

## Message From The President

E.D. Gaskins, Jr.



One of the privileges of serving as President of the Wake County Bar Association is writing this column for *The Bar Flyer*. Doug Brocker, President of the Tenth Judicial District Bar, and I will be sharing the privilege on alternating months.

I have little anxiety in serving as president due to the excellent professional staff and dedicated committee chairs who make things happen as they should. But, I feel a special sense of responsibility serving in a publicly visible position within the legal profession at this point in time. In part, that is because of the current perception of the legal profession in the eyes of the public. A poll conducted by Gallup, Inc. in 2008 revealed that only 15% of the public rates the ethics of lawyers as high or very high. That compares with 35% for bankers (I wonder if that is changed now) and 25% for automobile mechanics. For medical doctors, another of the learned professions, the rating was 64%.

I have pondered why there is such disparity in the public perception of lawyers as compared with physicians. Perhaps it is in the image created by current television programs. Perhaps it

*continued on page 2*

## Upcoming Meetings

### LOOKING AHEAD: WCBA Meeting Schedule

January 6	12:30 p.m.	Woman's Club
February 3	12:30 p.m.	Woman's Club
March 3	12:30 p.m.	Woman's Club
April 7	12:30 p.m.	Woman's Club

Please check the *Bar Flyer* to confirm the meeting location.

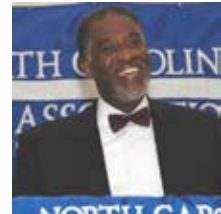
### February

The February meeting of the Wake County Bar Association will take place February 3, 2009, at the Raleigh Woman's Club. Mark your calendar and plan to join us then!

## WCBA Blood Drive March 26

The Blood Drive will take place on Thursday, March 26, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the offices of Poyner Spruill in RBC Plaza, 310 Fayetteville Street, Suite 1900. Donors can call Evon Weston at 783-2830 to schedule a time to donate. For those driving downtown to donate, Evon can provide instructions for guest parking in the RBC Plaza building.

## January Meeting



Charles Becton

The January meeting of the Wake County Bar Association will convene at 12:15 p.m. on January 6, 2009, at the Woman's Club. Lunch will be served at 12:15 and the meeting will begin promptly at 12:30 p.m.

Charles L. Becton, a Raleigh attorney and longtime Durham resident, was installed as president of the North Carolina Bar Association on Saturday, June 21, at the 2008 NCBA Annual Meeting in Atlantic Beach.

Becton succeeds Greensboro attorney Janet Ward Black as the 114th president of the NCBA. Judge Allyson K. Duncan of the Fourth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, who served as president of the NCBA in 2003-04, conducted the formal swearing-in ceremony. Education, service and professionalism will provide the foundation for Becton's platform as president in 2008-09. Becton will also promote expansion of the Wills for Heroes program, which provides wills for first responders, to make it available to veterans.

*continued on page 3*

Please Note!

# DEADLINE February Issue Jan. 13, 2009

**Please note: If materials are received after the deadline, they may be published in a subsequent issue of the Wake Bar Flyer.**

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### ADDITIONAL DEADLINES

Issue Date	Submission Deadline
Feb. 2009	Jan. 13
March 2009	Feb. 10
April 2009	March 17
May 2009	April 14
June 2009	May 19

**Typography:**

Capital Letters, Inc. (481-1011)

### Inside This Issue

Activity	Page
WCBA Meeting Dates .....	4
Member Information	
Change Form .....	4
BarCARES Information .....	4
Upcoming Meetings of	
Other Organizations .....	9
WCBA YLD Activities .....	12

## Message from the President *continued from page 1*

is in how we treat each other and each other's clients. We cannot change television programming. We can change how we interact with others.

My perception is that a surprising number of us deal with each other in an adversarial and confrontational manner, even in situations where civility and collaboration would likely achieve a better and less costly outcome for our clients. Perhaps we enhance the adverse image when we publicly portray ourselves as "fighters" rather than truth seekers and peacemakers. In many instances, working with opposing counsel to identify and articulate the problem and seek a mutually satisfactory solution is the best approach. Perhaps we have been slow to realize that such collaboration reveals wisdom, not weakness.

Our interaction with clients often conveys the same impression. I am not referring primarily to interactions with our own clients. Indeed, most clients have a favorable impression of their own lawyers. It is the "other person's lawyer" whom many perceive negatively and their own lawyer whom they consider the rare exception to the general rule that lawyers are difficult and untrustworthy.


I believe it to be advantageous to our clients when those opposed to us respect us rather than regard us merely as attack dogs or gun-fighters for hire. Indeed, the concept of "the rule of law" is that established rules and procedures applied equally to all, regardless of status or position, is a far better way to resolve disputes than trial by combat. There are certainly occasions when the opposing client does not deserve respect and when attacking is the appropriate course of action, but that should be the exception rather than the rule. Our clients are usually best served when we seek a fair and equitable solution.

Dean Roscoe Pound defined a profession as follows:

The term refers to a group . . . pursuing a learned art as a common calling in the spirit of public service – no less a public service because it may incidentally be a means of livelihood. Pursuit of the learned art in the spirit of public service is the primary purpose.

The lawyers of Wake County should be, and I

believe are, at the forefront in the practice of law as a profession. Charles Becton of the Wake County Bar is president of the North Carolina Bar Association. He has emphasized greater access to the legal system regardless of financial status. North Carolina is a one of a minority of states which have a Chief Justice's Commission on Professionalism. The Executive Director of the Commission is Wake County Bar member Mel Wright. The Professionalism Committee of the Wake County/Tenth Judicial District Bar was recognized last year by the American Bar Association with the Gambrell Award for significant achievements in promoting professionalism. The Professionalism Committee is currently undertaking a county-wide mentoring program which, if successful, will serve as a pilot for such programs in urban areas throughout North Carolina as part of the Chief Justice's Commission. (More about that later.)

I look forward to serving as your president and as a visible member of the legal profession. May we all practice in the spirit of public service in the coming year. May we treat each other and each other's clients with respect. And may we work together to ensure that all members of the public have access to the legal system. 

## Election Results (for 2009)

WCBA  
Tenth Judicial District Bar

### President-Elect:

Nan E. Hannah

### Board of Directors:

Bradley J. Bannon  
Nicholas J. Dombalis II  
Michelle L. Frazier  
David E. Holm  
Ned W. Mangum  
Karen Britt Peeler  
J. Heydt Philbeck  
Robert J. Ramseur, Jr. (Tenth)  
Eric P. Stevens (WCBA)  
Hannah G. Styron  
Michael J. Tadych

### Badger-Iredell Foundation:

Holmes P. Harden  
Robert B. Rader