

So You Want to be a Solo: The Lawyer Entrepreneur's Guide to Success

Illinois State Bar Association

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So You Want to be a Solo: The Lawyer Entrepreneur's Guide to Success

Presented by the ISBA Standing Committee on Racial and Ethnic Minorities

Wednesday, December 4, 2019

ISBA Regional Office

20 S. Clark Street, Suite 900

1:30 – 4:15 p.m.

– *or* –

Live Webcast

Wednesday, December 4, 2019

1:30 – 4:15 p.m.

2.50 hours MCLE credit, including 2.50* hours Professional Responsibility MCLE credit in the following category: *Professionalism, Civility, or Legal Ethics MCLE credit*

Count Me In – Diversity Reception

Attendees are invited to join us at **Taft Stettinius & Hollister LLP** after the program for a complimentary networking reception celebrating diversity within the profession.

[Registration is required.](#)

Are you interested in learning more about how to run a successful solo practice? Do you need best practice tips on marketing? Are you happy with how your firm has been branded? Then don't miss this half-day seminar that increases your understanding of law firm ownership and practice management issues. Topics include:

- How to maintain a consistent branding message;
- How branding can impact your business;
- Affordable marketing options at your disposal;
- How advertising can help promote your business;
- Alternative fee structures vs. hourly billing; and
- Much more!

Program Coordinator:

Masah S. SamForay, *The Foray Firm, Inc., Joliet*

1:30 – 2:15 p.m. Who Are You? Branding Your Law Firm*

Your firm is a business, but did you know your firm is also a brand? Your brand is a distinct point-of-view that serves as a way for potential clients to understand what your firm is really about. Don't miss this presentation that helps you gain a clear understanding of your brand, your ideal client, how to maintain a consistent message across all platforms, and the overall impact branding can have on your business.

Kelly T. Bennet, Law Offices of J. Jeltes Ltd., Chicago

Emily N. Masalski, Hunter Masalski LLC, Chicago

Juan R. Thomas, Quintairos, Prieto, Wood & Boyer, Aurora

2:15 – 3:15 p.m. If You Show Them, They Will Come: Marketing and Advertising*

Learn which types of marketing have proven successful, how to effectively promote your brand and firm through advertising, how to increase your footprint in the market, and the advertising options available for every budget.

Bonita B. Hwang Cho, Law Offices of Cheng, Cho & Yee, Chicago

Ebony R. Huddleston, The Law Office of Ebony R. Huddleston, P.C., Godfrey

Amina Saeed, River Valley Law Firm, Naperville

Mario Sullivan, Johnson and Sullivan Ltd., Chicago

3:15 – 3:30 p.m. Break (refreshments provided)

3:30 – 4:15 p.m. Billing and Collections: It's All About The Benjamins, Baby*

From time entries to invoicing and collections, we all have one common concern: how do we get paid? This session discusses best billing practices, alternative fee structures, and collections in a way that makes the practice of law not only fun, but profitable. A look at how to employ the best legal technology to your advantage, for automation, intake and tracking metrics is also included.

Daniel R. Hernandez, Walczak Hernandez, P.C., Chicago

Masah S. SamForay, The Foray Firm, Inc., Joliet

Mario Sullivan, Johnson and Sullivan Ltd., Chicago

5:00 – 7:00 p.m. Count Me In – Diversity Reception

Attendees are invited to join us at **Taft Stettinius & Hollister LLP** after the program for a complimentary networking reception celebrating diversity within the profession.

[Registration is required.](#)

**Professional Responsibility MCLE credit subject to approval*

TAB 1

Who Are You? Branding Your Law Firm

- Kelly T. Bennett
k.bennett@jelteslaw.com
- Emily N. Masalski
emily@huntermasalski.com
- Juan R. Thomas

This segment includes all materials received by the course book publication deadline.
Please contact the speaker for any other materials used at the program.

Establishing Your Brand

The Who, What, When,
Where, and Why



1

WHO

- Who is your target audience?
- Who are you and what do you do that your audience should know?
- Who do you want to reach and where are they located?
- Who might be talking about you and if they aren't, how can you get them to in positive ways?



2

A person's perception
of you as an attorney
or as a law firm

Jeff Bezos says, "Your
brand is what people
say about you when
you are not in the
room."

Stephanie Schwab, of
CrackerJack Marketing
says, "Your brand is what
you want to be. You have
to make it happen. You
are your brand."

What is a Brand?

3

Elements of your Brand



What are you known for in your space?
Your image and identity



Your brand communication and online
presence



Your brand voice or personality



The content you put out there

4

What is your firm's belief system

Mantras from Successful Businesses

- **Be obsessed** - Grant Cardone, top sales expert who has built a \$500 million real-estate empire, NYT bestselling author of Be Obsessed or Be Average
- **Clear the small stuff, so you can focus on what's important** -
- **Write goals 5 times a day, everyday** - Com Mirza, CEO of Fitness Expo Dubai and "The \$500 Million Man"
- **Do the Right Thing** – Google (they dropped "don't be evil" in 2015)
- **Think Different** – Apple
- **The Customer is the Most Important Person in the Room** – Amazon
- **Solving Problems that Others Ignore** – Dyson

<https://www.businessinsider.com.au/11-successful-executives-share-their-business-mantras-2016-12>

<https://www.gobankingrates.com/making-money/business/company-mantras-could-keys-success/#0>

5

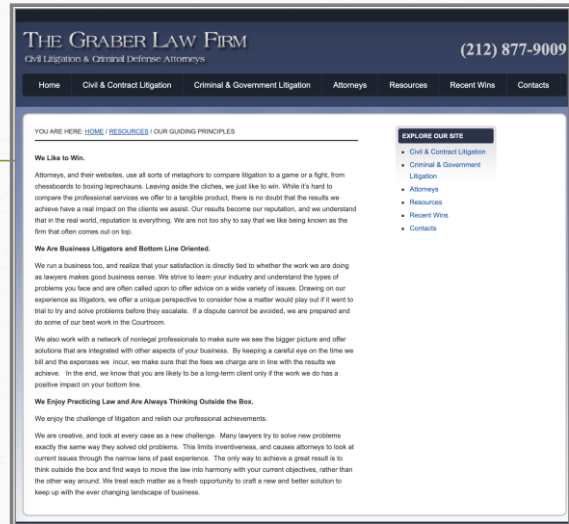
What are the tenets of your firm? What are your guiding principles?

-
- | | |
|---|---|
| • Do you believe in having an eco-conscious practice? | • Do you believe in fighting fair? |
| • Do you believe in fighting for the little guy? | • Do you love the fight of litigation? |
| • Do you handle sophisticated clients? | • Do you think mediation gets better results? |
| • Do you believe in a work-life balance? | • Do you believe in thinking outside the box? |

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Guiding Principles

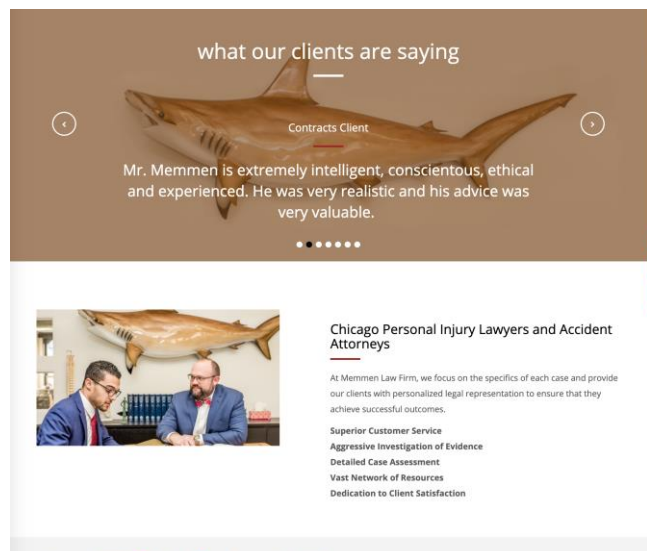
graberfirm.com



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What's your hook?

www.sharksatlaw.com



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What's your hook?

www.jelteslaw.com

Family Life Transitions

- Family Law
- Guardianship
- Adoption
- Probate
- Estate Planning



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What's your
hook?
Father's Rights
Dad's Rights

<https://jmlevinglawltd.businesshomepage.info/>

<https://fathersrightslawyer.wordpress.com/>

<http://dadsrights.com/>



Home > Nationally Known Fathers' Rights Attorneys In Chicago

Nationally Known Fathers' Rights Attorneys In Chicago

How Important Is Fatherhood?

Nearly 24 million U.S. children (34 percent) live absent their biological fathers. Children living without the presence and guidance of their fathers are, on average, two to three times more likely

Our Practice Areas

- Fathers' Rights
- Child Custody
- Divorce Proceedings
- Family Law

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What's your hook?

Potbrothersatlaw.com



How do you create your brand?



DETERMINE
YOUR PASSION



LIST YOUR
VALUES



KNOW YOUR
COMPETITION



WHAT ARE YOU
KNOWN FOR?

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Exercise: 35 headlines

Known by
Mark W.
Schaefer

- How fast can you think of 35 headlines you could write about?
- Identify topics to narrow or broaden what you could be known for.

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Your Brand Voice



Character/Persona



Language



Tone



Purpose

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Character/Persona

- Friendly
- Aggressive
- Authoritative
- Professional
- Welcoming
- Wacky
- Risqué
- Shark
- Attorney



15

Language

- Savvy
- Simple
- Legalese
- Complex
- Street

- <https://twitter.com/thewasslaw>
- <https://www.mcinteeclaw.com/>



INVEST IN YOUR AMERICAN DREAM

At McIntee Law Group, we have helped entrepreneurs and business owners from all over the world to build their businesses in the U.S. Whether you want to start a new business, buy a pre-existing business, or invest in a commercial enterprise, we are very familiar with the process. Our team of experienced immigration attorneys is here to guide you through. To schedule a consultation, please reach out to us through our [contact form](#).

Visa Options for Investors

E-1 Treaty Traders

The E-1 allows individuals and employees of qualifying organizations from Treaty Countries to enter the U.S. to engage in international trade. To qualify, the individual or company must engage in substantial trade. There is no minimum requirement, but the E-1 applicant must show clear evidence of substantial trade. Over 50% of that substantial international trade must be between the E-1 applicant's treaty country and the U.S. With an E-1 visa, treaty traders can trade goods and services in a variety of industries, including international banking, tourism, and technology.

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Tone

Note: these are examples,
is not an all- inclusive list



Personal



Honest



Direct



Technical



Formal



Humble

17

Purpose

What are you
trying to
accomplish?

- Educate
- Sell
- Entertain
- Inspire
- Engage
- Motivate
- Inform

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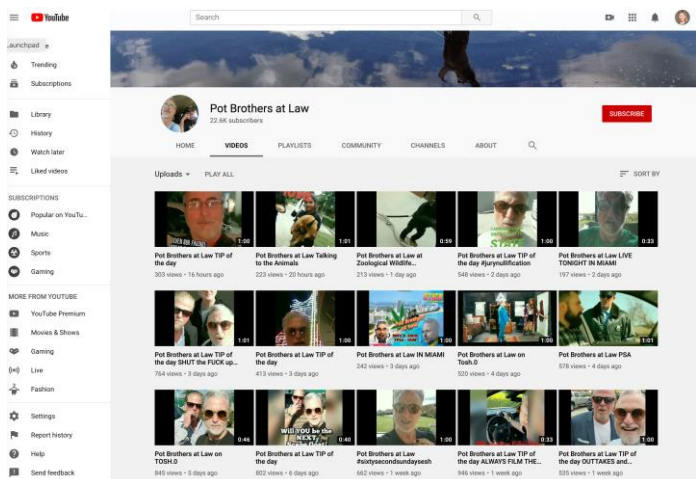
Online Platforms

- Firm website – have a page that has your name, even if your firm has your name in it, so people come to your site, not just your LinkedIn.
 - Example: Jeltelaw.com or Law Offices of J. Jeltel.
 - <https://jeltelaw.com/jenny-jeltel>
 - <https://jeltelaw.com/about/#jeltel-jenny>
- LinkedIn Profile – regardless of whether you are on there daily, you need a great, up-to-date profile with a professional photo. LinkedIn almost always shows up as a top result in search engines.
- Twitter – public platform
- Facebook – closed platform
- Blog – can become a book or e-book
- YouTube
- Podcast
- Instagram

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Pot Brothers at Law



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Blog/Book

Do you like writing?

Blog posts can lead to a book, YouTube Material, or speaking engagements

A book can solidify your brand.



benderlawchicago.com

Protecting Children: Bettering the World One Child at a Time

Judge Michael Ian Bender has devoted his life to protecting children so that they can grow into functional, independent, healthy adults. The trauma that children suffer due to disputes between their parents has long-lasting negative effects. This trauma is heightened at times of divorce and separation.



In his new book, "Protecting Children: Bettering the World One Child at a Time," Judge Bender documents his experience in minimizing trauma to children who are subject to families that are breaking up, so that parents, lawyers, and judges can better understand how to remove the trauma from the child's life. His book provides unique insight into aiding children of divorce, custody, and parentage disputes so that they grow into healthy adults. These children will, in turn, have the ability to have healthy relationships with their spouses and children.

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LinkedIn

in Search Home My Network Jobs Messaging

Need Recruits? - Let us do the matchmaking for you. Post to legal marketing's #1 J

Together, We Create!
pattydominguez.com

 **★ Patty Dominguez ★ · 1st**

I help small business owners achieve "Category of One" status through the power of Prolific Positioning™
Chicago, Illinois · 500+ connections · [Contact info](#)

The Moxie Circle LLC dba. Mighty Real Media
Lake Forest Graduate School of Management

Experience

 **Business Consultant & Coach | Positioning Marketing | Speaker / Advisor**
The Moxie Circle LLC dba. Mighty Real Media
Nov 2012 – Present · 7 yrs 1 mo
Chicago

I help business owners achieve "Category of One" status in their specific market using a unique framework called: Prolific Positioning TM

My proven methodology helps my clients position their business so that they are remarkable, and create offers that are irresistible to their ideal clients.

I also leverage digital marketing best practices which creates more predictable income.
... [see more](#)

 **PattyDominguez.com**  **Copy Chief Radio: CCR010: The...**

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Facebook



Share from various platforms

- Ebook
- YouTube
- Instagram

San Diego Immigration Lawyer,
Jacob J. Sapochnick



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Branding Summary





Determine your audience

What you want to be known for when others talk about you

Map out your online presence




Establish a clear and consistent brand voice

Put content across various media platforms consistent with your brand

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Who Are You? Branding Your Law Firm

ISBA Standing Committee on Racial and Ethnic Minorities
December 4, 2019

Emily N. Masalski
Founding Partner & CEO



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1

The Bright Idea



Photo by [Johnson Wang](#) on [Unsplash](#)



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2

The Details

- Banking
- Insurance
- Secretary of State
- Supreme Court

HM

3

3

The Space



HM

4

4

External Assistance

- CPA
- Information Technology
- Insurance Broker

HM

5

5

Firm Branding



Photo by [russn_fckr](#) on [Unsplash](#)

HM

6

6

Collateral



7

7

Get Out There

- Current Clients
- Colleagues
- Industry Groups



8

8

Resources

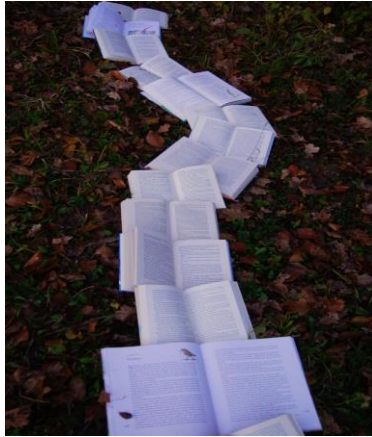


Photo by [Laura Kapfer](#) on [Unsplash](#)



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Questions?

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TAB 2

If You Show Them, They Will Come: Marketing and Advertising

- Bonita B. Hwang Cho
- Ebony R. Huddleston
ebony.huddleston@gmail.com
- Amina Saeed
- Mario Sullivan

This segment includes all materials received by the course book publication deadline.
Please contact the speaker for any other materials used at the program.

IF YOU SHOW THEM, THEY WILL COME: MARKETING AND ADVERTISING

- I. Advertising Rules
 - a. ABA Model Rule 7.1 prohibits a lawyer from making any false or misleading communications about the lawyer or the lawyer's services.
 - b. "A lawyer shall not make a false or misleading communication about the lawyer or the lawyer's services. A communication is false or misleading if it contains a material misrepresentation of fact or law or omits a fact necessary to make the statement considered as a whole not materially misleading."
 - c. ABA Model Rule 7.2 places restrictions on lawyer advertising.
 - d. (a) "Subject to the requirements of Rules 7.1 and 7.3, a lawyer may advertise services through written, recorded or electronic communication, including public media. (b) A lawyer shall not give anything of value to a person for recommending the lawyer's services except that a lawyer may (1) pay the reasonable costs of advertisements or communications permitted by this Rule."
- II. How much should I spend on marketing? How much time should I devote to business development?
- III. Law Firm Marketing Strategies – what has worked for me.
 - a. Website – content; SEO; blog; newsletter
 - b. Social media
 - c. Reviews
 - d. Existing and Former clients
 - e. Networks – bar associations, professional organizations, boards
 - f. Targeted communities

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TAB 3

Billing and Collections: It's All About The Benjamins, Baby

- Daniel R. Hernandez
- Masah SamForay
msamforay@theforayfirm.com
- Mario Sullivan

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Article VIII - Illinois Rules of Professional Conduct of 2010

RULE 1.5: FEES

(a) A lawyer shall not make an agreement for, charge, or collect an unreasonable fee or an unreasonable amount for expenses. The factors to be considered in determining the reasonableness of a fee include the following:

- (1) the time and labor required, the novelty and difficulty of the questions involved, and the skill requisite to perform the legal service properly;
- (2) the likelihood, if apparent to the client, that the acceptance of the particular employment will preclude other employment by the lawyer;
- (3) the fee customarily charged in the locality for similar legal services;
- (4) the amount involved and the results obtained;
- (5) the time limitations imposed by the client or by the circumstances;
- (6) the nature and length of the professional relationship with the client;
- (7) the experience, reputation, and ability of the lawyer or lawyers performing the services; and
- (8) whether the fee is fixed or contingent.

(b) The scope of the representation and the basis or rate of the fee and expenses for which the client will be responsible shall be communicated to the client, preferably in writing, before or within a reasonable time after commencing the representation, except when the lawyer will charge a regularly represented client on the same basis or rate. Any changes in the basis or rate of the fee or expenses shall also be communicated to the client.

(c) A fee may be contingent on the outcome of the matter for which the service is rendered, except in a matter in which a contingent fee is prohibited by paragraph (d) or other law. A contingent fee agreement shall be in a writing signed by the client and shall state the method by which the fee is to be determined, including the percentage or percentages that shall accrue to the lawyer in the event of settlement, trial or appeal; litigation and other expenses to be deducted from the recovery; and whether such expenses are to be deducted before or after the contingent fee is calculated. The agreement must clearly notify the client of any expenses for which the client will be liable whether or not the client is the prevailing party. Upon conclusion of a contingent fee matter, the lawyer shall provide the client with a written statement stating the outcome of the matter and, if there is a recovery, showing the remittance to the client and the method of its determination.

(d) A lawyer shall not enter into an arrangement for, charge, or collect:

- (1) any fee in a domestic relations matter, the payment or amount of which is contingent upon the securing of a divorce or upon the amount of alimony or support, or property settlement in lieu thereof; or
- (2) a contingent fee for representing a defendant in a criminal case.

(e) A division of a fee between lawyers who are not in the same firm may be made only if:

- (1) the division is in proportion to the services performed by each lawyer, or if the primary service performed by one lawyer is the referral of the client to another lawyer and each lawyer assumes joint financial responsibility for the representation;
- (2) the client agrees to the arrangement, including the share each lawyer will receive, and the agreement is confirmed in writing; and
- (3) the total fee is reasonable.

RULE 7.1: COMMUNICATIONS CONCERNING A LAWYER'S SERVICES

A lawyer shall not make a false or misleading communication about the lawyer or the lawyer's services. A communication is false or misleading if it contains a material misrepresentation of fact or law, or omits a fact necessary to make the statement considered as a whole not materially misleading.

RULE 7.2: ADVERTISING

(a) Subject to the requirements of Rules 7.1 and 7.3, a lawyer may advertise services through written, recorded or electronic communication, including public media.

(b) A lawyer shall not give anything of value to a person for recommending the lawyer's services except that a lawyer may

- (1) pay the reasonable costs of advertisements or communications permitted by this Rule;
- (2) pay the usual charges of a legal service plan or a not-for-profit lawyer referral service;
- (3) pay for a law practice in accordance with Rule 1.17; and

(4) refer clients to another lawyer or a nonlawyer professional pursuant to an agreement not otherwise prohibited under these Rules that provides for the other person to refer clients or customers to the lawyer, if

- (i) the reciprocal referral agreement is not exclusive, and
- (ii) the client is informed of the existence and nature of the agreement.

(c) Any communication made pursuant to this Rule shall include the name and office address of at least one lawyer or law firm responsible for its content.

RULE 7.3: ~~DIRECT CONTACT WITH PROSPECTIVE~~ SOLICITATION OF CLIENTS

(a) A lawyer shall not by in-person, live telephone or real-time electronic contact solicit professional employment ~~from a prospective client~~ when a significant motive for the lawyer's doing so is the lawyer's pecuniary gain, unless the person contacted:

- (1) is a lawyer; or
- (2) has a family, close personal, or prior professional relationship with the lawyer.

(b) A lawyer shall not solicit professional employment ~~from a prospective client~~ by written, recorded or electronic communication or by in-person, telephone or real-time electronic contact even when not otherwise prohibited by paragraph (a), if:

(1) the ~~prospective client~~ target of the solicitation has made known to the lawyer a desire not to be solicited by the lawyer; or

(2) the solicitation involves coercion, duress or harassment.

(c) Every written, recorded or electronic communication from a lawyer soliciting professional employment from anyone a ~~prospective client~~ known to be in need of legal services in a particular matter shall include the words "Advertising Material" on the outside envelope, if any, and at the beginning and ending of any recorded or electronic communication, unless the recipient of the communication is a person specified in paragraphs (a)(1) or (a)(2).

(d) Notwithstanding the prohibitions in paragraph (a), a lawyer may participate with a prepaid or group legal service plan operated by an organization not owned or directed by the lawyer that uses in-person or telephone contact to solicit memberships or subscriptions for the plan from persons who are not known to need legal services in a particular matter covered by the plan.

RULE 7.4: COMMUNICATION OF FIELDS OF PRACTICE AND SPECIALIZATION

(a) A lawyer may communicate the fact that the lawyer does or does not practice in particular fields of law.

(b) The Supreme Court of Illinois does not recognize certifications of specialties in the practice of law, nor does it recognize certifications of expertise in any phase of the practice of law by any agency, governmental or private, or by any group, organization or association. A lawyer admitted to engage in patent practice before the United States Patent and Trademark Office may use the designation "Patent Attorney" or a substantially similar designation.

(c) Except when identifying certificates, awards or recognitions issued to him or her by an agency or organization, a lawyer may not use the terms "certified," "specialist," "expert," or any other, similar terms to describe his qualifications as a lawyer or his qualifications in any subspecialty of the law. If such terms are used to identify any certificates, awards or recognitions issued by any agency, governmental or private, or by any group, organization or association, the reference must meet the following requirements:

(1) the reference must be truthful and verifiable and may not be misleading in violation of Rule 7.1;

(2) the reference must state that the Supreme Court of Illinois does not recognize certifications of specialties in the practice of law and that the certificate, award or recognition is not a requirement to practice law in Illinois.

Kelly Thames Bennett, is an attorney and partner at the Law Offices of J. Jeldes, Ltd. in 2016, a boutique law firm in Chicago that focuses on legal matters involving family life transitions, including: parentage, divorce, domestic violence, minor and adult guardianship, adoption, estate planning, and decedent's administration in Cook County, DuPage County, Will County, and Lake County. Before joining the Law Offices of J. Jeldes, Ltd., she practiced as a family law attorney in Chicago for over five years. She is the 2019-2020 Chair for the Standing Committee on Women and the Law of the Illinois State Bar Association and is a member of the Diversity Leadership Council. She has taught a continuing legal education seminar in Family Law Litigation Strategy for the Illinois Institute for Continuing Legal Education and coordinated and moderated a continuing legal education seminar on Girls in Crisis.

She received her Juris Doctorate degree from DePaul University College of Law. While at DePaul, Kelly was a student attorney for the DePaul Family Law Clinic, representing victims of domestic violence, and underprivileged divorce clients. Kelly received the CALI award for Excellence for her work in the DePaul Family Law Clinic. She also received a grant from Schiller, DuCanto, and Fleck Family Law Center at DePaul to intern at the Chicago Legal Clinic in family law matters.

Kelly volunteers pro bono legal service through Chicago Volunteer Legal Services. Through CVLS Kelly acts as a guardian ad litem in minor and adult guardianship cases, and as a child representative in domestic relations cases.

Kelly has been repeatedly named as a Rising Star with Super Lawyers and has been named as an Emerging Lawyer with Leading Lawyers.

In her free time, Kelly enjoys spending time with her family, enjoying live music events, practicing yoga, doing arts and crafts like macramé and painting, and honing her talent for growing plants. Kelly was born and raised in Texas, lived in New York, and currently lives in the city of Chicago with her husband and daughter.

Ebony R. Huddleston is the owner of The Law Office of Ebony R. Huddleston, P.C. in Godfrey, IL. A graduate of Xavier University of Louisiana and Ohio Northern Petit College of Law she is admitted to practice in the State of Illinois, Southern District of Illinois, Central District of Illinois and the United States Tax Court. Some of her areas of practice include civil litigation, taxation, business formation, probate and estate planning, real estate, and family law.

As an active member of the Illinois State Bar Association, Ms. Huddleston is a past Chair of the General Practice, Solo & Small Firm Section Council and currently serves as the Council's Continuing Legal Education coordinator. She is a current member and former chairperson of the Racial & Ethnic Minorities and the Law Standing Committee, the former chairperson of the Diversity Leadership Council and former participant on the Task Force on Diversity. Some of her other activities include being on the Board of Directors for Land of Lincoln Legal Aid, as well as board member and treasurer of IMPACT CIL in Alton, Illinois. Other memberships have included the Alton-Wood River and Madison County bar associations, and Alton-Godfrey Rotary Club. Ms. Huddleston has coordinated and presented on a variety of topics such as Starting and Running Your Own Law Practice, the Concealed and Carry Legislation, Financial Literacy and Chapter 7 Bankruptcy Relief for Individuals, Navigating the Residential Foreclosure Maze, Countering Litigation Gamesmanship, Hanging Out Your Shingle, and Credit Union Conventions and Expos.

Bonita B. Hwang Cho is a partner at the Law Offices of Cheng, Cho & Yee, where she specializes in immigration and nationality law. She received her J.D. degree from Chicago-Kent College of Law and her B.S. degree in Business Administration at the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana. Ms. Cho is a past president of the Korean American Bar Association and is also a member and past co-chair for the Asylum Committee, EOIR Committee, and Conference Planning Committee of the American Immigration Lawyers Association. She has also previously chaired the Immigration Law Committee for the Young Lawyers Division of the Chicago Bar Association and co-chaired the Solo/Small Firm Committee of the National Asian and Pacific American Bar Association. Ms. Cho is currently a board member of the Asian American Law Foundation and is president of the Board of Directors at Cornerstone Counseling Center of Chicago.

Emily N. Masalski is a Founding Partner and CEO of Hunter Masalski LLC in Chicago. Ms. Masalski represents companies in all aspects of environmental, health and safety law, with an emphasis on OSHA and EPA compliance and defense. Ms. Masalski also has a commercial litigation and appellate litigation practice. She continues to focus on environmental, health & safety, and enforcement issues associated with the medical cannabis industry. In 2017, Ms. Masalski was named as one of Illinois' "Forty Under 40" attorneys to watch by Law Bulletin Media. In 2018, she was honored with the Alta May Hulett Award by the Chicago Bar Association's Alliance for Women.

Before entering private practice, Ms. Masalski served as an agency attorney for the New York City Department of Environmental Protection, Wastewater Treatment Bureau. Prior to launching her own firm, she was a Partner at Rooney Rippie & Ratnaswamy LLP and a Principal at Deutsch, Levy & Engel, Chartered. Ms. Masalski received her J.D. and Environmental Law Certificate from Pace University School of Law, where she served as an Articles Editor for the Pace Environmental Law Review. She received her B.S. in Agricultural and Environmental Communications & Education from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Ms. Masalski is admitted to practice in Illinois, New York, and Connecticut.

Amina Saeed focuses her practice on estate planning, asset preservation, charitable planning, probate, guardianship, special needs planning, and elder law.

A north side Chicagoan at heart, Amina earned her Bachelor of Arts degree from Loyola University Chicago, her Juris Doctorate from Valparaiso University School of Law, and a Master of Laws (LLM) degree from the John Marshall Law School. She is a member of the American Academy of Estate Planning Attorneys, the National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys, the Illinois State Bar Association, and the DuPage County Bar Association. She is also a founding member and former president of the Muslim Bar Association of Chicago and a member of the National Association of Muslim Lawyers.

Amina's professional background includes work with nonprofits. She is passionate about building nonprofit infrastructure through charitable planning. Amina is a fellow of Leadership Greater Chicago, as well as a member of the Chicago Planned Giving Council, the Suburban Planned Giving Council, and 100 Women Who Care Fox Valley.

Married with four children, Amina tries to balance her spare moments between baseball, field hockey, scouting, youth groups, and her family's passion to visit all 60 national parks.

Masah S. SamForay is the founder of The Foray Firm, with locations in Joliet, Illinois, Homewood, Illinois and Houston, Texas.

She is highly experienced in managing family law cases, including complex child support, custody, visitation and divorce. As one of The National Black Lawyers – Top 100, Atty. SamForay received both her Juris Doctorate and Bachelor of Arts from Indiana University – Bloomington. She is licensed to practice law by the Supreme Court of Illinois. Atty. SamForay serves on the Illinois State Bar Association Board of Governors. She is also the 2019 Chair of the Racial and Ethnic Minorities in the Law Committee, and an active member of the Family Law Section Council. Atty. SamForay is a Co-Founder and Past-President of the Black Bar Association of Will County, and she previously served on the Board of Directors of the Black Women Lawyers' Association of Greater Chicago, Inc. She is also active in the Cook County Bar Association, where she is the 2016 Chair of the Family Law Committee.

Outside of the legal community, Atty. SamForay is very active in her community and holds a number of appointments for organizations with a focus on women, children, and underserved populations. Atty. SamForay was appointed by former Illinois Governor Bruce Rauner to the Board of Trustees of Governors State University, and she is currently the President-Elect of the Rotary Club of Chicago Southeast.

Mario A. Sullivan is a named partner at Johnson & Sullivan, Ltd. in Chicago, Illinois. He counsels clients on a wide range of issues relating to real estate, landlord/tenant, creditor bankruptcy, employment, contract law, business formation, and estate planning. Mr. Sullivan is a member of the Chicago Bar Association (CBA), the Illinois State Bar Association (ISBA), and the American Bar Association (ABA). In addition, he is a member of the National LGBT Bar Association (LGBT Bar) and Lesbian and Gay Bar Association of Chicago (LAGBAC).

Mr. Sullivan serves as 2018-20 GPSolo Diversity Director; 2019-21 GPSolo Council Member; 2016-20 GPSolo Diversity Board member; 2016-20 GPSolo Magazine Board Member; 2018-2021 ABA Nominating Committee LGBT Member at Large and member of the ABA House of Delegates; 2018-20 member of the ABA House of Delegates Select Committee; 2017-20 Commissioner for the ABA SOGI Commission; 2017-20 Council Member for ABA Civil Rights and Social Justice (CRSJ); 2017-19 Co-Chair of the CRSJ Bullyproof Committee; 2018-21 council member for the Lawyers Conference of the Judicial Division (JD); 2018-19 Chair of the Programing Committee for the Lawyers Conference of JD; 2017-20 Committee Member for the ISBA SOGI Standing Committee; and 2019-2020 ISBA REM Committee.

Mr. Sullivan is a former PILI Intern and member of the Public Interest Law Initiative (PILI) Alumni Network Leadership Council, and has previously served as: 2017-19 member of NITA Board's Advisory Council; Ex Officio Board Member to the LGBT Bar; 2017-18 member of the ABA House of Delegates Technology & Communications Committee; 2016-17 GPSolo Diversity Fellow; 2017-18 Chair of the Diversity Committee for the Lawyers Conference of the (JD); 2005-2018 Board Member and Co-Chair of the Program Committee for the LAGBAC; 2014-2017 Nominating Committee Representative for the ABA Young Lawyers Division (YLD); 2014-2017 Steering Committee Member; 2015-2017 Center Member on the ABA Center for Racial and Ethnic Diversity; 2014-2015 YLD Liaison to JD and American Bar Endowment; a 2014-2015 Council Member on the ABA Council on Racial and Ethnic Diversity in the Educational Pipeline Council; 2013-2014 YLD Chair, 2012-13 YLD Chair-Elect, 2011-2012 YLD Secretary-Treasurer, 2010-2011 YLD Conference, Program, and Products Director, 2009-2010 YLD Diversity Director, Committee member to the ABA YLD Diversity Team and Resolutions Team, and National Representative for the LGBT Bar to the YLD; Vice-president of LAGBAC; Planning Committee - Fundraising member for Equality Illinois 2005 Gala; Chair of the local host committee for the LGBT Bar's Lavender Law – 2007; a and Chair and vice-Chair of the CBA Committee on the Legal Rights of Lesbians and Gay Men.

Mr. Sullivan was named as one of the LGBT Bar's 2015 Best LGBT Lawyer under 40, received the Star of the Year from the YLD for the 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 bar year, received the YLD Star of the Quarter from the YLD 2008, and received the American Law Institute – ABA Scholarship and Leadership Award, 2005.

Mr. Sullivan graduated from the Illinois State University in 2000 and obtained his J.D. from The John Marshall Law School in 2005.

Timothy (TJ) Walczak is an owner and founder of Walczak Hernandez, P.C. TJ's unique focus and passion for his clients stems from over 16 years of public service, which leads to great client satisfaction. TJ concentrates his practice on family law and real estate law. TJ is honorably discharged from the U.S. Air Force and has spent over 16 years serving the public both as a police officer and firefighter. When it comes to family law, TJ understands the emotional toll the issues can take on his clients and their family. He personally experienced divorce and the complexity of raising children in a two-household environment. This experience allows him to advocate effectively and empathize with his clients. TJ also understands the complexity of landlord/tenant issues, as well as the buying and selling of real estate. This puts his clients at ease while navigating the complex areas of real estate. Prior to joining Walczak Hernandez, P.C., TJ worked for the Honorable John W. Darrah of the Northern District of Illinois. He also worked for a plaintiff's personal injury law firm. Bar Admission: State of Illinois Memberships: Illinois State Bar Association Chicago Bar Association

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