

WHO ARE THESE LAWYERS, AND WHY SHOULD YOU CARE?

The lawyers referred to in this article are your colleagues in the Louisville Bar Association. You should care because, as professionals, each of us has an obligation to play our part in maintaining the highest quality of legal services available to our community. Whatever our calling as lawyers—whether in government service, teaching in law school, on the bench, plaintiff or defense, transactional lawyer, big firm, or sole practitioner—one of the significant ways we learn to be better is by getting to know, watching, and interacting with our peers.

In addition to the contribution you make by daily interaction with your professional colleagues, the Louisville Bar Association is also filling a critical role in promoting its members' professional success and satisfaction and in developing new leaders within the profession. One of the best examples is the LBA Leadership Academy, which just completed its 10th year. Because I personally heard the rave reviews and witnessed the great quality, spirit and enthusiasm of the most recent graduating class, I asked one of its members, Devon Oser, to describe the experience in her own words.



To my fellow young lawyers in Louisville:

I readily volunteered to write about the Class of 2015–2016 Louisville Bar Association Leadership Academy because I was energized by the spirit and innovation I experienced in the lively classroom discussions and other activities of the Academy. Our group of young lawyers has a tremendous drive to work to better our community, and I am honored to be a member of that group.

I work at a small firm that practices labor law. We stay busy representing labor unions across Kentucky and Ohio. Because I work in a small firm, the Leadership Academy offered a unique opportunity to work with 11 other of my colleagues in the bar. The selected class included Jennifer Barbour, David Bufford, Matthew Golden, Cynthia Merrell, Ashley Michael, Frederick Moore, Jennifer Porter, Michelle Butler, Lindsay Volk, John Ward and Kate Ward.



**Class of
2015–2016**

The leadership group was disparate in their legal backgrounds. Although we came from large and small firms, criminal and civil practice groups, solo private practice, the Louisville Legal Aid Society, and the Louisville Metro Public Defender's Office, we quickly bonded over our shared interest in becoming more effective leaders in the Louisville Bar Association and within the Louisville community in general.

I was pleasantly surprised that the information we learned at the Leadership Academy differed substantially from the substantive knowledge we learned in law school. For example, Kathy Story, a well-known leadership consultant, used the icebreaker method as her primary teaching tool. Kathy divided us into small groups for many of her exercises. The exercises taught us how to better utilize different learning styles, and we also learned ways to help others make more thoughtful life choices by finding teaching parables in our own lives.

In a later session, we applied Kathy's teachings. We were asked to collectively brainstorm areas of improvement for the LBA Ramble, a 5k run/walk benefiting Doctors & Lawyers for Kids. Members of our group suggested innovative fundraising ideas for the run as well as ways to make the run more "kid-friendly." Our collective enthusiasm resulted in many members offering to volunteer their time for the 2016 Ramble.

Jim Ray, a business consultant, spoke with us about ways to better market our firms and ourselves. These skills are vitally important for those of us who are in small firms that do much of our marketing without formal training in the area. We learned useful practical methods for gaining more business as well as tips for those who may be thinking about entering solo practice for the first time.

While legal scholars may pontificate about proximate cause, the Erie doctrine, and mens rea, the real world requires us to utilize leadership practices commensurate with the highest aspirations of our profession. The Leadership Academy challenged us to find ways to uniquely contribute to our profession and to the communities in which we live.

I know firsthand how easy it can be to overlook the importance of the services offered by the Louisville Bar Association. Participating in the Leadership Academy or attending a section meeting for your area of law can seem daunting when we are all so pressed for time. But I can assure you that the few hours a month you devote to LBA activities will be invaluable to your careers. The exposure to a local network of attorneys, CLE opportunities and resources available will teach you more than any textbook in law school ever could.

The next Louisville Leadership Academy class is just around the corner. Call the LBA to learn more about the application process. It will be time well spent on both a professional and personal level.

Sincerely,

Devon Oser
Devon N.R. Oser



So there you have it. We should all be proud of the many ways we help each other and the LBA helps us to be the best lawyers we can be.

Sincerely,

Mike

Charles J. (Mike) Cronan IV
LBA President



Leadership Academy

See page 9 for more information on Leadership Academy applications!