



SPEAKER BIOS

Mark Afonso, is a product consultant at Easysoft and speaks regularly with attorneys nationwide informing them of the benefits of automating processes in their real estate practice, from cash closings to commercial and residential matters. He has also experience working with businesses in a debt consolidation/forgiveness role for a local New Jersey law firm. His lunchtime Lagniappe presentation will focus on important tips solo and small firm attorneys can use to run a more efficient practice, with a specific focus on automating real estate transactions

Tonia D. Aiken, RN, BSN, JD is a practicing attorney and registered nurse in Louisiana. She teaches legal consulting programs in Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas, and Alabama. She has extensive experience in medical malpractice litigation, healthcare issues, and representing nurses in disciplinary matters. A past president of The American Association of Nurse Attorneys (TAANA) and the Foundation, Tonia is a nationally recognized author, speaker, educator, and consultant. She is also the editor and a contributing author of *Legal, Ethical, and Political Issues in Nursing, 2nd Ed.* and *Legal and Ethical Issues in Health Occupations*, textbooks and resource books for health professionals. She is also a Reiki master.

Jason Anders, armed with a law degree from LSU Law School and an M.B.A. in Finance from Baylor University, he opened his solo practice in March 2019, where he focuses on business, contract, and succession litigation. Prior to hanging his own shingle, he was a partner with Montgomery, Barnett, Brown, Read, Hammond & Mintz, LLP, in the Business Practice Group. He can be reached at jason@anderslawfirm.com.

Ellen Barrett Artopoeus is a member of Barrett Title, LLC and Ellen Barrett Artopoeus, LLC, both in Old Metairie. Her experiences with Ozanam Inn, Strive, Inc. (which places severely disabled adults into day activities) and the Pro Bono Project as Senior Attorney, round out her long career as a solo practitioner. She also served the Governor's Elder Law Task Force in 2006-07. An avid sailor, she is the Commodore of the Lake Pontchartrain Women's Sailing Association. Her undergraduate degree is from Tulane and her JD from LSU. She is an active member of the LSBA's solo and small firm section.

Craig Ball hails from Texas but now calls New Orleans home. A Texas board certified trial attorney, he is an expert in digital forensics, emerging technologies, visual persuasion, electronic discovery, and trial tactics. A founder and instructor of the Georgetown University Law Center E-Discovery Training Academy, he also teaches Electronic Discovery and Digital Evidence at the University of Texas School of Law. An energetic speaker at CLE programs throughout the world, he speaks on computer forensics and electronic evidence to multiple courts, law enforcement and security agencies. His articles frequently appear in the national media. He authored for American Lawyer Media an award winning column, "Ball in your Court" which focused on computer forensics and e-discovery, and pens a popular blog of the same name at ballinyourcourt.com.

Eric K. Barefield is Ethics Counsel for the Louisiana State Bar Association (LSBA). A graduate of Louisiana State University Paul M. Hebert Law Center, Barefield began his professional career as an Assistant District Attorney in Orleans Parish. He later served as Deputy Disciplinary Counsel with the Office of Disciplinary Counsel and was responsible for investigating and prosecuting violations of the Louisiana Rules of Professional Conduct. He joined the LSBA staff in 2005, working first with the Practice Assistance Program's alternatives to discipline. Eric is responsible for the LSBA's Ethics Advisory Service which is comprised of attorneys across the state along with Ethics Counsel and provides confidential non-binding ethics opinions to Louisiana licensed attorneys.

Tad Bartlett leads a double life as a practicing lawyer and successful writer. His lawyer life is with the New Orleans firm of Jones Swanson, where he practices in the fields of complex commercial litigation, land damage and property rights litigation, and appellate advocacy. He is also a former judicial clerk for the Hon. James Dennis of the U.S. Court of Appeals. His legal life is counterbalanced with his writer's life as a fiction writer, essayist and "recovering poet." His work has appeared in numerous highly acclaimed journals and periodicals. He is also a member of the Peauxdunque Writers Alliance which provides for the development of the literary arts for writers of multiple genres. Armed with an undergraduate degree from SpringHill College, an MFA in fiction from UNO and a law degree from Tulane, his professionalism round table hour with Maurice Ruffin should not be missed.

Craig Bayer is the founder of [Optiable](#), a company which assists law firms in choosing and setting up document management software. For over 15 years, Craig has provided law-related technology consulting, and has worked with hundreds of law firms, small and large (one user to over 50 users). Craig, with his thorough knowledge of technology matched with his straight forward manner, is invited often to deliver presentations to bar associations around the state. His mantra: Provide advice based always on what's best for the client, even if it winds up being a solution that he doesn't provide.

Austin Benton is a practicing attorney at the law firm of Benton, Benton & Benton and focuses on domestic and civil litigation. He is also the owner of the legal technology company, Ayla, LLC. Ayla designs and builds document automation systems for practitioners of personal injury, family, successions, criminal, foreclosure, and commercial defense work. Ayla is utilized by firms located in Louisiana (including McGlinchey Stafford), New York, Texas, Florida, Mississippi, California, and Ohio. Austin works with over 100 law firms to assist in increasing productivity and decreasing the time required to generate simple and complex legal and administrative documents. Austin is also a member of the Access to Justice Technology Subcommittee.

Erica Birstler is the Director of Strategic Communications at CosmoLex, an all-in-one cloud-based legal practice management, billing & trust accounting system designed for solo and small law firms. Her business administration degree and her near decade of experience in the legal software industry allows her to cater to the specialized tech needs of small to mid-sized law firms. She has given numerous presentations across North America on legal technologies and strategy in the areas of law practice management, cloud computing, and legal billing & trust accounting compliance.

Camille Bryant is an associate with McGlinchey, Stafford, PLLC and focuses on labor and employment matters. She represents clients in all types of employment-related matters from single plaintiff to large, complex cases and collective actions alleging discrimination, non-compete violations, and wage and hour disputes. She also assists in conducting workplace investigations and audits, managerial training, and employee classification. She also reviews and drafts employee handbooks and employee leave and training policies, and provides advice relative to wage and hour laws

Honorable Susan M. Chehardy is the Chief Judge of the Louisiana 5th Circuit Court of Appeal. She was elected to the appellate bench in 1998 as the court's first woman judge (and reelected in 2012). Prior to the appellate bench, she served as judge for the 24th JDC, after an active general litigation personal injury practice with the firm of Chehardy, Sherman, Ellis and Breslin; and later with her own litigation firm, Chehardy & Nielsen. She also recently served as justice *pro tempore* for the Louisiana Supreme Court. A law graduate of Loyola University, she is a member of the Fifth Circuit Judges Association, the Fourth and Fifth Circuit Judges Association, the Association of Women Judges and the American Judicature Society, among other organizations. A frequent lecturer for the Louisiana Judicial College and the LSBA, she serves several committees and boards by appointment of the Louisiana Supreme Court.

Miriam Childs is the Director of the Law Library of Louisiana. During her time with library, she has been responsible for or provided support for all library operations, including staff management and training; cataloging; database maintenance; reference and research services; government documents; and preservation. Prior to the library, she served as the serials librarian at the University of New Orleans, a reference and collection management librarian at Jefferson Parish Public Library, and an assistant librarian at Exxon Chemical Baton Rouge. She holds a B.A. in History from LSU and her M.L.I.S. from Louisiana State University in 1993.

Kathleen Christmas, a graduate of LSU's nursing legal consulting program, is the owner of Nurse Paralegal USA. She and her team assist plaintiff attorneys by preparing comprehensive medical records reports substantiating the severity and long term injury prognosis for catastrophically injured victims. She also works closely with Louisiana's Attorney General's office by assisting the defense of medical malpractice cases that are filed against Louisiana health care providers. Her company can provide detailed reviews of complex cases for both plaintiff and defense attorneys. A Certified Case Manager with experience in hospital case management and field case management for catastrophically injured patients, she has experience in a variety of clinical settings, including emergency room, psychiatric and acute long term care. Her administrative credentials include being a utilization review nurse both in the hospital and insurance company settings.

Brandon Davis, a partner with Phelps Dunbar, focuses on employment-based and family-based immigration, as well as other labor and employment and business matters. He represents employers and individuals in immigration matters involving civil and criminal worksite enforcement defense, visa petitions for employees, students, investors/traders, intracompany transfers, and family sponsored petitions. He has successfully represented employers and individuals in the following matters: I-9/E-verify Compliance, Labor Certification, H-1B visas, H-2B visas, Conrad 30 Waivers, J-1 visas, I-130 Applications, Consular processing, Lawful Permanent Resident applications and E-3 visas. He also handles white collar defense matters in immigration and various other matters, and provides on-site and off-site compliance training on immigration laws.

Casey C. DeReus practices with Baer Law LLC and focuses on negligent security and rideshare cases. A native Virginian, Casey holds a masters in French studies from Tulane and earned her her JD, *magna cum laude*, from Loyola University New Orleans, where she served as the Managing Print Editor for the *Loyola Law Review*. She has published numerous articles in trade publications such as the *Louisiana Bar Journal* and *Louisiana Advocates*, and currently serves as the Chair of the Woman's Caucus Publications Committee for the Louisiana Association for Justice. She is also the founder of Lady Lawyers of Louisiana, a group designed to foster connections and communication.

Kevin Dorsey educates judges, attorneys, mediators, GAL's, and other family law professionals as to the online tools that can be utilized to benefit and monitor parental communication in moderate and high conflict cases, specifically tools to improve communication. Kevin travels the country attending continuing legal education conferences and seminars each year. In Louisiana, he has presented to the Jefferson Parish Bench, St. Tammany Parish Bench/Bar, East Baton Rouge Parish Bench/Bar, Calcasieu Parish Bar, Loyola University, and now the LSBA's Solo, Small Firm & TECH Conference. He is with The OurFamilyWizard® website.

Davidson S. Ehle, III, is an experienced criminal defense litigator with numerous "not guilty" verdicts in Jefferson, St. Tammany, and Orleans criminal courts, state and federal. A former assistant district attorney for the Parish of Jefferson, he was also the director of the Louisiana Crime Laboratory Study which analyzed comprehensively every crime laboratory in Louisiana, Virginia, and Florida, including the FBI's as well. His undergraduate degree is from LSU and law degree is from Mississippi College School of Law. In 2007, he started his solo practice and in 2017, joined forces with Joe Marino to form Marino & Ehle LLC where he now practices.

Laura E. Fine, a partner with the New Orleans firm of Lehman, Norman and Marcus, is a specialist in estate planning and administration. Dually licensed in California and Louisiana, she is also a board member of the Trust Code Committee for the Louisiana State Law Institute and the LSBA's Access to Justice Committee. She is a frequent speaker on estate planning topics including planning with LGBT individuals and couples, and on women's rights issues. She is also the author of *End-of-Life Decisions: Living Will, Healthcare, Powers of Attorney and Other Issues* which appeared in the April/May 2019 issue of the Louisiana Bar Journal.

Shawn L. Holahan is the LSBA's Practice Management Counsel, and administers it's fee dispute arbitration program. A former member of the ABA's LP Publishing Board, TECHSHOW Planning Board, LP State and Local Outreach Committee, she serves as an editor for the ABA's Law Practice Today e-magazine. She is also a former Chair of the Practice Management Advisors of North America. Prior to her position at the bar, she was a partner with a medium sized law firm in New Orleans (labor and employment matters primarily) and had completed two federal clerkships in the USDC (E.D. La.). A frequent speaker on law office management and technology, she has also written related articles in the Louisiana Bar Journal and other publications. She is the author of *Hanging Out Your Shingle, Louisiana Style*.

Robert A. Kutcher is the current president of the Louisiana State Bar Association. He is the managing partner of the Metairie firm, Kutcher Tygier & Luminais, L.L.P. and focuses on closely held companies and family businesses. Admitted in Louisiana and New York, he received his undergraduate degree from Cornell University and his JD degree, *cum laude*, from Loyola University School of Law. He has served in numerous other capacities for the bar, including as treasurer, and as a member of the House of Delegates, the Legislation Committee, the Committee on the Profession, the Nominating Committee and the Rules of Professional Conduct Committee. He served as a board member of the Louisiana Civil Justice Center and the Pro Bono Project, and was a member of the Louisiana Attorney Disciplinary Board, eventually chairing the board. He is also a former president of the Federal Bar Association New Orleans Chapter. Bob also chaired the Louisiana State Advisory Committee to the U.S. Civil Rights Commission and was an associate commissioner of the Anti-Defamation League National Commission.

Richard P. Lemmler, Jr. has been Ethics Counsel for the LSBA since May 2002 and has been responsible for the development and day-to-day administration of the LSBA's lawyer advertising filing and evaluation process since its inception. He frequently presents CLE on legal ethics and lawyer advertising; he has written several articles for the *Louisiana Bar Journal*. Before joining the LSBA staff, he practiced law in New Orleans for 14 years as a solo general practitioner. He also served two consecutive three-year appointments to the Louisiana Attorney Disciplinary Board, first as a lawyer member of a hearing committee and then as chair of a hearing committee.

Elizabeth S. Meneray is the founding member of the New Orleans firm, Meneray Family Law, L.L.C. Liz's practice is dedicated to family law, including adoption, divorce, child custody, child and spousal support, and community property matters. A family law mediator trained in collaborative divorce practice, she is a regular speaker on family law and professionalism topics for the LSBA and has provided legal commentary on the ongoing legal battle between actress Sofia Vergara and her frozen embryos for *The Times Picayune* and for KTVI, Fox2 News in St. Louis, Missouri. Her peers consider her a top family law attorney, as featured in *New Orleans Magazine*; and since 2017 Liz has been designated a "rising star" by *Super Lawyers Magazine*. A New Orleans native with many community interests, Liz has hosted an all vinyl jazz program on WWOZ radio for the past 17 years.

Lisa A. Montgomery, a solo practitioner with thirty-five years of experience in federal and state court in Louisiana, is a general civil practitioner and also defends attorneys in disciplinary proceedings. She is a frequent speaker on ethics and the issues raised by new, quasi-legal entities that she calls "legal disrupters" such as Avvo, LegalZoom, and RocketLawyer. A member of the LSBA's Ethics Advisory Committee and the LSBA's Solo and Small Firm section, she is also a former hearing committee member for Louisiana Attorney Disciplinary Board. Her undergraduate degree is from LSU and her law degree from Tulane.

Gayle O'Connor, a legal technology consultant with 30 years' experience, was recently named as an Honoree in the 5,000 strong membership of Women in eDiscovery. Previously the marketing manager at Social Evidence, a cloud based application, and at Degan, Blanchard and Nash. She is also a former trial technician for the federal public defenders, a marketing director for numerous legal software providers and has taught legal research at several law schools. Additionally, she has been a featured speaker at American Lawyer Media LegalTech Events, ABA TECHSHOW, Special Libraries Association, Washington State Paralegal Association, National Business Institute, ABA Litigation Section Meetings, local Bar Associations throughout Louisiana and the U.S., and international organizations. Most recently, Gayle co-founded the new Gulf Coast Chapter of Association of Certified E-Discovery Specialists (ACEDS), which will begin activities in 2019.

Tom O'Connor of Gulf Coast Legal Technology Center is a nationally known expert, consultant, speaker and writer on computerized litigation support systems. A New England native (now New Orleans “native”) with an undergraduate degree in political science from The Johns Hopkins University and a JD degree, he supports complex litigation with his expertise on technology issues. He has been appointed by various federal and state courts on cases involving large amounts of electronic evidence. His expertise is also sought for negotiating ESI exchange protocols. A co-author of the award winning article, “In Katrina’s Wake,” he is also the author of *The Automated Law Firm: A Guide to Computer Systems and Software* and *The Lawyers Guide to Summation and EDiscovery for Small Cases*, both published by the ABA. Tom’s professional accolades include the inaugural Betsy Ann Reynolds Award for Excellence in Litigation Support from the Litigation Support Leaders Conference and the inaugural Scarpitti Award for Professional Achievement from the Masters Conference.

Julie Baxter Payer is the Deputy Secretary and Executive Counsel for the Louisiana Department of Veterans Affairs, whose mission is to provide excellent care and quality service to Louisiana’s 284,000 veterans and their families. She served previously as Deputy Chief of Staff for Governor John Bel Edwards and as counsel for the Louisiana Senate Committee on Judiciary A. She was also a trial attorney, with Moore, Walters and the Rhorer law firms. Prior to practicing law, Julie spent more than 12 years as an investigative reporter for radio/television news, covering statewide elections, the legislature and natural disasters, including Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. She was awarded an Edward R. Murrow Award for Investigative Reporting in Television. She is also a former member of the LSBA’s Board of Governors and is currently a member of the LSBA House of Delegates.

Sarah Pfeiffer is a family attorney, mediator, and collaborative practitioner, whose solo practice serves the Greater New Orleans area and focuses on bringing high quality legal services to modest means clients and reaching favorable settlements without court. With over 350 training hours in alternative dispute resolution, she is a board member of the Collaborative Divorce Alliance of Greater New Orleans and a member the International Academy of Collaborative Practitioners (IACP). Named a Top Lawyer in Alternative Dispute Resolution and in Family law, she has also been named a “Rising Star” by Super Lawyers. She subscribes to the philosophy of Abraham Lincoln who said, “Discourage litigation. Persuade your neighbors to compromise whenever you can. As a peacemaker, the lawyer has superior opportunity of being a good man. There will still be business enough.”

William M. Ross of Stanley, Reuter, Ross Thornton & Alford, LLC in New Orleans, focuses primarily on legal ethics and malpractice, commercial litigation, and civil appeals in the state and federal courts of Louisiana. A graduate of Tulane where he served as a Managing Editor of the *Tulane Law Review* and a recipient of the Faculty Medal for attaining the highest cumulative average in his class, he is a member of the adjunct faculty and has lectured on ethical issues at various continuing legal education programs. He has defended attorneys in disciplinary matters before the Louisiana Attorney Disciplinary Board and the Louisiana Supreme Court and regularly advises lawyers regarding their ethical duties.

Maurice Carlos Ruffin is the author of *We Cast a Shadow*, which was published by One World Random House. The novel is a New York Times Editor’s Choice. Ruffin is the winner of several literary prizes, including the Iowa Review Award in fiction and the William Faulkner–William Wisdom Creative Writing Competition Award for Novel-in-Progress. His work has appeared in the Oxford American, Garden & Gun, and Kenyon Review. A New Orleans native, Maurice is a professor of Creative Writing at Louisiana State University, and the 2020-2021 John and Renee Grisham Writer-in-Residence at Ole Miss.

Buddy Stockwell is the Executive Director of the Judges and Lawyers Assistance Program (JLAP) and is a Certified Clinical Interventionist through training at the Betty Ford Center. Always on call, he assists bar applicants, lawyers, judges, and their family members. He speaks from personal experience as he has been in recovery from alcoholism for over thirty years. Prior to JLAP, Buddy had practiced law for many years in Baton Rouge. At some point, he decided to sell his law practice and home. He and his wife then moved aboard a large catamaran and sailed the seas for six years. This was a good fit considering his history in the US Navy on a Guided Missile Destroyer and his current service as a U.S. Coast Guard Licensed Captain. Buddy earned his undergraduate and law degrees from LSU.

Paul J. Unger is an attorney and founding principal of Affinity Consulting Group, LLC, a nationwide company dedicated to assisting law firms achieve better organizational efficiencies. A nationally recognized speaker, he specializes in technology consulting and audits; is the author of several legal-specific technology books & manuals (e.g., *Adobe Acrobat for Law Firms*, *PowerPoint for Legal Professionals*, and co-author of *Microsoft Word for Legal Professionals*); has provided trial presentation & litigation support for over 300 matters; and has advised firms on document management software and paperless office strategies throughout the United States. A graduate of Capital University Law School, he is an adjunct professor for its paralegal program. Prior to Affinity Consulting Group, Paul practiced with Clark, Perdue, Roberts & Scott Co., L.P.A., limiting his practice to civil litigation. A member of the American, Ohio and Columbus Bar Associations and the Central Ohio Association for Justice, Paul is a former chair of the ABA TECHSHOW and current chair of its Legal Resource Technology Center.

Peggy Gonsoulin Vallejo is a civil law attorney who specializes in family law, personal injury, and succession litigation. She is the sole proprietor of the Vallejo Law Firm in Covington where she has lived for the past 30 years. However, she hails proudly from the "Parish," having graduated from Holy Angels High School and Tulane University Law School, from which she graduated at the age of 44.

Kevin S. Vogeltanz litigates civil and criminal cases in New Orleans. A solo practitioner who forgoes a support staff, Kevin handles each aspect of every case from engagement agreement to trial. By using technology and streamlined practices, Kevin not only provides his clients with excellent representation, but does so at a fraction of the overhead most firms incur. A *cum laude* graduate from the University of Arkansas, School of Law, he was recruited by one of New Orleans's top firms where he litigated maritime, oil & gas, and white-collar matters until 2012 when he left to start his own practice.

Rachel Thyre Vogletanz, a graduate of the University of California at Davis School of Law, is the current Chair of the LSBA's Solo and Small Firm section. Rachel didn't plan on being a bankruptcy lawyer, but the economy landed her in a boutique bankruptcy firm and she hit the ground running, with consumer and Chapter 11 work. Except for a criminal law clerkship year at the Louisiana Supreme Court, she has represented bankruptcy clients ever since. Board-certified in consumer bankruptcy by the Louisiana Board of Legal Specialization and the American Board of Certification, she is a member of the National Association of Consumer Bankruptcy Attorneys and the National Association of Consumer Advocates. Rachel feels fortunate every day to be a consumer advocate, and is particularly interested in assisting clients with insurmountable student debt.

Edward J. Walters, Jr., a litigator with 40 years' experience and a founder of Walters, Papillion, Thomas, Cullens, LLC, is certified in the fields of Civil Trial Advocacy and Civil Pretrial Advocacy by the National Board of Trial Advocacy. He has served as Adjunct Professor of Law at the LSU Law Center over 25 years, teaching a course he co-developed with Baton Rouge attorney Michael Patterson entitled "Advanced Trial and Evidence" which is a "hands-on" trial skills course. He is a frequent lecturer and writer on a vast array of litigation, ethics and professionalism topics and has served as the Editor of the Baton Rouge Bar Association's monthly publication *The Baton Rouge Lawyer* for 30 years.

Lydia Winkler is co-founder and COO of RentCheck, a technology company that helps property managers attract great renters by revamping the inspection process. RentCheck resulted from a winning proposal in a national competition for a new business she and a MBA classmate conceived. They agreed Lydia's successful suit in small claims court over a security deposit, which required time-stamped photographs as evidence and subpoenas, could all be avoided with technology delivering appropriate transparency. While in law school at Tulane, Lydia successfully represented several inmates eligible for parole at Louisiana State Penitentiary and is the founder of REEP Now (Relief Effort for Earning Parole) a nonprofit that provides parole advocacy and support to people in Louisiana.