



# The Anne Arundel County BARRISTER

The Newsletter of the Anne Arundel Bar Association

March 2016

## Dates to remember

APRIL 9

**Barrister's Ball**  
London Town and Gardens  
Edgewater, MD

APRIL 15

**Spring Golf Tournament**  
**Lake Presidential Golf Course**  
Upper Marlboro, MD  
8:30 a.m.

APRIL 20

**Charity Pub Quiz**  
**Galway Bay**  
Annapolis, MD  
6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

MAY 10

**Family Law Dinner Meeting**  
Loews Annapolis Hotel  
Annapolis, MD  
6:30 p.m.

 Find us on Facebook



For meeting details, visit [www.aabar.org](http://www.aabar.org)

## Barrister's Ball at Historic London Town and Gardens: A Midsummer Night's Dream

Please accept this President's Message as your personal invitation to join Maria and me at the upcoming Barrister's Ball on April 9, from 7:00 to 10:00 pm at the Historic London Town and Gardens in Edgewater, Maryland. This fantastic and unique venue will host our signature Anne Arundel County Bar Foundation event for the first time.

For those of you who are not familiar with London Town, the property is owned by Anne Arundel County and operated by the London Town Foundation. The 23-acre museum and park features history, archaeology, and horticulture. The historic area includes the circa 1760 William Brown House, a National Historic Landmark, reconstructed colonial buildings, and an ongoing archaeological investigation in search of the "lost town" of London.

Additionally, the property houses an eight-acre Woodland Garden of native plants and exotic species arranged along a one-mile trail and the seasonal Ornamental Gardens overlooking the South River. Inspired by the setting, the Barrister Planning Committee has chosen the theme of "A Midsummer Night's Dream." While there is plenty of indoor space to accommodate us, let's hope for great weather so that we can enjoy the grounds too!

The Barrister's Ball is always a memorable event and gives AABA

members a chance to get to know other members in a relaxed setting. The evening will include a beer and wine open bar and a delicious buf-



Photo by Acroterton via Wikimedia Commons

*The crown jewel of London Town's historic area, the William Brown House was constructed about 1760 and served as a tavern for the busy port city of London.*

### President's Message by Dave Putzi

fet dinner catered by Palate Pleasers. In keeping with our "Midsummer Night's Dream" theme, there will be some un-

expected entertainment to add some magic and sparkle to this special night.

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# Judge Donna M. Schaeffer Takes the Bench

By Kevin M. Schaeffer

On December 17, 2015, Donna McCabe Schaeffer received a call from the Maryland State House and learned from Governor Larry Hogan that he had appointed her to be a judge of the Circuit Court for Anne Arundel County, replacing retired Judge Paul Hacker and making her the 56th associate judge in the bench's 179 year history. After thanking the governor and assuring him that she would not disappoint him in his selection, she stepped outside of her office into the hallway of the law firm of Council Baradel, her workplace since 1986, to announce the news to her fellow attorneys and staff. The smile didn't leave her face for the rest of the day.



respect for the role of the judiciary. Although Judge Couch was a critical thinker, Judge Schaeffer says, "He always brought common sense and a practical approach to his role as a judge. He was devoted to getting it right." It is an approach that she says she will strive to bring to her own time on the bench.

After her clerkship ended in 1986, she interviewed for and was hired in the position of associate at the Annapolis law firm of Council Baradel Kosmerl & Nolan, PA, then located in Eastport. The first female attorney hired by the firm, she opened the doors to a generation of women lawyers who would be hired at the firm.

Ronald Baradel, Judge Schaeffer's mentor for many years at the firm, recalled his initial job interview with her and says, "She was very bright and had a quiet confidence during the interview. I felt in many ways she was interviewing me to see if this would be the right fit for her. It was a great interview. Very refreshing."

In her first few years, she handled a variety of civil litigation matters, including administrative law and insurance defense work, before finding her calling in family law, an area in which she has concentrated for the majority of her career. In time, she made a name for herself as one of the top domestic lawyers in the county. She developed a reputation as an attorney who could be firm and resolute in representing her clients without alienating opposing counsel, a rare feat in the sharp-elbowed arena of divorce law practice. She also developed a loyal clientele, many of whom have continued to maintain their contacts with her long after their professional association ended.

After several years at Council Baradel, she married one of her partners, Kevin Schaeffer, in 1990. The Schaeffers have three children, two of them now adults and one still in high school. Her "fourth child" is a King Charles Cavalier Spaniel, who spends most of her time curled up next to Judge Schaeffer in her (their) favorite leather chair in the family room. Schaeffer and her husband have lived

On the same day, Governor Hogan also appointed Stacy McCormack to fill the seat vacated by retiring Judge Philip Caroom.

The first thing you need to know about Judge Schaeffer is that she is a child of the Eastern Shore. Born and raised in Salisbury, the oldest of three children and a proud graduate of James M. Bennett High School, she made her first extended trip off the Shore when she journeyed to Delaware, Ohio, in the center of the state, to attend Ohio Wesleyan University, a place that she had never visited until her first day of college.

Schaeffer graduated cum laude from OWU ("Oh-Wooh") in 1980 with a degree in English Literature. She returned to Maryland, where she took a job as a research writer in Cambridge, then worked in the credit card division of First National Bank of Maryland. After considering changing careers to become a paralegal, she listened to local attorneys and family friends who urged her to think about taking the LSATs instead. She did just that, was accepted into law school, and graduated from the University of Maryland Law School with honor in 1985. She promptly began a one-year stint as law clerk to the late Judge James Couch of the Court of Appeals.

Her experience with Judge Couch taught her the importance of attention to detail and thoroughness in research and opinion writing, as well as a deep

in Annapolis all of their professional lives and in the Bay Ridge community since 2009.

In her free time, the judge reads contemporary fiction by authors like Ian McEwan and Donna Tartt. She also enjoys visiting family in Salisbury, New Mexico, Arizona and California, and traveling with her husband and children. She and her husband recently returned from a trip to Quebec City for their 25th wedding anniversary.

Attorneys appearing in front of Judge Schaeffer for the first time should not make the mistake of assessing her 5'3" stature, pleasant voice, and approachable persona as a sign that she is a push-over. Her courtroom reputation was that of a smart, exacting and determined trial attorney, who was undaunted in representing her clients' interests. She was also known as a tough but fair negotiator, skillful debater, and compelling writer. Her colleagues at the firm regularly marveled at how far in advance of trial she had planned her preparations so that, by the time the day of trial arrived, she seldom found herself in the stereotypical last-minute scramble mode experienced by many a practitioner. She is a tireless list-maker.

Baradel was asked about what he'll miss most about working with Judge Schaeffer and says,

"Aside from the fact that she is an incredible legal talent, she had a terrific rapport with her clients. She was a terrific ambassador for our firm."

In the course of her 30 years in practice, she tried hundreds of cases and appeared in front of dozens of judges in the Anne Arundel County Circuit Court. Asked to name a few former judges that she particularly admired, Judge Schaeffer didn't hesitate. "Judge Eugene Lerner for his decisiveness and efficiency on the bench. Judge Robert Heller for his thoughtfulness, his legal analysis and his intellect. Judge Nancy Davis-Loomis for giving people the feeling walking out of her courtroom that, regardless of the outcome, she had listened carefully to both sides."

In discussing the philosophy she hopes to bring to her time on the bench, she said, "I know I sound like a broken record on this but, just as I did in practice, I want to keep in the forefront that this is probably the only experience these parties will have with the court system. While the attorneys may view it as a routine matter or similar to some other case they may have had, for their client this is his or her one and only case. In my practice I tried to treat each client's case as if it was the only case I'd ever have and I intend to give the matters

## ANNOUNCEMENT FROM THE OFFICE OF THE COURT ADMINISTRATOR:

# MAGISTRATE VACANCY CIRCUIT COURT FOR ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY

The Circuit Court for Anne Arundel County is seeking applicants for the position of Magistrate.

**Essential Functions:** Magistrates are responsible for conducting hearings, and review of juvenile, CINA, domestic and child support matters in accordance with the applicable Maryland Law and Rules of Procedure. The Magistrate will be cross-trained to handle matters within the Family Law Division and Civil Case Management Plans as determined by the Court's Administrative Judge.

**Education:** Juris Doctorate

**Experience:** Five years minimum of experience in the practice of law, preferably in the practice of family and/or juvenile law in Maryland.

**Note:** Must be a practicing attorney in good standing and admitted to the Maryland Bar.

To download and save the personal data questionnaire, visit: <http://www.circuitcourt.org/magistrate-2016>

**Deadline for submissions:** Friday, April 8, 2016.

It is preferred that you save this document and then email it to: [Magistrate2016@circuitcourt.org](mailto:Magistrate2016@circuitcourt.org). Additional individual copies are not required as the Court will disseminate copies to the judges electronically.

If mailing or delivering, please return to:

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Circuit Court for Anne Arundel County  
P.O. Box 2395  
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Annapolis, MD 21404-2395