



**DIMINISHED CAPACITY, ETHICS,
AND PROFESSIONALISM:**

**How to Effectively
Advocate For and
Communicate
With Individuals
With Diminished
Capacity CLE**

STATE BAR OF GEORGIA

**SPEAKER
BIOGRAPHIES**



DIMINISHED CAPACITY, ETHICS, AND PROFESSIONALISM



COMMISSIONER KEVIN TANNER

OPENING REMARKS

Commissioner Kevin Tanner is the Commissioner of the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities. He has served as county manager of Forsyth County and served four terms as a State Representative for District 9. He has spent thirty-four years in public service. Commissioner Tanner received his undergraduate degree from North Georgia College and State University and

earned his Master of Public Administration from Columbus State University. He has been heavily involved in community and civic activities in the North Georgia area for many years.

Commissioner Tanner and his wife Stacie have been married more than twenty-six years. Stacie is a public-school kindergarten teacher, and they are the proud parents of three daughters: Kaitlyn, Abbie, and Chloe. He serves as a Deacon at Bethel Baptist Church where his family has attended for seven generations.



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LAUREN SHUBOW

PROGRAM CHAIR

Lauren Shubow is a Public Defender in Fulton County, GA. She started her career as a trial attorney representing individuals in all levels of felony cases. For the last decade she has worked primarily as an appellate attorney practicing primarily before the Supreme Court and Court of Appeals of Georgia, as well as complex motions practice in front of the Superior Courts. She is the in-house expert of mental health cases involving competency, criminal responsibility, civil commitment, and involuntary medication. Additionally, she has authored and presented trainings to Gideon's Promise, the Georgia Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, and to the Fulton Public Defender's Office. She has also guest lectured at her alma mater, University of Michigan School of Law. She is a Member of the Chief Justice's Commission on Professionalism and the State Bar's Commission on Continuing Lawyer Competency.



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BRENDA WOODARD KING **PROGRAM VICE CHAIR**

Brenda King Woodard serves as general counsel and ethics officer for the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD), the state agency that supports people with mental health challenges, substance use disorders, intellectual and developmental disabilities, or any combination of these. In her role, she serves as chief legal strategist and is

responsible for developing and implementing legal strategies that support DBHDD's vision and mission. Woodard works collaboratively to help the agency thrive in this dynamic healthcare environment.

Woodard is an active member of the State Bar of Georgia. She is an appointed member of the Communications Committee. In January 2019, she began her three-year appointment to the Commission on Continuing Lawyer Competency. Woodard was reappointed to the Commission on Continuing Lawyer Competency for another three-year term and served as Vice Chair. Woodard currently serves as Chair of the Commission on Continuing Lawyer Competency. She is a former member of the Arc of Justice Steering Committee and the Committee to Promote Inclusion in the Profession. She is admitted to the Georgia state and federal courts and the United States Supreme Court. She is also a member of the Legal Division of the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors and currently serves as the Southeast Representative.



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DANA C. ASHFORD

Dana Ashford is a native of Atlanta. She earned her undergraduate degree from Georgia State University. In 2000, she graduated from Georgia State College of Law and joined a fiduciary litigation firm in Decatur as an associate attorney. In 2010, she established The Ashford Law Firm, LLC, where she specializes in estate, probate, and fiduciary litigation. For over 20 years, Ms. Ashford has served as a guardian ad litem and court-appointed attorney for DeKalb, Fulton, and Gwinnett Probate, State, and Superior Courts. Her extensive experience in complicated fiduciary litigation has given her unique insights into working with individuals with diminished capacity, including clients, opposing counsel, and opposing parties. Ms. Ashford is a proponent of and a vocal advocate for innovative solutions to challenging legal issues across all aspects of her practice.



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CELESTE BATES

Celeste Bates, LCSW, graduated from the University of Georgia School of Social Work in 2017. She currently serves as the Behavioral Health Court Liaison for the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities. Prior to coming to DBHDD, she worked over eight years at a Community Service Board, five of those years as the Mental Health Court treatment coordinator. She has completed several certification trainings, including Moral Reconciliation Therapy (MRT), MRT-Trauma, Strengthening Families, the Grief Recovery Method, and LEAP. Celeste's current focus is on providing technical support to Mental Health Courts throughout the state of Georgia.



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JOY BELL

Joy Bell is the AMH Forensics Manager within the Office of Adult Mental Health with the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities. In this role, Joy has helped to implement new grant initiatives to include co-responder, jail in-reach and integrated medicine. The collaboration between criminal justice and behavioral health systems is something that she is passionate about and holds near to her heart. Prior to this very important work,

Joy began her career with the Department of Juvenile Justice for 13 years. In the role as Forensics Manager, she has had the pleasure to provide programmatic oversight of special programs within the Office of Adult Mental Health. Her priority has been on improving data collection and support of these special programs that focus on individuals who are interacting within criminal justice and behavioral health systems and how to partner in reaching the same goals of diversion and treatment engagement. She also loves learning and providing education on behavioral health resources and services available for criminal justice involved individuals.

Joy Bell has a MPA from Jacksonville State University. She also holds a bachelor's degree from the University of West Georgia. She is a Georgia native and is married with three beautiful and amazing children. She is a member of the International Co-Responder Alliance and a certified LEAP trainer.



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ROBERT W. BUSH

Robert has worked for the Georgia Legal Services Program, Inc. since 1992. He was the first attorney outside of Atlanta to focus his practice on those suffering with HIV/AIDS and their caregivers in the early 90's, after securing funding for the project. He served hundreds of clients, and presented on his work to local, state, national, and international audiences. At the conclusion of this project, Robert shifted his focus to representing persons sixty years of age and over. He founded and chairs GLSP's Elder

Action Team, and is now the statewide Director of GLSP's Elder Law Unit, coordinating and guiding GLSP's work with senior clients.

In addition to his casework, Robert continues to advocate for marginalized populations both in his practice and in his local community, placing a special focus on outreach and clinical work with special populations, such as LGBTQIA persons, the Hispanic community, and those lacking access to healthcare. He was a founding member of the Chatham County Safety Net Planning Council and has also served on the boards of the Chatham County Center Court; the Governor's Advisory Board on Health Information Technology and Transparency; Georgians for a Healthy Future; the Advisory Board of Armstrong Atlantic University's Masters of Public Health program; and the Legal Services Delivery Committee of the American Bar Association's Section on Litigation.



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CHRISTOPHER K. GIFFORD

Christopher is a native of Macon, Georgia and has lived in Atlanta for the last 14 years. He is a graduate of the University of Georgia with a BA in History and he received his law degree from Cumberland School of Law in Birmingham, Alabama. Upon graduating from law school, Christopher worked for an insurance defense firm, where his practice focused on representing Employers and Insurers in workers' compensation claims. For the last 9 years,

Christopher has devoted 100% of his practice representing injured workers across the State of Georgia and was a partner at a claimant's firm prior to starting Gifford Law. He has taken and defended hundreds of depositions, negotiated settlement for hundreds of clients, tried cases before the State Board of Workers' Compensation in every corner of Georgia and participated in appeals before Superior Courts and the Georgia Court of Appeals.

Christopher has been a member of the State Bar of Georgia since 2010 and has spoken at many conferences and seminars on issues relating to Georgia workers' compensation claims. He is an active member of The Workers' Compensation Claimant's Lawyers (WCCL) arm of the Georgia Trial Lawyers Association (GTLA). He has also been a member of WILG – Workers Injury Law & Advocacy Group. In 2022 and 2023 Christopher was named a Super Lawyer by his peers, which is an honor bestowed on only 5% of attorneys.

Outside of work, Christopher enjoys spending time with his wife and three children and cheering for the Atlanta Braves and Georgia Bulldogs.



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RACHEL GORDON

Rachel is a graduate of The University of Michigan and Emory Law School. After finishing law school in 2012, she began her practice as a public defender at the Paulding County Public Defender's Office. There, she handled misdemeanors, felonies, juvenile court, and a few appeals. After three years there, Rachel continued her public defense career at the DeKalb County Public Defender's Office, where she also handled a variety of cases. In 2017, Rachel began exclusively handling SB440 cases, in which a juvenile is being charged as an adult in Superior Court for one of a handful of serious violent felonies. In 2022, after seven years in DeKalb County, Rachel came to the Fulton County Public Defender's Office, where she remains and continues to specialize in SB440 cases.



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JUDGE AMANDA N. HEATH

The Honorable Amanda N. Heath is a Superior Court Judge for the Augusta Judicial Circuit of Georgia. Her jurisdiction covers Burke and Richmond counties and she presides over civil, domestic and felony criminal cases. Judge Heath was appointed by Governor Brian P. Kemp on October 13, 2021, and elected by her community in 2022 to continue her service on the Superior Court bench. At the time of her election, Judge Heath was the first African

American woman to be elected as a Superior Court Judge in the Augusta Judicial Circuit's 152-year history. Judge Heath is currently the only African American Superior Court Judge and is the youngest judge in the Augusta Judicial Circuit. Prior to elevating to the Superior Court bench, Judge Heath served as a Juvenile Court Judge for five years and was the first African American woman to serve in that position for Burke, Columbia and Richmond counties.

Judge Heath was previously a solo practitioner with a focus on civil, criminal and family law. Prior to opening her law practice, Judge Heath prosecuted violent felonies as an Assistant District Attorney and argued successfully before the Georgia Supreme Court. She also served as the lead prosecutor for Drug Court, Mental Health Court and Veterans Court. Her family taught her "to whom much is given, much will be required" and to take every opportunity to give back to the community through service.

Judge Heath is a graduate of Hampton University and received her Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology, summa cum laude in 2007. She is also a graduate of Hampton's Freddie T. Davy Honors College and is an alumna of the Concert Choir.



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SARAH KELSEY

Sarah Kelsey is an autistic attorney working in the Atlanta Legal Aid Society Disability Integration Project, assisting Georgians who are at risk of institutionalization with access to services in the community. She is on the Board of Directors of Threshold Community Program and the Southern Center for Human Rights Ambassadors Leadership Council since 2018. She is an active member of the Georgia Native Plants Society and the Georgia Botanical Society, for which she served as the first Chair of the Maureen Donohue Habitat Conservation Fund Committee. Sarah graduated from Emory Law School with honors and was admitted to the State Bar of Georgia in 2016.



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SUPARNA MALEMPATI

Suparna Malempati is an Associate Professor of Law at Atlanta's John Marshall Law School where she teaches courses in evidence, constitutional law, criminal trial practice, and legal writing. Professor Malempati has published in the area of advocacy, ethics, and due process rights of children. Prior to joining the faculty at John Marshall, Professor Malempati served as the managing attorney for the Office of the Child Advocate Attorneys in Fulton County Juvenile Court, where she led a team of lawyers and investigators representing children in abuse and neglect proceedings. She is also an experienced trial attorney, having worked in criminal defense for over ten years as an Assistant Public Defender in Fulton County and in private practice. She is a graduate of the George Washington University Law School and received her bachelor's degree in psychology from Dartmouth College.



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LASHAWN E. MIKELL

Lashawn E. Mikell, Esq., is a supervising attorney with the Fulton County Office of the Child Attorney, where she represents abused and neglected children who are in state custody and has dependency cases before the Fulton County Juvenile Court. Before her tenure at her current position, she was a staff attorney with the Fulton County Office of the Public Defender, where she represented indigent clients in felony criminal matters from 2001-2005. From 2000-

2001, she was a program director and a Nelson, Mullins, Scarborough, & Riley legal fellow at Atlanta Volunteer Lawyers Foundation. She became a licensed attorney in the State of Georgia in 2001. She is also certified as a Child Welfare Law Specialist. Lashawn is a graduate of the University of North Carolina, School of Law, in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, where she received her juris doctor in 2000. In 1997, she graduated Magna Cum Laude with a Bachelor of Art degree in Political Science from Morgan State University in Baltimore, Maryland.

Lashawn is a member of several professional and community affiliation which include a member of the National Association of Counsel for Children (NACC), Georgia Association of Counsel for Children, (GACC), the Child Advocacy and Protection Section of the State Bar of Georgia, Georgia Association of Black Women Attorneys (GABWA), Georgia Association of Women Lawyers (GAWL), Gate City Bar Association, Junior League of Atlanta (JLA), International Women House-Board of Directors member from 2001-2007, and a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., since 1995.



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MATTHEW W. NORMAN, M.D.

With a goal of becoming a forensic psychiatrist, Dr. Norman received his undergraduate degree in psychology from the University of Virginia, completed medical school at Mercer University School of Medicine, and completed psychiatric residency and forensic psychiatric fellowship training at Emory University School of Medicine. He maintains a private practice of general and forensic psychiatry in Atlanta, including serving as an expert witness over 250 times in state, federal, and military jurisdictions. Dr. Norman has continued teaching with a dual appointment as an Adjunct Professor in both the Emory University School of Medicine and the Emory University School of Law. The governor appointed him to the Georgia Composite Medical Board in 2019, reappointed in 2023, and served as Chair in 2022-23.



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STACY E. REYNOLDS

Stacy E. Reynolds is a Staff Attorney in the Senior Citizens Law Project of Atlanta Legal Aid Society, Inc., where she has handled a variety of issues affecting the elderly since 2001. In recent years she has helped spearhead the Fulton Property Tax Project seeking to help Fulton homeowners protect their homes in the face of rapidly rising property taxes, advocating for a wider application of homestead exemptions and tax appeals. Prior to joining Atlanta Legal Aid, she worked as an attorney in the White House Counsel's Office during the Clinton Administration and then in the Atlanta Habitat for Humanity affiliate. She is a graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Georgetown University Law Center.



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EMILE D. RISBY, M.D., J.M.

Dr. Risby received his Bachelor of Science from Tennessee State University and his medical degree from Meharry Medical College, both in Nashville Tennessee. He did his psychiatry residency at Emory University before going to the National Institute of Mental Health for 2 years as a medical staff fellow. He returned to Emory as a member of the faculty where he was granted tenure. Prior to his appointment as Medical Director for the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities, Dr. Risby has held various positions throughout his career to include: Clinical Director, Georgia Regional Hospital at Atlanta; Medical Director, In-Patient Psychiatry Service, Grady Memorial Hospital Atlanta, GA; Medical Director, Drug Dependency Unit Grady Memorial Hospital Atlanta, GA; Medical Director, Psychiatry Community Outreach Services Grady Memorial Hospital, Atlanta, GA; Medical Director, DeKalb County Crisis Services, DeKalb County, Georgia; Medical Director, Mental Health Services DeKalb County GA Jail and attending psychiatrist, Emory University Hospital and Clinic. Dr. Risby retired from the U.S. Army Reserves with the rank of Colonel after 31 years of service to his country. Dr. Risby is board certified in General Psychiatry and Forensic Psychiatry. In August 2020, he received the Juris Master's degree from the Emory University School of Law.



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ROYCE SAGO

Attorney Royce Sago has practiced law in Georgia for over 15 years. She has dedicated her career to families and children dealing with sensitive issues. Attorney Sago started her career as a Child Attorney representing children who have been neglected and abused. She transitioned from a Child Attorney to a Special Assistant Attorney General, SAAG, Associate representing the Department of Family and Children Services in Dependency actions.

Through her career, she has gained valuable insight in the intersection of law and family. She prides herself on working with her clients to create settlement options conducive to a changing family dynamic while protecting the client's individual interests. When settlement is not an option, Attorney Sago is a zealous advocate who works to obtain positive results for her client.

In addition to being a litigator, Royce also serves as a Guardian Ad Litem in private custody cases. Her extensive background in child welfare and family law makes her uniquely suited to work with families and attorneys to determine what is in a child's best interest in a custody dispute.

Attorney Sago is a member of the Georgia Association of Black Women Attorneys (GABWA) and was selected for the 2017 class of the Charles Weltner Family Law Inn of Court. She is a graduate of GABWA's Professional Development Academy and the Georgia Bar's Young Lawyer's Division Leadership Academy. As a respected colleague, she has been selected as a speaker for The Family Law Institute.



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SANDRA SATCHELL

Sandra Anne Satchell is a graduate of Rutgers School of Law in Newark, New Jersey. Sandra is the Chief Assistant Public Defender for the Dougherty Judicial Circuit in Albany, Georgia and the defense attorney for the circuit's Mental Health and Substance Abuse Accountability Court. Sandra has witnessed firsthand the life changing, positive impact Accountability Court makes in the lives of her clients, and she passionately advocates for their placement and success in Accountability Court.

Sandra is a member of the Georgia Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers and she coaches a Georgia High School Mock Trial team. Sandra also serves on the Dougherty Judicial Circuit Mediation Board and is a former President of the Dougherty Circuit Bar Association.