

Focus on Diversity

For more information on items in this section, visit www.lsba.org/diversity.



Lafayette attorney Travis J. Broussard, left, and New Orleans attorney Lynn Luker presented the fourth CLE in the diversity series in July in Lafayette.



New Orleans attorneys Cherrilynne Washington Thomas, left, and Lynn Luker presented the third CLE in the diversity series in June in Kenner.

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Final CLE in statewide diversity series set for Sept. 30 in Alexandria; online registration open

The final CLE program in the statewide five-part diversity series is set for Wednesday, Sept. 30, at the Parc England Hotel in Alexandria. Online registration opened on Sept. 9.

In partnership with the Louisiana Attorney Disciplinary Board (LADB), the Louisiana State Bar Association (LSBA) Diversity Committee's Diversity Integration Subcommittee coordinated the series of one-hour diversity seminars. New Orleans attorney Lynn Luker, with the Law Offices of Lynn Luker, L.L.C., and a frequent presenter of LSBA diversity seminars, gathered the team of LSBA facilitators to bring the seminar to more than 1,400 attorneys in five locations across Louisiana.

The fourth CLE in the series was July

14 in Lafayette. Luker and Travis J. Broussard, an attorney in the Lafayette firm of Durio, McGoffin, Stagg & Ackermann, facilitated the presentation on "Minimizing the Impact of Unconscious Bias in Decision Making."

The first program in the series was in April in Shreveport, facilitated by attorney I.J. Clark-Sam. In May, Administrative Law Judge Kelly McNeil Legier and attorney Chauntis T. Jenkins spoke about generational differences to the attendees in Baton Rouge. In June in Kenner, attorneys Cherrilynne Washington Thomas and Luker discussed the impact of unconscious bias.

For more information and to register online, go to: www.ladb.org.

Smith serving as first African-American LYLA president

By L. Bianca Chretien

Dwazendra J. Smith believes that diversity is an ongoing struggle. She recently was named the first African-American president of the Lafayette Young Lawyers Association (LYLA). She has been a member of the organization since 2009 and has previously served in various capacities within LYLA.

"I think being the first African-American president of LYLA is a true testament to how far we have come in the legal community with regards to diversity," Smith said. "Conversely, it's also a testament as to how far we need to go and the strides we need to make."

Smith, a 2009 graduate of Southern University Law Center, is an associate in the

Lafayette firm of Davidson, Meaux, Sonnier, McElligott, Fontenot, Gideon & Edwards, L.L.P. She received the Lafayette Bar Association's Outstanding Attorney Award every year from 2010 to 2013. In 2014, she received the Lafayette Bar's Top LVL (Lafayette Volunteer Lawyers) Award. She also is the recipient of the Louisiana State Bar Association's (LSBA) Pro Bono Century Award in 2011, 2013 and 2014, and the LSBA's Pro Bono Publico



Dwazendra J. Smith

Award in 2012 and 2015.

Smith said her goal as LYLA president is to continue the successful work that LYLA has already accomplished through its service programs, such as "Wills for Heroes." She also plans to continue to help diversify LYLA, efforts she began prior to her presidency. She's done so by reaching out to young lawyers who may fly under the radar, especially those not in a traditional firm setting.

"I made it my mission to get people involved in order to diversify," Smith said. "As incoming president, I've informed a lot of young lawyers, especially African-American lawyers, about the board because they didn't know about it. I encourage people to get involved." 📱

Upcoming LSBA Diversity Events

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Check the LSBA's Diversity webpage for more information www.lsba.org/diversity.

► THURSDAY, SEPT. 24 • CLE

"Introduction to Special Needs Planning"

A three-part CLE series focusing on disabilities-related legal issues. This program is for those interested in best serving clients with special needs and their families. Presenter is Carole Cukell Neff. Sponsored by the LSBA Diversity Committee's Pipeline to Diversity and Outreach Subcommittee and the LSBA Legal Services for Persons with Disabilities Committee.

Registration fee: \$25 (lunch included).

Event times: Registration, 11:30 a.m.-noon; program, noon-1 p.m.

CLE credit(s): 1.0 hour professionalism credit (pending approval).

Location: Louisiana Bar Center, 601 St. Charles Ave., New Orleans.

Online registration: www.lsba.org/cle.

► THURSDAY, OCT. 8 • CLE

"The Impact of *Obergefell v. Hodges*: What Does the Future Hold?"

Discussion on issues resulting from the Supreme Court ruling on *Obergefell v. Hodges*, adoption, divorce, estate planning and employer benefits. Presenters are Ryan P. Delaney, Scott J. Spivey and

Rachel W. Wisdom. Sponsored by the LSBA Diversity Committee's LGBT Diversity Subcommittee.

Registration fee: Free.

Event times: Registration, 2-2:30 p.m.; program, 2:30-4:30 p.m.; reception immediately following.

CLE credit(s): 2.0 hours professionalism credit (pending approval).

Location: Louisiana Bar Center, 601 St. Charles Ave., New Orleans.

Online registration: www.lsba.org/cle.

► FRIDAY, NOV. 6 • RECEPTION

Reception in honor of American Bar Association President Paulette Brown

Presented by GNO Martinet, LSBA, AWA, Baton Rouge Martinet and the Louisiana Judicial Council.

Event time: 5:30-7:30 p.m.

Location: Louisiana Supreme Court, 400 Royal St., New Orleans, 4th Floor Courtroom.

For more information, email Dana M. Douglas, dmdouglas@liskow.com.

► FRIDAY, NOV. 6 • CLE

"Navigating the Troubled Waters of Immigration"

Addressing the challenges of immigration at the national and state level, the problems related to Unaccompanied

Alien Children, the detention of foreign nationals and how to effectively represent foreign nationals, and the intersection of immigration and litigation. Presenters are Graham Bateman, Kathleen C. Gasparian and Emily C. Trostle.

Registration fee: \$35.

Event times: Registration, 9:30-10 a.m.; program, 10 a.m.-noon.

CLE credit(s): 2.0 hours professionalism credit (pending approval).

Location: Cook Hotel and Conference Center, 3848 West Lakeshore Dr., Baton Rouge.

Online registration: www.lsba.org/cle.

► THURSDAY, NOV. 12 • RECEPTION

Reception for New Orleans area New Admittees

Event time: 5-6:30 p.m.

Location: Louisiana Bar Center, 601 St. Charles Ave., New Orleans.

RSVP by Nov. 5 to outreach@lsba.org.

► FRIDAY, MARCH 4, 2016 • CONCLAVE

"Diversity and Inclusion: Moving from a 'Foot in the Door' to a 'Voice at the Table'"

The ninth annual Conclave on Diversity in the Legal Profession.

Location: Hilton Baton Rouge Capitol Center, Baton Rouge.



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Stay tuned for more information!