



WSBA

COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

TO: WSBA Board of Governors

FROM: Pam Inglesby, WSBA Communications Services Operations Manager
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RE: Report on WSBA Professionalism Activities

DATE: April 5, 2016

In July 2014, a year after sunseting the WSBA Professionalism Committee, the Board of Governors adopted a Professionalism Plan to guide the organization's ongoing efforts to advance and promote professionalism. The plan included three primary objectives, listed below. This report chronicles progress made since the adoption of the plan.

Objective: *Raise awareness and promote professionalism among WSBA members.*

Objective: *Promote and advance professionalism by recruiting a "cadre" of WSBA member volunteers to carry out a variety of outreach and recognition activities.*

Progress:

- Several professionalism articles have appeared in *NWLawyer* magazine, including:
 - ✓ "Sunset to Sunrise: A New Dawn in Professionalism" by Sims Weymuller (10/14).
 - ✓ "Know Thy Client: Cultural Competency in a Diverse World" by Sims Weymuller (3/15).
 - ✓ "Refugees – Prisoners of a Single Story – The Cultural Competence Challenge" by Anthony D. Gipe (3/15)
 - ✓ "Shame on Us! Shame, Respect, and the Attorney-Client Relationship" by Tracy Reid (6/15).
 - ✓ "A Professional of Leadership: The Importance of Collegiality" by BOG member Sean Davis (3/16).
 - ✓ "Sanctions for Sexist Remarks: Don't Overlook Obnoxious, Demeaning Behavior" by Averil Budge Rothrock (3/16).

Volunteers have stepped forward to develop additional professionalism content for *NWLawyer* and *NWSidebar* (WSBA's blog), or to recruit their peers to write content.

- The WSBA's Professionalism Award was awarded in 2015 to Matthew L. Clucas of Poulsbo for his efforts to foster community within the Kitsap County Bar Association as well as his impressive public service work. WSBA is currently accepting nominations for the 2016 award.
- The Professionalism in Practice (PIP) member recognition program, which encourages attorneys, judges, clients and others to nominate WSBA members for a PIP award, is being revived in 2016, with a launch on Law Day (May 2). Volunteers have been recruited to publicize the program, review nomination letters, select honorees, present the awards, and write summaries of honorees for the WSBA's website, magazine (NWLawyer) and blog (NWSidebar).
- Several WSBA members have volunteered to develop and facilitate discussions of professionalism at local, specialty and minority bar association meetings and events. They will soon meet to discuss the format and content of the discussions; preliminary recommendations have been developed by WSBA's Outreach and CLE staff.
- The law school speaker program, in which WSBA members and staff visit all Professional Responsibility classes once a term to engage students in discussions about professionalism, is continuing: four presentations were made in the 2014-15 academic year, and two to date in 2015-16. The presentation and accompanying materials are under review and will soon be updated. Several additional presenters have been recruited and will be trained to assist in presentations starting in 2016-17.
- An online survey, developed by Robert's Fund in partnership with the Seattle University School of Law and WSBA, will be sent to WSBA members around May 2, 2016 (Law Day). The survey prompts respondents to define professionalism and civility by describing the characteristics and behaviors of a specific attorney they have encountered on the opposite side of a case or issue. It also asks how often and in what contexts the respondent has experience civil behavior in their legal work, which will provide a baseline to assess future progress, and solicits suggestions for how the legal community can increase civility in the profession. The results will be published in *NWLawyer*; shared with local and specialty bar associations to encourage them to explore the subject in their CLEs, meetings and publications; and otherwise disseminated throughout the legal community.
- A Professionalism toolkit on WSBA's website offers resources to members including articles about professionalism and civility, information about the Professionalism in Practice award, materials from WSBA's presentations to law school students, notice of upcoming professionalism CLEs, etc. It is updated on a regular basis.

Objective: *Integrate professionalism into WSBA's ongoing programs and activities.*

Progress:

- WSBA's CLE team continues to offer professionalism programs, including "Ethics, Professionalism and Civility Workshop" (6 ethics credits), "Professionalism: A Matter of Taste or Substance?" (1.5 ethics credits) and "Tackling the Challenges of Professionalism" (1.5 credits including .75 ethics). All are available for purchase in WSBA's online CLE Store. The "Tackling the Challenges" CLE was a free Legal Lunchbox program for which 1,465 members received credit in 2015. A Legal Lunchbox on listening skills (a key component of

professionalism) is planned for summer 2016. Finally, a Professionalism product bundle will soon be offered in the CLE Store.

- WSBA is making new attorneys aware of Professionalism by including information on the Rules of Professional Conduct, as well as WSBA services such as the Lawyers Assistance Program and Law Office Management Program, in the research materials for the Washington Law Component of the bar exam. The Preadmissions Education Program, which is currently being updated, will include a Professionalism module.
- Professionalism is being infused into WSBA's committees and sections. WSBA staff Sue Strachan and Pam Inglesby spoke about Professionalism at the 2015 committee chair and section leader meetings, and both groups are now required to report on their professionalism activities in their annual reports to the BOG. While the idea is new to most committees and sections, a few did discuss professionalism in their 2015 reports. For example, the Real Property, Probate and Trust Section reported that it had adopted a Tolerance Policy for speakers to remind them that "audience members reflect a broad and diverse range of viewpoints, experiences, and sensitivities."
- WSBA's Lawyers Assistance Program is focused on helping attorneys to build healthy relationships in their personal and professional lives. Its job search program teaches networking skills and how to make strong bonds with new colleagues after an attorney has been hired. Presentations are offered helping attorneys to deal with high conflict clients, opposing counsel, and colleagues. Professionalism is also taught to WSBA's Peer Advisor community in showing attorneys how to create a meaningful and supportive bond with another lawyer who may be struggling with their mental health or an addiction. Also, WSBA members may get referrals to counseling services, including free services, through WSBA Connects, a partnership with APS Healthcare.
- The Law Office Management Assistance Program (LOMAP) highlights civility and professionalism in advising and conducting outreach to WSBA members. Its CLE presentations include Client Communications, Building a Marketing Plan, Cleaning up Metadata, and conducting efficient and Affordable Legal Research. The soon to be launched Practice Education Center, an online series of educational audio lessons, will provide our members with guidance and resources on ethical business practices.
- The Board of Governors and senior WSBA staff have received training on communication, listening and conflict resolution skills. A question about professionalism is now included in the BOG Candidate Forum, raising the awareness of future BOG members about the importance of professionalism to the WSBA.