

# The Innformation

April, 2017

**The Newsletter of the Earl E.  
O'Connor Inn of Court**

Volume 26, Issue II

## President's Message

Mira Mdivani, President 2016-17

The Earl O'Connor Inn of Court has played an important role in my professional life. The Inn has created opportunities for me to learn from outstanding lawyers and judges who treated me as their peer even when I was a new inexperienced lawyer. It is at the Inn that I formed some of the closest collegial relationships and friendships that make practice of law such an enjoyable profession despite the intensity and pressure I experience in my practice. I have reached out to three of Inn's leaders with a request to share what the Inn means to them. Here is what they said:



**Judge Arnold-Burger, Chief Judge, Kansas Court of Appeals, Past President of the Inn**, member since 1992. *"I originally joined in about 1992 or 1993 as a Barrister. At that time you could only be an Associate for 1 year, a Barrister for 3 and then you were out... Masters were unlimited. I served as Membership Chair. I came back to the Inn at the urging of Melissa Taylor Standridge in about 2008 or 2009. I served as Program Chair for several years, and then eventually President. I enjoy the collegiality of the meetings and the interesting topics of the team presentations. I also enjoy meeting the newest members of our profession (although I am now old enough to be their mother!)"*



**Danielle Atchison, Co-Chair, Community Outreach Committee**, member since 2015: *"I have been a member of the Earl E. O'Connor Inn of Court since August 2015. I joke around that I really didn't have a choice in whether or not to join, since it is a group that is very important to my firm's managing partner. However, I am now thanking her for encouraging me to join! In just a year and a half, I have gotten to know so many wonderful people. I am proud to tell people that I am a member because this group has everything—esteemed membership, networking, mentoring, outreach, education, etc..! What I like best about the Inn is that we make it a priority to give back to our communities and to each other throughout the year."*



**Mark Dupree, Co-Chair, Membership Committee, member since 2011:**  
*"The Earl O'Connor Inn of Courts is a vital and impactful component of my professional life. The amount of wisdom, legal knowledge, and downright good folks that are involved with the Earl E. O'Conner Inn of Courts is of superior quality. I can think of no other organization that has exposed me to such a variety of legal professionals in one room. I have been able to build personal and professional friendships that continue to have long-lasting positive effects in my life."*

It goes without saying that our beloved Earl O'Connor Inn of Court, while making our lives better with the atmosphere of warmth and collegiality, is still subject to the universal rules of professional organizations: the more you give, the more it gives back to you. Getting involved in leadership, serving on committees, and helping with the Special Prom does take time, and it builds trust, which is the best foundation for meaningful relationships with your colleagues. Needless to say, as this year's President of the Inn, I am grateful to all our members who took time to volunteer. You are hands down awesome!

Mira Mdivani, President  
Earl O'Connor Inn of Court.

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## ***Editor's Note on Recent and Upcoming Events and Service Projects***

It has been a busy and interesting 2016-17 term for the Inn. And, as the summer nears, the Inn wraps up this term with the following events:

**Special Prom:** This year's Special Prom was on Friday, March 31 from 6pm to 9pm at J.C. Harmon High School. The dance is put on specifically for the special needs children of Wyandotte County to celebrate who they are. Students were treated to a Hollywood-themed evening, complete with the red carpet treatment and dancing! We had nearly 20 Inn members and significant others volunteer to help set-up, manage food and drinks, and clean up! The Inn and its members have carried on this tradition for over a decade. As always, this year's prom was a success and we are thankful to everyone who volunteered to make it happen.



**Job Olympics:** On Friday, April 7, 2017, Inn members served as volunteer judges at the Job Olympics competition hosted by the Wyandotte County Comprehensive Special Education Cooperative. The competition allowed secondary students with disabilities to showcase, learn and practice job skills such as sacking groceries, basic carpentry, sorting mail, and folding laundry and pizza boxes



**Ethics CLE:** The G. Thomas VanBebber Eighteenth Annual Ethics in Litigation Forum will be held on Thursday, April 27 from 1:30pm to 4:10pm. Registration starts at 1:00pm. The CLE will take place at the Ceremonial Courtroom, Sixth Floor, Robert J. Dole U.S. Courthouse, 500 State Ave., Kansas City, Kansas 66101. Registration costs are \$120 on or before April 14, \$150 after April 1, and \$100 for government attorneys. The organizers expect that attendants will receive 3 hours of ethics credit in KS and MO. Registrations may be submitted to Lora Jennings ([lmjennings@martinpringle.com](mailto:lmjennings@martinpringle.com)) at Martin Pringle's Corporate Woods office. Contact Lora Jennings if you have any questions.

The Inn's March meeting featured a presentation on two outstanding outreach opportunities. They are great ways to get involved and to give back to the community. The options were designed to cater to either those who prefer giving time or those who prefer giving resources. Below is a quick reminder and description of those two opportunities:

**Reconciliation Services:** Reconciliation Services ("RS") invites the Inn's members to donate money to RS's ID BE Campaign. The ID BE Campaign supports members of the community by helping them secure legal identification documents. Those who need assistance from the ID BE program often lack the basic documentation required to apply for things like a driver's license. The challenges they face include being unable to drive to work, or to prove their identity in order to receive work. Case workers support these individuals by tracking down identification and birth records in and out of state. RS has created a voucher program in partnership with the local DMV. Money that is donated is applied to these vouchers, and it is also used to pay record fees at the local health department and vital records office. The individuals receiving assistance from the IDBE program ultimately receive vouchers that will enable them to pay for and receive IDs from the DMV. The program does not provide cash to individuals, and only those who qualify for government-issued IDs can participate in the program. Even a small donation will greatly help the mission of the ID BE program as the program's costs are generally as follows: \$11 for an ID, \$12.50 for a driver's license, and \$15 for a birth certificate.

**Operation Breakthrough:** Operation Breakthrough ("OB") invites the Inn's members to donate their time to OB's Literacy Program. This is an opportunity to help preschool age or school age children from low income families learn to read. After completing a 30 minute on-site training session,

volunteer Inn members will participate in the program for twelve weeks. For the duration of the twelve-week program, members will be paired with a child whom they may tele-mentor online or read to in person. Volunteers will be able to tele-mentor by using reading software that OB will provide. The online program allows both the child and volunteer Inn member to view the book and each other while reading together over the internet. During a session, OB will provide staff/teachers on site to ensure that the child and volunteer Inn member meet up at the scheduled time and to assist with technical difficulties. To participate, each volunteer must be able to dedicate twelve weeks to the program, but the actual time commitment is only thirty minutes per week.

It is always great to see the good that Inn does in our communities. If you would like to get involved or to learn more about the Inn's activities, be sure to reach out to a member of the outreach committee.

**NOTE:** The newsletter is now accepting **articles** for the Fall Issue. If you are interested in writing for the newsletter or if you would like to submit an article that you have already written, please contact Jean Ménager, [jbm@ksmolaw.com](mailto:jbm@ksmolaw.com).

**NOTE:** You may also submit **events or announcements** to the newsletter. Contact Jean Ménager, [jbm@ksmolaw.com](mailto:jbm@ksmolaw.com).

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## Spring New Members and Bios

### **Jason Kotlyarov**

*Kotlyarov Law Group*

Jason Kotlyarov grew up in Shawnee, KS and attended the University of Missouri-Kansas City for his Bachelor's of Science in Accounting, Juris Doctor, and Latin Legum Magister (Master of Laws) in Taxation. He started his legal career in practice in Springfield, MO primarily practicing Bankruptcy Law and Social Security/Disability Law. He started Kotlyarov Law Group in the October of 2015, and is concentrating on building a practice focused

primarily on ERISA law, tax law and business law. Jason is a big Chiefs and Royals fan and is still holding out hope for an NHL or NBA team to make its way to Kansas City. He also speaks fluent Russian and enjoys cooking, reading and spending time with family and friends.

### **Katie Pederson**

*Office of the Kansas Securities Commissioner*

Katie grew up in Overland Park, Kansas and attended Kansas State University,

where she studied economics, French and Leadership Studies. After graduation, Katie set rivalries aside and attended the University of Kansas School of Law. Since graduating in 2013, Katie has worked as a staff attorney for the Office of the Kansas Securities Commissioner, where she represents the State of Kansas in criminal, civil and administrative matters involving violations of the securities laws.

Katie currently lives in Prairie Village with her husband,

hyperactive goldendoodle, and baby boy who will turn one in July. She loves exploring Kansas City, a good craft beer, and rooting on the Wildcats.

### **Megan R. Stumph**

*Baker Sterchi Cowden & Rice,  
LLC*

Megan is an attorney with Baker Sterchi Cowden & Rice, LLC. She practices civil litigation with an emphasis in

creditors' rights. Megan attended law school at Mizzou and obtained her undergraduate degree from William Jewell College. Born and raised in Kansas City, Megan is a die-hard Chiefs fan and had the privilege to cheer for them during the 2002-2003 football season.

catching a live show at the Midland or taking a salsa dancing class. Megan is engaged to be married in June 2017 to her fiancé, Presten. She and Presten have a loving home with 2 cats and 2 dogs: Mojo, Walter, Red, and Tessy.

When not working, Megan enjoys all things dance and music-related, whether it's

## More New Members

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Angela Angotti

Jadh Kerr

Brant McCoy

## 2016-2017 Board Members

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