



A Letter From Our President: Judge Teresa James

As I sit down to write this article, I have just finished reading "Turning Pages."
That's right, the first *children's* book written by Supreme Court Justice Sonia

Sotomayor. It is a remarkable book – perhaps, the best I’ve read (or listened to) in months -- and I commend it to you! It’ll only take you a few minutes to read....

But I’m focused on “Turning Pages” because it is part of the Summer Democracy Book Club for Junior Girl Scouts, conceptualized and organized for our FBA Chapter (“FBA”) by Brooke Hesler Ramsey (FBA member and law clerk to Magistrate Judge Rachel Schwartz) along with our Civics and Outreach Committee. I am so proud of the FBA for creating this wonderful Book Club, designed to meet the requirements for and enable Girl Scout Juniors to obtain their Democracy badge while learning about Civics and the Law. Approximately three dozen Girl Scouts, plus children of FBA members who register (even if not Girl Scouts), will participate in three remote discussions over the Summer, regarding “Turning Pages” and two other books (for more details, continue reading; there is a complete article regarding the Book Club inside this Newsletter). With funds obtained through a Grant, the FBA purchased and distributed the books to these Girl Scouts, who pay only a \$5 registration fee. This is a shining example of one of the many ways the FBA is working to promote Civics Education among our youth.

In “Turning Pages,” Justice Sotomayor writes, “Justice means treating people fairly under the law.” And, she explains, “As a [Supreme Court] Justice, I study the most important words in American law --... the Constitution of the United States – and decide which laws agree with it.” Of course, these are fundamental concepts upon which our law and government are based. As lawyers, we know that. But, it is so important that we educate our young people so they too understand these important concepts. I encourage you to buy and read the three children’s books that are included in this Summer’s Book Club program. Better yet, pass the books on to your kids or other kids you know. And then, even more important, take a few minutes to talk with those kids about the book(s). We are so fortunate, as lawyers, to be part of such a great profession -
- Let’s pay it forward!

Finally, if you are not yet a member of FBA, or you are a member but not actively engaged, I encourage you to join and get involved. Our Chapter is extremely busy and involved in many, many worthwhile projects. Notably, we have three CLE programs (all free to FBA members) and two social events scheduled over the next two months. To learn more about the FBA and these

programs and events, read the articles in this Newsletter, check out our website, Fedbarkanmo.org, and/or give me a call.



The Honorable Teresa J. James was appointed on January 16, 2014 as a United States Magistrate Judge for the District of Kansas in Kansas City. Judge James received her undergraduate degree from the University of Kansas in 1981 and her Juris Doctor from the University of Kansas in 1984. Judge James continues to be actively involved in the Inn of Court and FBA and to serve on the Bench-Bar Committee.

The Impact of Civic Education

by Wendy Rohleder-Sook



I was a senior in high school when my physics teacher said to me, “you should become a lawyer.” Perhaps he was just tired of listening to my endless arguments about why we should or should not do something in class, but it was one of the first times an adult had suggested the idea of pursuing a legal career to me.

While that single statement is not responsible for my ending up in law school, it did plant the first seed. During my undergraduate career, I spent time exploring the legal profession, developing skills in writing and critical thinking, and getting involved in student activities. I did ultimately apply to and graduate from law school.

Fast forward almost thirty years, and I now sit on the other side of the educational desk. My legal career has not been a traditional one. Rather, I combined my legal education with my passion of working with college students and now serve as an Assistant Professor and Director of Pre-Law/Legal Studies at Fort Hays State University in Hays, Kansas. Every day, I have an opportunity to teach and mentor pre-law students - sometimes planting the seed, sometimes trying to cultivate that seed by helping a student move forward on their pre-law journey.

I grew up and now live in a rural area in Northwest Kansas, an area that the data suggests is becoming a “legal desert.” A place where many of our bright young minds leave for “greener” pastures because they believe that they will find more exciting personal and professional opportunities elsewhere. A place where it is difficult to recruit young folks to begin their careers, particularly if they don’t have an affinity for small town life.

It has become increasingly clear to me that one of our paths to increasing the number of lawyers in this area is to develop or grow those attorneys right here in Northwest Kansas. This means planting seeds early in their educational careers. Recently, I had the delightful opportunity to join one of my local bar association colleagues, Aaron Cunningham, to present a couple of “Law Day” sessions for five hundred seventh and eighth grade students at our local middle school. We talked about the Constitution, the importance of the rule of law, and the Bill of Rights. We also talked about our work in the legal profession, the diverse legal opportunities in our area, and how one can become a lawyer. Perhaps most importantly, we fielded several questions from students about the law and working as lawyers. When I asked how many students had considered becoming lawyers, I was pleased to see a few hands go up. I also had a few students approach me afterwards to talk about their interests.

Many of the students in attendance do not have lawyers in their families or among their family friends, making access to personal and direct information about the profession difficult to obtain. Developing programs that allow lawyers to engage with the community, talk with young students, and build connections with teachers and

schools can make the law and legal profession more accessible. On a personal note, it is most rewarding to lend your knowledge and experience to aid in growing the next generation of lawyers. That seed you're planting just may bloom in the years to come.

Dr. Wendy Rohleder-Sook is the Assistant Professor of Political Science at Fort Hays State University. Her teaching focuses on pre-law/legal studies courses, with research interest including women in the law and pre-law advising models. She is a native Kansan with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science and Sociology from the University of Kansas, and a Juris Doctor (law degree) from the KU School of Law.



Book Banning CLE

July 7, 2022



Book Banning CLE and “Annie on My Mind” retrospective

With book bans and challenges spreading like wildfire across the United States in recent months, the FBA chapter for the Districts of Kansas and Western District of Missouri is organizing a CLE on this important topic which is scheduled for 1 p.m.

July 7, 2022, via Zoom and with limited in-person seating available for the first registrants. The event is free to FBA chapter members and \$25 for non-members seeking CLE credit.

In conjunction with this event, we have been conducting video interviews with participants in a landmark First Amendment book-banning trial that took place in Kansas nearly 3 decades ago, involving the Olathe School District’s 1993 ban of the novel “Annie on My Mind” about a same-sex romance between teenage girls. Following a bench trial in fall 1995 in the matter of *Case v. Unified School District No. 233*, the Hon. Thomas Van Bebber of the U.S. District Court for the District of Kansas ruled that “Annie on My Mind” had been unconstitutionally removed from the school district’s libraries on the basis of viewpoint discrimination.

To put this historic case into context in today’s book-banning climate, we recently recorded interviews with various trial participants, including Plaintiffs’ counsel Gene Balloun and (later U.S. District Court Magistrate Judge) David Waxse; Defense counsel Greg Goheen; and Plaintiffs Steve Case (then a teacher at Olathe East High School) and his daughter, Stevana “Stevie” Case, who at the time was a senior in high school. Here is a promo video for the event: **[embed the short video I sent yesterday]**.

The interviews with the *Case* trial participants will be compiled on the FBA site for posterity’s sake; watch for more outtakes and excerpts to come in weeks ahead.

The July 7 CLE event, moderated by Eric Weslander of Stevens & Brand LLP, will feature panelists Deborah Caldwell-Stone of the American Library Association and Gillian Wilcox of the Missouri ACLU, which is currently litigating various book bans. It will be presented to a dual audience of Kansas junior-high and high-school teachers, as one part of a two-day training program on civics put on by the Kansas First Amendment Foundation—an organization founded using the attorneys’ fees awarded to the prevailing plaintiffs in the “Annie on my Mind” litigation.

We would like to thank the FBA Litigation Section; Shook, Hardy & Bacon L.L.P.; and

Stevens & Brand L.L.P. for their sponsorship of this event, and we hope to see you there.

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER FOR BOOK BANNING CLE](#)



To further the goal of casting a wide net to attract the broadest possible pool of qualified applicants to serve as federal judges, the Judicial Conference Committees on the Administration of the Bankruptcy System and Magistrate Judges System present their national diversity event:

Roadways to the Bench: Who Me? A Bankruptcy or Magistrate Judge?

Time TBD

- Interested lawyers and law students are invited to observe a national keynote address or panel discussion and participate in local roundtables with bankruptcy, magistrate, district, and appellate judges about pathways to the federal bench.
- More information will be provided as the date approaches. Registration may be limited due to space constraints.

FBA Members! Your kids are invited to participate in Summer Democracy Book Club!



[CLICK HERE TO RSVP](#)

Summer Democracy Reading Program with Junior Girl Scouts.

The Kansas and Western District of Missouri chapter of the Federal Bar Association is offering the Summer Democracy Book Club for Junior Girl Scouts, which will meet all elements of the Democracy Badge. Participants will receive the books *Turning Pages: My Life Story* by Sonia Sotomayor; *Farmers Unite! Planting a Protest for Fair Prices* by Lindsay H. Metcalf; and *Rebel Girls Lead: 25 Tales of Powerful Women*. The Kansas and Western District of Missouri chapter of the Federal Bar Association is offering the Summer Democracy Book Club for Junior Girl Scouts, which will meet all elements of the Democracy Badge. Participants will receive the

books *Turning Pages: My Life Story* by Sonia Sotomayor; *Farmers Unite! Planting a Protest for Fair Prices* by Lindsay H. Metcalf; and *Rebel Girls Lead: 25 Tales of Powerful Women*.

There will be 3 Zoom book club discussions as a part of the program:

- **June 16, 6:30 PM - 7:00 PM:** U.S. Magistrate Judge Teresa J. James will lead the Zoom book club discussion about Justice Sotomayor's book and will talk about the role of the judiciary.
- **June 30, 6:30 PM - 7:00 PM:** Lindsay H. Metcalf will talk about her own book, *Farmers Unite!*, the power or peaceful protest, and the role of the legislative branch.
- **July 14, 6:30 PM - 7:00 PM:** Prominent Kansas City immigration attorney Mira Mdivani will finish off the book club discussing *Rebel Girls Lead* and the role of the executive branch and state and local government.

FBA Members are welcome to have their children ages 9-11 join the book club even if they are not Girl Scouts. To participate, members will need to purchase their own books and RSVP to brooke.hesler@gmail.com and indicate which Zoom book club discussions they would like to attend.

CLICK HERE TO RSVP

IMPLICIT BIAS AND DIVERSITY CLE

FEDERAL BAR ASSOCIATION, CHAPTER FOR THE DISTRICTS OF KANSAS & WESTERN MISSOURI, IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE FBA FEDERAL JUDICIAL LAW CLERK COMMITTEE, LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT LAW SECTION, CIVIL RIGHTS LAW SECTION, & FEDERAL LITIGATION SECTION PRESENT THIS

IMPLICIT BIAS AND DIVERSITY CLE.



Presented by Keith & Dana Cutler, trial lawyers at James W. Tippin & Associates practicing in the areas of civil defense litigation, education law and small business representation and the hosts of "*Couples Court with The Cutlers*."
With a special introduction by Hon. Lajua

When: August 10, 2022 1:00-2:00 P.M. CST

Where: Charles Whittaker U.S. Courthouse, 4th Floor, Training Room, 400 E. 9th St., Kansas City, Missouri

Life and remote attendance available
Free for FBA Members/ \$50 for non-members

[Click Here for More Information about this CLE](#)



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