

Denver Bar Association

2016–17 Annual Report

The Denver Bar Association advances professionalism within the legal community and promotes justice in the broader community. The DBA works to do so by promoting the administration and availability of justice to all; supporting and assisting its members; upholding the honor and dignity of the Bar; fostering respect for the legal profession; encouraging a thorough and ongoing legal education; cultivating positive relations among all Denver-area lawyers; and perpetuating the history and traditions of the profession. We are inclusive, purposeful, impactful and professional

This Annual Report presents a snapshot of the past fiscal year and the **DBA's Five-Year Strategic Plan**. It demonstrates what the DBA accomplished in its 126th year to advance its mission and its goals.

Promoting Justice

DBA Access to Justice Committee members joined the **DBA Young Lawyers Division (YLD)** to celebrate the **DBA's 125th Anniversary and Pro Bono Week** in October. The event was held at Boney's BBQ inside Odd Fellow Hall (where the DBA was founded). Attendees explored the beautiful space, got to know new and tenured bar members, mingled with DBA leadership, and learned about opportunities to volunteer in the community. Throughout the year, the Access to Justice Committee has worked on various articles for *Colorado Lawyer* and has contributed to the planning of the Access to Justice Summit.

The Doing-Your-Own Divorce Clinic has become the **Family Law Ask-A Lawyer Clinic** at the Denver District Court. The free clinic focuses on general divorce and child custody questions. It is intended for individuals who are not represented by an attorney and is limited to a 15- to 30-minute consultation. Volunteer lawyers can answer questions about dissolution of marriage (divorce) and parental responsibility matters (child custody). Attorney volunteers may hand out business cards and/or obtain clients on a pro bono, low-cost or unbundled basis.

This year marked the 51st anniversary of **Metro Volunteer Lawyers (MVL)**. MVL's mission is to bridge the gap in access to justice by coordinating the provision of pro bono legal services. Dedicated lawyers donate their time and knowledge within the Denver metro area to people who could not otherwise afford legal services for their civil legal issues. MVL continues to challenge attorneys to reach 50 hours of pro bono service and has updated its logo and marketing efforts. Toni-Anne Dasent became MVL's new director in the summer of 2017 and reinvigorated the organization's mission. MVL accepted more than 1,300 cases last year, with approximately 425 attorneys taking on a pro bono case and assisting

clients through MVL's various clinics. MVL also launched a new case management system called **Legal Server**. This configurable web-based platform has helped MVL better manage its caseload, improve the experience of its volunteers and make referrals from Colorado Legal Services as seamless as possible. This improvement has helped MVL modernize and ultimately improve its ability to provide quality help to a large number of people in need. MVL manages the following clinics and programs: the Legal Clinic at the Denver Indian Center; Post-Decree Clinics; Power of Attorney Clinics; the Family Law Court Program; and a Referral Program.

The 29th **Barristers Benefit Ball** was held in April at EXDO Event Center and featured an "Around the World" theme. Guests enjoyed culinary bliss and danced to hot tunes while celebrating cultures from around the world. The event attracted approximately 500 attendees and generated more than \$50,000 for MVL. The ball remains MVL's primary fundraiser.

Every Wednesday, **Lawline 9** volunteers answered hundreds of calls from 9NEWS's 250,000 viewers. Lawline 9's success has been entirely due to the DBA attorneys who have volunteered there.

Engaging and Supporting a Diverse Membership

The DBA has shifted its messaging strategy to create more targeted communications for smaller audiences. Engagement is also a top priority. The DBA's first **month-long membership appreciation campaign** took place in May. Nearly a dozen CLEs were offered, and events attracted new and seasoned members alike. We are always looking to increase our membership offerings that appeal to our diverse membership.

The DBA Young Lawyers Division held a variety of successful workshops, including a business development presentation by Merrilyn Tarlton, a "LinkedIn for Lawyers" workshop by Meranda Vieyra and a "Job Burnout" panel with keynote speaker Amy DeVan. YLD members promoted several volunteer programs, including the annual Law Suit Days clothing drive and the "Roll out the Barrels" food drive. The DBA YLD's flagship events, like **Barristers After Hours** and **Coffee Talks**, continue to grow and draw a range of practitioners. The success of these events is largely indebted to DBA YLD's partnerships with the CBA YLD, CBA sections and local law schools.

The **DBA Seniors Committee** hosted two popular events: the **Holiday Party** in December and the **Seniors Committee Spring Banquet** in June, which honored 32 DBA members who have been licensed for over 50 years. DBA President Nancy Cohen and DBA Past President Mary Jo Gross were among the presenters. Again this year, a number of young lawyers also interviewed and introduced the honorees. The Seniors Committee also joined forces with the YLD to hold a combined **Golf Tournament**, which attracted more than 100 participants.

The DBA also administers the **Waterman Fund**, which provides financial assistance to qualifying Colorado attorneys who are "aged, infirm or otherwise

incapacitated.” The Waterman Fund, which was established in 1954 by Anna Rankin Waterman, makes these benefits available to incapacitated attorneys in good standing who have practiced in Colorado for a minimum of 10 years. The Waterman Fund awarded \$95,575.00 in grants during the past fiscal year.

STRATUM, a members-only co-working space at the Colorado and Denver Bar Associations, witnessed a significant increase in usage during its third year. STRATUM offers members a stronger sense of community and collegiality while providing them with the business amenities that they need in order to enhance their 21st-century practices. Specific amenities include power for devices, meeting space, Wi-Fi access, printing, scanning, copying and faxing.

The **DBA Lawyers and Schools Committee** continued to assist with field trips to the Ralph L. Carr Colorado Judicial Center and the Denver City and County Building. During the week of September 17, volunteer attorneys from the Colorado Attorney General’s Office celebrated Constitution Day by leading programs and activities in 34 DPS classrooms across Denver. The committee is also affiliated with **Reading Partners**, which has been part of Colorado’s education landscape since 2012. In January, the committee hosted the annual **MLK Book Drive**, which yielded more than 30 boxes of donated books. Many of the books supported the one-on-one tutoring that the students receive in the Reading Partners program by helping them build their libraries at home. Books of higher reading levels were distributed to school libraries and adult literacy organizations across the city.

Advancing Professionalism

Colorado Bar Association CLE (CBA-CLE), the nonprofit educational arm of the CBA, welcomed a new executive director this year following the retirement of Gary Abrams. Vince O’Brien, who came from Minnesota Continuing Legal Education and has worked in the CLE industry for 30 years, is delighted to be on board.

CBA-CLE offers more than one 100 live program at its office each year that Denver-area attorneys can attend, as well as many video replays. In addition, we hold an ADR Conference, a Business Law Institute and an Intellectual Property and Technology Law Institute in the Denver metro area. These programs provide an excellent chance for attorneys to learn, network, and develop their careers. CBA-CLE’s mission is to be the go-to resource for quality CLE programs, legal publications and other legal tools.

The **DBA Mentoring Program**, which is run in association with **Colorado Attorney Mentoring Program (CAMP)**, achieved more than 70 matches during the past fiscal year. The program hopes to hold some joint programs with other mentoring programs in the metro area in the future.

The **DBA Bench-Bar Committee** continues to develop strategic events that allow judges and lawyers to get together informally and to discuss areas of concern and mutual interest. Three particularly successful events were held at the DBA

offices in December, February and May. They encouraged judges and attorneys to move freely between rooms so as to maximize the exchange of viewpoints and ideas. The December program, Do's and Don'ts of Practicing in Denver District Court, attracted approximately 60 attendees, including 20 judges. The February program, Celebrating the 50-year Anniversary of the Judicial Merit System, attracted 250 attendees, including 80 judges. The May program, Court of Appeals 101, attracted 70 attendees, including 20 judges. All three of the programs received very positive feedback from their participants. This year the Committee also announced the inaugural Denver Bar Association Bench-Bar Committee "Courtroom Chats" series. These successful monthly gatherings provided an opportunity for attorneys to meet and chat with a different Denver judge each month in an informal environment about various topics of interest, while also networking with other Denver attorneys.

The **DBA Awards Committee** honored the following recipients of its annual awards: Sheila Gutterman (Award of Merit); Hon. Maria "Terry" Fox (Judicial Excellence); Jennifer Holt and Leo Milan (Volunteers of the Year); Robin Hoogerhyde (Young Lawyer of the Year); and the Colorado Attorney Mentoring Program (Outstanding Program of the Year). The **Annual Awards Party** took place on June 20 at the Ralph L. Carr Colorado Judicial Center. The event also celebrated the passing of the DBA's massive gavel from Nancy Cohen to incoming president Franz Hardy. The ceremony in the Supreme Court Courtroom was followed by a reception in the atrium, where more than 80 attendees enjoyed appetizers and drinks while mingling with their colleagues.