
THE PRESIDENT'S COLUMN



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MINNESOTA NICE

Saunas, lake cabins, water skiing, and ice fishing. Most would agree that these are all things that make up Minnesota. Unless you didn't grow up with them. Then, each one is inaccessible *and* can seem a little bit odd (the International Eel Pout Festival?).

My law school classmates who came from other states were left scratching their heads at times as we tried to share Minnesota culture with them. Just about all of them have gone back to where they were born.

AS A RESULT, THE MINNESOTA BAR LOOKS AND SOUNDS A LOT ALIKE.

Recently, our law schools have done a good job of bringing law students of different backgrounds to Minnesota. Our job is to make them feel like this is a place that they should stay. A diverse Minnesota State Bar Association leads to diversity in the MDLA and in Minnesota law firms. Minnesota's long-term goal should be to increase diversity in our law schools with students from other states and our home-grown students of diverse backgrounds by fixing Minnesota's achievement gap — an achievement gap that is one of the largest in the nation and excludes students by race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status.¹

BUT WHAT STEPS CAN WE TAKE IN THE SHORT TERM?

One step is active inclusion in our organization of students from diverse backgrounds that have come to Minnesota's law schools. Today, the MDLA partners with Minnesota's law schools to provide contacts and mentors for students of diverse backgrounds to make the Minnesota Bar and the job market more accessible through our Diversity Student

Program. Personal relationships lead to jobs. For almost 10 years, the MDLA Diversity Student Program has brought law students to our Trial Techniques Seminar (TTS) in Duluth as a catalyst to start relationships with practicing Minnesota lawyers. The program is designed to provide a personal contact for students and give them a resource in the Minnesota legal community. A resource that makes jobs *and* the culture more accessible.

In 2020, the MDLA launched its Diversity Clerkship Program. With over 15 applicants from Minnesota law schools (and despite the problems presented by COVID-19), 3 students were placed at MDLA member firms. Each student was provided a list of learning objectives and an in-firm mentor. All students reported that they enjoyed their experience and had multiple opportunities to learn, grow, and observe MDLA member attorneys. Additionally, all law schools applauded MDLA for creating a program that is dedicated to placing diverse law students in the Minnesota Bar.

In 2021, we expanded our Diversity Student Program to include the MDLA Midwinter conference, where we hosted 5 students from Minnesota's law schools. Each student was paired with an attorney mentor and attended the Friday educational sessions. The students also attended the Young Lawyers Happy Hour on Friday night. All

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¹ *A Statewide Crisis: Minnesota's Education Achievement Gap*, Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, Rob Grunewald, Anusha Nath, located at: <https://www.minneapolisfed.org/~media/assets/pages/education-achievement-gaps/achievement-gaps-mn-report.pdf?la=en>

ARTICLES FROM PAST ISSUES

Members wishing to receive copies of articles from past issues of *Minnesota Defense* should forward a check made payable to the Minnesota Defense Lawyers Association in the amount of \$5 for postage and handling. In addition to the articles listed below, articles dating back to Fall '82 are available. Direct orders and inquiries to the MDLA office, 1000 Westgate Drive, Suite 252, St. Paul, MN 55114.

Winter 2021

Not for Your Well-Being: The Problems with Hedonic Damages "Experts"

Bradley R. Prowant

COVID-19 Crisis Affecting Long-Term Care and Health Care Providers

Megan McDonald, Vicki Hruby, Pat Skoglund

Warren v. Dinter: Physician-Patient Relationship Is Unnecessary to Establish Duty in Malpractice Claims against Medical Providers

Ryan Paukert

Fall 2020

Qualified Immunity: Past and (Uncertain?) Future

Andrew Wolf and Timothy Sullivan

Recent Developments at the Intersection of Minn. Stat. § 541.051 and Products Liability Actions

Louise A. Behrendt

Staying Power: What Keeps Women Practicing Law?

Lauren Nuffort, Kelly Sofio, and Elizabeth Sorenson Brotten

Summer 2020

COVID-19 in the Workplace — An Occupational Disease

Amy M. Byrne

The Rise of Modular Construction: Common Legal Issues

Janet G. Stellpflug, John F. Thomas and Eric H. Chadwick

Why Women Want: An Analysis of Addiction in Females

Jessie Sogge

Spring 2020

Mandatory Retirement Age Requirements

Hannah Felix

When Worker's Compensation and Tort Law Collide

Elizabeth Roff and Cindy Butler

Same as It Ever Was: Lambertson Contribution in a Post-Fish v. Ramler World

Rachel Beauchamp and Peter Lindberg

Village Lofts Ensured Repose for Condo Contractors, and Clarified the Law Governing Two Harbors Settlements. Here's How

Jon Zentner, Steven Erffmeyer and Jeff Markowitz

JOIN A COMMITTEE

MDLA committees provide great opportunities for learning and discussion of issues and topics of concern with other members in similar practices. Activity in committees can vary from planning CLE programs, to working on legislation, to informal gatherings that discuss updated practice information or changes in the law. Serving on a committee is one of the best ways to become actively involved in the organization and increase the value of your membership.

If you would like to join a committee's distribution list, please update your member profile on mdla.org specifying the appropriate committee under the "Practice Type" section. You will be automatically added to the distribution list.

To learn more about an MDLA committee, please visit www.mdla.org. Meeting times and dates for each committee are listed online.

Committees available include:

- Amicus Curiae
- Construction Law
- Diversity
- Editorial
- Employment Law
- Events Committee
- Governmental Liability
- Insurance Law
- Law Improvement
- Law Practice Management
- Long Term Care
- Membership Development
- Medical Liability and Health Care
- New Defense Lawyers
- Motor Vehicle Accident
- Products Liability
- Retail and Hospitality
- Technology
- Workers' Compensation
- Women in the Law

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students reported a positive experience and enjoyed their time networking with other MDLA members.

The Women in the Law Committee hosted a panel discussion "*Staying Power: Retention of Women Lawyers.*" The panel featured past MDLA Presidents Dyan Ebert, Rebecca Egge Moos and Jessica Schwie. The panelists shared their thoughts and experiences on the things that keep experienced women lawyers in private practice, the everyday experiences that contribute to the success of women lawyers, and what law firms can do to encourage retention of women lawyers.

The MDLA is actively taking steps to make our organization, the Bar, and Minnesota a more diverse and inclusive place. We appreciate your support.