

News & Notes

2021 State Bar of Nevada

Membership Awards

PRESIDENTIAL AWARD – J. Randall Jones

The State Bar of Nevada's Presidential Award is presented annually to a bar member practicing 20 years or more whose conduct, honesty and integrity represents the highest standards of the legal profession. Award recipients inspire by example, advance the administration of justice and bring honor to the profession.



The State Bar of Nevada is pleased to present this year's Presidential Award to J. Randall Jones, a civil litigation trial attorney with Kemp Jones. In addition to his successful career as a litigator, Jones is deeply dedicated to pro bono work, having served as a board member for the Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada since 1995, and he was named a Colleague by the Nevada Bar Foundation.

When the Nevada Trial Lawyers Association recognized Jones as Trial Lawyer of the Year in 1998, that organization wrote, "We are told that on a weekly basis Randall helps someone who can't get an insurance company to pay a fair amount on a claim or who can't get a doctor or a hospital to take care of a problem that should have been taken care of previously. Randall's staff says he can hardly turn down a person who asks him for help, and Randall requests no fee in these cases."

In addition to his inspiring and exemplary commitment to pro bono work, Jones has also represented a number of small businesses and class-action groups in cases against large corporations. He has tried more than 40 jury trials to verdict in both state and federal court, including *In re: Kitec Fitting Litigation*, the largest class action case ever tried in Nevada, resulting in verdicts and settlements of nearly \$300 million for 32,000 Nevada homeowners. Another example of his dedication to his clients is his work in *Simulnet East Associates v. Ramada Hotel Operating Company*. Jones took that case on a contingency basis because he strongly believed an injustice was done to his client, and the jury agreed, awarding the client more than \$10 million. After eight years and numerous appeals, Ramada paid the funds, along with millions of dollars in interest, to Jones' client.

Jones' commitment to service extends outside the courtroom setting. In addition to his considerable pro bono work, he is also dedicated to improving the legal community. He was a founding board member of the Thomas and Mack Legal Clinic at the UNLV William S. Boyd School of Law, a past president of the Las Vegas Chapter of the International Network of Boutique Law Firms, has served on the American

Arbitration Association's Construction Advisory Committee, and has been a contributing author of the American Bar Association's Survey of State Class Action Law for more than a decade.

MEDAL OF JUSTICE – Constance A. Akridge

The Medal of Justice Award is given to a person, group or entity that supports Nevada's legal community. Recipients are those who inspire by example and who demonstrate commitment to the advancement of the profession and to the protection of the public.



This year, the State Bar of Nevada is pleased to present the Medal of Justice Award to the Nevada Bar Foundation (NBF) President, Constance "Connie" A. Akridge. She has served as president of the NBF since 2013, when she led the effort to revive that organization in order to support law-related education programs in Nevada. Under Akridge's leadership, the NBF assumed responsibility for Nevada's Interest on Lawyer Trust Accounts (IOLTA) program. Thanks to her work, the NBF now manages the program that grants more than \$4 million each year to pro bono service organizations in Nevada. More than 35,000 Nevadans receive pro bono legal services annually through these grants.

In addition to her work for the NBF, Akridge has also been instrumental to the formation of other programs to support attorneys throughout Nevada. For example, she founded the State Bar of Nevada's Insurance and Health Law Section and spearheaded the formation of the bar's Transitioning Into Practice (TIP) attorney mentorship program. Her past service includes terms as president of the Clark County Bar Association and the Clark County Bar Foundation, as well as the State Bar of Nevada.

TRAILBLAZER AWARD – Bryan K. Scott

The Trailblazer Award is presented to a member of the state bar who exemplifies the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in Nevada's legal community. Recipients are those who actively work to dismantle institutional bias and who create a welcoming and inclusive professional community by promoting awareness of diverse values, creating or supporting DEI programs, or leading by example.



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This is the first year the State Bar of Nevada is presenting its Trailblazer Award; the bar is proud to present this award to inaugural recipient, attorney Bryan K. Scott.

Scott is a past president of the State Bar of Nevada, and he led the effort to emphasize the importance of diversity in the legal community. He initiated many of the state bar's DEI projects and programs during his terms of service on the state bar's Board of Governors. He chaired the state bar's Diversity Committee, worked to create expanded demographic information collection procedures, and encouraged collaboration between the State Bar of Nevada and Nevada's affinity bar associations.

In addition to his work during his time on the State Bar of Nevada's Board of Governors, Scott served in several trailblazing roles and leadership positions, including being the first African American city attorney for the city of Las Vegas, being the first African American president of the State Bar of Nevada, being the first African American president of the Clark County Bar Association, and being the first African American president of the Clark County Law Foundation.

VOLUNTEERS OF THE YEAR – Claudia Aguayo and Augusta Massey

The Volunteer of the Year award recognizes outstanding service by members of a State Bar of Nevada committee or section.

The 2021 volunteers of the year award are attorneys Claudia Aguayo and Augusta Massey. Both attorneys currently serve as presidents of two of Nevada's affinity bar associations.

During Aguayo's time as president of the Las Vegas Latino Bar Association (LBA), she has re-energized the organization, plotting a three-year plan, including more than 25 goals, to help the LBA support its members. Once her term of leadership ends, the LBA estimates she will have contributed more than 1,000 hours to the organization. During her presidency, Aguayo has grown the LBA's pipeline projects, such as the ¡Andale! 5k program that helps recipients pay for LSAT preparation courses and related LSAT fees. She also works to create career opportunities for LBA members, promote Latino history and culture, establish outreach goals, create more benefits for LBA members, and strengthen the organization's communications to members.



The membership of the Las Vegas Chapter of the National Bar Association (LVNBA) has grown by more than 30 percent since Massey's first year serving as that organization's president; the LVNBA attributes that growth directly to Massey's leadership. Massey has been a member of the LVNBA for more than 10 years and prior to becoming president, she served that organization in many other roles, including chairing the LVNBA's Membership & Elections Committee, serving as treasurer, and more. Among her many significant contributions, Massey led the LVNBA to partner with the William S. Boyd School of Law's Black Law Students Association to create a mentorship program to support the success of diverse law students.



YOUNG LAWYER OF THE YEAR – Ashley Biehl

The Young Lawyer of the Year award recognizes the professional and public service achievements of Nevada attorneys who are either under the age of 36 or who have been engaged in the practice of law for fewer than five years.



The State Bar of Nevada is honored to present the 2021 Young Lawyer of the Year award to Ashley Biehl, an attorney with the Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada's Children's Attorneys Project. In this role, Biehl represents abused and neglected children in Clark County, providing advice and representation to children who have never before had the help of an attorney to serve as their voice before the court and within their communities.

Eighth Judicial District Court Family Court Judge Margaret Pickard praised Biehl's talents by saying, "[She has] a unique ability to speak to children and youth who've experienced trauma and encourage them to express their wishes and their fears [to the court.]"

Biehl has continued providing this important work despite personal hardships. Early in her legal career, at age 26, Biehl suffered a sudden heart attack that necessitated a heart transplant. Throughout her recovery, she remained committed to returning to her legal career and never wavered in her determination to serve underrepresented children in Nevada – even after this life-changing event.

In addition to working for the Children's Attorneys Project, Biehl also serves as the southern representative on the board of the state bar's Young Lawyers Section. She also still finds time to take pro bono family law cases from the Family Justice Project and serves annually at the Ask-A-Lawyer events. Biehl also volunteers for the Nevada Donor Network, spreading information and awareness of organ donations.