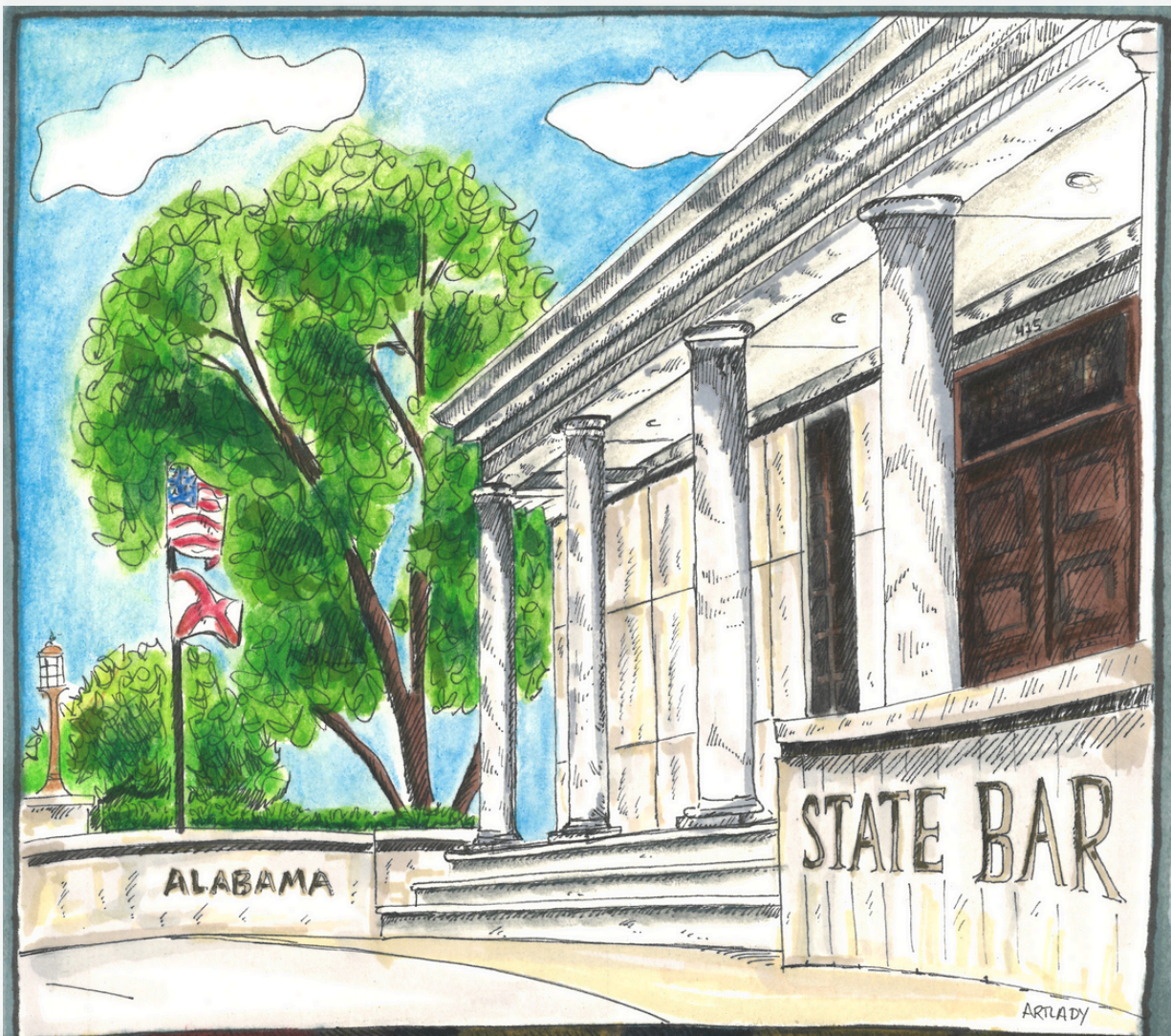


YEAR IN
REVIEW

2024-2025



ALABAMA STATE BAR

415 DEXTER AVENUE
MONTGOMERY, AL 36104
334.269.1515 | WWW.ALABAR.ORG



ON THE COVER

This original watercolor by Scottsboro artist Sonya Clemmons, known as the Artlady, features the Alabama State Bar building atop a stack of law books. Clemmons, whose work often highlights Alabama landmarks and institutions, is also deeply connected to the legal community. She partners with Jackson County Presiding Circuit Judge John Graham to lead a special art program for participants in drug court. Look for more about Clemmons and her inspiring work with the Jackson County court system in the Summer issue of *The Alabama Lawyer*.

2024-2025 YEAR IN REVIEW

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Tom Perry
149th President of the
Alabama State Bar

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

It has been a true honor to serve as President of the Alabama State Bar during a year focused on purpose, progress, and possibility.

With Harvesting Hope, we set out to strengthen our profession from the ground up by supporting new lawyers, addressing the needs of underserved communities, and building a sustainable path forward for rural practice. What began as an initiative is now a lasting investment: a 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to creating meaningful, long-term impact across our state.

As we look to the future, our direction is strong. We aim to foster innovation, provide practical resources for lawyers at every stage of their careers, and continue raising the bar for professionalism and service. I'm deeply grateful to our dedicated volunteers and staff, whose commitment drives this mission forward.

Together, we've planted something that will continue to grow.

The following benchmarks and accomplishments represent the **Seeds of Hope** planted during the past year through the **Harvesting Hope** initiative.



NOW ROOTED AS A 501(C)(3)

Harvesting Hope is officially a nonprofit, opening doors to growth, support, and sustainability for years to come.

MENTOR PROGRAM IN FULL BLOOM

Nearly 50 lawyers statewide have volunteered to be part of the mentorship program to help new lawyers plant confident roots.

YOUNG SHOOTS TAKING ROOT

Four new lawyers have taken root in rural communities with fewer than one attorney per 1,000 residents.

FERTILE GROUND FOR GROWTH

Expense models and possible income streams have been developed to show a sustainable path for lawyers to grow practices in small towns and underserved areas.

CROSS-POLLINATION IN ACTION

Other states have taken notice, not just of our model, but of the mindset. The term "legal opportunity zone" has reframed rural need as rural potential, inspiring bar leaders beyond Alabama.

SUPPORT FROM THE GROUND UP

With programs already in place within the Alabama State Bar's Law Practice Management program, new lawyers are equipped to thrive.

SEEDS THAT TRAVEL

The Harvesting Hope message has been shared at more than 60 events across Alabama, spanning more than 15,000 miles driven by Harvesting Hope Task Force Chair Tom Heflin alone. Every stop: another seed planted.

CULTIVATING SUPPORT FROM LEADERS

The initiative has taken root in conversations with top state decision-makers, helping equip the soil for future growth of the initiative.



Harvesting Hope

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Goals of Harvesting Hope

Provide **access to justice** by offering legal services to underserved communities.

Mentorship Program

Experienced lawyers guide new practitioners in establishing successful rural practices.

Incubator and Support

Incubators provide essential resources for lawyers to start and sustain their practices.

CURRENTLY IN ALABAMA

Rural Counties

49 counties in Alabama are classified as legal deserts, with less than one lawyer per 1,000 residents.

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Certain urban areas, like Jefferson County & Mobile County, also face significant shortages of legal services.

Impact on Access to Justice

Citizens in these areas face increased difficulty accessing legal services, some times leading to the denial of legal rights.



OF THE **19,745** MEMBERS OF THE ASB, **15,222** LIVE AND WORK IN ALABAMA.

77% OF THOSE 15,222 ATTORNEYS WORK IN **7** COUNTIES.

ONLY **3,545** ATTORNEYS ARE LEFT TO COVER THE REMAINING **60** COUNTIES IN ALABAMA.



ANNUAL CASELOADS

Total Cases Filed in 60/67 Counties

515,602

Average Caseload Per Available Attorney in 60/67 Counties

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Total Cases Filed in 7/67 Counties

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Average Caseload Per Available Attorney in 7/67 Counties

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HARVESTING HOPE

Preparation



Locating the legal opportunity zones in Alabama

Selection and Sowing



Selecting lawyers and placing them in legal opportunity zones

Management



Providing the lawyers with resources to develop a successful practice

Harvesting



Creating a healthy and sustainable law practice in rural communities



BOARD OF BAR COMMISSIONERS

Jeff Utsey
1st Circuit

Randy Bozeman
2nd Circuit

Elizabeth Smithart
3rd Circuit

Kyra Sparks
4th Circuit

Brian Strength
5th Circuit

Josh Hayes
Scott Holmes
6th Circuit

Will Broome
7th Circuit

David Langston
8th Circuit

Tamara Neeley
9th Circuit

Jimbo Terrell
Stephen Still
Andrew Nix
Freddy Rubio
Ashley Peinhardt
Conrad Anderson
Kitty Brown
Ryan Robichaux
Brandy Robertson
10th Circuit

Leslie Moore
10th Circuit
Bessemer Cutoff

Ralph Holt
11th Circuit

Carmen Howell
12th Circuit

Edwin Lamberth
Lisa Cooper
Bill Lancaster
Steve Nicholas
Suntrease Williams-
Maynard
13th Circuit

Richard Fikes
14th Circuit

Bobby Poundstone
Pat Sefton
Joel Connally
Leon Hampton, Jr.
Felicia A. Long
Wallace Mills
15th Circuit

Brad Cornett
16th Circuit

Hunter Compton
17th Circuit

Clay Carr
Julius Shanks
Doug Smith
18th Circuit

J. Pratt Austin-Trucks
19th Circuit

William Lee
20th Circuit

Kirk Garrett
21st Circuit

Manish Patel
22nd Circuit

Mark Debro
Doug Martinson
Robin Wolfe
David Holt
23rd Circuit

Ron Strawbridge
24th Circuit

Chrissy Riddle
25th Circuit

Jorja Loftin
26th Circuit

Greg Price
27th Circuit

Steven Savarese
Lang Floyd
Lynn Perry
28th Circuit

Sally Bowers
29th Circuit

John Rea
30th Circuit

Edgar Black
31st Circuit

Matthew Carter
32nd Circuit

Lee Knowles
33rd Circuit

Jeff Bowling
34th Circuit

Bob McMillan
35th Circuit

Jerome Thompson
36th Circuit

Andrew Stanley
37th Circuit

Deborah Dunsmore
38th Circuit

Mitchell Shelly
39th Circuit

Tyler Sims
40th Circuit

Jeff Sherrer
41st Circuit

Angela Kennedy
At-Large, Place 1

Raymond Bell
At-Large, Place 2

Holly Sawyer
At-Large, Place 3

Al Vance
At-Large, Place 4

Jana Garner
At-Large, Place 5

Lisha Graham
At-Large, Place 6

Leila Watson
At-Large, Place 7

Mitch Kemmer
At-Large, Place 8

John Stamps
At-Large, Place 9

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL



Tom Perry
President



Fred Helmsing
President-Elect



John Stamps
Vice President



Terri Lovell
Secretary



Jana Garner
Executive Council



Pat Sefton
Executive Council



Ron Strawbridge
Executive Council



Mark Boardman
Parliamentarian



Ryan Duplechin
Ex-Officio



Aigner Kolom
Ex-Officio



Tom Heflin
Ex-Officio



Hal Turner
Ex-Officio



MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As we reflect on another bar year, I extend my deepest thanks to each of you, our members, for your continued support and commitment to the legal profession and the mission of this organization. Your engagement, leadership, and shared values are the foundation of what we do.

This year, I am grateful for the work of our 149th Alabama State Bar President, Tom Perry, whose passionate advocacy for addressing the rural lawyer shortage brought attention and action to one of our most pressing challenges. His vision and energy inspired new conversations and real steps forward that will impact communities across our state for years to come. Seeds of hope have been planted in all of us through his and his Task Force's extraordinary work!

The Alabama State Bar's current strategic plan provides a multi-year roadmap to guide our work. While the plan spans 2023–2026, we assess progress annually through clearly defined goals and performance benchmarks in four focus areas:

- Protecting the public and upholding professional standards
- Expanding access to justice across Alabama
- Serving as a leader and resource for the legal profession
- Supporting member wellness and professional growth

I hope you find this year's Annual Report informative and encouraging as we highlight activities and accomplishments from the 2024–2025 bar year.



Terri Lovell
Executive Director
Alabama State Bar

BOARD ACTION ITEMS*

BBC MEETING | JUNE 26 & JUNE 29, 2024

- Approved bar licensure fees at the continued reduced rate of \$300 regular membership and \$150 special membership
- Approved Young Lawyers Section Bylaws Amendments
- Approved amendment to Alabama Rules Governing Admission Rule II to authorize electronically submitted, digitally certified paper item packets for the admissions process (subject to Supreme Court approval)
- Approved amendment to ARGA Rule VI(B) to extend the maximum bar exam score ages from 25 months to 36 months (subject to Supreme Court approval)

BBC MEETING | SEPT. 13, 2024

- Approved Staff Compensation for FY 2024–2025 at a total of \$3,561,062 to include a 2% Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) and a 1% merit increase
- ASBF Board of Trustees approved the FY 2025 Alabama State Bar Foundation Budget at \$1,543,200 to include the purchase of a new HVAC system

BBC MEETING | NOV. 1, 2024

- FY 2026 budget approved at \$7,066,645.00, a slight decrease over FY 2025

BBC MEETING | JAN. 24, 2025

- Approved a reduction in *The Alabama Lawyer* publication schedule to four quarterly editions per year
- Approved dissolution of the Communication Law Section and disbursement of \$15 in account to the Section Administrative Fund

BBC MEETING | MARCH 21, 2025

- Approved revisions to the Code of Professional Courtesy
- Approved amendment to Rule 1, Alabama Rules of Disciplinary Procedure
- Approved amendment to Rule 8.5, Alabama Rules of Professional Conduct

BBC MEETING | MAY 2, 2025

- Approved a one-year waiver of \$25 Client Security Fund assessment
- Adopted the standard State of Alabama Holiday schedule for employees of the Alabama State Bar
- Approved the payment of board member lodging at the 2025 Annual Meeting

*Does not include appointments and awards. For a full list, go to www.alabar.org/board-of-bar-commissioners/board-minutes/ or scan the QR code to the right.





BAR BY THE NUMBERS

2024-2025

19,745 ACTIVE MEMBERS

1,819 MEMBERS ADMITTED IN PAST 3 YEARS

765 MEMBERS ADMITTED FOR 50+ YEARS

MEMBER DEMOGRAPHICS



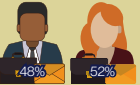
63.4%
MALE

36.6%
FEMALE



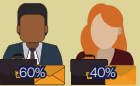
17%

36 OR YOUNGER



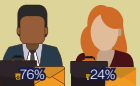
51%

37-59 YEARS OLD



32%

60+ YEARS OLD



2024 BAR EXAM STATS

841 TOTAL EXAMINEES

39.2% PASSAGE RATE

363 ADMITTED BY EXAM

113 ADMITTED BY UBE

106 ADMITTED BY RECIPROCITY

OFFICE OF GENERAL COUNSEL

1118 COMPLAINTS RECEIVED

881 COMPLAINTS SCREENED OUT

306 FORMAL INVESTIGATIONS



| | |
|-----------------------------|-----------|
| PRIVATE REPRIMANDS | 22 |
| PUBLIC REPRIMANDS | 13 |
| SUSPENSIONS | 21 |
| DISBARMENTS | 10 |
| SURRENDER OF LICENSE | 8 |
| TRANSFER TO INACTIVE STATUS | 1 |

2061

FREE ETHICS OPINIONS*
ISSUED BY
ASB'S ETHICS
COUNSEL TO
MEMBERS

*INFORMAL

COMMUNICATIONS

49 SIDEBAR NEWSLETTERS
SENT AND READ BY AN
AVERAGE OF **14,583**
ASB MEMBERS
EACH WEEK

THE ALABAMA LAWYER IS
MAILED TO **ALL 50 STATES &
20 COUNTRIES**

LAWYER REFERRAL SERVICE



12,055 REFERRALS IN 2024

46 REFERRALS / DAY

VOLUNTEER LAWYERS PROGRAM



SCREENED **4,524** PEOPLE FOR ELIGIBILITY

1,932 TOTAL ATTORNEY VOLUNTEERS ENROLLED

43 WALK-IN OR VIRTUAL LEGAL AID CLINICS HELD

294 QUESTIONS ANSWERED ON ALABAMA FREE
LEGAL ANSWERS WEBSITE

42.8

AVERAGE
NUMBER OF
PRO BONO
HOURS
WORKED PER
LAWYER
LAST YEAR

WEBSITE PAGE VIEWS

1,004,233 TOTAL HITS
Homepage

29,054 PAGE HITS
OGC Disciplinary History

28,417 PAGE HITS
For the Public - Get Legal Help

25,062 PAGE HITS
Find a Member

ALABAMA LAWYER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM



131 ATTORNEYS & STUDENTS
CURRENTLY SERVED BY ALAP

52 NEW CLIENTS ADDED IN 2024

150

NUMBER OF
COUNSELING HOURS
PROVIDED LAST YEAR

CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION

9,274 HOURS OF CLE INSTRUCTION
TIME PRESENTED BY ATTORNEYS

26 LIVE ZOOM CLE COURSES
HOSTED BY ASB, RESULTING IN

8,000+ HOURS OF LIVE CLE
CREDIT AWARDED **FOR FREE** TO
ASB MEMBERS

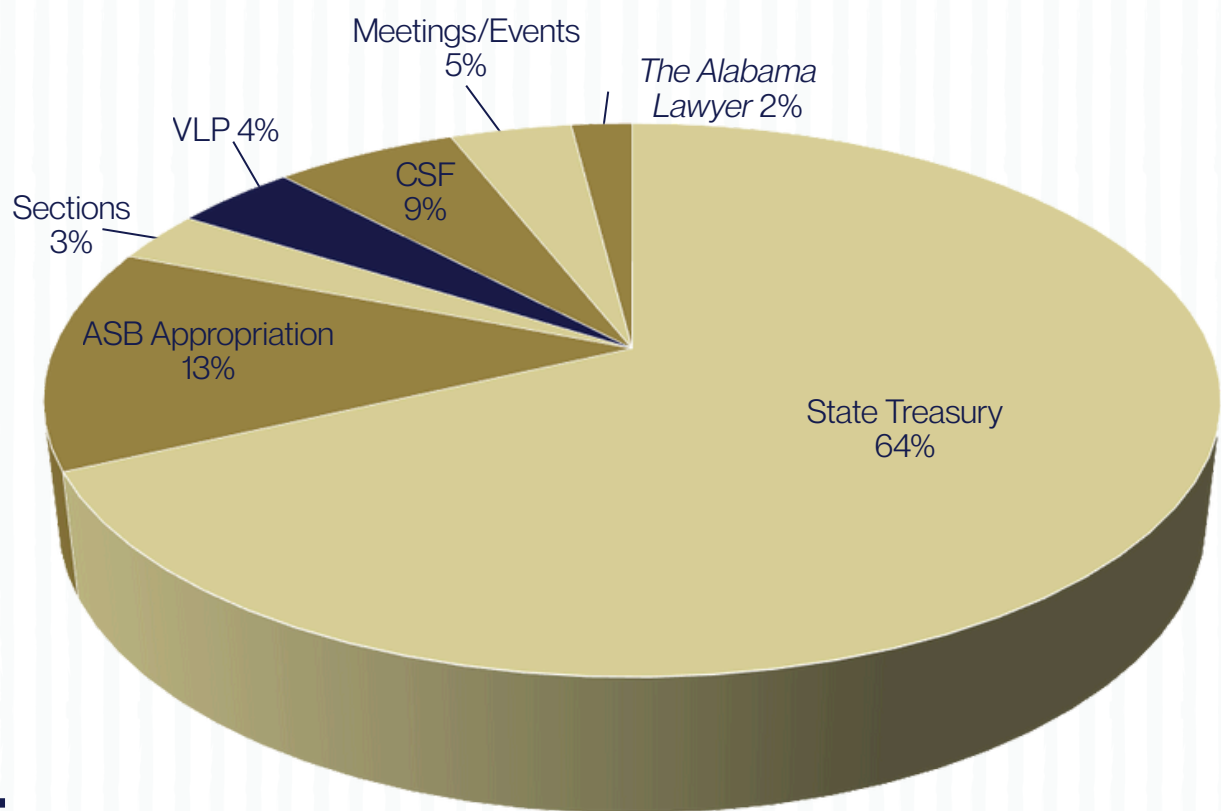
14,806 CLE COURSES COMPLETED ON-DEMAND
ON OUR FREE TOPCLASS PORTAL



FINANCIAL REPORT

The ASB finance director and financial assistant collaborate with officers and staff routinely to manage the various funding resources and fund accounts of the Alabama State Bar in an effective manner. Among the key roles of the finance department are to formulate and manage the annual state budget appropriation, provide fundamental reporting to keep stakeholders up-to-date on financial performance and make informed financial decisions, manage vendor payment activity and travel requirements, oversee cash receipts and cash flow management functions, forecast and analyze financial data and trends, state and federal tax reporting requirements, and compile all required documents for examinations/audits performed by the Examiner of Public Accounts and external auditors.

In FY 2024, the finance department processed approximately \$9.2 million and \$9.25 million in cash receipts and disbursements transactions, respectively, for the ASB and its closely related foundation entities in addition to administering \$20.6 million of invested funds under the supervision of Regions Wealth Management.



NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS

- 1 Coordinated effective budget management practices that have supported reduced membership dues for more than five years.
- 2 Maintained an unmodified audit opinion issued by external auditors on the ASB financial statement audits.
- 3 Served as designee to implement the new budgeting and payroll systems released by the State of Alabama last year.

NEW MEMBER BENEFITS LAUNCHED

As your partner in the profession, the Alabama State Bar is committed to supporting your success both in and out of the office. Members have access to high-quality educational programs, exclusive discounts on products and services, and resources that support both practice management and work-life balance.

This year, we added several new benefits, bringing the total to more than 40 member benefits. Now is a great time to explore everything available to you. Scan the QR to the right to see the full list of Member Benefits. We routinely add member benefits, so be sure to check back often!



BETTERHELP

BetterHelp has partnered with the Alabama State Bar to support lawyer well-being by offering private, online access to licensed mental health professionals. Members receive one free month of therapy, followed by a 15% discount on ongoing services. Matching is based on individual preferences and needs, ensuring a personalized experience. Use code 62b11 to get started. All counseling is confidential; the Alabama State Bar will not know who is receiving services or have access to any personal information.



Scan here to access your exclusive discount.

SMOKEBALL BILL

Smokeball Bill is a trust and billing software solution designed to help law firms manage trust accounting, track time and expenses, send invoices, and receive payments with ease. With features like invoice templates, accounts receivable tracking, and online payment options, it's built to help lawyers stay compliant and get paid faster. Alabama State Bar members can access Smokeball Bill **for free**.



Scan here to access your exclusive discount.

CASEFOX

CaseFox is a trusted legal tech platform offering comprehensive tools for case management, billing, time tracking, trust accounting, and client communications—all in one intuitive dashboard. Designed for law firms and solo practitioners, CaseFox simplifies operations and enhances efficiency across legal practices. Alabama State Bar members receive an exclusive 25% discount on all paid plans for the first year.



Scan here to access your exclusive discount.

PAPERSTREET

PaperStreet is a leading provider of law firm web design, development, marketing, and content services. Founded by a lawyer for lawyers, the agency has launched over 2,500 custom websites—many of them award-winning—over the past 24 years. With a deep understanding of the legal industry, PaperStreet delivers visually compelling, high-performing sites with 100% ownership and top-tier support. Alabama State Bar members receive a 5% discount when referred through the Bar.



Scan here to access your exclusive discount.



Toolbox Tours

We held four Toolbox Tour events, where we helped attorneys enhance their legal toolkit with CLE sessions on ethics, criminal law sentencing, and state bar member benefits. The events were held in Columbiana, Dothan, Tanner, and Greenville.



Admissions Ceremony

On October 24, 2024, we celebrated all our new admittees at the Admission Ceremony in Montgomery.



Milestone Luncheon

We honored our 50-year members on September 19, 2024 at the inaugural Milestone Luncheon. Nearly 80 members who were admitted to the Alabama State Bar in 1974 joined us at Ross Bridge for the special event.



Pro Bono Month

Each October, we celebrate the work of our pro bono lawyers and highlight the impact they have on their communities.

Leadership Forum

We announced the 26 lawyers selected for Leadership Forum Class 19. Leadership Forum is honored as a dynamic and highly effective program for nurturing and developing leadership skills and values among a select group of qualified, promising attorneys each year.



Fred Gray Statue Unveiling

We unveiled a life-size bronze statue honoring civil rights attorney Fred D. Gray during a special ceremony on April 24, 2025. The statue, sculpted by nationally renowned artist Steven Whyte, now sits in a newly dedicated courtyard outside the Bar building.

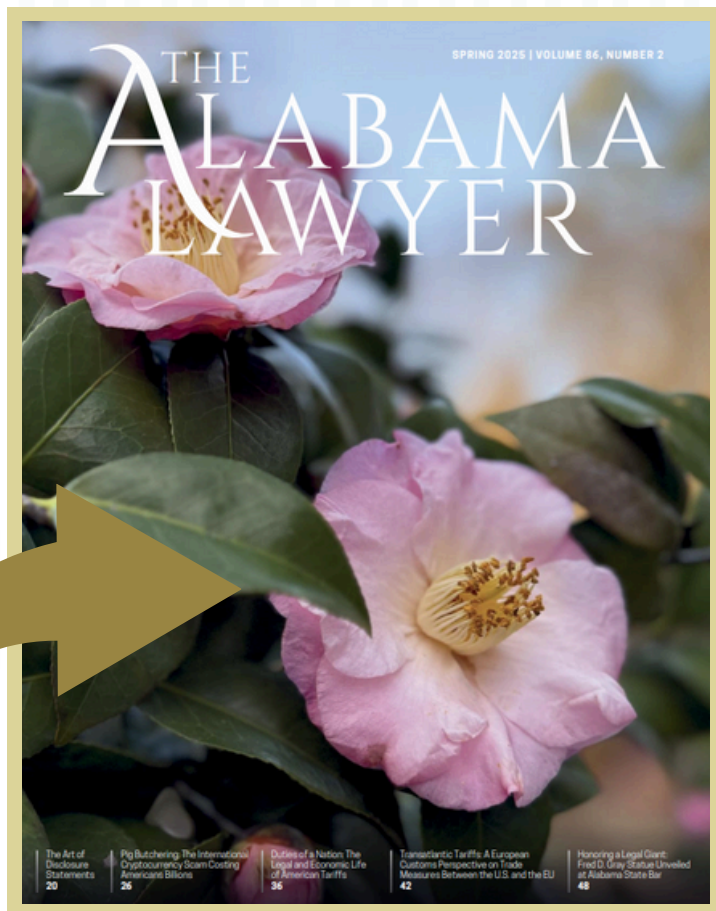
Hall of Fame

We inducted five new attorneys into the Alabama Lawyers Hall of Fame on May 2, 2025. The ceremony was held in the Heflin-Torbert Judicial Building in Montgomery. The inductees were Camille Wright Cook, James O. Haley, George Washington Lane, Alex W. Newton, and Louis Charles Wright.



Law Day

We celebrated Law Day on May 1, 2025. We received more than 100 requests for speakers, and many members stepped up to speak to multiple classes in a day. In addition, we held three live Law Day presentations via Zoom for teachers across the state who weren't able to connect with a local lawyer.



CHANGES TO THE ALABAMA LAWYER

Starting this year, the magazine is now published quarterly instead of bi-monthly. This change allows us to continue delivering high-quality content while adapting to our members' needs. We appreciate your readership!

If you're not receiving your printed copy, your preferences may be set to receive it in only digital form. To check, log in to your member profile at www.alabar.org. On the Preferences menu on the left side of the page, look for the question about receiving the magazine in digital format only. If it's set to "Yes," you will not receive a printed copy.

STAFF DIRECTORY

ADMINISTRATION

Terri Lovell, Executive Director

terri.lovell@alabar.org

Chad Coker, Director of Operations

chad.coker@alabar.org

ADMISSIONS

Karen Laneaux, Director of Admissions

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LaDonna Vinson, Admissions Coordinator

Sonia Douglas, Administrative Assistant

ATTORNEY LICENSING

Cathy Sue McCurry, Attorney Licensing

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COMMUNICATIONS

Melissa Warnke, Director of Communications

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Olivia Walker, Communications Coordinator

ETHICS DIVISION

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FINANCE

Merinda Hall, Director of Finance

merinda.hall@alabar.org

Denise Perkins, Administrative Assistant

INFORMATION SYSTEMS

Hunter Harris, Information Systems Manager

hunter.harris@alabar.org

LAW PRACTICE MANAGEMENT

Jillian Evans, Advisor

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LAWYER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Shannon Knight, Director & Case Manager

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April Allen, Administrative Assistant

LAWYER REFERRAL SERVICE

John Dunn, LRS Representative

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MEETINGS & EVENTS

Robyn Bernier, Meetings & Events Coordinator

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Amy Fawcett, Administrative Assistant

OFFICE OF GENERAL COUNSEL

Roman Shaul, General Counsel

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Jeremy McIntire, Deputy Chief General Counsel

Mark Moody, Assistant General Counsel &
Compliance Counsel

Autumn Caudell, Assistant General Counsel

Stacey Moseley, Disciplinary Clerk

Angie Burkhalter, Paralegal to General Counsel

Carol Mott, Client Security Fund Coordinator

Julie Lee, Receptionist

SECURITY & FACILITY

Matt Mara, Security & Building Manager

matt.mara@alabar.org

Stephanie Oglesby, Receptionist

stephanie.oglesby@alabar.org

VOLUNTEER LAWYERS PROGRAM

Hilaire Armstrong, Director of VLP

hilaire.armstrong@alabar.org

Michael Granger, VLP Clinic Coordinator

Jordan Gilmore, Intake Clerk



ALABAMA CODE OF PROFESSIONAL COURTESY

1. A lawyer should never attempt to deceive a client, another lawyer, or a tribunal.
2. A lawyer must honor promises and commitments made to another lawyer.
3. A lawyer should make all reasonable efforts to schedule matters with opposing counsel by agreement.
4. A lawyer should strive to maintain a cordial and respectful relationship with opposing counsel.
5. A lawyer should seek sanctions against opposing counsel only where required for the protection of the client and not merely for tactical advantage.
6. A lawyer should not make unfounded accusations of unethical conduct about opposing counsel.
7. A lawyer should never intentionally embarrass another lawyer and should avoid personal criticism of another lawyer.
8. A lawyer should always be punctual.
9. A lawyer should always seek informal agreement on procedural and preliminary matters before involving the court.
10. When each adversary proceeding ends, a lawyer should shake hands with the fellow lawyer who is the adversary, and the losing lawyer should refrain from engaging in any conduct which engenders disrespect for the court, the adversary or the parties.
11. A lawyer should communicate with opposing counsel to avoid litigation if possible and identify areas of potential agreement where they exist, remembering the obligation to be courteous to other lawyers.
12. A lawyer should recognize that advocacy does not include harassment or needless delay.
13. In all methods of communication with opposing counsel, a lawyer should communicate with civility and professionalism.
14. A lawyer should be ever mindful that any motion, trial, court appearance, deposition, pleading, or legal technicality costs someone time and money, and as such, should not take actions deliberately designed to increase said time and money for opposing parties.
15. A lawyer should stand to address the court, be courteous, and not engage in recrimination with the court.
16. During any court proceeding, whether in the courtroom, in chambers, or by video conference, a lawyer should dress in proper attire to show proper respect for the court and the law.
17. A lawyer should not become too closely associated with a client's activities or emotionally involved with a client.
18. A lawyer should always act with integrity and should remember that the practice of law is neither an opportunity to make outrageous demands upon vulnerable opponents nor blind resistance to a just claim; being stubbornly litigious for a plaintiff or a defendant is not professional.

*The following benchmarks and accomplishments represent the **Seeds of Hope** planted during the past year through the **Harvesting Hope** initiative.*



Harvesting Hope was created to strengthen our profession from the ground up by supporting new lawyers, addressing the needs of underserved communities, and building a sustainable path forward for rural practice. What began as an initiative is now a lasting investment: a 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to creating meaningful, long-term impact across our state.

As we look to the future, our direction is strong. We aim to foster innovation, provide practical resources for lawyers at every stage of their careers, and continue raising the bar for professionalism and service. I'm deeply grateful to our dedicated volunteers and staff, whose commitment drives this mission forward.

Together, we've planted something that will continue to grow.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Tom Heflin
tom@tomheflinlaw.com

Tom Perry
tom@tomheflinlaw.com

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