

2025 LSBA ANNUAL MEETING & LJC / LSBA JOINT SUMMER SCHOOL



Chief Justice John L. Weimer administers the oath of office to the 2025-26 Board of Governors. Photo by Matthew Hinton Photography.

LSBA Installs 2025-26 Officers and Board of Governors

The Louisiana State Bar Association's (LSBA) 2025-26 officers and members of the Board of Governors were installed June 5 at a ceremony at the LSBA's Annual Meeting in Destin, Fla. Louisiana Supreme Court Chief Justice John L. Weimer and Hon. Darrel J. Papillion of the U.S. District Court Eastern District of Louisiana administered the oaths of office.

Edward J. Walters, Jr., a partner in the Baton Rouge law firm Walters, Thomas, Cullens, LLC, was installed as the 85th LSBA president (2025-26 term). The oath of office was administered by Hon. Darrel J. Papillion of the U.S. District Court Eastern District of Louisiana.

Curtis R. Joseph, Jr., a partner in the Shreveport law firm Blanchard, Walker, O'Quin & Roberts, APLC, was installed as the 2025-26 president-elect. He will assume the presidency in 2026-27.

Bradley J. Tate, an attorney at Sternberg, Naccari & White, LLC, in New Orleans, is beginning his two-year term as secretary. He also serves as editor of the Louisiana Bar Journal, the LSBA's magazine published six times a year.

C.A. (Hap) Martin III, a member in the Monroe law firm Shotwell, Brown & Sperry, APLC, is beginning his second year of a two-year term as treasurer.

Patrick A. Talley, Jr., a partner in the New Orleans office of the law firm Phelps, will continue his service to the LSBA as the 2025-26 immediate past president.

Collin R. Melancon, a partner/owner of Mansfield Melancon Injury Lawyers in New Orleans, was installed as 2025-26 chair of the LSBA Young Lawyers Division.

Members of the 2025-26 Board of Governors were installed by Chief Justice John L. Weimer.

First District

- **Graham H. Ryan**, a partner in the New Orleans office of the law firm Jones Walker, LLP.
- **Lindsey A. Cheek**, the founding attorney of The Cheek Law Firm LLC in New Orleans.

Second District

- **Jeffrey G. Lagarde**, an attorney in the Metairie office of the law firm Staines, Eppling & Kenney, LLC.

Third District

- **Melanie W. Chatagnier**, the sole attorney and owner of Chatagnier Law Office in Thibodaux.

Fourth District

- **Todd S. Clemons**, the founder of Todd Clemons & Associates in Lake Charles.



The Louisiana State Bar Association's 2025-26 officers and members of the Board of Governors. Front row, from left: Curtis R. Joseph, Jr., Lindsay A. Cheek, Sen   D. Hall, Edward J. Walters, Jr., Patrick A. Talley, Jr., Melanie W. Chatagnier, Bradley J. Tate, C.A. (Hap) Martin III, Tina L. Suggs. Back row, from left: G. Trippe Hawthorne, Barry M. Barnett, Todd S. Clemons, Collin R. Melancon, Larry E. Pichon, Amy J. Miller, Shannon Seiler Dartez, John M. Church and Christopher K. Jones. *Photo by Matthew Hinton Photography.*

Fifth District

- **Kelly M. Rabalais**, vice president of communications and strategy for St. Tammany Health System in Covington.
- **Christopher K. Jones**, a partner in the Baton Rouge firm of Keogh Cox.

Sixth District

- **Barry M. Barnett**, a partner in the law firm LaCroix, Levy & Barnett, LLC, in Alexandria.

Seventh District

- **Amy J. Miller**, owner/attorney in Amy Miller Attorney at Law in Ruston.

Eighth District

- **Sen   D. Hall**, an assistant district attorney in the Caddo Parish District Attorney's Office in Shreveport.

At-Large Members

- **L. Bradley Hancock**, the executive partner in the Houston, TX, office of the law firm Holland & Knight, LLP.
- **Tina L. Suggs**, managing attorney at State Farm Insurance Company's Claims Litigation Counsel Office in Metairie.
- **Daniel A. Cavell**, a partner in the Thibodaux law firm Morvant & Cavell, LLC.

LSU Paul M. Hebert Law Center/ Faculty Representative

- **Prof. John M. Church**, a Professor of Law at Louisiana State University (LSU) Paul M. Hebert Law Center in Baton Rouge.

Tulane University Law School/Faculty Representative

- **Prof. Ronald J. Scalise, Jr.**, the John Minor Wisdom Professor of Civil Law at Tulane University Law School in New Orleans.

Louisiana State Law Institute Representative

- **G. Trippe Hawthorne**, an attorney at Kean Miller in Baton Rouge.

House of Delegates Liaison Committee.

- **Chair, Shannon Seiler Dartez**, an attorney with the Glenn Armentor Law Corporation in Lafayette.
- **Member, Aaron R. Wilson**, an attorney in Wilson & Wilson, APLC, in Bossier City.
- **Member, Larry E. Pichon**, a solo practitioner in Lake Charles.



Edward J. Walters, Jr., 2025-26 LSBA President, is presented with the ceremonial gavel by Patrick A. Talley, Jr., 2024-25 LSBA President. *Photo by Matthew Hinton Photography.*



JUNE 1-6, 2025

Good Vibrations

Awards Presented to Members at LSBA Annual Meeting

LSBA President's Awards



(From left to right) J. Christopher Zainey, Jr., Monica Hof Wallace, Adam P. Johnson, and Shannon Seiler Dartez recieved the LSBA President's Award presented by Patrick A. Talley, Jr. (center), 2024-25 LSBA President, during the 2025 General Assembly. Photo by Matthew Hinton Photography.

Five LSBA members received 2025 President's Awards. Recipients were chosen by 2024-25 LSBA President Patrick A. Talley, Jr. and were recognized for services to the association. Recognized were attorney **Shannon Seiler Dartez** of Lafayette, attorney **Adam P. Johnson** of Lake Charles, attorney **Graham H. Ryan** of New Orleans, attorney **Monica Hof Wallace** of New Orleans, and attorney **J. Christopher Zainey, Jr.** of New Orleans.

Dartez was recognized for her leadership as chair of the Task Force to Study the House of Delegates and her overall support of the president and the LSBA. She practices with the Glenn Armentor Law Corporation in

Lafayette and earned her BA in 1990 and JD in 1994 from LSU. She was admitted to practice in Louisiana in 1994. Dartez is a member of the LSBA House of Delegates, currently serving as chair of the House of Delegates Liaison Committee to the Board of Governors. She also served on the Louisiana State Bar Association's (LSBA) Board of Governors as the Third Board District representative from 2002-05 and 2017-20. She is a member of the LSBA's Insurance Committee, previously chairing the Group Insurance Committee.

Johnson was recognized for his leadership as chair of the Artificial Intelligence Task Force and his exceptional support of the President and the

LSBA. A partner at The Johnson Firm in Lake Charles, he earned a BS in business management from LSU in 2006 and a JD from Southern University Law Center in 2009. After clerking for Judges Wyatt and Ware, he joined his father and brother in practice; he and his brother now run the firm, focusing on family, criminal defense, and personal injury law. Johnson served in the LSBA House of Delegates, co-chaired Leadership LSBA (2014-15), and represented District 4 in the Young Lawyers Division (2015-19). He writes the Criminal Law section of the Louisiana Bar Exam and is a past president of both the SWLBA and its Young Lawyers Division.

Ryan was recognized for his leadership as chair of the Strategic Planning Committee and his support of the LSBA President. A partner at Jones Walker LLP in New Orleans, he handles complex commercial litigation, appeals, arbitration, and regulatory matters for clients in industries such as tech, banking, energy, and healthcare. He graduated summa cum laude in business finance from LSU, earned his JD from LSU Paul M. Hebert Law Center (Louisiana Law Review), and completed the Harvard Law School Program on Negotiation. A former judicial extern for the Louisiana Supreme Court, Ryan has served on the LSBA Board of Governors, chaired the LSBA YLD, and was a delegate to the ABA House of Delegates. He participated in Leadership LSBA (2014-15) and has served on the LSBA's Access to Justice, MCLE, and CLE Committees. He also held roles with the Louisiana State Law Institute and the Louisiana Center for Law and Civic Education.

Wallace was recognized for her leadership in organizing the Loyola Ainsworth Lecture featuring U.S. Supreme Court Justice Amy Coney Barrett and for her support of the LSBA President. She is the Dean Marcel Garsaud, Jr. Distinguished Professor of Law at Loyola University New Orleans College of Law, where she has taught since 2002 after practicing at Correro Fishman Haygood. A top graduate of Loyola Law, she served on the Law Review and chaired the Moot Court Program. She clerked for Judge Jacques L. Wiener, Jr. (5th Circuit) and Judge Barry Ted Moskowitz (Southern District of California). A frequent speaker and author on family law and related fields, she also developed and directed the Loyola Advocacy Center. Wallace is active in the LSBA, Louisiana State Law Institute, and St. Thomas More Inn of Court, and is a Fellow of the Louisiana Bar Foundation and Educating Tomorrow's Lawyers. She serves on the Louisiana Youth Seminar board and has received multiple awards for teaching, scholarship, and service.

Zainey was recognized for his leadership as chair of the Judges and Lawyers Assistance Program Task Force on Wellness in the Legal Profession and his support of the LSBA President. A partner at Lambert Zainey Smith & Soso, PLC in New Orleans, he clerked for Judge James J. Brady (U.S. District Court, Middle District of Louisiana) after graduating from Loyola Law in 2008. His practice centers on maritime and Jones Act cases, wrongful death, catastrophic injury, and complex tort litigation. Zainey chairs the LSBA's Insurance, Tort, Workers' Compensation and Admiralty Law Section and has served on the Board of Governors, Nominating Committee, and House of Delegates. He regularly presents at the LSBA Annual Meeting and Admiralty Law Symposium and lectures for organizations such as the Louisiana Association for Justice (Board of Governors), Federal Bar Association (Board of Directors), Loyola Law, Tulane Law, and LSU's trial advocacy program.

Distinguished Service to the Profession Award



Monte T. Mollere is presented with the Distinguished Service to the Profession Award by Patrick A. Talley Jr., 2024-25 LSBA President. Photo by Matthew Hinton Photography.

Monte T. Mollere of Luling received the 2025 Distinguished Service to the Profession Award.

Mollere was recognized for his longstanding commitment to the LSBA and his leadership as director of its Access to Justice Department, a role he has held for over 25 years. Working with justice community providers across Louisiana, he has expanded resources for those with legal needs and helped establish the Louisiana Access to Justice Commission, a Supreme Court-created body focused on ensuring justice for all. He collaborates with civil and criminal legal services stakeholders through LSBA committees and statewide initiatives. Mollere earned a BA in accounting from LSU and a JD from Loyola University College of Law. Before joining the LSBA, he practiced at Southeast Louisiana Legal Services in Hammond. He is a member of the American Bar Association, the National Legal Aid and Defenders Association, and the National Association of Pro Bono Professionals.



JUNE 1-6, 2025

Good Vibrations

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Associate Justice John M. Guidry is presented with the Chief Justice Bernette Joshua Johnson Trailblazer Award. Photo by Matthew Hinton Photography.

Chief Justice Bernette Joshua Johnson Trailblazer Award

Associate Justice John Michael Guidry of Baton Rouge received the 2025 Chief Justice Bernette Joshua Johnson Trailblazer Award.

Guidry is the fourth African American elected to the Louisiana Supreme Court and was the first African American chief judge of the Louisiana 1st Circuit Court of Appeal, only the second African American judge elected to that court. Committed to justice, diversity, and inclusion, he previously served in the Louisiana House (1991–93) and Senate (1993–97). Early in his legislative career, he joined efforts to support a federal consent decree establishing minority judgeships and later filed legislation creating two minority seats on the Baton Rouge City Court. He also championed access to justice programs. Since joining the judiciary in 1997, Justice Guidry has served on pro bono and domestic violence committees and frequently presents on legal ethics and professionalism. He regularly speaks at schools, churches, and community events to educate the public about the legal system and civic engagement.

Louisiana Center for Law and Civic Education's Judge Benjamin Jones Judges in the Classroom Award

Judge **Bruce E. Hampton** of Farmerville received the 2025 Louisiana Center for Law and Civic Education's Judge Benjamin Jones Judges in the Classroom Award.

Hampton, Third Judicial District, earned a Bachelor of Science in Finance, cum laude, at Louisiana Tech University; his JD, magna cum laude, from Tulane University Law School; and LLM in taxation from Southern Methodist University School of Law. He has been licensed to practice law in Louisiana since 1981. Before being elected district judge in 2018, he maintained a private law practice in Farmerville since 1991. Additionally, he served as assistant district attorney for the 3rd Judicial District for 18 years and as a public defender for the 3rd Judicial District for nine years. Judge Hampton is chair of the Judiciary Commission of Louisiana and is currently serving as secretary of the Louisiana District Judges Association, a member of the Louisiana State Law Institute, the American Judges Association, and the Supreme Court Task Force on Judges in the Classroom/Students in the Courtroom. He often speaks at seminars for judges and attorneys on the subject of ethics and frequently speaks on various legal topics to civic organizations and students from third grade to college as an active participant in the Judges in the Classroom Program.



Judge Bruce E. Hampton is presented with the 2025 Louisiana Center for Law and Civic Education's Judge Benjamin Jones Judges in the Classroom Award. Photo by Matthew Hinton Photography

Awards Presented to Members at LSBA Annual Meeting

Guardian of Diversity Award

The **Baton Rouge Louis A. Martinet Legal Society, Inc.** in Baton Rouge received the 2025 Guardian of Diversity Award.

Established in 1957, the **Louis A. Martinet Legal Society, Inc.** honors the legacy of Louis André Martinet, a pioneering African American attorney who played a pivotal role in challenging segregation laws in Louisiana. Louis A. Martinet Legal Society, Inc. is a diverse and inclusive organization composed of attorneys of varying genders, religions, ages, creeds and national origins. Recent initiatives include organizing town hall meetings, Black History Month programs, and a Women's History Month luncheon to foster dialogue and celebrate diversity. The chapter has also conducted Continuing Legal Education sessions on juvenile justice and eviction law, promoted mental health awareness among attorneys, and provided pro bono services to underserved populations. In addition to legal education and advocacy, the society is active in youth and community engagement. Members have participated in elementary school reading initiatives and judged high school and law school mock trial competitions. The chapter also hosts annual community events, including Christmas toy drives and women's concealed handgun training courses.



The **Louis A. Martinet Legal Society** is presented with the 2025 Guardian of Diversity Award. Photo by Matthew Hinton Photography.

Stephen T. Victory Memorial Award

Bradley C. Guin, of Baton Rouge, received the 2025 Stephen T. Victory Memorial Award, recognizing outstanding contributions to the Louisiana Bar Journal, the LSBA's magazine. He was recognized for his article, "Ethical Considerations When Applying for TROs," published in the April/May 2025 issue of the magazine.

Guin is an attorney at law in the Shreveport area. Brad received his Juris Doctor and Diploma in Comparative Law from the LSU Paul M. Hebert Law Center. He is a member of the Baton Rouge Bar Association Publications Committee and a prior recipient of the LSBA Young Lawyers Division Top 40 Award.



Bradley C. Guin is presented with the 2025 Stephen T. Victory Memorial Award. Photo by Matthew Hinton Photography.

John A. "T-Jean" Hernandez III Memorial Award

Georgia D. Chadwick of New Orleans received the 2025 John A. "T-Jean" Hernandez III Memorial Award, presented for achievements in Francophone leadership.

A longtime advocate for legal scholarship and access to information, **Chadwick** currently serves on the Louisiana Supreme Court Historical Society's Bicentennial Steering Committee for the 1825 Civil Code, helping organize lectures highlighting the Code's development and the influential role of jurists of French heritage. Chadwick served as director of the Law Library of Louisiana from 2007 to 2016, concluding a nearly 40-year career in legal information. She began her tenure there in 1978, holding key roles including associate director, head of technical services, and documents librarian. Her earlier experience includes positions at law firms in New Orleans, Washington, D.C., and Dallas, as well as roles at the University of Texas, Southern Methodist University, and the Law Library of Louisiana. Chadwick holds a Master of Arts in Librarianship from the University of Denver and a B.A. in sociology from Tulane's Newcomb College.



Georgia D. Chadwick



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Thomas M. Hayes III is presented with the Curtis R. Boisfontaine Trial Advocacy Award. Photos by Matthew Hinton Photography.

Louisiana Bar Foundation's Curtis R. Boisfontaine Trial Advocacy Award

Thomas M. Hayes III of Monroe received the 2025 Louisiana Bar Foundation's Curtis R. Boisfontaine Trial Advocacy Award.

Hayes earned a BA with honors from the University of the South in 1974 and a JD from LSU Paul M. Hebert Law Center in 1977. He practiced civil litigation in state and federal courts with Hayes, Harkey, Smith & Cascio in Monroe until 2023. Now a full-time mediator and arbitrator with The Patterson Resolution Group, he completed mediation training at Pepperdine's Straus Institute in 2015. A member of the Louisiana State Law Institute for over 25 years, Hayes currently serves as chair and immediate past president, and sits on several key committees. He chaired a legislative task force on e-filing and records retention in 2022-23. Hayes is a two-term LSBA Board of Governors member and former bar examiner for the Louisiana Supreme Court Committee on Bar Admissions. He is a fellow and former regent of the American College of Trial Lawyers and a fellow of the International Academy of Trial Lawyers. He is also a past president of several organizations, including the 4th Judicial District Bar Association and the Fred J. Fudickar Jr. American Inn of Court.



Hon. Brian A. Jackson is presented with the Catherine D. Kimball Award by Patrick A. Talley, Jr., 2024-25 LSBA President. Photo by Matthew Hinton Photography.

Catherine D. Kimball Award for Advancement of the Administration of Justice

Hon. Brian A. Jackson of Baton Rouge received the 2025 Catherine D. Kimball Award for Advancement of the Administration of Justice.

Jackson is being honored for over four decades of distinguished public service across Louisiana, California, and Washington, D.C. Appointed by President Barack Obama in 2010, he served as chief judge of the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Louisiana from 2011 to 2018. A graduate of Xavier University, he earned his JD from Southern University Law Center (editor-in-chief, Law Review) and an LL.M. from Georgetown. He spent over 16 years with the U.S. Department of Justice, including roles as Assistant U.S. Attorney, Associate Deputy Attorney General, and U.S. Attorney for the Middle District of Louisiana. In 2002, he joined Liskow & Lewis as a partner, leading its white collar defense group. Jackson is a fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers and a member of the Federal Judges Association and National Association of Former U.S. Attorneys. He has served on the Louisiana Bar Admissions Committee and was appointed by Chief Justice John Roberts in 2013 to the Judicial Resources Committee of the U.S. Judicial Conference.

Awards Presented to Members at LSBA Annual Meeting

LSBA Young Lawyers Division Bat P. Sullivan, Jr. Chair's Award

Joseph T. D. Tran of Metairie received the 2025 LSBA Young Lawyers Division's Bat P. Sullivan, Jr. Chair's Award.

Tran was recognized for his leadership with the LSBA Young Lawyers Division's Wills for Heroes Program. He is associate general counsel at LAMMICO, focusing on intellectual property, health and insurance law, cybersecurity, and artificial intelligence. A CIPP/US, he holds a BS in mechanical engineering from LSU and a JD from Loyola University New Orleans College of Law. Admitted to

practice in Louisiana in 2016, he is also registered before the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. Tran chairs the LSBA Minority Involvement Section (2024), serves on the Louisiana Bar Journal Editorial Board, and was co-chair of Leadership LSBA (2022–23). He's a former ABA YLD delegate and sits on the Jefferson Bar Association YLD board. He also serves on the executive boards of the Louisiana Asian Pacific American Bar Association and the Vietnamese American Bar Association, and is active in IAPP, ACC, and MPLA.



Joseph T. D. Tran is presented with the 2025 Bat P. Sullivan Chair's Award by Kristen D. Amond, 2024-25 YLD Chair.

LSBA Young Lawyers Division's 2025-26 Officers, Council Installed



The Louisiana State Bar Association Young Lawyers Division's 2025-26 officers and council. Front row, from left: Ashley U. Johnson-Firven; Taylor B. Ashworth; Rachal Cox Cassagne; Collin R. Melancon; Kristen D. Amond; Christopher J. Sellers, Jr.; Jennifer G. Lampton. Back row, from left: Jared E. Nelson; Joseph T. D. Tran; Jasmine C. Cooper; Josef P. Ventulan; Mary Catherine Joiner; Brad W. Cranmer; Andrew A. Maberry and Margaret L. Manning. Photo by Matthew Hinton Photography.



2025 LSBA ANNUAL MEETING & LJC / LSBA JOINT SUMMER SCHOOL

LSBA Young Lawyers Division's 2025-26 Officers, Council Installed

The Louisiana State Bar Association Young Lawyers Division's (LSBA YLD) 2025-26 officers and Council were installed June 5 at the LSBA Annual Meeting in Destin, Fla. Louisiana Supreme Court Chief Justice John L. Weimer administered the oath of office.

Collin R. Melancon, a partner/owner of Mansfield Melancon Injury Lawyers in New Orleans was installed as 2025-26 YLD chair.

Other officers sworn in include:

- ▶ Chair-Elect **Christopher J. Sellers, Jr.**, an Assistant Vice President & Associate General Counsel at Ochsner Health in New Orleans.
- ▶ Secretary **Rachal Cox Cassagne**, an assistant United States attorney for the U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Louisiana, in New Orleans.
- ▶ Immediate Past Chair **Kristen D. Amond**, an attorney in New Orleans at Kristen Amond LLC.

Installed as members of the 2025-26 YLD Council were:

District 1: Jennifer Gordon Lampton, research attorney for Judge Nakisha Ervin-Knott, 4th Circuit Court of Appeal, Division A, New Orleans; and **Margaret L. Manning**, an associate at-

torney at Stanley Reuter Alford Owen Munson & Paul, LLC in New Orleans.

District 2: Christina K. Guzman, an associate attorney at Jeffrey Hufft, Attorney at Law, LLC, Metairie; and **Andrew A. "Andy" Maberry**, an associate attorney in the Law Office of Glenn C. McGovern, in Metairie.

District 3: Jared E. Nelson, an associate in the Lafayette office of the law firm Liskow & Lewis, APLC.

District 4: Brooke A. Roach, an attorney in The Roach Law Firm, APLC, in Lake Charles.

District 5: Brad W. Cranmer, a partner in the Baton Rouge office of the law firm Mansfield, Melancon, Cranmer & Dick, LLC; and **Mary Catherine Joiner**, an associate attorney with the Baton Rouge office of Bradley Murchison Kelly & Shea LLC.

District 6: Ashley U. Johnson-Firven, an associate in the Baton Rouge office of the law firm Hammonds, Sills, Adkins, Guice, Noah & Perkins, LLP.

District 7: Jana Robinson Tuma, legal counsel of U.S. Operations at Drax, based in Monroe.

District 8: Jasmine C. Cooper, an assistant district attorney for the Caddo Parish District Attorney's Office in Shreveport.

At-Large Representative: Josef P.



2025-26 YLD Chair Collin R. Melancon receives the gavel from 2024-25 YLD Chair Kristen D. Amond. Photos by Matthew Hinton Photography.

Ventulan, an attorney with the Louisiana State Law Institute in Baton Rouge.

American Bar Association Young Lawyers Division Representative: Joseph T.D. Tran, an associate general counsel for LAMMICO, based in Metairie.

Young Lawyer Member/American Bar Association House of Delegates: Taylor B. Ashworth, an associate in the Baton Rouge office of the law firm Kean Miller, LLP.



Chief Justice John L. Weimer administers the oath of office to the 2025-26 YLD Officers and Council. Photo by Matthew Hinton Photography.