



## 2026 SEVEN POINTS LA FACULTY

(BR – Baton Rouge; C – Covington; H – Houma; LAF – Lafayette;  
NOLA – New Orleans; WM - West Monroe; SP – Shreveport/Bossier City)

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**Eric K. Barefield** (BR, C, H, LAF, NOLA, WM, SP) is Ethics Counsel for the Louisiana State Bar Association (LSBA). After obtaining his JD from LSU, he began his professional career as an Assistant District Attorney in Orleans Parish. He also 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 is responsible for the LSBA's Ethics Advisory Service, a confidential service for LSBA members to field ethical concerns.

**Austin Benton** (BR, C, H, LAF, NOLA, WM, SP) is a practicing attorney at the law firm of Benton, Benton & Benton and focuses on domestic and civil litigation. He is the owner of the legal technology company, Ayla, LLC, which designs document automation systems for practitioners of personal injury, family, successions, criminal, foreclosure, and commercial defense work. Ayla is utilized by firms throughout Louisiana, New York, Texas, Florida, Mississippi, California, and Ohio. He 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.

**Brian Essex** (BR, C, NOLA, WM, SP) is the Senior Director of Compliance and Corporate Counsel with Gilsbar Specialty Insurance Services. He also serves as Loss Prevention Counsel for the LSBA. He provides business-focused legal solutions while navigating complex legal, regulatory, and operational challenges for large, multi-brand organizations. Before Gilsbar, he served as in-house counsel for a variety of industries, having held senior legal roles across a variety of industries. He served as Deputy General Counsel at ServiceMaster Brands, overseeing legal franchise matters and compliance for six brands. He has a B.S. in Accountancy from Creighton University and a J.D. from the University of Louisville. He currently resides in Metairie, LA, with his wife, Jessica, and their daughter, Cyla.

**Shawn L. Holahan** (BR, C, H, LAF, NOLA, WM, SP) is Practice Management Counsel/Loss Prevention Counsel for the LSBA and also administers the LSBA's fee dispute arbitration program. An active member of the ABA LP Division, she is the Secretary of the Division and Vice Chair to the ABA TECHSHOW Planning board. She is also an editor and contributing author of its monthly e-publication, Law Practice Today (LPT), columns editor of the Law Practice Magazine and former vice chair of the Professional Development Board. She is also the former Chair of the Practice Management Advisors of North America and columnist of the ABA GP Solo Magazine. Prior to her position at the bar, she was a partner with a medium-sized law firm in New Orleans (labor and employment primarily) and had completed two federal clerkships in the USDC (E.D. La.). She assists lawyers with law office management issues and with choosing technology.

**Daya Naef** (BR, C, H, LAF, NOLA, WM, SP) is an attorney, entrepreneur, and business and AI strategist with deep experience in the legal and construction industries. With over 20 years in law (seven coaching and two with hands-on AI strategy experience, she guides law firms and professional service businesses toward sustainable growth and smarter operations. With a JD degree from Loyola, Daya's career spans litigation, mediation, and legal consulting. Daya is the founder of The Success Partner and assists firms scale, modernize, and compete through leadership development and practical innovation. A sought-after speaker and mentor, she delivers actionable insights on business development and the future of law. Outside of work, Daya enjoys sculpting, reading, and time with her cats, balancing strategy with creativity.

**Hunter Thevis (H)** is the president and co-founder of S1 Technology, an IT and cybersecurity managed service provider in Lafayette, Louisiana. Holding a degree in Information Systems & Decision Sciences from LSU and an MBA from UL, Hunter provides strategic IT support and advanced cybersecurity solutions to small businesses including law firms. He is also the founder of DEFCON Acadiana, a non-profit group dedicated to strengthening the region against cyber threats. A proud Lafayette resident, Hunter is also a devoted husband, new father, and avid golfer.

**Edward J. Walters, Jr.** (BR, C, H, LAF, NOLA, WM, SP) is the president of the LSBA and partner in the Baton Rouge firm of Walters, Papillion, Thomas, Cullens, L.L.C. A former editor of the *Louisiana Bar Journal* and continuing to serve on the *Louisiana Bar Journal* Editorial Board, he currently chairs the LSBA's Senior Lawyers Division and is a member of the Rules of Professional Conduct Committee. He is also the editor of the Baton Rouge Bar Association's monthly publication, *Around the Bar*, since its first issue in 1985. He is a recipient of the LSU Law Center's Distinguished Alumnus Award, the Louisiana Bar Foundation's Distinguished Attorney Award and the Baton Rouge Bar Association's President's Award. He is a member of the American College of Trial Lawyers, the International Academy of Trial Lawyers and the LSU Law Center Board of Trustees. He earned a BS degree in accounting and JD, both from LSU.

**Dr. Angela White-Bazile** (BR, C, H, LAF, NOLA, WM, SP) is the executive director of the LSBA's Judges and Lawyers Assistance Program (JLAP). She is an advocate for enhancing overall health and wellness for judges, lawyers, and law students. She emphasizes that JLAP is a confidential safe haven of healing, and you are not alone if you suffer with addiction, substance abuse/dependence, depression, or other mental, emotional, or physical health concerns.

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