

October 2022

Volume 28, Number 2

GEORGIA BAR  
**JOURNAL**

What SOLACE Does  
for Georgia's Legal  
Community

Georgia Bar Foundation  
Awards \$3.7 Million  
in Grants

Wellness Through the  
Stages of Practice

Take a Memo to the File



THE LEGAL

**Irrevocable Trust Modification:  
Clarifying Georgia Law**

# Thirty Years of the Award-Winning Law School Orientations on Professionalism

The Commission thanks all of the lawyers and judges—including the 140 lawyers and judges and one law school graduate who served as group leaders—for helping to make the 2022 Law School Orientations on Professionalism a great success!

BY KARLISE Y. GRIER

In 1992, Dana Miles, while serving as chair of the State Bar of Georgia Committee on Professionalism, became the architect of the Law School Orientations on Professionalism. During 1992 and 1993, Miles reported on the progress of the Committee's work on the orientations to the Chief Justice's Commission on Professionalism. On Nov. 2, 1992, Miles reported that the committee had divided responsibilities for its project of making a professionalism presentation at each of the four Georgia accredited law schools' orientations.<sup>1</sup> Those divisions were (1) law school coordination (getting in touch with deans and faculty members), (2) program development and (3) attorney identification and recruitment. Miles further announced that he would be calling on members of the commission and the bench and bar to participate in the orientation programs.

During another meeting on June 4, 1993, Miles reported to the commission that the committee was in the final stages of planning the Orientation on Professionalism programs as a part of orientation at the law schools. Miles also credited Professor Roy Sobelson with the development of the hypotheticals to be used in the breakout groups at these programs.

Miles further announced that the committee was actively recruiting lawyer volunteers to serve as small group leaders.

The first Law School Orientations on Professionalism program in Georgia was held in the fall of 1993. Shortly, thereafter, by the commission's Nov. 19, 1993, meeting the American Bar Association Commission on Partnership Programs announced that it had selected the State Bar of Georgia Orientations on Professionalism as the recipient of the 1994 ABA/Information America Client Relations Project Award. Miles accepted the award at the ABA Midyear Meeting in Kansas City in February 1994. In addition, the Nov. 19, 1993, commission minutes reflected that the committee and the commission continued to receive letters commending the orientations. Sobelson reported that he was finding that first-year law students were bringing up professionalism issues in substantive classes.

The commission, along with the State Bar of Georgia's 2021-22 Committee on Professionalism, under the leadership of Chair Joshua Bosin and Vice Chair Terrika Redfield Ganzy, observed the 30th Anniversary of the Law School Orientations on Professionalism by holding the orientations at all five of Georgia's ABA-

accredited law schools during August 2022.<sup>2</sup> The orientations are designed to introduce concepts of legal professionalism to incoming 1L students. Georgia judges and lawyers serve as "group leaders" at breakout sessions during the orientations to help students learn the meaning of professionalism and why it is important for them as law students. The Law School Orientations subcommittee that planned the August 2022 law school orientation programs was chaired by Michael Herskowitz, U.S. Attorney's Office, Northern District of Georgia. The vice chairs of the subcommittee were J. Maria Waters, Worsham Corsi Dobur & Berss, and Kacey Baine, JD May 2022, Georgia State University College of Law.<sup>3</sup>

The focus of the hypothetical problems designed by the Committee and discussed with the students has changed over the years from client-centered problems to professionalism problems law students might encounter while they are students in law school. Nevertheless, the heart of the Law School Orientations on Professionalism has remained the same for the past 30 years. In a letter to the students at each of the law schools, Chief Justice Michael P. Boggs described the orientations as follows:



Group leaders for the orientations at (1) Atlanta's John Marshall Law School; (2) Mercer University Walter F. George School of Law; and (3) University of Georgia School of Law.



PHOTO BY MARIA GOBER

The heart of the Professionalism Orientation is the breakout session, during which one of the documents you will discuss is A Lawyer's Creed and the Aspirational Statement on Professionalism. This document is intended for use by Georgia's practicing lawyers and judges, but as you will discover during your breakout sessions, the principles embodied in it have many applications to you as a law student. In 1992, the Supreme Court of Georgia explained that it was our "hope that Georgia's lawyers, judges and legal educators will use the ... ideals [set forth in A Lawyer's Creed and the Aspirational Statement on Professionalism] to reexamine the justifications of the practice of law in our society and to consider the implications of those justifications for their conduct."

The commission asked Professor Emeritus Roy Sobelson, who retired from Georgia State University College of Law in 2018, what was the rationale behind the breakout sessions and his thoughts about why the breakouts continue to be one of the highlights for students of the program. He said:

I was always surprised at how many law students knew almost nothing about what lawyers really do and



PHOTO BY LEAH YETTER



PHOTO BY HEIDI M. MURPHY





Group leaders for the Emory University School of Law orientation.



Group leaders for the Georgia State University College of Law orientation.

had made no pre-school effort to examine what a lawyer's life and career are really like. And while professors serve partly as role models, I knew that many of them had little practice experience or had left practice because they disliked it. Thus, I thought it was important that [new law students] immediately see how successful practicing lawyers think, work, talk, carry themselves and engage in public service. I didn't give as much thought to how much it helped them see the diversity of thought amongst their new classmates, which was a real bonus. Since those first professionalism sessions, I've spoken with many graduates who remember them quite vividly, and say they had a profound effect on their lives, which is something

I honestly didn't expect, but pleases me greatly.

The Commission and the Committee thank our partners (including deans, professors, law students and support staff) at each of Georgia's five ABA-accredited law schools and the many lawyers and judges who have volunteered during the past 30 years. It is because of each of these individuals that the Commission and the Committee can continue to make the award-winning Law School Orientations on Professionalism an outstanding success! ●



**Karlise Y. Grier**  
Executive Director  
Chief Justice's Commission  
on Professionalism  
kygrier@jcpga.org

## Endnotes

1. Georgia's fifth law school, Atlanta's John Marshall Law School, was included in the orientation program in later years.
2. See <http://jcpga.org/law-school-orientations-on-professionalism-2022/>.
3. For a list of the many people, in addition to the group leaders, who assisted with the preparation and execution of the 2022 Law School Orientations on Professionalism and to view more photographs from the orientations, visit [http://jcpga.org/orientations\\_2022\\_thankphotos/](http://jcpga.org/orientations_2022_thankphotos/).

Are you interested in serving as a group leader for the 2023 Law School Orientations on Professionalism? Complete the contact form found at [www.surveymonkey.com/r/GL\\_Contact](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/GL_Contact).



