SPOKANE COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION
1908

Calendar Call

SEPTEMBER 9, 2024

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

by Darren M. Digiacinto, SCBA Board President

Greetings to all of you and I hope that you are all taking advantage of our remaining warm weather before we transition into what will hopefully be a beautiful fall season. The SCBA fiscal year starts anew each September and as such, I want to take this opportunity to briefly introduce myself, to provide some sincere thanks to our stellar team, and to start to identify some of the things that are in my priorities as we start this new SCBA year.

I became a licensed attorney in 2007, following graduation from the Seattle University School of Law. Following the bar exam, I was fortunate to have the opportunity to clerk for the Division II Court of Appeals in Tacoma for several wonderful judges, the Honorable Marywave Van Deren and the late C.C. Bridgewater. We came to Spokane when my lovely wife Corey decided that she too wanted to go to law school and chose Gonzaga. We never left.

Corey and I are the proud pup parents of Rider, short for I Know You Rider, our current rescue who looks like a black lab with short corgi legs. Rider, along with Casey Jones, who we had the pleasure of enjoying over the last fifteen years, are both named after Grateful Dead songs, which likely betrays a bit of my personal interests. When I am not at Winston & Cashatt, where I have been happily situated since 2017, I spend my free time listening to all sorts of music, whether live or otherwise, which I believe keeps me sane. I am also an avid reader and enjoy snow skiing in the winters and working in my yard and playing golf, albeit not very well, during the summers.

I have served on the SCBA for several years and have seen it navigate the pandemic along with its transition through several executive directors and staff members. The SCBA is not done with its transitions either, so keep an eye out for some exciting updates and further changes as we navigate bridging issues including technology, changes in generational preferences, and the well-deserved and earned retirements of many of our Baby Boomer members. We are still working to find creative and engaging ways to get our members together for in-person discussions and networking following the pandemic. In a generation of AI and electronic communication, there remains, in my opinion, great personal and professional value to keeping direct communication and actual engagement front and center. Change is scary and we are admittedly living in a very divided nation at present. That being said and while there are always exceptions to any generalization, the members of this bar have always been, in my experience, collegial with one another and with the bench. And more importantly, our members are able to do so while professionally serving the various needs of their clients, which is really our measure after all.

My priorities this year will include fostering civility and professionalism within our membership and community while also creatively working to update and streamline our bar processes. We have great challenges in front of us but that has never stopped this membership before and it won't do so this year.

While my intention is to be forward-looking, as we begin our new fiscal year I do want to look back briefly to express my sincere gratitude to our past president, Emily Arneson and our deputy ED Mark Wardrop for all of their efforts to support the SCBA while we looked for a new Executive Director. I also want to recognize the significant time and energy given to this group by Nick Pontarolo, our incoming President Elect, and Lisa Dickinson, our incoming Secretary. I will share more about them in future articles as the amount of time and effort they have contributed to get this group ready for the tasks ahead leaves me in awe. Finally, I want to welcome our new ED, Cindy Johnson, whose creative approach and willingness to serve are exactly what the SCBA needs right now. With that, I say cheers to a great upcoming year.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

September

11 EDEP Section Board Elections
26 New Admittee Swearing-in Ceremony

October

24 Title 11 GAL Court Visitor Training - Day 1
25 Title 11 GAL Court Visitor Training - Day 2

Dates & events listed herein subject to change

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SPOKANE COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION
CALENDAR CALL
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EDEP SECTION BOARD ELECTIONS

The SCBA's EDEP section meeting next Wednesday, September 11th at 5:30 pm. held at Gander and Ryegrass, 404 West Main Avenue.

We will be voting on board positions. Please email me with nominations or be prepared to make a nomination at the meeting. Feel free to nominate yourself!

- President Elect
- Secretary
- Treasurer

RSVPs for the meeting are encouraged, but not required. You can RSVP to Emily Wilson at Emily@SpokaneWTP.com. Please let Emily know if you are interested in serving as chair for the following committees or if you have any questions.

- Education Committee
- Networking/Mentoring Committee
- Legislative Committee

Join Me in Leaving a Legacy of Justice

"I am a longtime supporter of the Legal Foundation of Washington (LFW) and the civil legal aid organizations it supports. The Endowment for Equal Justice helps fund LFW. It is a transparent and responsible 501(c)(3). Including the Endowment in my estate planning was simply the right thing to do. We all care about equal justice. Show you care. Please add the Endowment as part of your legacy."

— PAM DERUSHA

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A CALL TO ACTION:

If you're not thinking about courthouse security each time you walk through the doors, you should be. A special event later this month is your chance to help make our courthouses safer.

By John Allison
Eymann Allison Jones, PS

"Three family members were shot, including two fatally, near a courthouse in Kentucky on Monday before attending a hearing on an emergency protective order, officials said."

ABC News, August 19, 2024

News articles like this from just within the past couple of weeks are a jarring dose of reality, and not only for the judges and court staff working in the courthouse day in and day out. Attorneys going through those doors are just as at risk. We all want and expect a safe route into our system of justice.

But courthouse security remains a growing issue throughout the country. If you're thinking things are different here somehow, consider this sobering tally from Washington state's Board for Judicial Administration in its 2020-2022 tracking of courthouse incident reports here:

In 2022 174 incidents were recorded, a 3.6% increase from 2021, and a 14.7% decrease from 2020. Of the 174 incidents, 47.7% (83) were deemed to be critical incidents presenting a significant risk of harm to individuals, a 22.7% increase from 2021, and a 15.9% increase from 2020 during the same timeframe. This continues a trend of increasing severity of the incidents Washington Courthouses are experiencing. Threats to judicial staff have increased 63.2% since 2021 and 76.3% since 2020.

https://www.courts.wa.gov/programs_orgs/pos_bja/?fa=pos_bja.courtSecurityTF

I am one of the eastern Washington Trustees serving the Foundation for Washington State Courts, a non-profit organization comprised of attorneys, retired judges and executives raising funds to provide grants to courthouses, large and small, throughout the state. Other local Trustees include retired Judges Harold Clarke and Jerome Leveque, and attorneys Alison Turnbull of KS Lawyers, and Amy Mensik of Williams Kastner.

Over the past several years, the Foundation has focused on funding security improvements as requested by our courts.

The Foundation has recently awarded grants for these security improvements and more:

- Improved security camera systems
- Metal detector wands
- Gun lockers
- Panic alarms

Items like these have been placed around the state thanks in part to Foundation funds. At this moment, the focus is here in Spokane and neighboring courthouses in Cheney and Airway Heights, and we need your help.

Join us on Wednesday, September 25 for a reception and fundraiser to make our courthouses more secure. Hear from local judges about their concerns. 5:00 to 6:30 p.m., the Lukins & Annis offices, 717 W. Sprague Ave., No. 1600.

The critical need for newer technology and tools for securing our courts, as usual, meets the roadblock of a never-ending fight for budget dollars in every aspect of courthouse operations. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, Washington State ranked 50 out of 50 in state funding for trial courts in 2012. In the 12 years since that study, little has changed.

"That's one of the downsides of working within a county government system in Washington state," says Spokane County Superior Court Judge Tony Hazel. "Because we typically get much fewer funds compared to other states, it leaves a burden on the local county which itself is always in a state of financial resource crisis."

Continued on Page 4

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Judge Hazel chairs a newly re-formed Spokane courthouse campus security committee seeking ways to fund much needed improvements. "For example, we have an archaic camera system that doesn't produce a very high quality image. That has been a complaint of law enforcement when they need to investigate incidents that occur in the courthouse," Judge Hazel says. "We also currently have a number of blind spots without camera coverage where we can't really see what's going on."

An enhanced camera system is on the court's wish list, and courts in Airway Heights and Cheney also have made grant requests for security improvements. A Foundation grant – coupled with contributions from the local bar, can go a long way to filling the budget gap that keeps these improvements from being implemented.

And again, since we all personally benefit from a safer courthouse, I write this as a request for you and your firm to consider this opportunity to help make a difference.

Join judges and colleagues for this important Foundation reception on **Wednesday, September 25** from 5:00 to 6:30 p.m. at the Lukins & Annis offices, 717 W. Sprague Avenue, No. 1600 downtown.

All donations will be greatly appreciated by the judges and court staff who work in the courts every day.

** If you plan to attend, please register here now allowing us to keep an accurate count of attendees:

https://www.wdtl.org/ev_calendar_day.asp?date=9/25/2024&eventid=401

You or your firm can also make a direct contribution now in advance of the reception and join us knowing you have already made your important commitment.

To learn more about the Foundation's work or to make that direct contribution, visit our website at www.fwacourts.org.

UPDATES FROM SUPERIOR COURT

There have been some changes to the Family Law forms! The Domestic Case Schedule Order is modified to align the **Last Day to File Confirmation of Mediation** with the **Last Day for Motion to Change Trial**; approximately two months before trial.

Additionally, the Domestic Trial Management Joint Report (JTMR) has been updated to correct the date that it is due. The JTMR is due **by the pretrial conference**. This is necessary in order to have a meaningful pretrial hearing and we expect the JTMR to be completed entirely. Please include exhibit log an a witness list with actual time anticipated for both parties to question said witness.

Starting September 3, any **relocation hearing or objection to relocation hearing** shall be heard by the assigned Judge. Please contact their Judicial Assistant to get the appropriate day and time for hearing. The Revision process has also been modified. Please review LAR 0.7, specifically section (b) requiring the full transcript, and section (e) **hearing procedure** to prepare yourselves. Revisions will be without oral argument unless authorized. The rule also gives you the process to request oral argument, if necessary.

Lastly, we are excited that Judge Chuang and his assistant Susan Verduzco have been added to the Family Law team! Please welcome them when you see them.

Superior Court has made some changes to the courtroom assignments to maximize our courtroom capacity. Judge Schmidt and his Judicial Assistant have moved over to Juvenile Courtroom #1 and Judge Chuang and his Judicial Assistant have moved into Courtroom 303 for the remainder of 2024.

SCBA WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS SERVICES COORDINATOR

We are proud to introduce a new member to the team, Jennifer Bonds.

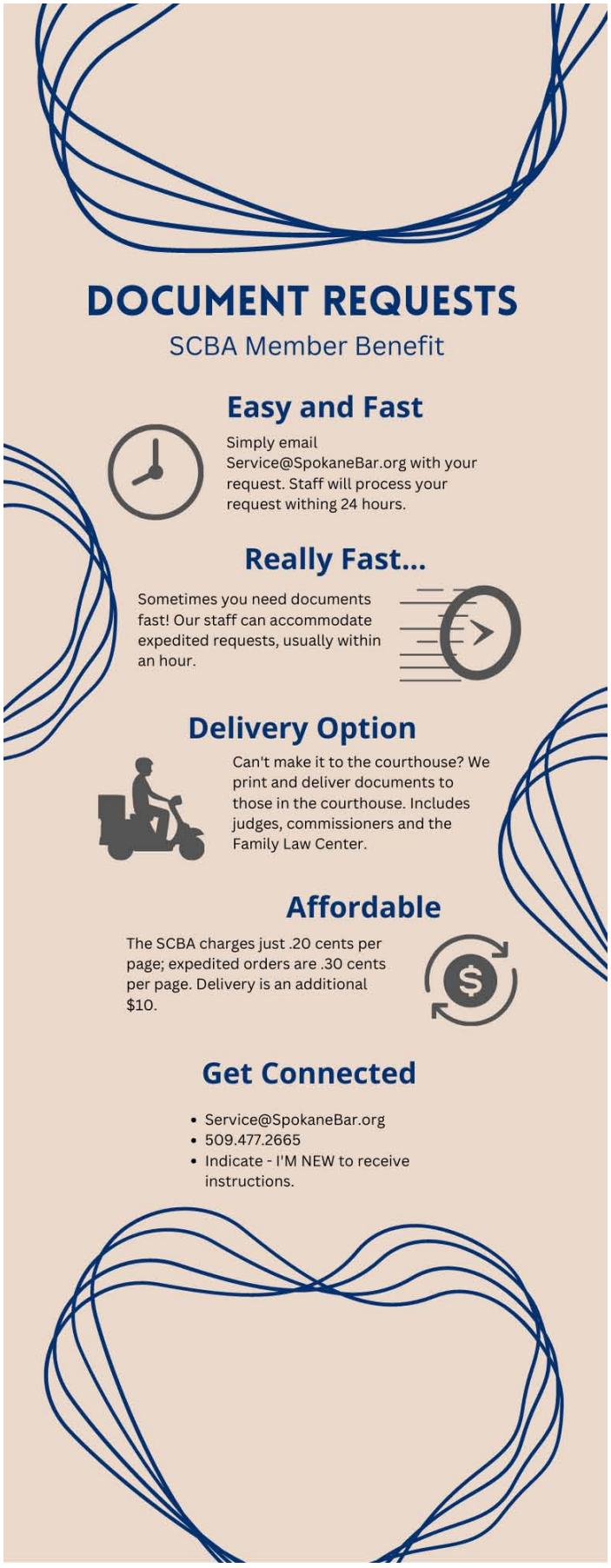
Who am I professionally?
Jennifer Bonds has spent 15 years in the health and property/casualty insurance industry. As a personal independent agent, I excelled in working directly with consumers and insurance companies. With a vast knowledge of multiple insurance products and an understanding of client's unique needs, I was able to provide insurance policy solutions that protected one's health, financial, liability, or physical damage needs.

Who I am personally:
Born to legendary radio DJs, I have had the privilege of living in multiple cities and states—from California to Connecticut. When I moved to Spokane in 2012, I quickly found a place to call home. My oldest child recently graduated from North Central High School and is pursuing a Biochemistry degree at San Diego State University—go Aztecs! Our youngest will graduate high school in 2025 with hopes of attending an HBCU.

Why did I want to work for the SCBA
For the past two years, I've been actively involved in the local Spokane community. My passion for assisting others while removing the pressures of obtaining a sale led me to apply for the Membership Coordinator position with SCBA. I am most excited about the knowledge and experience I'll gain from supporting Spokane County's legal community and the Volunteer Lawyers Program.

Hobbies
I love anything that starts in the kitchen. Which means cooking and baking, especially with music in the background. Holistic health and exercise are an important part of my life. During the week, you can usually find me at an early morning Orangetheory class or biking the Centennial Trail. A California girl at heart with a Washington lifestyle keeps me home in the cold months, but that means more time to watch football games and root for the Seahawks and Zags! I am happiest when the weather is warm, the kids are out of school, and I get to enjoy all the beautiful places Spokane and the PNW has to offer.

Favorite Book: The Color of Water- James McBride
Musical Artist: The Isley Brothers
Food: Tacos



ON THE MOVE

Witherspoon Brajcich McPhee is excited to announce that attorney **Julia Schoffstall** joined our team on July 25, 2024. Julia most recently worked as a Deputy Prosecuting Attorney in Kootenai County Idaho for the past five years. During her time there, Julia's caseload focused on complex felony prosecutions and trials, including crimes against children and homicides. Prior to moving to Idaho, she worked in Virginia as an Assistant Commonwealth's Attorney in Emporia/Greensville County for two and a half years and for King George County for seven months. She also served as a Magistrate in the 11th Judicial District, Region 3 for the Supreme Court of Virginia for a little over a year. Julia is licensed in Idaho and Washington and will be working primarily out of the Coeur d'Alene office. Julia brings a wealth of experience and positive energy to our team.

Witherspoon Brajcich McPhee, PLLC has served individuals and businesses since 1985 and is proud to strengthen its practice areas and its client representation with the addition of Julia. Our growth demonstrates our continued commitment to our existing clients in Washington and Idaho and our dedication to serving the needs of our new and expanding clientele.

Please visit www.workwith.com for additional information on our attorneys.

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Kutak Rock congratulates those included in *The Best Lawyers in America*© 2025 list:

- Adam R. Baird: Public Finance Law
- Geana M. Van Dessel: Commercial Litigation

And, those recognized on the Ones to Watch List:

Alex Fern
Education Law
Municipal Law

Tanya L. Lawless
Public Finance Law

Piskel Yahne Kovarik PLLC Attorneys Named to Washington Super Lawyers and Rising Stars Lists

Piskel Yahne Kovarik PLLC, a Spokane based law firm, announced today that six attorneys at the firm have been named to the 2024 Washington Super Lawyers and Rising Stars lists.

According to Thomson Reuters, a national firm specializing in legal and regulatory resources and author of the lists, says that both Super Lawyers and Rising Stars identify outstanding lawyers from more than 70 practice areas who have attained a high degree of peer recognition and professional achievement.

Piskel Yahne Kovarik's honorees for 2024 are:

Super Lawyers

- Jason T. Piskel
- Nicholas D. Kovarik
- Ryan D. Yahne

Rising Stars

- Whitny L. Norton
- Benjamin J. McDonnell
- Troy D. Sims

The annual selections are based on extensive statewide surveys, an independent research evaluation of candidates, and peer reviews by practice area. Reuters said, "The result is a credible, comprehensive and diverse listing of exceptional attorneys."

Piskel Yahne Kovarik PLLC primarily serves clients in the areas of commercial business litigation, construction litigation, real estate disputes, property development, financial work-outs and employment issues.

For more information about Super Lawyers, visit SuperLawyers.com. For more information on Piskel Yahne Kovarik PLLC, visit pyklawyers.com.

Thank You

to everyone who made the Champions of Justice Breakfast a success!

Please look for the list of sponsors and supporters in the next Calendar Call

COURT VISITOR TRAINING

(PREVIOUSLY KNOWN AS GUARDIAN AD LITEM)
(does not apply to guardianships for Minors)

Helping those that might need help.

A court visitor is an individual who is appointed by the court to inform the court about an individual's best interests for a specific purpose for a specific period of time. This two-day training program prepares you to apply to the program and begin serving our community. Both days of training are required for new registry applicants. Only day 2 is required for current Registry Court Visitors.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 24TH- 8:45AM TO 4:30PM
PATSY CLARK'S MANSION
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 25TH - 8:00AM TO 4:30PM*
GONZAGA SCHOOL OF LAW- BARBIERI COURTROOM

We will be raffling 2 GU Men's BB Tickets for a November game at the end of the training

SPOKANE COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION

2024 Cost:

Single Day: $210

Both Days: $350

Who should attend:

WSBA Licensed Attorneys w/3 years experience

People with a graduate level degree in related field and current license or certification

Visit our website for more information about qualifications

www.spokanebar.org

Sponsored by the Spokane Bar Association & Spokane County Superior Court Guardianship Training Committee

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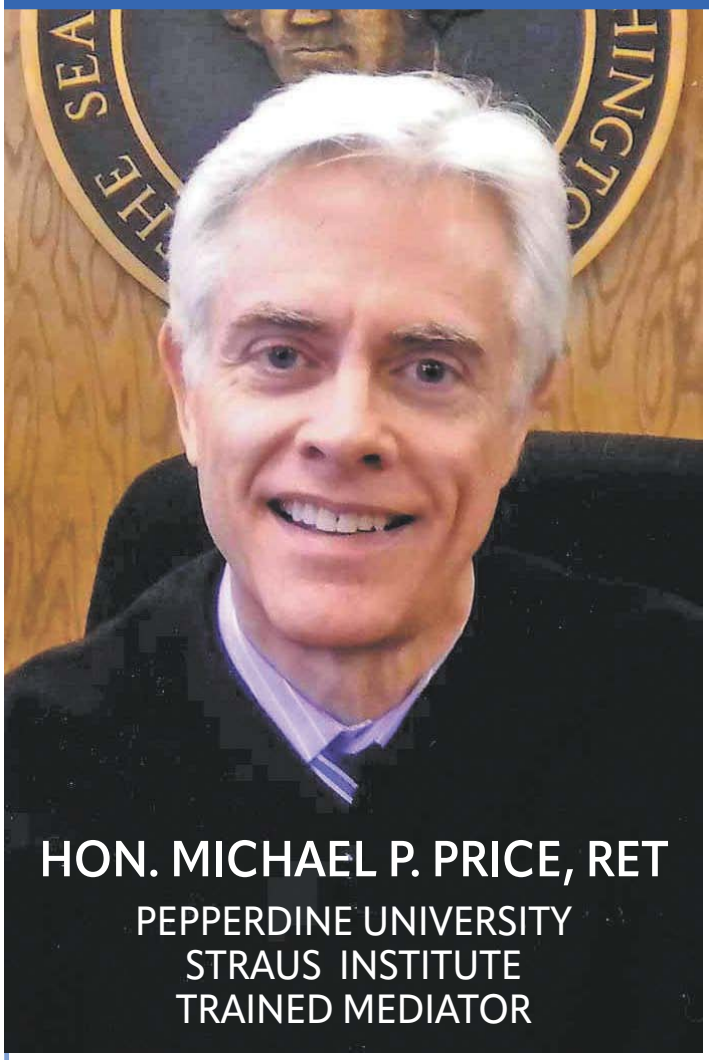

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Family Law

Mediation Services

Paul B. Mack

Attorney Paul B. Mack announces his availability to conduct family law mediations. Paul has many years of practice in the family law area dealing with both simple and complex estates and parenting issues.

To schedule please contact Michelle Nay at (509) 624-2161 or michelle@paulbmack.com

Law Office of Paul B. Mack, PLLC
618 West Riverside Avenue, Suite 300
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Roberts | Freebourn, PLLC is seeking to hire an associate attorney with at least 4 years of experience to work in the areas of employment law, business disputes, personal injury, construction, commercial litigation, and eminent domain. Our office is located downtown Spokane. We are seeking someone who is highly motivated and has shown an ability to excel academically and professionally. **Depending on experience and qualifications, the compensation package is between $120,000 - $200,000**. If you are interested in joining our team, please submit a cover letter and resume to laurenm@robertsfreebourn.com. We are an equal opportunity employer.

Experienced bookkeeper specialized in assisting local law firms with eight years of expertise in keeping local legal practices on track. Our services include routine account management, one-time clean-ups, payroll, and more. We work with you to determine how to best meet your needs! For more information on services and fees, please email: ledgerlaneservices@gmail.com

The WA AGO is **seeking an Assistant Attorney General to work in the Social & Health Services Section** of the Spokane office. Join a collegial team environment where you can protect Washington State's most vulnerable adults. For more information and to apply, please visit: www.careers.wa.gov.

The WA AGO is **seeking an Assistant Attorney General to work in the Torts Section** of the Spokane office. Join a collegial team environment where you can defend the State of Washington in a wide variety of civil lawsuits. For more information and to apply, please visit: www.careers.wa.gov.

Attorney 3 – Counsel for Defense - Spokane County seeks professional attorney to provide advanced defense services to indigent adults and juveniles charged with a crime. $101,780.54 - $142,446.86 annually + excellent benefits. Apply here: https://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/spokanecountywa/jobs/4620304/attorney-3-counsel-for-defense for immediate consideration. Closes 9/12/24.

The Washington State Attorney General's Office has openings in our Yakima, Wenatchee, Kennewick and Vancouver Regional Services' Office for Assistant Attorney Generals to represent the Department of Children Youth and Families (DCYF) in child welfare cases to protect abused and neglected children in dependency, guardianship, and termination of parental rights cases. The subject matter can be difficult, but the work is remarkably rewarding. These cases directly influence the lives of children in our state, in a very meaningful way. The Regional Services Division fosters a collegial, team environment, supports many clients and covers a broad array of subject matters. Collaborative staffing of legal issues is an important part of the division culture. Selected candidates will work in a fast-paced litigation practice entailing frequent state court docket and trial appearances. The ideal candidate will be able to independently handle all aspects of litigation, demonstrate excellent judgment, and have a commitment to providing excellent legal services to the State of Washington. AAG salaries are set between $76,752 and $149,508. The exact amount is set in accordance with Appendix B of the AWAAG CBA. To learn more about this exciting opportunity and to apply, visit the full job postings at www.careers.wa.gov.

Associate Attorney – General Litigation - Williams Kastner, a premier Pacific Northwest trial law firm, seeks an Associate with 2-5 years' experience to support our civil litigation practice in Spokane. Tasks include drafting, reviewing, and revising legal documents, advising clients on legal rights, and assisting in developing and implementing a strategy for defending and litigating the case. A license to practice in the state of Washington is required. Additional Oregon, Alaska, and/or Idaho licenses are a plus. Experience in civil litigation, including toxic tort defense, employment litigation, and transportation/trucking defense litigation, is a plus. The salary range is $135,000 - $150,000 depending on experience, skill level, and ability to perform the essential functions. Benefits included health, dental, vision, and 401K. To apply, please submit your resume, law school transcript, and writing samples to ateags@williamskastner.com or apply here: https://recruiting.paylocity.com/Recruiting/Jobs/Details/2435678.