

# WAKE BAR Flyer

Wake County Bar Association  
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May 2009

## Message From The President

E.D. Gaskins, Jr., President  
Wake County Bar Association



It is my privilege to serve as a member of the Chief Justice's Commission on Professionalism. Three items were on the agenda at a recent meeting which I would like to share with you as they reflect on the state of the legal profession in North Carolina.

First, the Commission is preparing a brochure and on-line information for those interested in attending law school. The purpose is to address misperceptions about the practice of law, with particular reference to the time and cost involved in obtaining a law degree, realistic expectations of what is involved in the practice of law, and reasonable expectations of compensation in law practice. Lawyers and administrators in contact with law students report that the students and prospective students misperceive certain aspects of the profession, at least in part because television and media reports create a false impression of what most attorneys experience in a law practice. Students are not focused on the high cost of obtaining a law degree as compared with the compensation they can reasonably expect.

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## Upcoming Meetings

### LOOKING AHEAD: WCBA Meeting Schedule

June 9	12:30 p.m.	Woman's Club
July 7	12:30 p.m.	Sisters' Garden
August	No Meeting	
September	No Meeting	

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

#### June

The June meeting of the Wake County Bar Association will take place June 9, 2009, at the Woman's Club. Mark your calendar and plan to join us then!

#### Special Public Defender Election

Monday, June 1, 2009

The Woman's Club

See pages 4 & 5 for more information.

**Sign Up Now!**

### The WCBA's Lunch With a Lawyer Program Needs You!

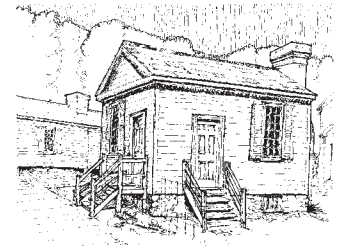
Please sign up for the Lunch with a Lawyer program. We promise to match you with an impressionable youth for the 2009 Summer beginning in late June. We need you for this fifteen year old Public Service Program of Wake County Bar.

Please complete the **sign-up form on page 6** and fax it to the WCBA office at (919) 657-1564.

## May Meeting

The May meeting of the Wake County Bar Association will be held on May 5, 2009, at Mordecai Park. Lunch will be served at 12:30 p.m.

The meal will be barbecue with all the trimmings. Please come and enjoy the beautiful spring weather, fine company and good food.



Tours will be conducted of the Badger-Iredell law office. Also plan to visit the Mordecai Gardens and surrounding grounds.

You are welcome to bring family members. Cost for guests will be \$10 per person. Call the WCBA office at 677-9903 if you plan on bringing a guest.

A map to help you locate Mordecai Park is on page 3.

### WCBA Offices Closed

Monday, May 25, 2009  
Memorial Day



Please Note!

# DEADLINE June Issue May 19, 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
July 2009	June 16
August 2009	July 14
September 2009	Aug. 18
October 2009	Sept. 15
November 2009	Oct. 6

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Many students apparently anticipate that they will receive a starting salary of \$100,000.00 plus, without realizing that only a small percentage of beginning lawyers with outstanding academic records working for select law firms will make anything approaching that amount. They also fail to understand that the demands in terms of billable hours dictate a less than desirable lifestyle in regard to the balance of work with other activities. In addition, they fail to recognize that the kind of lawyering which they envision is highly unlikely in that only a small percentage of lawyers have the opportunity to become constitutional lawyers, or lawyers representing those accused of high-profile white collar crimes, or lawyers who consistently argue cases before the Supreme Court, etc. The Commission hopes to have information available on line to address these misperceptions in a few months.

Second, the Commission is concerned about those law students who complete the challenging and costly process required to graduate from an accredited law school, only to be denied entry into the profession due to character and fitness issues. Some law schools do not inquire about character and fitness issues in their application process. Some of those who do inquire fail to do so in the same manner as bar examiners such that the students are never apprised during their law school career that they are likely to be seriously challenged upon applying to take the Bar due to past conduct or excessive debt.

The Chief Justice's Commission has formed a committee with bar examiners and law school deans in an effort to include character and fitness inquiries in all law school application processes and to make those applications more closely resemble the scrutiny that the law students will encounter in applying for admission to the Bar.

Finally, the Commission continues to be concerned about the professionalism, happiness and success of new lawyers entering the profession, and it believes that effective mentoring is a key to the process of establishing a successful law practice. The Commission is aware that the State Bar is also concerned with the process and is monitoring the success of the statewide mandatory mentoring program which has been underway in Georgia and the statewide voluntary program that is underway in Ohio. In addition, South Carolina has undertaken a statewide

mandatory program initiated by its Supreme Court which began on March 1, 2009, and will impact all lawyers sworn in between that date and January 1, 2011.

In the meantime, the Commission is pursuing its own mentoring pilot project in conjunction with the Wake County Bar under the sponsorship of the Professionalism Committee and with the help of Elon Law School. The Committee has undertaken a mentoring needs survey with the help of Elon. All new lawyers who participated in the Wake County swearing in ceremonies over the last two years have been asked to participate in the survey. The results of that survey are expected in the near future.

The Professionalism Committee has been concerned about at least five aspects of any mentoring program which are critical to its success.

These are: (1) selecting appropriate mentors; (2) matching mentors with lawyers needing mentors; (3) establishing criteria for effective mentoring; (4) evaluating the mentoring experience; and (5) handling problems which arise during the mentoring process. The Committee is aware of a very successful mentoring program undertaken by the University of St. Thomas Law School in Minnesota. The program has a full-time director, a comprehensive mentoring manual, and has implemented procedures to deal effectively with each of these five critical issues. Campbell Law School is consulting with the director of the St. Thomas program and plans to offer a similar program at Campbell beginning in 2010. Campbell anticipates having full time administrative personnel to deal with these critical issues. Hopefully, the Wake County Bar can partner with Campbell to implement a joint mentoring program involving both Campbell law students and new lawyers in Wake County. Such a partnership will be important for both the Wake County Bar and Campbell because the Wake County Bar could benefit from the structure of the Campbell program and Campbell will need help from the Wake County Bar to recruit approximately 450 mentors each year once its program is up and running.

These developments illustrate that North Carolina and Wake County continue to be leaders in the concern, interest, and effort to promote professionalism. 