



2025-2026 Louisiana State Bar Association Young Lawyers Division Officers and Council

Officers 2025-26

Collin R. Melancon

Chair

Collin R. Melancon is a partner/owner at Mansfield Melancon Personal Injury Lawyers in New Orleans. He represents injured clients throughout Louisiana and focuses his work on representing crime victims who were sexually abused. He received a bachelor's degree in international studies in 2011 from Louisiana State University and his JD degree in 2015 from Loyola University College of Law. He was admitted to practice in Louisiana in 2015.



Collin R. Melancon

During his law school years, he was a member of the *Loyola Law Review* and was nominated to the *Loyola Law Review* Editorial Board. He received Loyola's highest honor given to a graduating law student, the Spirit of St. Ignatius Award for Outstanding Law Graduate. He also received the LSBA Civil Code Award for graduating first in his class in the Louisiana civil law division.

Melancon previously served as chair-elect, secretary and as the District 1 representative on the Louisiana State Bar Association's (LSBA) Young Lawyers Division (YLD) Council. He is the YLD representative on the Louisiana Judicial Council. He has been a speaker for several conferences and CLEs, including the Louisiana Young Lawyers Conference and the LSBA Professionalism CLE program.

He is a member of the New Orleans Bar Association and the Louisiana Association for Justice and helped plan the Pro Bono Project's Justice for All Ball in 2019. He has been named a *Louisiana Super Lawyers* "Rising Star" from 2020 to 2024 in personal injury law.

Melancon and his wife, Jillian Melancon, have been married for five years and have one son.

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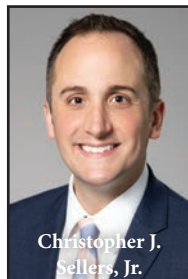
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Christopher J. "Chris" Sellers, Jr.

Chair-Elect

Christopher J. Sellers Jr., assistant vice president and associate general counsel for Ochsner Health, serves as the 2025-26 chair-elect of the Louisiana State Bar Association (LSBA) Young Lawyers Division (YLD). As the YLD chair-elect, he also serves on the Budget Committee of the LSBA. He previously served the YLD as the secretary and a District One representative and represented the YLD on the Editorial Board of



Christopher J.
Sellers, Jr.

the *Louisiana Bar Journal*.

Sellers' other LSBA involvement includes serving as the vice chair of the Health Law Section and a member of the Bar Governance Committee and the Medical/Legal Interprofessional Committee. He is board certified by the Louisiana Board of Legal Specialization (LBLS) as a health law specialist and previously served two terms on and as the 2024-25 chair of the LBLS Health Law Advisory Commission. He was a member of the 2017-18 Leadership LSBA class and served as a co-chair the following year.

Chris received his bachelor's degree in 2011 from Louisiana State University (LSU) and his J.D. in 2014 from the LSU Paul M. Hebert Law Center. He was admitted to practice in Louisiana in 2014. In his community, he is the run club director for Stonewall Sports – New Orleans and is a member of the Krewe of Endymion.

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Rachal Cox Cassagne

Secretary

Rachal Cox Cassagne is an assistant United States attorney for the Eastern District of Louisiana. Prior to joining the U.S. Attorney's Office, she worked as a commercial litigation associate in a defense firm and as a law clerk for U.S. District Judge Greg G. Guidry.

She received a BA degree in English in 2011 from Louisiana State University-Shreveport, a MA degree in literary studies in 2013 from Universiteit van Amsterdam and her JD degree, *magna cum laude*, in 2016 from Southern University Law Center. She studied at the Universiteit van Amsterdam as a Rotary Ambassadorial Scholar and gave presentations to various Rotary Clubs throughout the country. She was admitted to practice in Louisiana in 2016.

Cassagne is a volunteer for the Louisiana State Bar Association's Disaster Recovery Hotline. She is an active member of the Jefferson Bar Association and the Federal Bar Association. She previously served as an observer with the Louisiana State Law Institute for the Louisiana State Bar Association's Young Lawyers Division. She participated in Forum 35's John W. Barton, Sr. Community Leadership Program in 2018.

In her community, she attends St. Joseph Church in Gretna. She and her husband, Craig Cassagne, Jr., have been married for five years and they have two daughters.

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Rachal Cox
Cassagne

Kristen D. Amond
Immediate Past Chair

Kristen D. Amond is an attorney in New Orleans (Kristen Amond, LLC), practicing in federal and state courts in Louisiana. She represents businesses of all sizes in all forms of business disputes and is outside general counsel to small businesses and start-ups. She has represented bankruptcy trustees, plan administrators, receivers in complex litigation and investors in securities fraud lawsuits. She also is a trained mediator. She is a member of the civil pro bono panels for the Eastern and Middle Districts of Louisiana and volunteers her professional time to represent plaintiffs in civil rights cases.



She served as a clerk to Judge Susie Morgan of the U.S. District Court of the Eastern District of Louisiana. In law school, she served as an intern for Judge Brian A. Jackson of the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Louisiana.

Amond received her JD degree, *magna cum laude*, in 2016 from Louisiana State University Paul M. Hebert Law Center. She was editor-in-chief of the *Louisiana Law Review*, chaired the SBA's Ethics Board and was the 3L representative of the Diversity and Inclusion Committee.

Before law school, she taught second and third grades in New Orleans charter schools.

She served as the Louisiana State Bar Association Young Lawyers Division chair in 2024-25, as chair-elect in 2023-24 and as secretary in 2022-23. She was elected to two terms as the District 1 representative on the Young Lawyers Division Council.

She also serves on the board of the New Orleans Federal Bar Association Younger Lawyers Division and is an alumna of the New Orleans Regional Leadership Institute and a Council for a Better Louisiana's Leadership Louisiana program.

She was an adjunct professor at Tulane University teaching "The Media and the First Amendment" and teaches a course at LSU Law's Apprenticeship Week each year with Judge Susie Morgan.

She was named as one of the American Bar Association's Top 40 Young Lawyers in America in 2022 and has been recognized in the 2021-2024 editions of *Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch* and 2022-2024 editions of *Louisiana Super Lawyers: Rising Stars*.

Amond looks forward to traveling the world with her wife, Nancia Sterling.

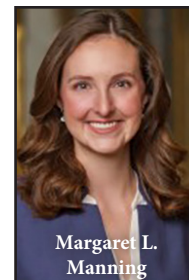
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YLD Council 2025-26

Margaret L. Manning
District One Representative

Margaret L. Manning is an associate attorney with Stanley Reuter Alford Owen Munson & Paul, LLC, in New Orleans. She received her BA degree in mass communication, *cum laude*, with Honors College Distinction, in 2017 from Louisiana State University. She graduated from the University of Notre Dame Law School in 2020.

While attending Notre Dame, she competed as a member of the Notre Dame Law School Barrister's Mock Trial Team and was an active member of the Notre Dame Law Student Bar Association, serving as 1L representative, communications director and Executive Board secretary. Upon graduation, she received the faculty-elected Kyle D. Smith Mock Trial Award and the King Williams Memorial Award.



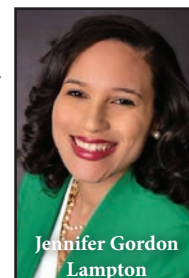
Following law school, she clerked for Judge S. Maurice Hicks, Jr., U.S. District Court for the Western District of Louisiana. She is a former member of the Leadership LSBA Class. She presently serves on the New Orleans Bar Association's Young Lawyers Section Executive Council and the Association of Women Attorneys of New Orleans Board. She is also a member of the Louisiana State Bar Association's Committee on the Profession, the New Orleans Bar Association Inn of Court and the New Orleans Chapter of the Federal Bar Association.

In her community, Manning attends Holy Name of Jesus Catholic Church in New Orleans.

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Jennifer Gordon Lampton
District One Representative

Jennifer Gordon Lampton is the research attorney for Judge Nakisha Ervin-Knott with the Louisiana 4th Circuit Court of Appeal, Division A, in New Orleans. Previously, she was senior law clerk for Judge Ervin-Knott at Orleans Parish Civil District Court. She received a BS degree in management in 2009, with a focus on legal studies in business and political science, from the A.B. Freeman School of Business at Tulane University and her JD degree (Civil Law Division, Common Law Certificate) in 2012 from Loyola University College of Law. She was admitted to practice in Louisiana in 2014.



Lampton is a member of the Louisiana State Bar Association's Diversity Committee and Outreach Committee and was a member of the 2019-20 Leadership LSBA Class.

She is a member of the New Orleans Bar Association (current Young Lawyers Section vice chair; 2022-23 YLS secretary; and 2021-22 YLS treasurer), the Greater New Orleans Louis A. Martinet Legal Society, Inc. and the A.P. Tureaud American Inn of Court (current board member).

Lampton and her husband Kevin have been married for 10 years and are the parents of one child.

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Christina K. Guzman
District Two Representative

Christina K. (Cristy) Guzman is an associate attorney at Jeffrey Hufft, Attorney at Law, LLC, in Metairie. She focuses her practice on criminal defense and expungements. She received a B.A. in Criminal Justice with a minor in Forensic Science from Loyola University New Orleans in 2016 and earned her J.D. from Loyola University New Orleans College of Law in December 2019. She was admitted to practice in Louisiana in May 2020.



During law school, she was a Rule XX student practitioner and later a law clerk for the Jefferson Parish District Attorney's Office. She also served as the Gillis Long intern at the Louisiana Civil Justice Center (2017) and the Justice and Accountability Center of Louisiana (2019). Following law school, she worked as a staff attorney at Southeast Louisiana Legal Services in the Veterans and Innovative Projects Unit.

Guzman is the Vice-Chair of the Jefferson Bar Association's Young Lawyers Division and previously served on the Louisiana State Bar Association's Young Lawyers Conference Committee. As the District 2 Representative for the LSBA Young Lawyers Division, she has served on the Mock Trial and Wills for Heroes Committees.

In her free time, she enjoys traveling with her fiancé, Blake Chazan.

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Andrew A. "Andy" Maberry
District Two Representative

Andrew A. "Andy" Maberry is an associate attorney in the Law Office of Glenn C. McGovern in Metairie.

He received his undergraduate degree from Louisiana State University, and his JD with a certificate in social justice in 2019 from Loyola University New Orleans College of Law. He was admitted to practice in Louisiana in 2019.



Maberry is a member of the Louisiana Association of Justice, the Bar Association for the Federal Fifth Circuit, and the National Police Accountability Project. He has volunteered as a member of the Louisiana State Bar Association Young Lawyers Division Wills for Heroes as a committee member.

In 2019, Maberry was honored as the Gillis Long Social Justice Fellow.

In his spare time, he enjoys attending festivals and live music, spending time with family and becoming a first-time parent. Maberry has been married for three years to Brett Stephenson and they are the proud parents of one son.

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Jared E. Nelson
District Three Representative

Jared E. Nelson is an associate in the Lafayette office of Galloway, Johnson, Tompkins, Burr & Smith, LLP. He received a BA degree in government in 2008 from the University of Virginia, Charlottesville; a master's degree in public administration in 2010 from Southern University and A&M College in Baton Rouge; and his JD degree, *cum laude*, in 2018 from Southern University Law Center. He was admitted to practice in Louisiana in 2018.



Prior to joining the law firm, he served as an assistant attorney general for the Louisiana Department of Justice, Office of the Attorney General, handling tort and civil rights litigation for the state of Louisiana. Prior to practicing law, he served as a probation and parole officer for the Louisiana Department of Public Safety and Corrections for seven years.

Nelson is a member of the Louisiana State Bar Association's (LSBA) House of Delegates, representing the 15th Judicial District. He is a member of the LSBA's Criminal Justice and Diversity committees. He was a member of the 2019-20 Leadership LSBA Class and co-chair of the 2020-21 Leadership LSBA Class.

He is a member of the Louisiana Association of Defense Counsel (Young Lawyers Committee as a Third Board District representative, secretary and Young Lawyer liaison to the Environmental and Energy Law Practice Group), Institute of Energy Law (Young Energy Professionals' Committee as Program Subcommittee vice co-chair, member of the 2022-23 Institute of Energy Law Leadership Class and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee member) and the Lafayette Bar Association's Young Lawyers Section.

He was recognized by National Black Lawyers as a "Top 40 Under 40" Lawyer in Louisiana in 2020-2023 and was a member in the Leadership Council on Legal Diversity's Pathfinders Program in 2021-22. He was awarded the 2022 Frank L. Maraist Award by the Louisiana Association of Defense Counsel and its Young Lawyers Committee. He was selected as a "Top Lawyer" by the *Acadiana Profile Magazine* for 2023.

In his community, he is a lector at St. Benedict DeMoor Church in Duson. He is a life member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. He and his wife, Joelle Mary Nixon, have been married for 11 years and are the parents of one child.

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Brooke A. Roach
District Four Representative

Brooke A. Roach is an attorney in The Roach Law Firm, APLC, in Lake Charles. She received a BA degree in human resources in 2016 from Louisiana State University and her JD degree, *magna cum laude*, in 2019 from Southern University Law Center. She was admitted to practice in Louisiana in 2019.



She clerked for Chief Judge Ulysses G. Thibodeaux, Louisiana 3rd Circuit Court of Appeal, from 2019-21.

Roach followed in her father's and grandfather's footsteps, becoming the third generation to practice law at The Roach Law Firm. Her practice focuses on personal injury litigation and first-party bad faith property damage litigation. She is admitted in all Louisiana state courts; the U.S. District Courts for the Western, Middle and Eastern Districts of Louisiana; and the U.S. 5th Circuit Court of Appeals.

She is a member of the Southwest Louisiana Bar Association (SWLBA) and its Young Lawyers Section, currently serving as past president of the SWLBA's Young Lawyers Section.

She and her husband, Landan, are the proud parents of one son and are expecting their second son later this year.

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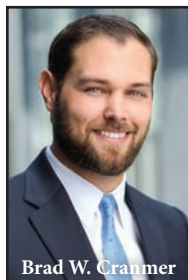
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Brad W. Cranmer

District Five Representative

Brad W. Cranmer is a distinguished partner at Mansfield, Melancon, Cranmer & Dick, LLC, based in Baton Rouge. He earned his bachelor's degree in political science, with a minor in criminology, from Louisiana State University, followed by his JD/DCL from the LSU Paul M. Hebert Law Center. During law school, Cranmer excelled academically, achieving the highest grades in White Collar Crime and Insurance Law, and actively participated in the Trial Advocacy Board as a member, competitor, and coach.



Brad W. Cranmer

Upon graduating, he launched his own law practice and further honed his legal acumen as a prosecutor for the City of Baton Rouge, handling cases ranging from DWI to domestic abuse battery. In 2018, he co-founded Mansfield, Melancon, Cranmer & Dick, where he has since dedicated his practice to plaintiff's personal injury law. Cranmer is admitted to practice in all Louisiana state courts, the U.S. District Courts for the Middle and Eastern Districts of Louisiana, and the U.S. 5th Circuit Court of Appeals.

Cranmer's professional involvement is extensive. He is a past chair of the Baton Rouge Bar Association's Young Lawyers Section Council and actively contributes to various committees, including the Louisiana State Bar Association's High School Mock Trial Committee and CLE committee. He has also presented CLE programs on diverse legal topics.

His dedication to excellence has been recognized through numerous accolades, such as the Avvo Clients' Choice Award in 2017. He has also been distinguished as a top lawyer by the Expert Network, American Law Society, and the American Institute of Personal Injury Attorneys. Notably, he has been honored as a Louisiana Super Lawyers Rising Star from 2020 to 2025.

Beyond his legal practice, Cranmer is committed to his community, volunteering with organizations like St. Aloysius Catholic Church and School, the Boys & Girls Club of Greater

Baton Rouge, Club Blue, St. Vincent DePaul, and the Louisiana Association of Justice. He and his wife, Chloe, are the proud parents of two children.

Cranmer's unwavering dedication to his clients and his community underscores his reputation as a leading personal injury attorney in Louisiana.

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Mary Catherine Joiner

District Five Representative

Mary Catherine Joiner is an associate with the Baton Rouge office of Bradley Murchison Kelly & Shea LLC. She primarily practices in the area of energy and natural resources.

She received her undergraduate degree in business administration, international business and legal studies from Loyola University New Orleans and her JD, *cum laude*, from Southern University Law Center in 2018. She was admitted to practice in Louisiana in 2019.

Joiner is a member of the Baton Rouge Bar Association, the Foundation for Natural Resources and Energy Law, and Louisiana Association of Defense Counsel. She has been recognized as a Louisiana Rising Star Honoree in 2025, Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch in Energy Law (2025) and was a speaker at the 2025 Louisiana Mineral Law Institute.

In her community, she volunteers with Live after Five; Power Pump Girls, Inc.; and the Baton Rouge Bar Association Holiday Star project.

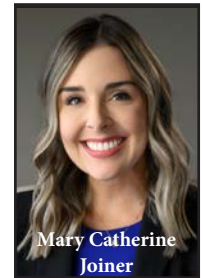
Joiner recently married John Rogillio and they are the parents of two children. In her spare time, she enjoys spending time with family and friends, traveling, Pilates and calligraphy.

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Mary Catherine Joiner

Ashley Unique Firven

District Six Representative

Ashley U. Firven is an associate in the Baton Rouge office of Hammonds, Sills, Adkins, Guice, Noah & Perkins, LLP. Her practice is focused on civil litigation defense, employment law and insurance defense. She received a BA degree in 2014 from the University of California-Santa Barbara and her JD degree in 2019 from Southern University Law Center, where she graduated with honors. She was admitted to practice in Louisiana in 2019.

Firven was a member of the Leadership LSBA 2022-23 Class and a member of the Young Lawyers Division's Awards Committee. She also has been involved with the Access to Justice Disaster Relief Hotline and the Lawyers in Libraries project. She previously served as the 2023-2025 District 6 representative



Ashley U. Johnson-Firven

where she co-chaired the Young Lawyers Conference and Barristers for Boards.

She is a member of the National Bar Association, the Baton Rouge chapter of the Louis A. Martinet Legal Society, Inc. and the Baton Rouge Bar Association.

In her community, Firven is a member of Grace Community Baptist Church and Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.

She and her husband, Leon Firven, have been married for three years and share a one year old daughter.

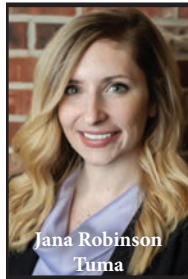
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Jana Robinson Tuma **District Seven Representative**

Jana Robinson Tuma is the legal counsel of U.S. Operations at Drax, based in Monroe. She received a BA degree in 2014 from the University of Louisiana-Monroe and her JD degree in 2017 from Louisiana State University Paul M. Hebert Law Center. She was admitted to practice in Louisiana in 2017.

In her community, she is a member of the Junior League of Monroe and is a United Way volunteer. She and her husband Scott have been married for four years and are the parents of two children.

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Jasmine C. Cooper **District Eight Representative**

Jasmine C. Cooper is an assistant district attorney for the Caddo Parish District Attorney's Office in Shreveport. She received her BA degree in political science in 2017 from Southern University and A&M College in Baton Rouge and her JD degree in 2020 from Southern University Law Center. She was admitted to practice in Louisiana in 2021.

Cooper was a member of the 2022-23 Leadership LSBA Class. She also is a member of the Shreveport Bar Association and the Harry V. Booth/Judge Henry A. Politz American Inn of Court. She was named to the Top Lawyers 2023 Shreveport/Bossier list by *SB Magazine*.

In her community, she is a member of the League of Women Voters, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. and the NAACP. Cooper also serves on the Board of Directors for the Louisiana Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association.

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Josef P. Ventulan **At Large Representative**

Josef P. Ventulan is an attorney with the Louisiana State Law Institute (LSLI), staffing the Code of Civil Procedure, Marriage-Persons, Obligations, and Employment Law Committees. Prior to joining the LSLI, he clerked for Judge Lisa M. Woodruff-White (Ret.). He has also served as a board attorney for the Louisiana Board of Tax Appeals and as an adjunct professor at Southern University Law Center.



He received his undergraduate degree in accounting from Louisiana State University and his law degree from Southern University Law Center, where he graduated first in his class and received a certification in tax law. He also served as the editor-in-chief of the Southern University Law Review. He was admitted to practice in Louisiana in 2020.

Ventulan is an active member of the American Bar Association (ABA), currently serving as the Young Lawyers Division's Affiliates Director and as a member of the Long-Range Planning Board. He is also a member of the ABA's Standing Committees on Gavel Awards, Delivery of Legal Services, and Bar Leadership.

He is a member of the Louisiana State Bar Association's Access to Justice Committee and the Baton Rouge Bar Association's Publications and Pro Bono Committees. He formerly served as a junior council member of the LSLI.

Ventulan was recognized in 2024 as one of the country's Top 40 Young Lawyers by the American Bar Association. He has also received the LSBA's Pro Bono Publico Award, the LSBA YLD's Bat P. Sullivan, Jr. Chair's Award, and the Baton Rouge Bar Association's Judge Joseph Keogh Memorial Award.

In his community, he serves on the advisory board of Southeast Louisiana Legal Services and the board of directors of the Lagniappe Law Lab. He is also a Future Leaders Council member of the Public Affairs Research Council of Louisiana.

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Joseph T.D. Tran **ABA YLD Representative**

Joseph T.D. Tran, CIPP/US, is an associate general counsel for LAMMICO, where he provides support in corporate legal affairs and focuses in intellectual property, health and insurance law, cybersecurity and artificial intelligence. He received a BS degree in mechanical engineering from Louisiana State University and his JD degree from Loyola University New Orleans College of Law. He was admitted to practice in Louisiana in 2016. He also is admitted to practice before the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office on patent matters.



Tran is a current member of the *Louisiana Bar Journal's* Editorial Board and 2024 chair of the Louisiana State Bar Association's (LSBA) Minority Involvement Section. He served as co-chair of the 2022-23 Leadership LSBA Class and was a member of the 2021-22 Leadership LSBA Class. He also served as a Young Lawyers Division delegate to the American Bar Association.

He is a board member for the Jefferson Bar Association's Young Lawyers Division. He serves on the Executive Boards of the Louisiana Asian Pacific American Bar Association and the Vietnamese American Bar Association. He is an active member of the International Association of Privacy Professionals, the Association of Corporate Counsel and the Medical Professional Liability Association.

In his community, he volunteers with the Kiwanis Club of Algiers and serves on the board of directors for the Algiers Economic Development Foundation.

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Taylor B. Ashworth

Young Lawyer Member/ABA House of Delegates

Taylor B. Ashworth is an associate in the Baton Rouge office of Kean Miller, LLP. She practices in the offshore energy and marine litigation and the casualty and mass tort groups. She received a BS degree in mass communication, *cum laude*, in 2017 from McNeese State University and her JD/DCL degree, *cum laude*, in 2020 from Louisiana State University Paul M. Hebert Law Center. She was admitted to practice in Louisiana in 2020.

Ashworth was a member of the 2022-23 Leadership LSBA

Class and is a member of the Louisiana State Bar Association's (LSBA) Outreach Committee. She has volunteered as a mock trial competition judge for the LSBA Young Lawyers Division's Mock Trial Competition.

She is a member of the Lafayette Bar Association's Young Lawyers Section and a former chair of the Membership and Mentor Committee. She also is a member of the Baton Rouge Bar Association, the Louisiana Association of Defense Counsel and the Women's Energy Network South Louisiana Chapter (former Lafayette Program Director).

In law school, she was a junior and senior associate on the *Louisiana Law Review*. She was the Robert Lee Tullis Moot Court Competition finalist, winning best brief and an oralist award. She was a member of four external advocacy teams and won a best oralist award at the National Pretrial Competition. She won the LSU Law Opening Statement Competition during her 1L year. She was selected as an academic tutor to her peers in torts and obligations and served as a research assistant to Professor William R. Corbett. She also served as an extern for Judge Shelly D. Dick, U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Louisiana.

Ashworth is a member of the recruiting committee and is a summer associate mentor at her firm. In her community, she regularly volunteers her time as a judge for the various LSU Law advocacy program competitions and external team practices.

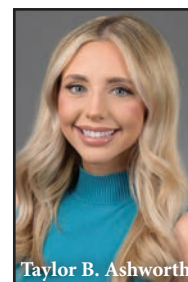
She is married to Baton Rouge attorney Peyton Gascon.

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Taylor B. Ashworth



Jessica D. LeBlanc CPA, CFF

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