



OPEN SERVICE

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COME GET LOST WITH US

This is an invitation, not an article. It is the first invitation of twelve that you will receive in the next twelve months to participate in the KBA's "Open Service" project.

Open Service is the core initiative of our new KBA President Tasha Blakney. She asked that Troy Weston and I co-chair it, and we are honored to do so. With Tasha's help, we have put together a committee to brainstorm and lead our Bar in one service project a month in 2015. Our committee members are the Honorable Greg McMillan, District Attorney General Charme Allen, Francis Lloyd, Farrell Levy, Katrina Arbogast, Maha Ayesh, and John Winemiller.

As a Bar, we talk a lot about the value of service. We particularly discuss the value of pro bono service, which is, without a doubt, a core pillar of our profession. Open Service, however, is not about providing legal services. It is about having an easy, open format in which to engage in community service as individuals, not just attorneys. For me, the quote that best sums up the spirit of this project is from a fellow lawyer who was famous for his service, Mahatma Gandhi. He said "The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others." Indeed.

Our committee hopes that engagement with various local communities brings joy to each lawyer who participates in an Open Service event. And, we hope to engage with diverse communities in our area. For example, we plan to engage our Muslim community, our Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender community, and our African-American community, among others. We are also hopeful that this project improves the perception of lawyers in our community.



Lawyers are some of the hardest working people I know and are very generous with their time. It's time to showcase that. In addition, as even more of an incentive, each time you participate in an Open Service project, you will be entered in a drawing to dine with Justice Gary Wade.

Our first Open Service project is January 7th at 6:00 p.m. at the YWCA downtown. The Honorable Deborah Stevens, who is the President of the YWCA Board of Directors, has graciously agreed to be our host, and she will give us a tour of the facility. The YWCA Knoxville is dedicated to eliminating racism, empowering women and promoting peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all. Our service project for the YWCA will be to provide dinner for its 50 residents. Our dinner theme will be a "Tour of Italy," and we need volunteers to sign up to bring items for dinner, to help serve, and to assist with decorations.

Please contact me at jballinger@bakerdonselson.com or 865-549-7216 to sign-up to attend and bring an item. It is going to be a great night of fellowship at the YWCA. And, even though we are there to help the women of the YWCA, I always find they help me more. Please come get lost with us in the service of others.



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