

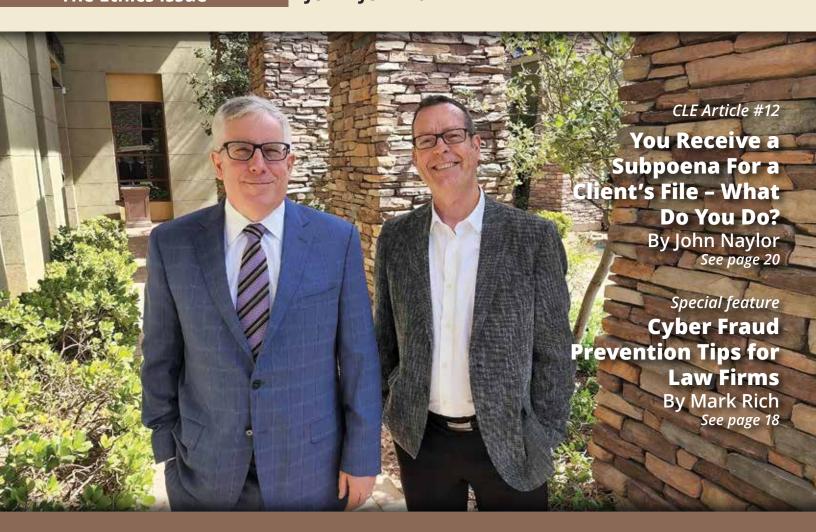
The Ethics Issue

Ethics, Experts, and Cannabis Law CLE webcasts Free for CCBA members on June 30, July 20, and August 25, 2022 See pages 8, 10, and 12

COMMUNIQUÉ

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JUNE/JULY 2022



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THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE CLARK COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION

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John Naylor of Naylor & Braster Attorneys at Law PLLC and Mark D. Rich, CPA, CFF of Rich Wightman & Company. Photo courtesy of Stephanie Abbott.

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CCMMUNIQUÉ

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE CLARK COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION

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For more information about our publication's editorial calendar, deadlines, editorial policy, author guidelines, ad rates, ad specifications, and deadlines, contact the publisher at Clark County Bar Association, 717 S. 8th Street, Las Vegas, Nevada, 89101. Phone: (702) 387-6011.

Editorial Calendar Cover Date Topic of Articles Closing Date January 2022 Five Things 12/1/2021 February 2022 **Employment Law** 1/7/2022 **Educational Law** March 2022 2/1/2022 Environmental Health April 2022 3/1/2022 May 2022 Discovery 4/1/2022 **Ethics** June/July 2022 5/3/2022 August 2022 Litigation 7/1/2022 September 2022 Election Law 8/1/2022 October 2022 Cyber Law 9/1/2022 November 2022 Family Law 9/23/2022 December 2022 Pro Bono 11/1/2022

*The combined June/July issue will be released in June. The editorial calendars, schedules, editorial policies, and writer's guidelines for the *Communiqué* are subject to change without notice.

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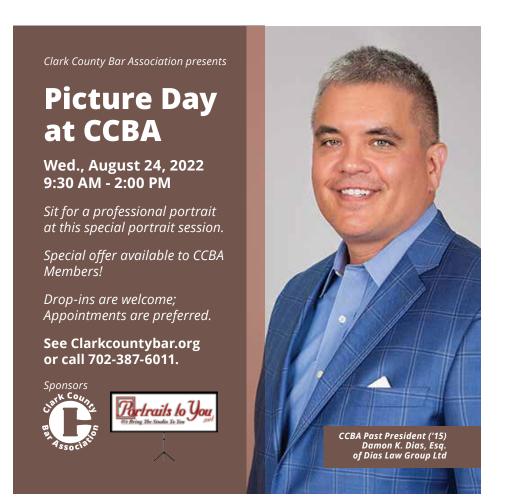
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Join a Bar Committee

CCBA members are invited to join one or more committee and help the CCBA to enrich the lives and careers of our members and community.

- Community Service Committee Meets: First Friday of the month. Chair: Alicia May, Esq. of Pecos Law Group.
- Continuing Legal Education (CLE) Committee Meets: Second Wednesday of the month. Chair: Robert Telles, Esq. of Clark County Nevada Public Administrator.
- **Diversity and Inclusion Committee on Equity (DICE)** Meets: Last Friday of the month. Chair: Annette Bradley, Esq.
- New Lawyers Committee Meets: Second Thursday of the month. Co-Chairs: Josh Dresslove of Joshua S. Dresslove Attorney at Law and Christena Georgas-Burns of Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada.
- **Publications Committee** Meets: Second Friday of the month. Chair: Alia Najjar, M.D., Esq. of Ladah Law Firm, PLLC.

For more information about a committee, reach out to the committee chair or contact the CCBA office at 702-387-6011. **c**



Wear the White Hat

By Nedda Ghandi, Esq.

hen I was in law school, I had a professor who encouraged his students to "always wear the white hat" whether in front of the bench or the jury or when dealing with opposing parties. The phrase has stuck with me over the years. Essentially, his point was that while advocating there is an importance to being the hero or the "good guy." While the verbiage is somewhat dated, the symbolism of the phrase has been used often in modern times. The hero in westerns is often the one who wore the white hat. Olivia Pope in the television series "Scandal" was initially shown as the character who wore the white hat as she was the initial reflection of good conscience in the show. Hackers who are hired to breach security by companies to find weaknesses and develop fixes are called "white hats."

Throughout my time in the bar, I have kept this phrase in the back of my head when navigating through difficult cases and I often encourage my clients to do the same. The idea is to always remember that as you move through handling matters for your clients that there is something to be said for knowing when to let small slights slide, when to extend yet another professional courtesy, and when to bite your tongue on a responsive insult to opposing counsel even though they are insulting you. When you "wear the white hat," you remind yourself of the great responsibilities that come with this job and with being in the courtroom. You put the practice of law and the reputation of the profession before yourself and your ego.

There is a reason that CLEs in ethics are required each year in our profession. Beyond the basic tenets to protect confidential information, secure client funds, and to avoid When you "wear the white hat," you remind yourself of the great responsibilities that come with this job and with being in the courtroom.

conflicts of interest, there is a compelling need to remind each other that even as we engage in "zealous advocacy," we must continue to play the part of the good guy. In a society where division and vitriol run rampant, there is no greater skill than navigating through advocacy while wearing the white hat. I encourage all of us to pick up our hats, scrub off any dingy spots, and put on our white hats as we move forward. Move through your career trying to maintain the gleam.

New Benefit for CCBA Members

I'm pleased to announce that WestPac Wealth Partners, a holistic wealth management firm located in Las Vegas, has made a strong commitment to serve CCBA members. They are offering CCBA members an exclusive 10 percent discount on disability insurance through the Guardian-Berkshire Life Insurance Company of America. For more information, contact Joshua Brown CFP, MBA or Bryan Martinka at WestPac. See page 7 for their contact information. **©**



Nedda Ghandi, Esq. is a partner with Ghandi Deeter Blackham Law Office. Nedda's primary practice area involves bankruptcy for both individual and business debtors. She also litigates complex family law cases that often involve family-owned businesses or complicated financial battles. Nedda serves as the president of the Clark County Bar Association through December 2022.



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John Naylor Presents Ethics Program for Nevada Lawyers on June 30, 2022

n Thursday, June 30, 2022, commercial litigator John M. Naylor will make a special presentation for the continuing legal education of Nevada lawyers in a program produced by the Clark County Bar Association (CCBA) and sponsored by Bank of Nevada and Las Vegas Legal Video.

A former judge advocate for the United States Air Force, John M. Naylor has been licensed for nearly 35 years and is a cofounder of Naylor & Braster, a Las Vegas law firm specializing in business litigation. He practices in the areas of commercial litigation, appellate work, and construction law.

Naylor will present "Someone Subpoenas Your Client Files – What Do You Do Next?" and address topics relative to the Nevada rules of professional conduct. Planned topics include:

- Those files belong me, don't they?
- Why would anyone ever subpoena those files?
- I probably should tell the client . . .
- But I have no idea where the client is . . .
- How to object to the subpoena or court order
- But what if I never got paid?
- Losing the first round do you appeal?
- Do I even have to turn over my notes?
- Special circumstances

The presentation will offer 1.0 ethics CLE credit (NV) to CCBA members only online via Zoom, from 12:00 to 1:15 p.m., Thursday, June 30, 2022. Pricing of the live webcast event is included with the 2022 CCBA membership. CCBA membership will be verified upon RSVP. During the event, attendance will be taken and only those members in attendance will have their attendance reported to the NV CLE Board.

The event will be recorded for use in the CCBA's audio/visual library. The recorded versions of the program will be offered for rental use at a small fee (to cover administrative costs).

For more information and to RSVP for this event, contact Donna Wiessner at Donnaw@clarkcountybar.org, (702) 387-6011. •



The presentation will offer 1.0 ethics CLE credit to CCBA members only. Pricing of the live event is included with the 2022 CCBA membership.

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CCBA Members Visit to U.S. Vets May 14, 2022



Working with Your Experts CLE Program Set for July 20, 2022

n Wednesday, July 20, 2022, forensic accountant Mark D. Rich will make a special presentation for the continuing legal education of Nevada lawyers in a program produced by the Clark County Bar Association (CCBA) and sponsored by Bank of Nevada and Las Vegas Legal Video.

Mark is the founding partner of Rich, Wightman & Company. He graduated from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas with a Bachelor of Science/Arts degree in accounting in May 1979 and earned his Certified Public Accountant license in July 1981. He is also Certified in Financial Forensics, CFF (AICPA designation).

Mark will present "Working with Your Experts" and address the following topics:

- Evaluating your potential expert
- Establishing a scope of service and budget with your expert
- Engaging your expert
- Consideration of using your expert as a consultant verses for a report and testimony
- Efficiencies in using your expert for discovery and investigation
- Expert assistance in third-party interviews and depositions
- Expert reports and rebuttals
- Expert declarations
- Preparing your expert for depositions
- Expert testimony in court

The presentation will offer 1.0 general CLE credit (NV) to CCBA members only online via Zoom, from 12:00 to 1:15 p.m., Wednesday, July 20, 2022. Pricing of the live webcast event is included with the 2022 CCBA membership. CCBA membership will be verified upon RSVP. During the event, attendance will be taken and only those members in attendance will have their attendance reported to the NV CLE Board.

The event will be recorded for use in the CCBA's audio/visual library. The recorded versions of the program will be offered for rental use at a small fee (to cover administrative costs).

For more information and to RSVP for this event, contact Donna Wiessner at Donnaw@clarkcountybar.org, (702) 387-6011. •



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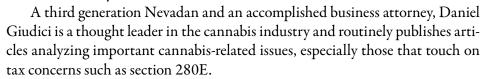
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Cannabis Law CLE Program Set for August 25, 2022

n Thursday, August 25, 2022, business law attorneys Shamus Flynn, Daniel Giudici, and A. William "Bill" Maupin will make a special presentation for the continuing legal education of Nevada lawyers in a program produced by the Clark County Bar Association (CCBA) and sponsored by Bank of Nevada and Las Vegas Legal Video.

A former Marine and Ninth Circuit clerk, Shamus Flynn helps clients grapple with sophisticated and vexing issues, especially those touching on the emerging cannabis industry.



Elected to two terms to the Supreme Court of Nevada from 1997 to 2009, Chief Justice Maupin's 50-year legal career includes significant public and private sector experience.

The speakers will present "State of Play Cannabis Law 2022" and address the following topics:

- Cannabis legislative and regulatory updates
- Short overview of proposed federal legislation involving cannabis legalization and banking
- Nevada cannabis legislative and regulatory updates
- Consumption lounge licenses
- New cannabis DUI law
- Nevada CCB Update
- Updates on active NV cannabis litigation cases
- Bill Maupin's Department of Taxation litigation overview
- Section 280E
- Quick overview of Section 280E
- Section 280E's status with Congress and courts
- Salient 2021 cases involving Section 280E

The presentation will offer 1.0 general CLE credit (NV) to CCBA members only online via Zoom, from 12:00 to 1:15 p.m., Thursday, August 25, 2022. Pricing of the live webcast event is included with the 2022 CCBA membership.







CCBA membership will be verified upon RSVP. During the event, attendance will be taken and only those members in attendance will have their attendance reported to the NV CLE Board.

The event will be recorded for use in the CCBA's audio/visual library. The recorded versions of the program will be offered for rental use at a small fee (to cover administrative costs).

For more information and to RSVP for this event, contact Donna Wiessner at Donnaw@clarkcountybar.org, (702) 387-6011. •

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Save the dates!

CCBA's Diversity and Inclusion Committee for Equity (DICE) Presents

DICE CLE Series



A special bar luncheon:

Hispanic Heritage CLE Luncheon September 15, 2022 • 12-1:15 PM

Offers 1.0 Ethics CLE (NV) • Plated luncheon service included!

Speakers: TBA Location: TBA

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A special discusion presented in two parts:

An Introduction to Critical Race Theory October 14, 2022 • 12–1:30 PM

Offers 1.0 Ethics CLE (NV) • Light refreshments included!

Critical Race Theory on Civil Rights and Criminalization

November 4, 2022 • 12-1:30 PM

Offers 1.0 Ethics CLE (NV) • Light refreshments included!

Speakers:

- Professor Roy L. Brooks, University San Diego School of Law
- Professor Frank Rudy Cooper, Director, UNLV Program on Race Gender & Policing
- **Professor Addie Rolnick**, UNLV William S. Boyd School of Law
- Professor Stewart Chang, UNLV William S. Boyd School of Law

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- UNLV Race, Gender & Policing Program





UNLV Program on Race Gender & Policing

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Sponsor opportunities available

Business Bench Bar Meeting

- When: Tuesday, June 16, 2022, noon to 1:00 p.m.
- Where: Courtroom 16A at the Regional Justice Center and streamed on the Clark County Court's website http://www.clarkcountycourts.us/.
- What: Presentation on "How Business Court Judges Process Orders" will offer 0.5 hour of CLE (NV). Moderator will be Ismail Amin and the panel will be made up of EJDC Business Court judges. Lunch will be provided for the first 25 attendees by the TALK law firm.



- **When:** Tuesday, June 14, 2022, noon to 1:00 p.m.
- Where: Online via Zoom
- What: Learn what's happening at the court and discuss any modifications of processes in the civil department. For more info, send inquiries to EJD-CBenchBar@gmail.com.
- **Note:** No meetings of the Civil Bench Bar will be held during July or August.

Deposition Behavior Addressed in Administrative Order 22-08

On May 9, 2022, the Eighth Judicial District Court filed an order in the administrative matter regarding deposition behavior. *See* Administrative Order 22-08.

Administrative order 22-08 applies to all civil and family division actions filed in the Eighth Judicial District Court for which discovery disputes are heard by a discovery commissioner or discovery hearing master. The 23-page PDF, includes instructions on several aspects of deposition behavior:

- Scheduling
- Examination of the witness by counsel
- Witness conduct during depositions
- Lodging objections
- Rule 30(B)(6) depositions
- Seeking court intervention



Congratulations to Eighth Judicial District Court Judge Jerry Wiese who was elected by the EJDC bench to serve as the new chief judge. His 2-year term will begin in July. Pictured with outgoing EJDC Chief Judge Linda Bell.

Volunteers Needed

Become A Truancy Diversion Judge

The Eighth Judicial District Court is seeking volunteer Truancy Diversion Program (TDP) judges to work with the Clark County School District and the Clark County Charter Schools to reduce absenteeism in school to reduce the number of youths entering the formal juvenile justice system.

For more information, contact Michelle Young at TDP@clarkcountycourts.us or 702-455-1755.

Notably, the court order emphasizes professionalism for members of the bar:

"All counsel intending to participate in depositions, and witnesses expecting to testify at trial, must comply with this Order. Counsel must behave professionally at all times during depositions; they must treat parties, other counsel, court reporters, videographers, interpreters, and other involved in any aspect of the deposition with civility and respect.^{2"}

For more information, read the 23-page order. See http://www.clarkcountycourts.us/general/court-rules-and-administrative-orders/. **©**



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Southern Nevada (Las Vegas) Thursday, October 13, 2022

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Summary Eviction Diversion

By Judge Melissa Saragosa

t is no surprise to most that the worldwide pandemic wreaked havoc upon the summary eviction process as we knew it. The Las Vegas Justice Court is the jurisdiction for nearly 75 percent of the entire state's summary eviction case filings. Historically, the court has hovered around 30,000 summary eviction cases per fiscal year, increasing to 32,810 eviction cases in fiscal year 2019 (July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2019). Though filings decreased in fiscal year 2020 to 21,260 and increased only slightly to 24,288 in fiscal year 2021, we are on pace to close out fiscal year 2022 with approximately 45,000 summary eviction cases.

Over the past two years, all branches of government have had a hand in attempting to solve what some may deem an eviction crisis. At the state level, ever-changing Governor's directives, a judicially-created mandatory mediation program, and a legislative bill regarding affirmative defenses to summary eviction actions have all altered the processing of a summary eviction action. At the federal level, CDC orders, Supreme Court opinions regarding the constitutionality of the CDC orders, and Congressional acts that provided rental assistance funding have also changed the summary eviction landscape. The end result has proven confusing to landlords, tenants, and lawyers alike and has had a significant impact on the administration of the Court Clerk's Office.

While Nevada has been nationally recognized for its streamlined approach to processing rental assistance applications and has put millions of dollars into the hands of landlords curing defaulted rent and stabilizing housing The end result has proven confusing to landlords, tenants, and lawyers alike and has had a significant impact on the administration of the Court Clerk's Office.

for thousands of tenants, the reality is those dollars are dwindling and may be exhausted in the near future. In the meantime, availability of rental housing has become scarce and supply chain issues and labor shortages have delayed or prevented construction. The Las Vegas Justice Court is committed to tackling these issues for fiscal year 2023 and beyond.

In an effort to address this dynamic problem, the Las Vegas Justice Court has embarked upon a collaboration with community stakeholders to develop an eviction diversion program that would bring together landlords, tenants, and services in a single coordinated effort. This partnership includes representatives from Home Means Nevada mediation, Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department, Legal Aid of Southern Nevada, Nevada REALTORS*, Nevada Apartment Association, Clark County Social Services, Supreme Court of Nevada, nonprofit organizations, and the Governor's office. More to come as this new program develops! **©**



Judge Melissa Saragosa was appointed to Las Vegas Justice Court Department 4 in 2006.



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Cyber Fraud Prevention Tips for Law Firms

By Mark D. Rich, CPA, CFF

s a part of our fraud, forensics, and litigation support engagements, we work with many IT and cyber fraud specialists. Generally, our clients have an IT department, a recognized outside IT contractor, or a full-time IT staff person with credentials that focus on protecting the law firm's electronic data from theft. Unfortunately, we have occasions where the answers to our IT questions go something like this, "One of our partner's brother-in-law's former roommate's kid handles our IT system. He works for some big company and does our IT work on the side, he's really a smart kid". The reality is, if the Colonial Pipeline can be successfully attacked with ransomware that disrupted the supply of fuel to the entire southeastern United States, your firm is a much easier target, even with the best of IT departments. You may not be aware that your firm's website provides plenty of information necessary to attempt penetration by cyber-attackers and that the vast majority of cyber-attacks are initiated by email. Remember, the weakest link in your IT system is an employee or partner sitting behind a computer just one key stroke away from a costly disaster. Cyber-attacks are on the rise and be assured that attempts are directed at your firm every minute of every day. While you sleep, cyber-attackers are awake!



Mark D. Rich, CPA, CFF has been licensed for 40 years and is Founding Partner of Rich Wightman & Company. Contact Mark at markr@richwightman.com.

The following are common cyber-attack methods that your firm should be aware of, and all employees trained to recognize:

Phishing – most common attempt using a fraudulent email to give up specific credentials, entice clicking a malicious link, or downloading a malicious file.

Spear phishing – researching and targeting with a tailored phish to gain access to specific firm accounts.

Whaling – spear phishing the top by researching and targeting leaders within a firm.

Smishing – phishing via text includes providing malicious links, impersonating a contact, impersonating a business, or trying to scam a legitimate authentication from the firm.

Vishing – phishing using a phone call.

Angler phishing – leveraging employees' social media accounts with fraudulent notifications and messages to gain access.

Watering Hole – infecting or hijacking sites that a cyber-attacker knows the firm frequents to steal credentials or propagate malware.

Pharming – hijacking DNS (Domain Name System) to redirect users to URLs and IPs they did not intend to access. The browser displays the correct URL, but it is actually a malicious site.

Evil twin – copying or imitating a legitimate wi-fi access point to entice employees/firms to expose their internet traffic to cyber-attacker. A common tactic with public Wi-Fi, i.e., airports, food providers, and hotels.

SIM swapping – a cyber-attacker will take over a cell phone account by vishing a cell company and getting them to transfer a number to a new SIM card, taking over the accounts of the employees/firm.

Spoofing – making a call or email that looks as if it came from a legitimate source.

Credential stuffing - using data from past breaches

to try known, exposed email/password combinations previously used by employees/firm on other sites.

USB attack -malicious utilization of a USB device. This can include providing infected drives or chargers to an employee/firm as a freebie, or intentionally infecting a USB device at one location to infect a Firm location.

Supply chain attack – hacking a third-party service provider to use its platform to attack its customers. This method was used in the recent Solar-Winds cyber-attack.

RDP attack –using remote desktop protocol access abilities to gain access into the firm's system. This method was used in the notorious Colonial Pipeline cyber-attack.

If you have not engaged a reputable IT specialist, your firm is especially vulnerable to a computer breach. Basic IT controls help your firm prevent cyber fraud. Important controls include, intrusion prevention (firewall), up to date anti-virus software (endpoint protection), strong password standards and multi-factor authentication, securing wi-fi access, prohibiting employee personal computer usage, prohibiting computer devices brought from the outside without oversight, constant training on suspicious emails and websites, and periodic penetration testing by a cyber fraud specialist.

Here is a quick cyber fraud self-assessment: If some or all of these concepts sound unfamiliar, start today by hiring the right IT professional(s). **©**



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You Receive a Subpoena For a Client's File – What Do You Do?

By John M. Naylor, Esq.

*About the CCBA's Article #12: "You Receive a Subpoena For a Client's File – What Do You Do?" offers 1.0 Ethics Continuing Legal Education (CLE) Credit to Nevada lawyers who complete the test and order form per the offer described in the June/July 2022 issue of Communiqué. See pp. 20 and 22-28. The CCBA is an Accredited Provider with the NV CLE Board.

Introduction

Every attorney accumulates old client files--you store them in the very back of the file room or as an archived file on the cloud, and they may or may not be able to easily find. You forget about them until it comes time to clean up the file room, make more space on the cloud, or someone serves a subpoena for them. What do you do when someone subpoenas the files of an existing or long-forgotten client? Basically, you should fight it. This article aims to give an attorney guidance on how to meet their ethical obligations.

Whose files are they anyway?

The State Bar of Nevada considers the files in your possession to be the property of the client. See State Bar of Nev., Standing Comm. on Ethics & Professional Responsibility, Formal Op. No. 28 (Sept. 24, 2007) (Answer to Question No. 1). You have an ethical duty under NRPC 1.15(a) to keep those files for seven years, after which point, you may dispose of them. Attorneys should remember that files need to be destroyed in such a way as to protect client confidences. See, e.g., State Bar of Texas, Professional



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Ethics Comm., Op. No. 627 (Aug. 2013). That means that throwing them in the dumpster behind your office is insufficient, but the finer points of document destruction are a topic for another day. You and your client can shorten the seven years by agreement so long as the period is reasonable and does not otherwise violate the client's rights. See Nev. Formal Op. No. 28, (Answer to Question 4). The State Bar of Nevada suggests that two years is the minimum, but that may be longer for certain types of files. How long to keep files is beyond the scope of this article, but a useful publication that covers this topic is the State Bar of Nevada's "Succession Planning in Nevada," published in 2017 and available for free on the state bar's website under the News and Publications tab). What this all means is that a subpoena for a client's file is essentially a subpoena for a client's property.

NRCP 1.6 imposes duties on you

Nevada Rules of Professional Conduct 1.6(a), which is based on ABA Model Rule 1.6 is the primary rule at play here. Rule 1.6 generally prohibits an attorney from disclosing any information regarding the representation of a client unless one of several exceptions apply. The State Bar of Nevada has wholeheartedly embraced this prohibition by broadly stating that an attorney cannot disclose anything regarding a client or the representation. *See* State Bar of Nev., Standing Comm. on Ethics & Professional Responsibility, Formal Op. No. 41 (June 24, 2009). Here, anything means everything. A literal reading of Formal Opinion No. 41 prohibits an attorney from confirming the identity of a

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How Nevada lawyers may earn 1.0 Ethics CLE credit in three easy steps:

- Read the article, "You Receive a Subpoena For a Client's File – What Do You Do?" (CCBA CLE Article #12). See pages 20-25;
- 2. Complete the quiz. See pages 26-27; and
- 3. Complete the order form. See page 28.

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client, even if that information is a matter of public record (*i.e.*, even if you have just made an appearance in court).

The applicable exemption here is NRPC 1.6(b)(6), which allows a lawyer to disclose information when necessary to comply with a law or a court order. An argument can be made that a validly issued subpoena is a court order for purposes of NRPC 1.6(b)(6) since it is technically issued by a court and the served party is subject to possible contempt for noncompliance. See NRCP 45(a)(2), 45(e). No Nevada cases or other authority discuss the implications of a subpoena for client files, and Formal Opinion 41, while broad in scope, does not really discuss the exceptions.

Do the comments to the ABA Model Rules offer any help? While the Supreme Court of Nevada did not adopt the comments, they may be used as guidance. NRPC 1.0A. The ABA commentary, though, expressly states that whether a particular order fits within the exception of NRCP 1.6(b)(6) is beyond the scope of the rules. *See* ABA Model Rule 1.6(B)(6) (2015) (Comment 12. So, what do you do?





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ABA Formal Opinion 473 provides guidance

Nevada has no specific authority regarding the subpoenaing of client files. As a general principle, the Supreme Court of Nevada and the State Bar of Nevada will at least consider the ethic opinions of other jurisdictions and the American Bar Association. See, e.g., Merits Incentives, LLC v. Eight Judicial District Court, 127 Nev. 689, 262 P.3d 720 (2011); Nev. State Bar Formal Op. No. 18 (Apr. 29, 1994).

The ABA looked at this issue in 1994 and again in 2016. See ABA Formal Op. 94-385 (June 5, 1994), ABA Formal Op. 473 (Feb. 17, 2016). The reason for the fresh look in 2016 was the adoption of ABA Model Rule 1.6(b) (6) in 2002. Prior to the amendment, Model Rule 1.6 was interpreted to allow disclosure of client files to comply with a *final* order of a court. ABA Model Rule 1.6 (1994) (Comment 20). The ABA eliminated any reference to *final* orders by amending Model Rule 1.6(b) to allow disclosure in response to simply just orders. Nevada adopted the amended Rule 1.6 in 2006. The amendment raised questions about court orders that the ABA formal opinion attempts to address. A more detailed discussion of this amendment and its reasoning appear in ABA Formal Opinion 473. Unless

another source is cited, the following approach to a subpoena is described in ABA Formal Opinion 473.

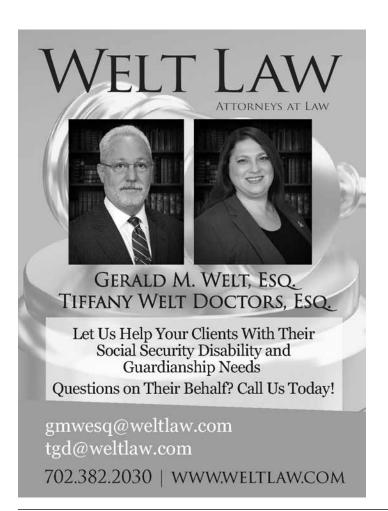
Can you find the client?

The initial question a lawyer faces is whether they can find the client because the first duty upon receiving a subpoena is notification. For an existing client, notification should be easy.

After notification, you must consult the client and that consultation must include, at a minimum, (i) a description of the protections afforded by NRPC 1.6(a) and (b); (ii) to what extent the attorney-client privilege or work product doctrines apply to the subpoenaed material; and (iii) any other relevant matters. *See* ABA Formal Op. 473, NRPC 1.4. Other relevant matters could include whether disclosure of the material may raise concerns of criminal liability or whether the subpoena is valid in the first place. *Id.*.

If after consultation the client makes a fully informed decision to not fight the subpoena, the lawyer may proceed with disclosure. If the client wants to fight the subpoena, the lawyer must use all reasonable means to do so. The starting point for that is NRCP 45, which governs the is-

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suance of subpoenas and lays out a procedure for objecting to them. Most objections will be grounded in the attorney-client privilege and work product doctrines. The nuances of the objections will most likely be fact specific and are beyond the scope of this article.

If the client and attorney agree on objections, they will typically be asserted by a Rule 45 Letter that identifies the reasons for withholding documents. See NRCP 45(c)(2) (B). The subpoenaing party will then bring a motion to compel. See NRCP 45(c)(2)(B)(ii). At that point, the court will rule. If the ruling is not to the client's liking, NRPC 1.4 requires the attorney to discuss the possibility of appeal with the client.

Two issues may come up after consultation. The first is when the lawyer and client do not agree on what objections to make or whether to proceed with the appeal of an adverse ruling. The second issue is more likely to come up and that is when the attorney and client cannot agree on the cost of opposing the subpoena. The latter is especially true if defending against a subpoena falls outside the original scope of the engagement.

If there is a disagreement over the scope of the objections or the fees, the lawyer may have to withdraw from

representing the current client or decline to renew the engagement with a former client. In either event, the lawyer must give the client a reasonable time to find counsel.

What happens if the client or former client cannot or will not find new counsel? ABA Formal Opinion 473 is not clear on this situation. It does suggest, however, that the attorney must still have to take reasonable steps to oppose the subpoena. *See* ABA Formal Op. 473 fn. 21, citing D.C. Bar Op. 288 fn. 4 (1999). As described below, in the situation where a lawyer cannot find a former client, this will most likely include objecting to a subpoena and responding to a motion to compel, but does not require the pursuit of an appeal.

And if you can't find the former client

In the case of a former client that cannot be located, the attorney must take reasonable steps to locate them. NRPC 1.0(h) defines reasonable as the actions that a prudent and competent lawyer would take. ABA Opinion 473 advises that these steps include internet searches, faxes, calls, e-mails, and a letter to the former client's last known address. The lawyer should keep a record of all attempts to



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If you cannot find your client, ABA Formal Opinion 473 requires the attorney to still make all reasonable objections to protect privileged material. The opinion advises that the lawyer, when making the objections (and presumably in response to a motion to compel), candidly explain to the court all the steps taken to locate the former client. If the court orders disclosure, the attorney may do so pursuant to NRPC 1.6(b)(6).

Importantly, ABA Formal Opinion 473 does not require the lawyer to pursue an appeal on behalf of an unavailable or unlocatable client. The opinion employs a balancing of hardships analysis to determine that the interests in protecting the unavailable client's interests outweigh the burden on the lawyer to object to the subpoena and respond to a motion to compel. Once a court has ruled in favor of disclosure though, the balance shifts in favor of the lawyer due to the burden of pursuing an appeal. Therefore, under ABA Formal Opinion 473, the lawyer is not ethically bound to pursue an appeal on behalf of an unavailable client and may safely produce the file under NRPC 1.6(b) (6).

What if my client has died?

ABA Formal Opinion 473 does not address what happens when a client has passed away. In Nevada, the attorney-client privilege survives death and is held by the personal representative of the deceased client. NRS 49.105(1). A good approach is to treat a deceased client in the same manner as a former or missing client. The lawyer should first take reasonable steps to locate the personal representative for consultation and direction. If the personal representative cannot be found, then the attorney should still take reasonable steps to protect the files. This will include a Rule 45 Letter and responding to a motion to compel. The attorney need not, however, shoulder the burden of an appeal.

Conclusion

What the ethical opinions and the rules make clear is that a subpoena alone is insufficient to require you to turn over a client's file, regardless of whether it is considered a court order. Unless the client gives informed consent to release the file, the attorney is duty bound to fight it, at least up until the point a court or other tribunal enters an order specifically requiring its production. **©**



CCBA CLE Article #12 Quiz

You Receive a Subpoena For a Client's File – What Do You Do?

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Complete the quiz. Each question has only one correct answer.

- 1. The Nevada State Bar has issued several formal opinions outlining what an attorney should do upon receipt of a subpoena for a former client's file.
 - A. True
 - B. False
 - 2. An attorney's client files:
 - A. Belong only to the attorney
 - B. Belong to the client
 - C. Don't really belong to anyone because they can be destroyed
 - D. Belong to the State Bar of Nevada
 - 3. Client files should be:
 - A. Kept until the attorney runs out of space
 - B. Kept no more than a year
 - C. Kept seven years unless another period has been agreed to with the client
 - D. Kept until a third party subpoenas them
 - 4. Nevada State Bar Formal Opinion No. 41:
 - A. Governs the disposition of funds for contingent fee cases.
 - B. Allows an attorney to openly discuss details of a client with strangers
 - C. Trick question there is no Formal Opinion No. 41
 - D. States that NRPC 1.6 strictly prohibits an attorney from disclosing any information about a client unless an exception applies
 - 5. NRPC 1.6(b)(6) only applies to final orders.
 - A. True
 - B. False
- 6. Subpoenas are court orders under NRCP 45(a)(2) and NRCP 45(e).

- A. True
- B. False
- 7. With respect to the ABA comments to the model rules:
 - A. The Supreme Court of Nevada has not adopted them but allows them to be used as guidance
 - B. Another trick question the ABA has no comments to its model rules
 - C. The Supreme Court of Nevada strictly forbids anyone from reading the comments
 - D. The Supreme Court of Nevada requires courts to strictly adhere to the ABA comments to the model rules
- 8. Attorneys have an ethical duty to maintain contact information for all former clients.
 - A. True
 - B. False
- 9. Upon receipt of a subpoena for the file of a current client, the attorney must immediately contact that client.
 - A. True
 - B. False
- 10. If the current client directs an attorney to make a frivolous objection to a subpoena for a client file:
 - A. The attorney must do so and explain to the court that "I know it is frivolous, but my client made me do it" to avoid sanctions
 - B. Try to persuade the client to not make the objection but if the client persists, consider withdrawing understanding that the attorney will most likely still have to take reasonable steps to oppose the subpoena
 - C. Continue representing the client but completely ignore the client's instructions

- D. All of the above
- 11. ABA Formal Opinion 473:
 - A. Has been completely adopted by the Supreme Court of Nevada
 - B. Does not address the issues raised when an attorney receives a subpoena for a client file
 - C. May be considered as guidance because the Supreme Court of Nevada and the State Bar of Nevada have at times considered ABA formal opinions when deciding an issue
 - D. Only applies to people who are members of the ABA
- 12. NRCP 45 describes the procedure that third parties use to object to subpoenas.
 - A. True
 - B. False
- 13. Under NRCP 45, the only way the recipient of subpoena can object to it is to bring a motion for a protective order.
 - A. True
 - B. False
- 14. If you receive a subpoena for client files that are more than seven years old:
 - A. You can turn them over without trying to consult with the client or former client
 - B. You still have to immediately inform the client or take reasonable steps to locate the former client to consult with them about the subpoena
 - C. Ignore the subpoena
 - D. All of the above
- 15. Upon receipt of a subpoena for a former client's files, the attorney must:
 - A. Take reasonable steps to locate that client
 - B. Turn over the files without trying to locate the former client because it's their problem if they have not taken the trouble to keep the attorney informed of their current contact information
 - C. Immediately destroy the client file and say they no longer have them
 - D. Hide the files
- 16. Reasonable and prudent steps to locate a former client include:
 - A. Internet searches

- B. Letters to the client's last known address
- C. Emails to the client's last known email address
- D. Calls to the client's last known telephone number
- E. All of the above
- 17. If a client wants to appeal an order concerning the production of client files, and the attorney believes the appeal is frivolous:
 - A. The attorney should proceed with the appeal because Nevada's appellate courts do not mind frivolous appeals
 - B. The attorney can resolve the dispute with the client by waiting too long to file an appeal or writ thereby mooting the issue
 - C. The attorney must consider withdrawing from the representation
 - D. All of the above
- 18. If an attorney cannot locate a former client, the best practice would be for the attorney to oppose the subpoena on all reasonable grounds, which may include opposing a motion to compel but not necessarily an appeal.
 - A. True
 - B. False
- 19. ABA Formal Opinion 473 states that if a client cannot be found, the attorney must use all means to oppose a subpoena at their own cost, including pursuing an appeal if necessary.
 - A. True
 - B. False
- 20. If an attorney receives a subpoena for a deceased client's file, the attorney should:
 - A. Ignore it
 - B. Consult a professional psychic medium or use a Ouija Board to try to contact the deceased client
 - C. Attempt to locate the deceased client's personal representative
 - D. Tell the subpoenaing party they have never heard of the client
- 21. Bonus question under NRAP 3A(b) are orders concerning disputes over subpoenas directly appealable?
 - A. True
 - B. False

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Kids and Conflicts of Interests

By Marcus Brouwers, Esq.

epresenting children is great. They are genuine and interesting because the world seems new through their eyes. They want to tell their story and usually make you feel taller by comparison.

Minor guardianship cases occasionally have complicated issues. But part of the fun of being a lawyer is problem-solving with negotiations, writing, or dazzling the judge with oral arguments practiced in the mirror and refined in the shower.

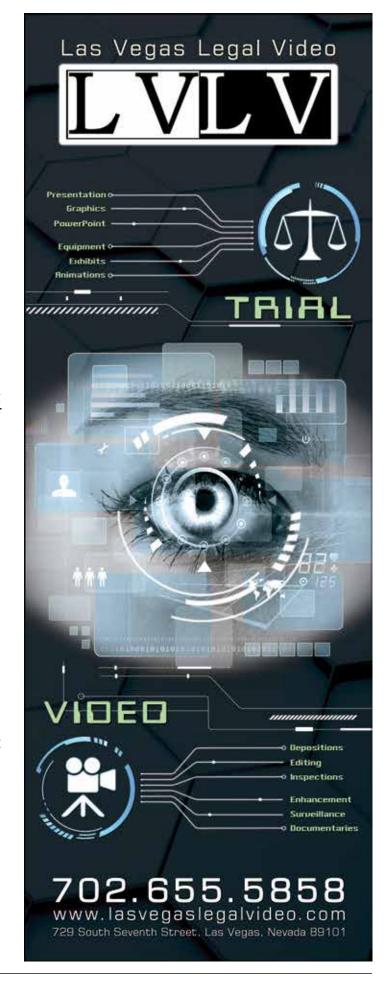
Occasionally, children in a family have different goals, resulting in a conflict of interest. When a conflict exists, the attorney cannot ethically stay on the case representing sibling groups. Under NRCP Rule 1.7, I can't argue out of both sides of my mouth; I can't say that safety concerns exist for one kid but not another. Unlike adults, children cannot waive conflicts of interest, *Matter of H. Children*, 608 N.Y.S.2d 784 (N.Y. Fam. Ct. 1994). So when a conflict arises, I have to withdraw, no matter how much work I put in or how badly these kids need their voices heard. And there is nothing I can do. But wait! What we need is a hero. These kids need a hero. But where?

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