of Kansas, the University of Missouri-Kansas City, and the University of Missouri-Columbia.

South Florida Chapter

On Oct. 24, 2017, we hosted our Fifth Annual Law Student Mentorship Program at Batch Gastropub. Students from all of our local area law schools came to socialize and network with practicing attorneys in town and with each other. Despite inclement weather, and rescheduling because of Hurricane Irma, we had a fantastic turnout and a good time was had by all. Our mentoring program continues to be strong, and offers a great opportunity for students who are members of the FBA to be paired with local practitioners.

New Mexico Chapter

The New Mexico Chapter, recognizing a gap in mentorship opportunities for local law students interested in federal practice, launched a chapter mentorship program. Veronica C. Gonzales-Zamora, Chair of the Chapter Mentorship Program, and Frank T. Apodaca, Chapter President, organized an event to kick off the program in November. Law student mentees were matched with volunteer lawyers and met for the first time at the event. The mentors include lawyers who practice before federal courts and administrative agencies, the Honorable James O. Browning of the U.S. District Court for the District of New Mexico, and Daniel Lewis, the National V.P. for the 10th Circuit of the FBA. University of New Mexico School of Law students met with New Mexico mentors at the 2017 10th Circuit Judicial Conference.

Above Left: Dean Sergio Pareja and Dean Alfred Mathewson (co-deans and professors of law at University of New Mexico School of Law) stopped in to thank the chapter and mentors for organizing and participating in the program. Above Right: Frank Apodaca (president of New Mexico Chapter) thanked mentors, mentees, and law school staff for participating, introduced board members, and shared an inspiring story.

South Florida Chapter: Students from local Florida Law Schools networking with practicing lawyers at Batch Gastropub.
other events
south florida chapter
federal judicial reception
the federal bar association section on taxation and pricewaterhousecoopers llp hosted a happy hour reception for tax court judge joseph r. goeke on dec. 5, 2017. judge goeke spoke about current events in the u.s. tax court, and networking and socializing followed.

teen discourse and discussion event
on dec. 1, 2017, the district court along with our chapter held miami’s first teen discourse and discussion event at the courthouse. judge bloom and judge rosenberg have been instrumental in getting this program off the ground in our district and similar events were recently held in fort pierce and fort lauderdale by our sister chapters. students from young men’s preparatory academy and law enforcement officers memorial high school arrived early to the courthouse where they learned about how various members of the fba became lawyers and why they did so. the program then transitioned to selecting students for their various roles for the upcoming event, and then a discussion on civil discourse. students were assigned roles as attorneys, jurors, a courtroom deputy, a courtroom security officer, and two interpreters.

the framework of the argument to be made was elonis v. united states, 135 s.ct. 2901 (2015), a first amendment matter. the students were given a modified version of elonis concerning a teenager’s facebook postings, where the parties were tasked with arguing whether the first amendment protected his postings.

the student attorneys for each side argued three sub-issues, fielded questions from judge bloom, and also gave a closing argument. a spirited jury deliberation ensued.

after the conclusion of the jury deliberations, judge bloom reviewed a “reality checklist” where the students were presented with real-life situations that, if the wrong choice was made, could affect them for the remainder of their lives. judge bloom encouraged the students to make the right choice, and the students, interactive throughout, took the judge’s words to heart.

thanks to our local high schools for coordinating and attending and thanks to judges bloom and rosenberg for making the rollout of this program a success!

fba annual awards & installation dinner
on nov. 1, 2017, we hosted our annual chapter awards & installation dinner at our new venue, the four seasons hotel miami. turnout was tremendous both from the judiciary and the bar. we presented the edward b. davis award for service to the federal bench & bar to hon. donald l. graham, district judge, in honor of his public service, and we installed our incoming president, russell koonin, officers and board members. in addition to a traditional award of appreciation to judge graham, we also presented him with a personalized miami dolphins jersey, which was certainly well received!

thank you to all who attended and a special thank you to our sponsors, without which the night would not have been possible!

hyatt luncheon—nelson mandela: the greatest lawyer who ever lived
on oct. 11, 2017, for our first luncheon of the season, we were excited to welcome attorney bill manning of robins kaplan, llp, who explored nelson mandela’s life, with particular emphasis on his training and development as a lawyer. manning described how president mandela practiced the skills of lawyering throughout his life, focusing on the deep spirituality that mandela developed and how this inner life continually impacted his lawyering skills and his person as one of the greatest individuals of the 20th century. manning gave a dynamic, interactive presentation with amazing visuals supplementing his presentation. manning walked us through certain legal ethical canons, as well as certain philosophical concepts, and tied all of them into the life of president mandela. manning took us on the journey of president mandela’s life, from his time as a small child, through his education and formative years, to his time practicing law and becoming involved in politics, to his incarceration, and then his eventual release and presidency. it was a fascinating presentation about a fascinating subject. manning was gracious enough to answer questions at the end in both a group setting and additional individual questions thereafter.

a special thanks to manning and to all our attendees!
Race and the Federal Justice System CLE
On Oct. 10, 2017, we were fortunate to have Hon. Marcia G. Cooke, Federal Public Defender Michael Caruso, and Acting United States Attorney Benjamin G. Greenberg as panelists for this CLE seminar discussing some of the most pressing legal issues of today, including criminal justice reform, the role of implicit bias (if any) in criminal justice, and Washington’s impact on the day-to-day work of the court, prosecutors, and public defenders. It was moderated by Marissell Descalzo of Tache Bronis, and held at Holland & Knight. Important topics were discussed at length and with great candor, such as the impact of the Sessions Memo versus the Holder Memo, the effect implicit bias has on daily life and in the courtroom, and issues pertaining to sentencing guidelines. The conference room was full to capacity and our audience members engaged with the speakers on these very important topics as well.

A special thank you to our panelists, to our moderator, to the host law firm, and to all those who attended!

FBA Boardroom Series Luncheon—US Secret Service
For our third Boardroom Series luncheon of the summer, the FBA was pleased to host South Florida’s Secret Service’s Assistant to the Special Agent in Charge Brian Deer. Agent Deer was a fascinating and engaging guest.

Agent Deer began by discussing the history and origins of the Secret Service, which stemmed from multiple currencies being issued by various states during the time of the Civil War and how these multiple currencies bred a culture for counterfeiting. Agent Deer then explained that given the Secret Service’s success in this arena, the agency was later tapped to provide protective detail for presidents after three presidential assassinations in the latter part of the 19th century and the turn of the century.

Agent Deer explained that to this day these two missions are the focus of the Secret Service, but encompass a far wider swath than what they originally entailed. The Secret Service’s protective detail requirement includes presidents, vice-presidents, their families, all candidates for president, former presidents, and all visiting foreign heads of state should they request protection. Agent Deer also shared with us how the Secret Service utilizes many methods and techniques to neutralize threats.

As for the Secret Service’s other mission of investigating financial crimes, identity theft, and other related crimes, Agent Deer gave us tremendous insight into the agency’s mission, dedication, and approach.

Agent Deer also shared with us his personal story, and how after 9/11, he was determined to be a federal law enforcement officer and the process he went through to become a Secret Service agent.

Agent Deer graciously answered many questions that we had, and for each one, took the time and care to provide true insider insight.

Thank you Agent Deer and thank you to everyone who attended!

Maryland Chapter
Three members of the Maryland U.S. Attorney’s office were nominated for and/or obtained significant positions in the Department of Justice (DOJ) during 2017. Former Maryland U.S. Attorney Rod J. Rosenstein, an FBA member and former Maryland Board of Governors member, was sworn in as DOJ deputy attorney general on April 26, 2017. James A. Crowell IV, FBA member and current Maryland Board of Governors member, was appointed acting director of the Executive Office of United States Attorneys on Dec. 6, 2017. Robert K. Hur, the Deputy Attorney General’s principle deputy, was nominated by President Donald Trump to be the U.S. attorney for Maryland on Nov. 1, 2017.

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the picture is not particularly hopeful or encouraging, Gibney’s work makes a significant contribution to a badly needed cultural conversation that is long overdue.

J. Phillip Calabrese is a partner at Porter, Wright, Morris & Arthur LLP whose practice includes defending businesses in class action and product liability cases. He is the president of the Northern District of Ohio Chapter of the Federal Bar Association. The views expressed here are his own.

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