

# The Las Vegas Chapter



## of the National Bar Association 2019-2021 Term Showcase

Please allow this document to serve as our list of activities and events for the term (to date). The Las Vegas Chapter of the National Bar Association (LVNBA) is the only affiliate chapter of the National Bar Association (NBA) in the entire state of Nevada and has accomplished many feats during an unprecedented term.

The LVNBA was founded in 1981 by a group of Black attorneys in an era when it was difficult for Black attorneys to be accepted as members in established bar associations. In 1987, the LVNBA held its first scholarship gala, a very successful event that soon became a must attend event for the Nevada legal community. Through the Annual Scholarship Gala, the LVNBA raises scholarship funds each year for law students who are committed to serving minority, low income, and other underserved communities in Nevada.

- On November 2, 2019, the LVNBA held its 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Scholarship Gala at the Gold Coast Hotel and Casino. This event brought over 130 attorneys, judges, legislators, deans, and law students, from across the state to honor 3 law students with over \$6,500 in scholarship and to honor a 4<sup>th</sup> law student with an inaugural book scholarship in honor of Bryan Scott, last year's winner of Attorney of the Year award. We also honored Christine Jones Brady (from the Attorney General's office in Northern Nevada) as our attorney of the year; Pisanelli Bice, PLLC as law firm of the year; Southwest Gas received the Corporate Service Award of the year; and The Las Vegas Chapter of the Links, Inc. received the Community Service Award.
- This gala was very special, as it was two years after the fatal shooting by Stephen Paddock (on October 1, 2017) from a Mandalay Bay Hotel, killing 58 people, while injuring 413 others. The impact of this shooting on the community was still lingering and this was a chance to honor our legal community and law students by being #vegasstrong.

- We also inaugurated a new board at this meeting. The new board members were sworn in by the first African American female Judge in the entire state, Judge Tierra Jones. The board included: President Augusta Massey, Vice President Brittnie Watkins, Treasurer Karen Williams Cormier, and Secretary Angela Cook. The four-board-member leadership grew to 8 board members and 11 Chairs by the end of December 2019, fulfilling 19 leadership positions. In one month, the leadership had quadrupled in size, showing the strength of the new board and ability to attract and lead the bar. Members of the board and chairs can be found here: <https://www.lasvegasnba.org/>. Each board member and chair are all equally accomplished in their own rights and work in nonprofits, associates or partners at law firms, law firm owners, government employees, as legislators, judges, casino executives, and law students.
- The new board met and set a master calendar for the year 2020 and by January 2020 everything was going smoothly. Board members and Chairs each received detailed board member/chair descriptions. Smart goals were set by the board at an annual retreat to decide the direction of the LVNBA.
- On January 28, 2020, the board attended the Nevada state bar's Specialty Bar Leadership Development Program. There were over 10 members of the LVNBA leadership in attendance. A historic number for the State Bar of Nevada. We showed up and we spoke up and the state bar took notice.
- On February 11, 2020, members of the LVNBA watched the Harriet Tubman movie together in celebration of Black History Month. We also had a Nevada 2020 Caucus Training on February 12, 2020, and started a fundraiser for our law students to obtain money for graduation. Additionally, several of our members launched their campaigns for Judges in the Eighth Judicial District Court and in North Las Vegas Justice Court. Our members also ran for other elected positions in the state and local governments. We have almost 20 members running for office and about 5 of them are from the public defender's office. Historically, lawyers from the public defender's office do not run for judicial office. However, in 2020, several of our members ran to bring diversity, cultural competency, and fairness to public office.
- **In February 2020, Tyre Gray, our MLK Drum Major for Justice Chair, was elected as the President of the Nevada Mining Association. The first Black person to hold this position.**
- We were scheduled for a Diversity Bar Mixer in partnership with the Southern Nevada Association of Women Attorneys, the Latino Bar Association, and the South Asian Bar Association on March 25, 2020, while actively preparing for the NBA's Drum Major for Justice Oral Advocacy local and regional competition. We were also preparing for the Civil Trial Advocacy Boot Camp scheduled for April 2–4, a mixer for the Black Law Student Association (BLSA), and our county-wide Youth Justice Forum in partnership with Assemblywoman Dina Neal and other Black leaders in the Las Vegas community. However, the world was impacted by a global pandemic, which

interrupted many of our plans. We were, however, still able to follow through with the Youth Justice Forum. After months of careful preparation, we watched as our world turned upside down and had to adjust immediately.

- Despite the odds, we have still managed to achieve many firsts, including:
  - Sandra Douglass Morgan (former vice resident and past recipient of the LVNBA Attorney of the Year award) resigned from her position as the first African American woman to chair the Nevada Gaming Control Board to join National Fidelity's board of directors, where she chairs a special litigation committee.
  - Brittnie Watkins (Vice President) was elected as the first African American woman to serve on the Nevada State Bar's Board of Governors. She campaigned exclusively online and via telephone during a pandemic and won. This is a historic win for our organization and our state. Brittnie was also appointed by Governor Steve Sisolak to the Nevada Gaming Control Board.
  - Bryan Scott (former president and our 2018 recipient of the Attorney of the Year award) became the first African American city attorney for the City of Las Vegas amidst civil unrest and a worsening pandemic. Another historic win for our organization and our state.
  - Three of our members were nominated for the 2020 National Bar Association Women Lawyers Division award, a first in our organization, and our President, Augusta Massey, is one of the NBA's Top 40 under 40 in the nation for 2020. She was also recently appointed to sit on the Nevada Civil Rights Commission.
- Additionally, while many pre-planned events were cancelled or postponed indefinitely, several members stepped up to the plate and have impacted the community with their time, efforts, and service. Amazingly, we have also increased our membership three times over. We have also had several members, like Caleb Green (Fundraising and Corporate Sponsorship Chair and Chair of the Racial Justice Committee), Brittnie Watkins, Augusta Massey, Angela Cook, Karen Cormier, and Keith Hightower publish several articles in the *Communique*--Clark County's Bar Association Magazine--which is widely distributed all over Clark County.
- Initially, we focused on providing information once the pandemic hit. We distributed information regarding COVID-19 and several government relief programs, including PPP loan, EIDL, and the stimulus check, information regarding the response to the pandemic in the workplace, and legal resources for our members and the community at large. We also provided information on our state's new move to make the primary election an "all mail" vote, and provided information on the census and its importance.

- We also gave back to the community by fundraising for Three Square, an organization where \$5 can provide 15 meals! Through a generous donor who donated \$25 for every new member who signed up in April, we raised about \$700 through these efforts which is **2,100 meals!**
- On April 22, 2020 we held a “Q & A” session with Chief Justice Kristina Pickering, Judge Tierra Jones, and Attorney General Aaron Ford, to answer questions regarding the new court rules due to COVID-19, as we pivoted to new court procedures in response to the new public safety mandates.
- On May 1, 2020 we had a “Meet the Candidates Forum,” which gave a platform to our members running for office to speak to the Las Vegas community. This was organized by Crislove Igeleke, our Community Outreach and Voter Initiatives Chair.
- On May 22, 2020, we organized a virtual welcome luncheon for Anthony Curry, who is the ABA Diversity Clerk for Judge Nancy Allf. Anthony was one of only 4 recipients of this prestigious national award from the American Bar Association. Anthony graduated from Arizona State University in 2017, receiving a Bachelor of Science Degree in Political Science. He was a rising 3L at Thurgood Marshall School of Law in Houston, TX. After graduation, he hoped to return to Las Vegas to practice law. Prior to attending law school, Anthony served in the U.S. Navy for 9 years. At the beginning of his career, he served as a military police officer (known as a Master-At-Arms) and ended his career as a Navy recruiter. Members welcomed him with enthusiasm, advice, and encouragement.
- Shortly after, in May 2020, our world was thrown into civil unrest due to the inhumane, unjust killing of George Floyd and systemic racial injustice and police brutality it exposed. Our members rallied quickly behind the movement for change and provided a forum for discussion, trained to be legal observers, joined and/or organized protests, while protecting the civil rights of citizens to protest peacefully.
- On May 31, 2020, the board organized a vigil for George Floyd, titled “Breathe” in less than 48 hours. There were approximately 100 participants at the vigil, where we cried, we talked, and we shared. The recording of the vigil was shared and viewed by thousands. A wide cross-section of people from all races and backgrounds attended the vigil. It was an opportunity for the community to come together and express solidarity with the LVNBA and the wider Black community at large. To date, we are still getting expressions of gratitude about how the event was so timely and needed for our community.
- On June 3, 2020, several of our members spoke at a virtual panel regarding “Your Right to Protest” in conjunction with our sister organization, the Latino Bar Association. On June 8, 2020, we joined in marching with our members who are public defenders for the “Black Lives Matter

to Public Defenders” march downtown at the courthouse. This March was led by our members Belinda T. Harris and Jessica Smith-Peterson, both public defenders.

- On June 9, 2020, Las Vegas had its all mail-in primary voting with several of our members “unofficially” making it through the primaries. Official vote count on June 19 confirmed that a number of our members made it on the ballot in November. After the November votes were tallied, an unprecedented number of African American women and members of the LVNBA were elected to the bench for the first time, many of whom came from the Office of the Public Defender.
- In early June of 2020, an Ad Hoc Racial Justice Committee was formed to examine and address systemic racism and racial disparities through police reform, public/private accountability, and legislation.
- On June 27, 2020, we held Breathe II, which was greatly anticipated. This was part 2 of the response to George Floyd's death at the hands of law enforcement, and was a call to action. The forum was live streamed on Facebook and reached over 4,000 people and portions of it were viewed by nearly 2,000 people at the time.
- Breathe II was moderated by **Professor Rachel Anderson**, who was General Counsel at the Office of the Nevada Attorney General, Professor at Boyd Law School, past president of the LVNBA, and former Secretary of the National Bar Association. LVNBA Vice President **Dr. Brittnie Watkins, at the time, a litigator at Pisanelli Bice, led the LVNBA in imagining, creating, organizing, and executing the Breathe series.** Guest speakers included: U.S. **Senator Catherine Cortez Masto**, who was born and raised in Las Vegas (Senator Catherine Cortez Masto made history by becoming the first woman from Nevada and the first Latina ever elected to the United States Senate. Prior to becoming a senator, she served two terms as Attorney General of Nevada); **Professor Frank Rudy Cooper**, a UNLV Boyd School of Law professor who teaches and researches the course Criminal Procedure: Police, especially in light of the intersectionality of race, gender, and class; **Attorney General Aaron Ford**, who was sworn in as Nevada’s 34th attorney general in 2019 and is the first African American to take statewide constitutional office (Before being elected Nevada's attorney general, Dr. Aaron Ford served as the majority leader of the Nevada State Senate); **Assemblywoman Dina Neal**, who has been in the legislature for ten years and served as chair of taxation for four years (She is a graduate of Southern University Law School and received her undergraduate degree in political science from Southern University A & M); **Donavan McIntosh**, who was born and raised in Trenton New Jersey, and is a US Army and law enforcement veteran, holds a degree in criminal justice, and is one of the newest members of the NAACP; and **Belinda T. Harris**, who was a chief deputy public defender at the time, but is currently the first African American judge in North Las Vegas Justice Court (Belinda won her seat for judge to serve the community that raised her). We also heard from community activists and

representatives from the NAACP, Forced Trajectory Project, and other racial justice organizations.

- Not taking a breath to pause, between June--July, we started a fundraising campaign for a historically underserved elementary school in our community to get them school supplies by encouraging our community to donate \$19 in honor of Juneteenth. We raised a total of \$2,800 and donated a portion of that to The Ward 5's Wendell P. Williams Elementary School. This money helped to purchase a much-needed pallet of school supplies for the school.
- In July 2020, we hosted a socially distanced special edition of the Youth and Justice Forum at the Pearson Community Center in partnership with Assemblywoman Dina Neal. This was the 11th year hosting the forum. The theme was "Getting real about first amendment rights and police stops, authority and compliance." Members of the public, youth, their parents, civil organizations, and the police came together to learn about civil rights, protests, and justice. Our organization prepared the Powerpoint presentation and handouts, lectured on constitutional law, answered questions, and participated in simulated activities to demonstrate to youth their rights and responsibilities when interacting with the police. This was a day-long event, and many commented on the value they received.
- On August 12, 2020, in collaboration with the Boyd School of Law Black Law Students Association, we kicked off our fall programming and back to school events with a socially distanced drive-in movie night experience at the West Wind Las Vegas Drive-In. Two weeks later, on August 26, 2020, we were back at the movies seeing the classic, "**Coming to America.**" These special drive-in screenings were part of Amazon's contribution to the social justice movement.
- In mid-August of 2020, we hosted a special guest, Sondra Cosgrove, at our general membership meeting. Ms. Cosgrove is a history professor and the President of the League of Women Voters of Nevada, a non-partisan political organization. She holds a Ph.D. from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas and engages in community and civic empowerment as well as advocacy for civil rights priorities. Ms. Cosgrove provided invaluable information to our members on the voting process and potential challenges to voting during the pandemic.
- In August, we also witnessed via video the shooting of another unarmed black man in Kenosha, Wisconsin, Jacob Blake, who was shot seven times in the back by police, and is now paralyzed. Once again, LVNBA members together with other black, brown, and white allies took to the streets to demand justice for our Black lives that do matter. As we closed out August, we paid our respects and said goodbye to one of our long-time members, Geraldine Kirk-Hughes, who passed away.
- In September, our vice president, Brittnie Watkins, was recognized along with other members of her law firm--Pisanelli Bice--in the Best Lawyers of America Publication.

- On September 9, we were treated to another socially distanced movie night with Stacy Abrams' **"All in: The Fight for Democracy,"** a documentary that examines the issue of voter suppression in the US. In addition to the timely and salient message, our members were treated to snacks and swags. In September 2020, many of our members were promoted in their respective jobs or obtained new opportunities.
- On September 19, 2020, in partnership with the Williams S, Boyd School of Law's Black Law Students Association, we hosted our first virtual mentorship mixer dubbed Mentorship Mixer #1. Renee Becker, our mentorship committee chair, wanted to ensure that, despite the pandemic, mentees and mentors had the opportunity to connect and mentees were not unduly disadvantaged because of social distancing protocols. This event was a success by any standard.
- In September and early October of 2020, the LVNBA also participated in the Andale' 5K walk/run organized by the Nevada Latino Bar Association, where over \$45,000.00 in scholarship monies were raised by that organization. The LVNBA team won a few bragging rights, including the team with the largest age gap. Also, the 15 year-old daughter of member and past president Doreen Spears-Hartwell, won first place for the fastest time to complete the 5k in her age group.
- Also in September 2020, when the Kentucky Attorney General announced that no charges would be filed against the officers who shot and killed Breonna Taylor, along with many others across the nation, the LVNBA was disappointed. We recommitted to voting and electing fair and impartial decision makers that serve the end of justice; those who will value our lives as if they matter. The LVNBA released a statement on the Breonna Taylor decision [read here: https://0fcfa3fc-34a8-415e-91e5-6c29d310c681.filesusr.com/ugd/b671c9\\_693351543e4540f89e4e869492ec6f0f.pdf](https://0fcfa3fc-34a8-415e-91e5-6c29d310c681.filesusr.com/ugd/b671c9_693351543e4540f89e4e869492ec6f0f.pdf)
- Throughout the summer and ensuing months leading up to the general election, our members participated in voter education initiatives that were resourceful in helping Nevada voters. Not only were we successful there, but our Attorney General Aaron Ford was successful in delivering victory for all Nevadans when his office successfully defended Nevada in a lawsuit filed by the Trump Administration to stop expanded mail-in voting. Our AG prevailed on his motion to dismiss, allowing Nevadans to exercise their most precious constitutional right without fear of the deleterious effect of a pandemic.
- Our members were civically engaged at every level and showed up to participate; from voter registration and get out the vote initiatives to encouraging participation in the 2020 Census.
- On October 3, 2020, we partnered with BLSA again to host our second virtual mentorship mixer dubbed Mentorship Mixer #2. By the second virtual mixer, both mentees and mentors were pros at navigating Zoom and connecting with each other. This allowed for great relationship building. In the words of our first African American City of Las Vegas Attorney Bryan Scott, "to me it is

vitaly important to uplift and reach back to help others. I've had great mentors in my life and want to be the same for others." (Facebook post after the event October 3, 2020).

- From October 17-October 30 we challenged our members and the wider community through social media, to participate in early voting with the #VoteChallenge. We created a flyer that gave at-a-glance voting information to the public and linked directly to the Clark County Elections webpage. The information was divided into **Mail in** and **In Person-Election Day**. The flyer was created by Community Outreach and Voter Initiatives Chair Crislove Igeleke, and provided a wealth of useful information for the community.
- On November 3, 2020, we had a historic election in which many of our members were presumptive winners. When the dust cleared two weeks later. It was indeed history making both locally and nationally.
- On November 12, 2020, LVNBA, in coordination with Howard D. McKibben Chapter of the American Inn of Court, and the Nevada Latino Bar Association, presented a CLE on Racial Bias & Prejudice in the Legal Profession. This was a timely, well attended event and our president, Augusta Massey, and vice president, Brittne Watkins were stellar in their presentations.
- On November 17, 2020, longtime member Judge Johnnie B. Rawlinson, of the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, was honored by the Southern Nevada Association of Women Attorneys (SNAWA) with the 8th Annual Miriam Shearing Award.
- On November 22, 2020, we were back honoring two of our members, Commissioner Ogonna Brown and Judge Karen Bennett-Haron, on receiving the 2020 Liberty Bell Award from the Clark County Law Foundation.
- In November of 2020, we also recognized Sebastian Ross from the Boyd School of Law as the recipient of the \$500 LVNBA Back to School Committee/BLSA Book Scholarship. At the time, Sebastian served as the BLSA president. To date, the 2020-2021 BLSA executive board organized a local fundraiser, held numerous forums addressing government accountability and social justice, and has worked with local youth. Sebastian provided strong, engaging leadership to BLSA at that critical time, and we applaud him.
- In November, Judge Tierra Jones and Judge Timothy Williams were featured in an 8 News NOW news brief where they discussed their unique experiences of being African Americans on the bench and how they are encouraging the next generation. Judge Tierra Jones was the first black woman to be appointed to the district court bench in the entire state in 2017.
- We closed out November 2020 with an apparel scholarship fundraiser, where we sold merchandise bearing the LVNBA logo. Members can be seen sporting their swag from time to



time around town and during our Zoom meetings. Our efforts netted over \$500 in aid of scholarship.

- On December 11, 2020, several of our members were honored at the Pro Bono Awards Ceremony for the Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada (LACSN) for their countless hours of pro bono service performed over the year to aid low-income clients in their pursuit of justice, especially in light of the pandemic. Our very own gala committee co-chair, Doreen Spears-Hartwell, serves as Chair of the Pro Bono Advisory Council for LACSN, and continues to encourage and inspire us to give of ourselves to our community.
- On December 12, 2020, we unwound and let our hair down at our first Virtual Holiday Party. We donned "ugly" Christmas sweaters, brought our favorite drinks, and came to have a good time. We gave over \$2,500.00 in scholarships to BLSA students, gave to our Toy Drive campaign to help children have an extra special Christmas after such an unprecedented year, gave to Safe Nest to help families seeking shelter from abuse, gave to the Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada, and lifted up each other. We laughed, played games, and gave prizes to contest winners. At the end of the night, many who attended proclaimed it was the most fun they had had at a virtual event.
- The year 2021 brought new hope and recommitment to our mission and to the cause of justice. On January 5, 2021, an unprecedented number of female judges took the bench in Nevada—most of whom are members of our chapter. Our chapter members all made history in becoming firsts on the bench. We celebrate **Judge Belinda T. Harris**, who won her seat in North Las Vegas Justice Court, as the first black woman elected to the bench in the community in which she was born and raised. **Judge Dee Smart-Butler** is the first Black woman and person elected to the District Court-Family Division. **Judge Jasmine (Jaz) Lilly-Spells** became the first Black woman elected to the district court in the criminal division. Other history makers who are LVNBA members are **Judge Monica Trujillo**, the first Latinx ever elected to the district court bench, **Judge Sunny Bailey**, **Judge Carli Kierney**, and **Judge Heidi Almase**. **And of course, as noted above, Judge Tierra Jones.**
- On January 6, 2021, we all watched in horror and disgust as the US Capitol was overrun by a mob trying to stop the certification of the November 3, 2020, election and thus a peaceful transfer of power. These insurrectionists entered the seat of power causing death and destruction in their wake. The events of January 6 shook our country to the core and laid bare for the world to see how racism permeates all aspects of our society. For while the Capitol rioters were treated with kid gloves, the Black Lives Matter protesters in the summer past, were treated with coarseness and even brutality in some instances. Read LVNBA Statement here:[https://0fcfa3fc-34a8-415e-91e5-6c29d310c681.filesusr.com/ugd/b671c9\\_7aabeeb3e51474c09abe49cf78563b8d3.pdf](https://0fcfa3fc-34a8-415e-91e5-6c29d310c681.filesusr.com/ugd/b671c9_7aabeeb3e51474c09abe49cf78563b8d3.pdf)
- Nonetheless, on January 20, 2021, history was made as we celebrated the inauguration of Joe Biden as President and Kamala Harris as the first woman, Black, Asian, and Indian vice president.

- On January 26, 2021, we kicked off our events calendar when the Racial Justice Committee hosted a webinar on the legislative process and how to lobby during a pandemic. This webinar was open to the public and was good for 1 general CLE credit. We had over 80 attendees.
- To cap off January, John Bailey, longtime LVNBA member/founder, graciously decided to donate a copy of *Caste* by Isabel Wilkerson to any LVNBA member who wanted a copy of the book--**for free!** He sent a copy to our President, Augusta Massey, who, after reading it, suggested forming a book club or round table discussion after all members received their book and had a chance to read it. *Caste* later became the foundation of Breathe III, where we discussed how the themes in *Caste* may exist in our immediate and extended environments.
- February roared in like a lion with LVNBA members publishing various articles in different publications and being honored in various ways in celebration of Black History Month. The February issue of the *Nevada Lawyer* featured Brittnie Watkins as a Nevada Trailblazer--the first Black woman elected to the State Bar of Nevada Board of Governors in its 80-year history. Our members contributed five articles to the Nevada Lawyer Magazine and four articles to the Clark County Bar Association's *Communique*.
- The Nevada Lawyer featured articles by Bryan Scott, Esq. titled "African American Attorney 'Firsts'" [https://www.nvbar.org/wp-content/uploads/NevadaLawyer\\_Feb2021\\_AfricanAmericanFirsts.pdf](https://www.nvbar.org/wp-content/uploads/NevadaLawyer_Feb2021_AfricanAmericanFirsts.pdf);
- Angela M. Cook, Esq., Karen Cormier, Augusta Massey, Esq., Keith J.D. Hightower, and Brittnie T. Watkins, Esq., wrote a piece in the *Nevada Lawyer* titled, "National Bar Association and Las Vegas National Bar Association: Still Standing Strong" [https://www.nvbar.org/wp-content/uploads/NevadaLawyer\\_Feb2021\\_LVNBA-StandingStrong.pdf](https://www.nvbar.org/wp-content/uploads/NevadaLawyer_Feb2021_LVNBA-StandingStrong.pdf)
- Caleb Green, who is our Racial Justice Committee and fundraising chair, authored an article centered on diversity titled "Upholding the Constitution through Diversity." [https://www.nvbar.org/wp-content/uploads/NevadaLawyer\\_Feb2021\\_Constitution-Diversity.pdf](https://www.nvbar.org/wp-content/uploads/NevadaLawyer_Feb2021_Constitution-Diversity.pdf)
- LVNBA Foundation President Andrea Simmons, Esq., focused on intellectual property with her article "African American Inventors: Protecting Our Intellect" [https://www.nvbar.org/wp-content/uploads/NevadaLawyer\\_Feb2021\\_Constitution-Diversity.pdf](https://www.nvbar.org/wp-content/uploads/NevadaLawyer_Feb2021_Constitution-Diversity.pdf)
- Mary Bacon, Marisa Rodriguez, & Ryan Gormley's "Nevada Trailblazers: Meet Brittnie Watkins" can be found here: [https://www.nvbar.org/wp-content/uploads/NevadaLawyer\\_Feb2021\\_Trailblazer-Watkins.pdf](https://www.nvbar.org/wp-content/uploads/NevadaLawyer_Feb2021_Trailblazer-Watkins.pdf)
- Also, on the first day of February, our member, Claire Thomas, was sworn into the Nevada Legislature as a new assemblywoman.

- In addition to the articles published in the February issue of Nevada Lawyer, members authored pieces in the Clark County Bar Association's official publication, *Communique*. Authors include **Karl Riley** (on his interview with Justice Michael Douglas), **Jonathan Lee** (on qualified immunity), **Mary Bacon** (on 5 ways to increase diversity in the legal profession), and **Caleb Green** (on racial inequality in intellectual property).
- In February, we hosted, promoted, and attended the following events for Black History month:
  - Feb. 1-21: We participated in the ABA 21-Day Challenge.
  - Feb 8-March 1: We participated in the CCBA 21 Day Challenge.
  - Feb. 10: We attended the NBA International Partnership Committee for a timely discussion on the excessive use of force from the perspective of an international human rights issue.
  - Feb. 11: Judge **Tierra Jones** shared HERstory with the State of Nevada Treasurer, **Zach Conine**.
  - Feb. 11: We attended the NBA WLD Webinar on the CROWN ACT.
  - Feb. 17: The Boyd Black Law Students Association (BLSA), in conjunction with The Mob Museum, hosted a Black History Month event.
  - Feb. 20: We had our 40th Year Anniversary Celebration: honoring the past, celebrating the present, and preparing for the future. We were captivated by a joyful and thought-provoking discussion moderated by Judge **Jasmine Lilly-Spells** & Judge **Belinda T. Harris**. We had an all-star panel of members, including: Judge **Richard Boulware (Nevada federal court judge)**, retired Supreme Court of Nevada Justice **Michael Douglas**, **Attorney General Aaron D. Ford**, **Speaker of of the Nevada State Assembly Jason Frierson**, **law firm partner Patricia Lee**, and **City Attorney Bryan Scott**, who shared their historical and forward-looking perspectives.
  - Feb. 28: All month long we celebrated our members and their publications in both the Nevada Lawyer Magazine and the Clark County Bar Association's *Communique*.
- On March 4, our Racial Justice Committee organized a Virtual Immigration Panel to address the effects of the United States immigration policies on families from the African diaspora. We collaborated with Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. and the ECDC-African Community Center. It was a much needed dialogue. Attendees expressed gratitude for the space and the need for additional or similar events moving forward.

- The 81st Session of the Nevada Legislature met from February 1, 2021, to June 1, 2021. Our organization helped to draft language and collaborated with various entities to provide oral testimony in furtherance of the passage of legislation. In doing so, we contributed to the furtherance of the cause of justice in Nevada and our nation.
  - Some of the Bills we supported include: SB 199-Crown Act I, which sought to provide statutory protections against discrimination based on race-based hairstyles in professional settings and in schools.; SB 50, banning no knock warrants; AB 116 decriminalizing traffic tickets; AB 158, which sought to reduce the impact of disproportionate criminalization of Black and Brown youth throughout Nevada, by prohibiting detention of minors under the age of 19 for a first-time alcohol or cannabis possession offense. Instead, under the proposed legislation, a minor’s first offense may only be punished by mandatory community service and substance use rehabilitation hours; AB 243, which addressed blind sentencing; SB 140, which addresses the post-slavery practice of convict leasing by proposing to provide prisoners with a living wage equivalent to the state minimum wage for any work they provide to the prison industry. This bill also proposed to remove barriers to prisoner re-entry into the economy and general life.
  - Members testified on behalf of the LVNBA in support of these bills, several of which were passed and signed into law by Governor Steve Sisolak.
  - Of note, The Crown Act, now law in Nevada, provides statutory protections against discrimination based on race-based hairstyles by extending legal protection to hair texture and protective styles such as braids, locs, twists, and knots in the workplace and public schools.
- In April 2021, we hosted a Civil Rights Panel in partnership with other affinity bars and organizations, including the ACLU of Nevada, South Asian Bar Association, American Association of Jewish Lawyers and Jurists, Southern Nevada Association of Women Attorneys, Nevada Justice Association, and the Latino Bar Association. Members from each organization were invited to speak on civil rights issues affecting our respective communities, and what that would mean in the post-COVID-19 era. This event was informative and was well attended.
- On April 15, 2021, we hosted guest Speaker, Kristine Kuzemka, as a precursor to Lawyer Wellness Month in May. Kristine Kuzemka is the Director of the Nevada Lawyer Assistance Program with the State Bar of Nevada and talked with us about mental health, how COVID-19 has affected attorneys, and resources available to attorneys from the State Bar of Nevada. We were provided the necessary information to reach out if individual lawyers needed additional resources or assistance.

- In April 2021, President Augusta Massey authored an article in April's edition of the Urban Voice Magazine, titled "10 Common Bankruptcy Questions."
- Also in April 2021, member Marisa Rodriguez was elected to serve on the State Bar of Nevada Board of Governors—the first Latina to do so.
- Our members continued to excel in the community and in their careers.
  - Crislove Igeleke was hired as Deputy City Attorney with the City of Las Vegas.
  - Karl Armstrong was appointed by Governor Sisolak as an Appeals Officer to the Department of Administration.
  - Brittnie Watkins was appointed by Governor Steve Sisolak to serve on the Nevada Gaming Control Board—one of the youngest people ever appointed to this position.
- On May 7, 2021, we co-sponsored a Virtual Workshop CLE event with the Latino Bar Association, titled, "Discovering Your Inner Boss: Introduction to Imposter Syndrome." The guest speaker was Lupita Martinez, who is well regarded in her field and teaches on the subject of Imposter Syndrome.
- Many attendees who occupy various positions in different levels of organizations shared about their individual experiences with Imposter Syndrome. This was a necessary event, as it helped to allay the fears of many junior attorneys who are faced with this dilemma.
- On May 8, 2021, we participated in a run to honor Ahmaud Arbery, who was killed by two civilians in Georgia while engaging in the mundane act of running. We used the hashtag **#IRunWithMaud**. The run was organized by Recording Secretary Angela Cook. We ran to demonstrate that we will not be intimidated in our everyday activities because we have the right to exist and to go about our business without fear of intimidation or death. This run was well supported and gave us the opportunity to fellowship while still observing public health mandates in the state.
- On May 17, 2021, we co-sponsored a Diversity Happy Hour with SNAWA, LBA and SABA. This event was in person at an outdoor venue. It gave us the opportunity to network with other affinity bars.
- On May 29, 2021, we co-sponsored yet another event—a Criminal Record Sealing Training in collaboration with the Cannabis Equity and Inclusion Community (CEIC), ACLU of Nevada, and Nevada Legal Services. We trained participants on how to seal their criminal records. This was to empower attendees to address an important aspect of their lives that could bring positive social and economic change.

- June 2021 was a whirlwind month with various activities demanding our input and our attention. On June 12, 2021, we held **Breathe III: Reckoning with Our Caste**, the third in a series of social justice events spurred by the death of George Floyd. This event connected the community with various stakeholders to continue the important work of racial justice. The two previous events, Breathe I and II served as a vigil for George Floyd after his death, and then as a space where the community came to hold discussions and create actionable plans to address the issues of Black bodies being valued/undervalued. The Breathe III event was organized by the **Racial Justice Committee** in collaboration with **Brittnie Watkins**, our vice president, **Claytee White**, the inaugural director of the Oral History Research Center for the University of Nevada, Las Vegas Libraries, **John R. Bailey**, managing partner of the law firm Bailey Kennedy, and LVNBA founding member and supporter.
- The book *Caste* by Isabel Wilkerson was the focal point of our discussion. Earlier in the year, John Bailey donated a copy of Wilkerson's book to every member who wanted one. Isabel Wilkerson once said in an interview with NPR: "Caste is the term that is more precise [than race]; it is more comprehensive, and it gets at the underlying infrastructure that often we cannot see, but that is there undergirding much of the inequality and injustices and disparities that we live with in this country." This was our diving off point, and it spurred heartfelt and serious discussions about the ways caste plays a role in American society and what it will take to dismantle that system. These discussions took us through a gamut of emotions, but they were always informative, and to some extent, healing. At the end of the book discussion, the attendees competed against each other in a pop quiz game of sorts. The questions tested attendee's knowledge and understanding of *Caste*. The winners were awarded another of Ms. Wilkerson's best-selling novels: *The Warmth of Other Suns*.
- On June 15, 2021, we held our Annual Diversity Luncheon. This event was co-sponsored with Judge Nancy Allf to welcome ABA Diversity Clerk, Julie N. Joseph, to the Las Vegas community.
  - Julie is currently attending UC Davis School of Law and expects to graduate in 2022.
  - This was a hybrid virtual/in person event and LVNBA members shared their experience, areas of practice, community involvement, and advice, both on professional matters and on local food and culture.
- On June 19, 2021, the President of the United States declared Juneteenth a federal holiday. Juneteenth commemorates the day news of the Emancipation Proclamation reached Texas and is celebrated by African Americans all over the United States. The LVNBA was already engaged in several activities geared toward commemorating Juneteenth, including service through giving.
  - We partnered with Councilman Cedric Crear to buy and donate a pallet of school supplies for an underserved high school in Las Vegas.
  - We also gave away a laptop to one lucky high school student.

- Our members and the community at large donated to our fundraising efforts and we raised over \$2,000 for the cause.
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- June 16-19 of 2021, we attended the State Bar of Nevada's annual bar Conference in San Diego California. This year's theme was "Waves of Change" and focused on issues of social justice, diversity and inclusion, and national lessons that might inspire local action.
  - Our members showed up and showed out, as they were front and center with CLE presentations on diversity, equity and inclusion and mental health.
  - CLEs presented by members were as follows:
    - LVNBA members Augusta Massey, Brittne Watkins, and Claudia Agauyo co-presented a CLE on implicit bias, diversity, equity, and inclusion in the legal profession.
    - LVNBA members Bryan Scott, Uri Clinton, retired Justice Michael Douglas and Ann Morgan, co-presented a CLE on the importance of a diversity pipeline.
    - LVNBA member Caleb Green co-presented a CLE on Mental Health. Specifically, he spoke on "helping young lawyers succeed."
- Several of our members received awards at the state bar conference: **Bryan Scott, City Attorney for the City of Las Vegas** was awarded the inaugural Trailblazer of the Year Award. The State Bar of Nevada's Trailblazer Award recognizes attorneys, firms, and organizations that have been leaders in promoting diversity, inclusion, and equity, or that have led efforts to support diverse organizations or groups. Bryan Scott embodies this individual, and it was decided that moving forward, this award would be named in his honor. Bryan Scott was also the first Black president of the State Bar of Nevada.
- Members Augusta Massey and Claudia Aguayo were awarded the Volunteer of the Year Award for the work they each do in their organizations. Specifically, the State Bar of Nevada presents this award for outstanding volunteer service. The selection committee gives primary consideration to nominees who have served or continue to serve on state bar committees or sections and have demonstrated a commitment to the advancement of the profession and to the protection of the public.
- Also in June, as a result of the amazing grant writing abilities of President Augusta Massey and member Mary Bacon, an LVNBA grant request for funds from the state bar's Program Development Grant initiative was approved and the LVNBA was awarded: (a) a \$15,000 one-time contribution to the Annual Gala Scholarship; and (b) a \$3,000 (one year grant) for mentorship lunches. These Grants are awarded to support education programs, pipeline programs, wellness initiatives, scholarship programs, and diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- On June 26, 2021 we hosted a Mentor-Mentee Mixer. This was organized by Mentorship Committee Chair Renee Becker. At this event, mentors and law school students had the

opportunity to meet and get to know one another. This was an in-person, outdoor event hosted at the Chair's home.

- July 2021 was deliberately a slow month for us, so that we could recharge after the hectic June schedule. On July 15, our members supported the South Asian Bar Association Meet the Judges event.
- In July 2021, Caleb Green was presented with a Leadership Recognition for the 2020-2021 ABA year for his work on behalf of ABA Section of Intellectual Property Law.
- In August 2021, the LVNBA sponsored a pallet of school supplies valued at over \$500 to a school from a historically underserved ward. These events were organized by Back to School Committee Chair Maliq Hendricks. One of our Members, Tyre Gray, donated \$1,000 to this initiative. From the funds raised, a MacBook was awarded to one high school scholarship recipient.
- Executive board elections for the 2021-2023 term was held from August 12-28, 2021. A new executive board was elected and will be sworn in at the Annual Scholarship Gala on October 16, 2021.
- On Saturday August 28, 2021, we partnered with Senator Dina Neal and local law enforcement officers to co-sponsor the 12th Annual Youth and Justice Forum. This forum has grown over the years and was born out of the need to address interactions between Black and Brown youth and law enforcement in the wake of Trayvon Martin's killing at the hands of a purported neighborhood watchman. The event was held in person and saw a sizable turnout despite the challenges navigating the pandemic. The forum targets youth up to 18 years old. We engaged in discussions about individual rights and responsibilities, especially our first amendment rights and our rights against search and seizure, specifically, in the context of protests or while at school. Our members taught the legal lessons and used scenarios and reenactment of cases to illustrate and underscore these themes. The youth were eager to engage in the material, ask questions, and give their perspectives.
- In August, Caleb Green, LVNBA Racial Justice Committee Chair, was one of four attorneys appointed as an inaugural Presidential Fellow with the National Bar Association. This opportunity will prepare him to be a national leader, advancing the NBA's ambitious agenda in the areas of voting rights, combating police brutality, advocating criminal justice reform and reparations, and eliminating public health disparities based on race.
- On Saturday September 18, 2021, the LVNBA Mentorship Committee partnered with BLSA (Black Law Students Association) to host a Panel Discussion on Mentorship, Career Advancement, and Networking.



- The distinguished panelists engaged with students and other attendees on the specific topic of "Career Paths: What else can you do with your law degree?"
- This was an in-person event held at the William S. Boyd School of Law and was well attended.
- Despite the public health protocols that were observed, mentors and mentees were still able to network with each other and interact with panelists.
- Panelists included: **Jason Frierson**, Speaker of the Nevada State Assembly; **Sandra Douglass Morgan**, immediate past chair of the Nevada Gaming Control Board and the first African American City Attorney in the State of Nevada; **Athar Haseebullah**, Executive Director, ACLU of Nevada; **Yolanda Miller**, attorney for the Children's Attorneys Project, Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada, and former Judge Advocate General, U.S. Air Force; and **Renee Becker**, Associate General Counsel-Securities and Assistant Secretary at Opendoor Technologies Inc., and LVNBA chair of the Mentorship Committee.
- This panel provided valuable information to both law students and young attorneys on how to explore non-legal careers and navigate non-traditional legal jobs.

The LVNBA will cap off this Board's tenure on October 16, 2021, with our 40th Anniversary Gala. The theme of the gala is ruby red and we are actively raising over \$40,000 in scholarship monies to give back to law students and to fulfil the mission of our organization.

It should be noted that when this current board was sworn in, there were not enough officers to fill all the positions. Currently, we have 65 members and have collected \$4,807 in dues this year. This board started small, but has grown and even thrived, regardless of a global pandemic and civil unrest. We are a small organization, but tasked with the responsibility of providing guidance, direction, programming, and leadership to all our members in the entire state. We have done so much with what we have and are continuously breaking glass ceilings every day. We strive to break stereotypes and are actively working to be agents of change all across Nevada, from the bench to several key leadership high stakes positions. We do not back down, we move strategically, and we do not give up. Our organization is strong, motivated, hungry, and works extremely hard. And together, we have accomplished a lot.

Thank you so much for taking the time to learn about our vibrant organization and for allowing us to showcase our accomplishments this term. Pictures can be provided upon request. Here's a link to our Facebook page to join us: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/lvnba/?ref=bookmarks>. If we can serve you or the community in any way, please do not hesitate to let us know.

Respectfully,

LVNBA Board