



LAKE LEGAL VIEWS

Regard for the Public Welfare is the Highest Law

VOLUME 77, NO. 298

LAKE COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION

MAY 2026

PRESIDENT'S PROCLAMATION



**Lydia Gross, Esq.
LCBA President 2025 - 2026**

This year the Law Day theme is The American Dream- No Person is Above the Law and Should be Ensured the Right to Live as Freely as Possible and to Pursue their Dreams. I love this theme in that we all have such different dreams and that makes it so unique to each person. I think about my dreams and how they have largely stayed the same since I was a small child. I sometimes will talk to other people about that, and some people think it is so strange; other people relate to it. I can think back to first grade, and I wanted to be an attorney, I wanted to help homeless animals, I wanted to spend time understanding and preserving history and I wanted to live in the Bailey house. I pretty much have these exact same dreams that I continue to live to this day. They have developed over time, but the core of them are the same.

I think back to one dream I had as a small child. This was not anything grand, but a small dream. There was a picture in my parent's living room of a walkway into a garden. I used to tell my mother that I was going to go into that garden. I said it all the time when I would lay and look at that picture. I remember my mom saying to me, "That garden is probably something in someone's imagination. It may not even exist." I was so certain that I would go into that garden though. Flash forward 20 years and I took a trip to California. On my list, I wanted to go to a mission. It didn't matter what mission it was. I told my host to just pick a mission (there were about 19 to choose from in the area) and we would go. We went to San Juan Capistrano. I took the tour and absolutely loved it there. It had a garden and it was filled with yellow roses (my favorite flower). I took lots of pictures and was raving about it when I got home. I got the pictures developed and showed them to my parents and my mom looked at one picture and gasped. She walked into our living room and held it up to the painting. It was the same doorway in the painting. It had the words etched "Resurgam" above the doorway, so we were certain. Sure enough, I looked up paintings of San Juan Capistrano and the painting in our living room was it.

It just makes me think that sometimes we can achieve our dreams and not even realize it. Dreams are such a vital part of our life, and we must always pursue them.

2026 Annual Meeting

Lake County Bar Association



Friday, June 12th, 2026

Registration: 11:30AM

Begins at: 12:00PM

\$30 per person

*Mooreland Mansion
7800 Clocktower Dr.
Kirkland, OH, 44094*

*Remit payment on the
LCBA Payment Portal or
mail a check made out to the Lake
County Bar Association*



JUDGE'S CORNER



JUVENILE COURT INTRODUCES NEW AND ENHANCED PROGRAMS REDUCING SPENDING

By: Judge Michael DeLeone

It has been an honor to serve as Judge of the Juvenile Division of the Lake County Court of Common Pleas and one of my greatest pleasures has been working with the fantastic staff we have to better serve our constituents. We have successfully launched several new programs which have been recognized at the state level due to their beneficial impact in the lives of juveniles we serve and in the community. These programs were launched while reducing our grant spending by over \$500,000.

I am most proud of our Transitions Program which has received the Linda Modry Young Woman of Achievement award presented by the Ohio Department of Youth Services in conjunction with the Ohio Association of Juvenile Court Judges. The award was also presented to one of our participants in the Transitions Program as an “outstanding female youth.” The award was created to honor young women who have made significant achievements and demonstrated potential for future success, as well as recognizing a court’s effort to habilitate youth through community programing. This juvenile was able to take pottery classes at the Willoughby Fine Arts Center thanks to the Transitions Program. Her resilience and commitment to personal growth led to her being invited back for a second session, being featured on the Fine Arts class schedule cover, and ultimately receiving this award.

The Transitions Program assists youth with resources and opportunities to transition back into natural prosocial activities that promote general wellness, community engagement, and healthy choices. Opportunities for Transitions include martial arts, 4-H, CrossFit, boxing, creative fine arts, gardening and all school-based extra-curricular activities. Our court oversaw 106 youth participate in Transitions last year. I am incredibly grateful for our collaboration with the Ohio Department of Youth Services RECLAIM team, the Lake County local school systems, partnering community agencies and Laketrans to ensure the success of the program.

Additionally, the gardening program at the juvenile detention center was awarded the Outstanding Master Gardener Volunteer Project Award at The Ohio State University Extension Master Gardeners’ annual awards program. The program brings together Master Gardener volunteers and detention center residents to plant, maintain, and harvest a garden on the facility grounds. Produce from the garden is used in the detention center kitchen, with surplus vegetables donated to local charities. In 2025, our youth grew 353 pounds of produce. This produce was used in the detention center kitchen, with excess produce being donated. I was very happy to witness our juveniles first learning how to tend the garden and then experience their hard work by eating the produce they cultivated. For many of them, it was the first time they had done anything like it and gave them a source of something to be proud of. It’s no wonder they do so well at the Master Gardner’s program!

The Juvenile Court has launched a couple additional programs to great early success. One of the most recent changes is the “Lake Effect Program,” a pilot juvenile detention treatment program we began this year. The Lake Effect Program (LEP) is a court-ordered treatment program provided to youth while they are detained in our juvenile detention center. The program operates in two tiers based on length of detention, specifically whether the detention equals or exceeds 90 days determines which of the two tiers a detained juvenile is assigned. The program provides structured, evidence-based treatment and focuses on skill development, accountability, and behavioral changes. Individual treatment focuses on accountability, goals, decision-making, and behavior changes. Group treatment and family treatment, when appropriate, teach and reinforce cognitive behavioral skills, communication, and problem-solving.

The program utilizes incentive-based reinforcement by allowing the participants to earn recognition and rewards based on individual interests and goals which can reinforce skills and behaviors that can be properly applied following release. For example, individuals with an interest in art, music, or sports, are rewarded by good behavior with increased opportunity to engage in those pursuits in an appropriate setting in the detention facility. The ultimate incentive for the participants can be the potential for early release which is at the discretion of judge or magistrate who orders participation in the program.

Already, we have a number of youths participating in the program in both Tier 1 and Tier 2 and one juvenile has been successfully released. I am grateful for everyone who has been involved in making this a success, including our program supervisor and intensive care work, court administration, probation department, and intake department.

Our mediation program has approached its first anniversary and has been incredibly successful. 75 cases were referred to mediation last year, 87% of which resulted in a full or partial agreement. Cases have, on average, spent only two months in mediation, which demonstrates that nearly all cases are able to be prescreened and scheduled within a month of the referral and either are placed back on the Court’s regular docket or successfully closed within another month. This has contributed to our court’s ability to process our cases in a timely manner. In fact, by the end of the year we did not have single civil case beyond time guidelines. Overall, we reduced the number of cases over guidelines by 70% thanks to our amazing court staff and all the members of the bar who work so judiciously for their clients.

Other Juvenile Court programs have continued to make impacts in our community. Our Night Court program has seen 374 cases scheduled over the past year with a 94% appearance rate. 85% of night court cases have been resolved at the initial appearance. 234 youth have participated in our CARTEens program with a 90% completion rate.

Here at the Lake County Juvenile Court, we remain committed to streamlining services, expediting cases, and providing opportunities for youth and families to better themselves and our communities. Due to the success of these programs, I am confident that our youth will continue to better themselves and that Lake County will be a safer and stronger community. I am thankful to serve our community.

Court of Appeals of Ohio

Eleventh Appellate District

Matt Lynch
Presiding Judge

Eugene A. Lucci
Judge

Scott Lynch
Judge

111 High Street, N.E., Warren, Ohio 44481
Telephone: (330) 675-2650
Facsimile: (330) 675-2655
Ashtabula Geauga Lake Portage Trumbull

John J. Eklund
Administrative Judge

Robert J. Patton
Judge

Shibani Sheth-Massacci
Court Administrator/Magistrate/
Administrative Counsel

May 4, 2026

R E L E A S E

GEAUGA

2025-G-0039

STATE OF OHIO, Plaintiff-Appellee v. ROBERT A. LUZAR, JR.,
Defendant-Appellant.

Judgment affirmed. See Opinion and Judgment Entry. [S. LYNCH] (M. LYNCH) (LUCCI)
CRIMINAL - rape; sentencing; contrary to law.

LAKE

2025-L-098

STATE OF OHIO, Plaintiff-Appellee v. DAVID G. ANDERSON,
Defendant-Appellant.

Judgment affirmed. See Opinion and Judgment Entry. [LUCCI] (M. LYNCH) (S. LYNCH)
CRIMINAL LAW - forgery; R.C. 2913.31(A)(3); theft by deception;
R.C. 2913.02(A)(3); knowledge; deception; sufficient evidence;
Crim.R. 29; manifest weight of the evidence; other acts evidence;
Evid.R. 404(B); Evid.R. 403(A); lay opinion testimony; Evid. R. 701;
prosecutorial misconduct; closing argument; felony sentencing; clearly
and convincingly contrary to law; merger; allied offenses of similar
import; R.C. 2941.25; plain error; invited error; App.R. 12(A)(2);
restitution; R.C. 2929.18(A)(1).

TRUMBULL

2025-T-0063

CREDIT ACCEPTANCE CORPORATION, Plaintiff-Appellee v.
ROBERT W. BURSON, III, et al., Defendants-Appellants.

Judgment affirmed. See Opinion and Judgment Entry. [EKLUND] (M. LYNCH) (LUCCI)
CIVIL - Arbitration agreement; Federal Arbitration Act; contract; stay
of case; order compelling arbitration; waiver of right to arbitrate;
acquiescence to judicial proceeding rather than arbitration; conduct
inconsistent with right to arbitrate may constitute waiver; where
arbitration clause contains anti-waiver provisions, the filing of a lawsuit
may not constitute waiver; assignment of arbitration rights.

2025-T-0064 IN THE MATTER OF: G.M.

Judgment affirmed. See Opinion and Judgment Entry. [EKLUND] (M. LYNCH) (LUCCI)
CIVIL - contempt; companionship order; adoption of magistrate's
decision; abuse of discretion; witness concessions not dispositive;
failure to establish reversible error.

2025-T-0072 STATE OF OHIO, Plaintiff-Appellee v. DANNY L. ISOM, Defendant-Appellant.

Judgment reversed and remanded. See Opinion and Judgment Entry. [EKLUND] (M. LYNCH) (LUCCI)

POSTCONVICTION RELIEF - R.C. 2953.21; trial court must make
findings of fact and conclusions of law in dismissal of a petition for
postconviction relief; failure to do so requires reversal and remand.

LCBA LAW DAY USA 2026 KEYNOTE ADDRESS (MAY 1, 2026)

“The Rule of Law and the American Dream”

Judge Eugene A. Lucci, Ohio Eleventh District Court of Appeals

Good morning. It is a genuine honor to stand before you on this Law Day — May 1, 2026. Consider what today is. Two hundred and fifty years ago — on this exact date, May 1, 1776 — the Second Continental Congress was in session in Philadelphia, locked in furious debate about the future of the American colonies. The outcome was not yet certain. Pennsylvania voters had just that day elected an assembly that still favored reconciliation with the Crown. And yet the ideas being hammered out in that hall would, sixty-four days later, become the Declaration of Independence. The American Dream, on May 1, 1776, was still just an argument. A passionate, dangerous, treasonous argument being made by men who were pledging their lives to it.

This year — 2026 — is the semiquincentennial of that moment. The 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, and of the constitutional order that followed. We are not merely commemorating a date. We are taking the measure of an idea that has survived two and a half centuries, two world wars, a Civil War, a Great Depression, and every strain that history could contrive to place upon it. That is the backdrop against which I want to speak to you this morning.

I want to begin with a simple observation — one so obvious we rarely pause to examine what it actually means.

There is an American Dream.

Not just the phrase — but the fact of it. This nation, alone among all the nations on earth, has attached the word “dream” to its very identity. Not a plan. Not a policy. Not a system. A dream. You have never heard of the British Dream. There is no French Dream, no Brazilian Dream, no Chinese Dream, no Canadian Dream. Other nations have histories, traditions, ambitions — some of them magnificent. But none of them has a Dream. None has woven into its national identity the idea that any person — from any background, from any corner of the earth — can arrive with nothing, and through hard work, determination, and the equal protection of the law, build a life that is entirely and irreversibly their own.

Only America has that. And the world knows it — not because we advertised it, but because for more than two centuries, ordinary people from every continent, every language, every religion have voted with their feet. They have crossed oceans and deserts, scaled fences and navigated bureaucracies, risked everything they had for the chance to be here. Not France. Not Canada. Not Scandinavia. Here. The United States receives more legal immigrants annually than any other nation on earth — by a substantial margin. There is a reason for that. This morning I want to tell you what I believe that reason is.

So what is the American Dream? I will tell you first what it is not — because it has been badly misunderstood, and in some quarters, deliberately misrepresented.

The American Dream is not a promise of handouts. It is not a guarantee that the government will provide for you. It is not an entitlement to comfort or equality of result. It is not a license to disregard the law, to jump the line, or to demand that others subsidize your choices.

The Dream is not about what America will give you. It is about what America will not take from you.

The American Dream, properly understood, is a legal proposition. It is the promise that when you stand before our courts, enter our markets, open your business, educate your children,

and live your life — the law will see you as an individual. A human being with dignity. A person with unalienable rights. And it will apply to you the same rules it applies to everyone else.

Equality of opportunity to dream — not equality of dreams.

Those are not the same thing. Confusing them — or deliberately conflating them — has done more damage to this republic than almost any foreign adversary I can name.

For most of human history, this promise did not exist. Where you ended up depended entirely on where you started. Your birth determined your destiny. Your bloodline was your biography. The son of a serf died a serf. The American founding broke that chain. For the first time, a nation declared that rights were not granted by rulers but endowed by God — pre-political, pre-governmental, inalienable — and that the law would protect them for every person equally. That is what people are coming for. Not a check. A chance.

We live in an age when it has become fashionable in certain quarters to describe America as a fundamentally flawed nation — racist at its core, misogynistic by design, a culture so deplorable it is not worth defending, let alone celebrating.

And yet people are crossing deserts on foot, traversing seas in barely seaworthy vessels, standing for hours in consulate lines around the world, waiting years — sometimes decades — for the chance to live here. Not in France. Not in Cuba. Not in Denmark. Not in Venezuela. Here. This deplorable place. This is where they are going.

I ask the people who insist America is beyond redemption a simple question — with genuine curiosity, not contempt.

If this country is what you say it is — why is everyone trying so desperately to get in?

The people voting with their feet are not fooled. Word has traveled for two hundred and fifty years — to remote villages, isolated provinces, politically controlled corners of the world. The word is this: in America, there is a rule of law. Courts exist. Contracts are honored. You can build something and keep it. Your daughter can go to school. No strongman can walk through your door and take what is yours.

People do not risk their lives to reach a deplorable nation. They flee deplorable nations. The direction of the traffic tells you everything you need to know.

And let me be precise about one thing: that is not an argument for lawless immigration. The rule of law applies to immigration as it applies to everything else. A nation governed by law must have laws governing who enters, how they enter, and under what conditions they remain. Disobeying those laws is not part of the Dream — it is a repudiation of the very principle that makes the Dream worth pursuing. You cannot claim the Dream while ignoring the law that sustains it.

Nor can you claim the Dream while refusing to become part of the nation that offers it. This brings me to something I believe is essential and too often left unsaid: assimilation. Assimilation is the process by which a person who has come to a new country adopts its language, laws, customs, and civic identity as their own — not as a guest, but as a full and permanent member of the national community. It is critical because a nation of laws can only endure if the people who live under those laws share a common allegiance to them — for a republic that cannot count on its members to claim it, know it, and defend it will eventually find that no one does. The Dream has always required it. Not the erasure of heritage — no one is asked to forget where they came from. But the embrace of a common national identity. A shared civic language. A genuine belonging to this people, this republic, this constitutional order.

My father came to this country from Pacentro, a small mountain town in Abruzzo, Italy. He was proud of where he came from. But he did not come to America to remain Italian. He came

to become American. He was not an Italian-American, or an American-Italian. He was an American — who happened to have been born in Italy. He learned the language.

He learned the customs. He worked alongside people who looked nothing like him and shared nothing of his background, and he built with them the common life of a common country. That is what assimilation means. Not surrender. Investment. A decision that this place, these people, this law — is mine now. I am responsible for it. And it is responsible for me.

In 1776, the men who signed the Declaration came from different colonies, different religions, different professions, different temperaments. They disagreed about nearly everything except one thing: that they were no longer British subjects. They were Americans. The act of founding was itself an act of assimilation — *e pluribus unum*, out of many, one. That motto is 250 years old this year. It has not expired.

How did this nation come to make such a promise in the first place? In 1776, that group of men — brilliant, flawed, and in historical terms utterly improbable — declared that certain truths were self-evident: that all men are created equal, endowed by their Creator with unalienable rights, and that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness. They did not say the government grants these rights. They said these rights are endowed by our Creator. Pre-political. The government does not give them — and therefore cannot take them away.

Eleven years later, the Framers wrote the Constitution — not as poetry, but as enforceable law. Madison understood that men are not angels, and so they built separated powers, checks and balances, an independent judiciary, and a Bill of Rights — all resting on one load-bearing principle: no one is above the law. Not the President. Not a judge. Not a billionaire. Not a mob. John Adams captured it: a government of laws, and not of men.

That phrase is 246 years old. It is still the most accurate description of what we are trying to maintain. The Constitution that flowed from the Declaration was not a conclusion. It was a commission — handed to each generation to carry forward.

Now — the Dream is an individual proposition. It always has been. No group has ever pursued happiness. Individuals do — one person at a time, making choices, bearing consequences, building lives. And yet there is a growing impulse to stop seeing people as individuals and see them instead as members of groups — assigning guilt, privilege, grievance, or victimhood based not on what a person has done, but on the category into which they were born. The Fifth Amendment says no person shall be deprived of life, liberty, or property without due process of law. No person. The Fourteenth Amendment guarantees every person the equal protection of the laws. Every person. Individually. One at a time. This language was not accidental. The Founders built a legal system designed to see the individual first, last, and always.

The great collectivist experiments of the twentieth century — every last one — ended in poverty, oppression, and ruin. Not despite their idealism, but because of it. When you subordinate the individual to the collective, you remove the one thing standing between a human being and the raw power of the state: his individual, unalienable, legally protected rights. The American answer to inequality is not collectivism. It is the rule of law, applied to every individual, without exception and without favoritism.

I have spent more than fifty years inside the American justice system. For thirteen years I wore a badge and enforced the law on the streets. The rule of law is the line between justice and vengeance — the reason a suspect has rights even when you are certain he is guilty, because the moment you abandon those rights for him, you have abandoned them for everyone. Then I spent twenty years as an attorney. The adversarial system is the most reliable engine for finding truth human beings have ever devised — not because it is perfect, but because the rules do not favor

either side. For the past twenty-six years I have served on the bench — twenty-two years as a common pleas trial judge, now in my fourth year as an appellate judge. I have affirmed verdicts I found personally distasteful, because the law required it. I have reversed verdicts I would have preferred to uphold, because the law required it. That is the rule of law. It applies the same standard to the person before the court — this person, this case, this set of facts — and it lets the law speak.

My father arrived from Pacentro with nothing but his hands, his faith, and his willingness to work. By every collective measure our current discourse likes to apply, he was among the least privileged people in this country at the time — an immigrant laborer, a Catholic with an accent and rough hands. But he had one thing.

He had the same law as everyone else.

Not a guarantee of success. Just the law, applied to him the same way it was applied to everyone else. He became American — fully, without reservation — and under that law he built a life. His children built on what he built. And his children's children stand in places like this one.

That is the American Dream. Not a handout. Not a guarantee. The equality of opportunity to try — under a rule of law that sees you not as a category to be managed, but as a person. A human being, endowed by your Creator with dignity and rights that no government gave you and no government may take away.

On this semiquincentennial — this 250th year of the American experiment — that promise is worth pausing over. Worth honoring. Worth defending. The men in that Philadelphia hall on May 1, 1776 had not yet written the Declaration. They were still arguing. But they were arguing about the right things. And sixty-four days later, they got it right. The question for our generation is whether we will.

More than fifty years ago, I raised my right hand and swore to uphold the constitutions and laws of the United States and the State of Ohio. Every time I renew that oath, I think about my father — and about what it meant to him that the law was there. It is a promise to every person who has ever stood before a court in this country and trusted, sometimes against considerable evidence, that the rules would be applied fairly.

On this Law Day, I ask each of you — judges, lawyers, police officers, public officials and employees, students, and citizens — to renew that promise in your own way. Not by reciting an oath, but by living one. In the courtroom, in the community, and especially in the quiet choices you make when no one is watching.

The American Dream endures because the rule of law endures. It endures because each generation chooses, again, to honor it. Let each of us leave this room today committed to making that choice.

Thank you.



★ Law Day 2026



Rule of Law and the
American Dream

***THE LAKE COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION
49TH LAW DAY BREAKFAST***

★ Law Day  2026



**Rule of Law and the
American Dream**

***Friday, May 1st, 2026
Pine Ridge Country Club
30605 Ridge Road, Wickliffe, OH 44092***

***Keynote Speaker:
The Honorable Eugene A. Lucci
11th District Court of Appeals***

Law Day, celebrated on May 1 and throughout the month of May, has been a visible part of American legal culture since President Dwight D. Eisenhower established it in 1958 to celebrate the rule of law in a free society.

Eisenhower, a former five-star Army general during World War II, saw first-hand what happens when the rule of law breaks down. As the Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Force, he directed multi-lateral military operations on land, sea, and air in Europe.

Every year, the American Bar Association suggests a Law Day theme and offers resources, programming, and tips to assist in organizing classroom and community activities.

The 2026 Law Day theme is “The Rule of Law and the American Dream.” The rule of law—the idea that no person is above the law—is what ensures the rights of the people to live their lives as freely as possible and to pursue their dreams.

The ABA encourages all Americans to recognize Law Day on May 1, 2026, and to reflect on how the rule of law ensures all Americans have the ability to fulfill their dreams.

★ Law Day  2026



**Rule of Law and the
American Dream**

STATEMENT BY DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER

34TH PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES: 1953 - 1961

THURSDAY--MAY FIRST--has by proclamation been designated "Law Day." The reason is to remind us all that we as Americans live, every day of our lives, under a rule of law.

Freedom under law is like the air we breathe. People take it for granted and are unaware of it--until they are deprived of it. What does the rule of law mean to us in everyday life? Let me quote the eloquent words of Burke: "The poorest man may, in his cottage, bid defiance to all the forces of the Crown. It may be frail; its roof may shake; the wind may blow through it; the storms may enter; the rain may enter--but the King of England cannot enter; all his forces dare not cross the threshold of that ruined tenement !"

But the rule of law does more than ensure freedom from high-handed action by rulers. It ensures justice between man and man however humble the one and however powerful the other. A man with five dollars in the bank can call to account the corporation with five billion dollars in assets--and the two will be heard as equals before the law. The law, however, has not stopped here. It has moved to meet the needs of the times. True, it is good that the King cannot enter unbidden into the ruined cottage. But it is not good that men should live in ruined cottages.'

The law in our times also does its part to build a society in which the homes of workers will be invaded neither by the sovereign's troops nor by the storms and winds of insecurity and poverty. It does this, not by paternalism, welfarism and hand-outs, but by creating a framework of fair play within which conscientious, hard-working men and women can freely obtain a just return for their efforts.

This return includes not only good wages and working conditions, but insurance as a fight against the insecurities of injury, unemployment and old age. In the words of a great American lawyer: "The law must be stable, but it must not stand still."

Another direction in which the rule of law is moving is that of displacing force in relations among sovereign countries. We have an International Court of Justice. We have seen the exercise of an international police function, both in the United Nations force in Korea, and in the United Nations force assigned to the Gaza Strip. We have agreements in Article II of the United Nations Charter to the most fundamental concepts of international conduct.

We have elaborate rules of international law--far more complete and detailed than most people realize. More than once, nations have solemnly outlawed war as an instrument of national policy, most recently in the Charter of the United Nations. We have, in short, at least the structure and machinery of an international rule of law which could displace the use of force. What we need now is the universal will to accept peaceful settlement of disputes in a framework of law.

As for our own country, we have shown by our actions that we will neither initiate the use of force or tolerate its use by others in violation of the solemn agreement of the United Nations Charter. Indeed, as we contemplate the destructive potentialities of any future large-scale resort to force, any thoughtful man or nation is driven to a sober conclusion.

In a very real sense, the world no longer has a choice between force and law. If civilization is to survive, it must choose the rule of law. On this Law Day, then, we honor not only the principle of the rule of law, but also those judges, legislators, lawyers and law-abiding citizens who actively work to preserve our liberties under law.

Let history record that on Law Day free man's faith in the rule of law and justice is greater than ever before. And let us trust that this faith will be vindicated for the benefit of all mankind.

2025 - 2026

Law Day Committee

Lori R. Kilpeck, Co-Chair

John Thomas, Co-Chair

J. Charles Ruiz-Bueno

James R. Dugan

Jeffrey W. Fram

Darya J. Klammer

Judge Paul Malchesky

Susan Seacrist

2025 - 2026

Lake County Bar Association Executive Officers

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PROGRAM

Welcome

John Thomas

Co-Chair of Law Day

Pledge of Allegiance

Invocation

Robin Stanley

Law Day Art Winner

Karla Alfaro

Law Day Essay Winner

Caitlin Monaco

Lake County Bar Association President Remarks

Lydia Gross

LCBA President

Recognition of Sponsors

Jodi Tomaszewski President's Award

David Farren, Lake County Public Defender's Office

Liberty Bell Award

Mary Jean Donovan

Introduction of Keynote Speaker

The Honorable Eugene A. Lucci

The 11th District Court of Appeals

Benediction

Robin Stanley

Closing Remarks

Lori Kilpeck

Co-Chair of Law Day

2026 Law Day Art Winner

By: Karla Alfaro, 4th Grade, Longfellow Elementary-Eastlake

Teacher: Alyssa Saluan



2026 Law Day Essay Winner

By: Caitlin Monaco, 12th Grade, Mentor High School

Teacher: Lori Cohen

The American Dream is not defined by wealth, power, or individual success. I believe that it is defined by fairness. At its heart lies a simple but powerful goal: no person is above the law, and every individual has the right to live freely and pursue their dreams. This promise keeps us together as a nation, sustaining the foundation of a democracy that strives, even in its imperfections, toward justice for all. The Constitution acts as a unifying force, bridging differences in background, belief, and identity. It is a system where laws are meant to apply equally, protecting both the powerful and the vulnerable. This idea that justice does not favor one group over another is what transforms a collection of individuals into a collective “We.” Without it, the American Dream would become exclusive rather than shared. Yet, the strength of this dream depends on participation. Democracy is not passive; it requires effort from ordinary people every day. Whether through civic engagement, public service, or simply treating others with dignity, each action contributes to the broader goal of unity. The phrase *E pluribus unum*, “Out of many, one,” reflects this responsibility. Our differences do not weaken us, they challenge us to listen, collaborate, and grow stronger together.

However, the American Dream is not static. It evolves as society confronts inequality and works to correct it. Throughout history, individuals and communities have pushed the nation closer to its ideals, demanding that the law truly serve everyone. These efforts remind us that freedom must be protected and expanded continuously. To live freely is not only to pursue personal success but also to ensure others can do the same. This is a personal strength that I aspire to apply to every action of my life. I intend to go into law and striving for equality is a trait that I plan to implement into my practice to make a change in our country. When we defend fairness and equality, we reinforce the belief that opportunity should not depend on who you are, but on what you strive to achieve. This shared commitment transforms individual dreams into a collective reality.

The American Dream, then, is not a guarantee, but it is a responsibility. It calls on us to uphold justice, respect the law, and support one another in the pursuit of possibility. Only by working together can we fulfill its promise and ensure that freedom remains not just an ideal, but a lived experience for all.

In Memory of
Jodi Littman Tomaszewski, Esq.

THE NAMESAKE OF THE LAKE COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION'S PRESIDENT AWARD



The Jodi Littman Tomaszewski Memorial Scholarship Fund seeks to endow women who possess the drive, passion, and altruistic spirit of its namesake by giving them access to financial resources to pursue the powerful tool of a law degree.

www.thejltfund.org

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- 2015 - Albert L. Purola, Esq.
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- 2020 - Cancelled - Pandemic
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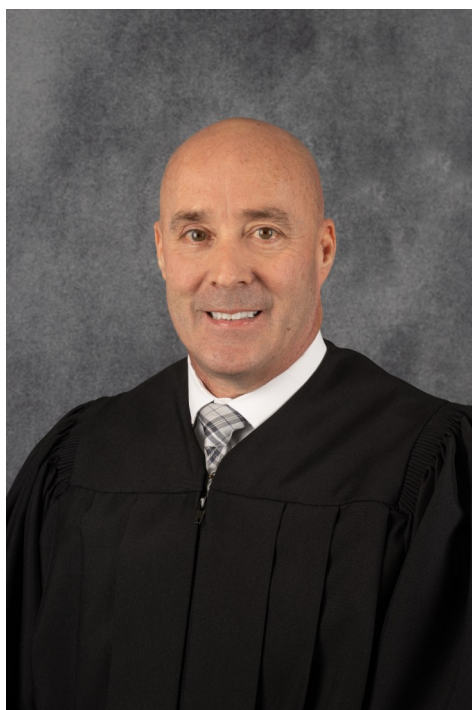
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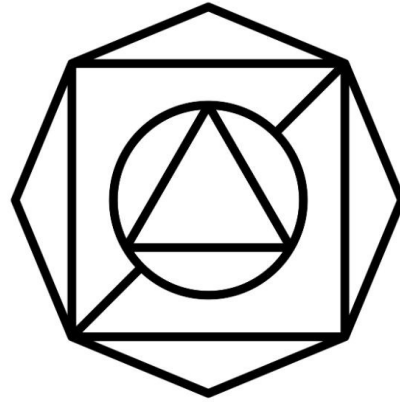
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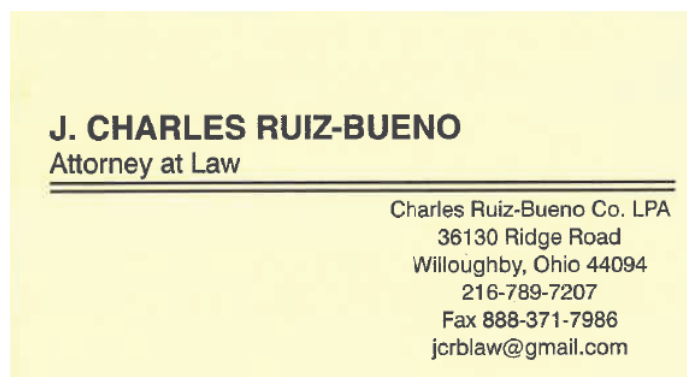


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Upcoming LCBA Events

Wednesday, May 27th - CLE w/ Magistrate Jessica Wright

Saturday, June 6th - Spring Family Event at Penitentiary Glen

Friday, June 12th - LCBA Annual Meeting at Mooreland Mansion

Wednesday, July 29th - CLE w/ Judge Joe Gibson

Friday, August 14th - LCBA Annual Golf Outing at St. Denis GC

Wednesday, August 26th - CLE w/ Judge Eugene A. Lucci



LCBA Events

SAVE THE DATE

2026 LCBA ANNUAL GOLF OUTING

14 AUGUST 2026



Registration at 8:00 AM Shotgun at
9:00 AM

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Nomination Committee Announcement

On April 1st and 3rd, 2026, the Lake County Bar Association Nominating Committee met virtually. In attendance were Anna Parise, Pam Kurt, Lori Kilpeck, Jan Bell, and me. The meetings were called to order at 12:00 pm.

After questions, answers, and debate, the Committee has approved the following slate for the 2026 – 2027 Lake County Bar Association Executive Board:

Past President:	Lydia Gross
President:	Christopher Tucci
Vice-President:	Josephine Begin
Treasurer:	Rebecca Castell
Secretary:	Mirela Turc Rudary
Trustee:	Susan Seacrist
Trustee:	Jessica Wright
Trustee:	Stephen Komarjanski
District 18	
Board of Governors:	Anna Parise

All were approved by unanimous vote.

The meetings adjourned at 1:00 pm.

The Commission wants to thank everyone who applied for a board position and encourage them to join a committee to stay active in the Bar Association.

Respectfully,

Joshua Strickland

AVAILABLE NOW!!

No Further Questions



an LCBA Podcast

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The Lake County Public Defender's Office, located in Painesville, Ohio, has immediate openings for two full-time attorneys to represent clients in its misdemeanor division. Yearly salary starts at \$75,000, commensurate with experience.

Assistant Lake County Public Defender - Misdemeanor Division

Job responsibilities include representing indigent clients in misdemeanor criminal cases at all stages of the criminal process, including arraignments, discovery, motion hearings, pleas, trials, sentencings and post-sentencing hearings; conducting client interviews and gather relevant information for case preparation; reviewing discovery and conducting investigations in conjunction with staff investigator; researching and analyzing legal issues related to assigned cases; drafting legal documents for court filings; negotiating plea agreements with prosecutors when appropriate; advocating for clients' rights and best interests throughout the legal process; and working collaboratively with other members of the defense team, including investigators, paralegals, social workers, law clerks and legal interns.

Experience and Skills: Juris Doctor (J.D.) degree from an accredited law school; licensed to practice law in Ohio; strong written and verbal communication skills; legal research, writing and oral advocacy skills; ability to work independently and manage a caseload effectively; commitment to providing quality legal representation to underprivileged individuals; knowledge of criminal law and procedures, evidence and professional responsibility and ethics; and excellent judgment and interpersonal skills with the ability to communicate and work effectively with clients, office personnel, court personnel, prosecutors, law enforcement, probation officers, social workers and the general public.

Pay: The salary varies depending upon the number of years of experience as a criminal defense attorney, but the minimum starting salary is \$75,000.

Work Hours: Normally 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday - Friday, but longer hours may be required with evening or weekend work depending upon status of cases.

Benefits: Retirement through Ohio Public Employees Retirement System; Health Insurance (includes medical, dental and eye); Employee Assistance Program; Life Insurance, Paid Time Off via Vacation, Sick, Personal Days and Federal and State Holidays, Continuing Education Credits; and Loan Forgiveness.

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<i>Scott</i>	<i>Kuboff</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Patrick</i>	<i>Brickman</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Jessica</i>	<i>Wright</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Patrice</i>	<i>Denman</i>	<i>15</i>
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<i>Rochelle</i>	<i>Hellier</i>	<i>23</i>
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