A Letter from Leon:

Howzit my fellow Barristers, Solicitors, and Judges;

In this issue, where we share highlights from another successful year for the KCMBF’s Student Law Academy, I wanted to talk about the important role lawyers play in giving back to the community. Lawyers serve as guardians of justice, working diligently to uphold the rule of law, and have a vital role in being active participants in the communities they serve. Lawyers can make a significant impact, fostering a sense of social responsibility and justice.

KCMBF, through its Legal Connection Programs, continues to focus on our mission to:

1. Strengthen KCMBF’s impact in the community
2. Increase KCMBF’s visibility within the profession and community at large; and
3. Build KCMBF’s long-term sustainability

When lawyers invest back in their communities, the benefits are boundless...

1. Strengthening Access to Justice

All members of society, regardless of their socioeconomic status, deserve equal access to justice. Through pro bono work, or volunteering at legal aid clinics, lawyers can help level the playing field, ensuring the opportunity of justice for all. Pro bono work allows lawyers to use their expertise to represent those who would otherwise go unheard. Lawyers contribute to a more inclusive and fair legal system, uplifting marginalized communities and giving them a voice.

2. Educating and Empowering Communities

Lawyers possess specialized knowledge that can help empower individuals and communities. Through community outreach programs and educational initiatives, lawyers can share their expertise to educate people about their legal rights, obligations, and potential legal issues they may encounter.

By conducting workshops, seminars, or providing free legal advice, lawyers can demystify legal concepts and increase legal literacy among community members. This, in turn, empowers individuals to make informed decisions and assert their rights in various aspects of their lives, such as employment, housing, consumer protection, and family matters.

3. Advocating for Social Justice

Lawyers have historically played a significant role in championing social justice. They have the power to influence policymakers, shape legislation, and make a difference in public interest matters. By representing nonprofit organizations, advocating for human rights, or engaging in public interest litigation, lawyers can work towards creating a fairer and more equitable society.

Through their involvement in social justice causes, lawyers can actively address systemic issues, challenge discrimination, and fight for the rights of vulnerable populations. Their dedication to social justice amplifies the community’s voice and helps create a more just society for all.

4. Mentoring and Inspiring Future Legal Professionals

Lawyers have unique and invaluable knowledge to share with aspiring lawyers. By becoming mentors, lawyers can inspire young minds, provide guidance, and foster future generations of legal professionals who are also committed to giving back. When lawyers mentor students, participate in legal clinics, or offer internships, these meaningful interactions encourage future lawyers to continue the tradition of giving back to the community.

KCMBF contributes to all these essential ways of giving back to the community, through KCMBF members. We have a unique opportunity to positively impact our communities by going beyond our usual responsibilities.

Service-oriented lawyers enrich both their communities and the legal profession. By actively engaging in acts of service, lawyers demonstrate the power and potential of their expertise in creating a more inclusive and fair society for everyone. If you are not already actively involved in KCMBF, I encourage you to get involved!
Afrikaans WORDS of the month – Back to School Edition!
As the kids head back to school, I wanted to leave you with a few appropriate Afrikaans words for the month.

Kampus – Campus
Hoër Skool – High School
Klaskamer – Class Room
Onderwyser – Teacher

“Ontgroen” is an Afrikaans term that refers to the process of initiation or orientation of new students in a school or university. It is a tradition where senior students welcome and introduce new students to the school’s culture, rules, and activities.

In South Africa, we also had something called “huis sport” that translates to “house sport” in English. House sport refers to sporting activities or competitions organized within a school or educational institution where students are divided into different “houses” or teams. Each house typically has a unique name or color, and students compete against each other in various sports and athletic events. The purpose of house sports is to promote camaraderie, teamwork, and healthy competition among students. It also provides an opportunity for students to showcase their athletic abilities and school spirit. House sport events are often held on sports days or during special school events, and they can include a variety of sports such as track and field, soccer, rugby, cricket, and more.

I hope you enjoyed this article, and I look forward to catching up again in September.

I would love to get your feedback, so please drop me a text at (816) 565-4040 with your comments.

Groete (Regards),
– Leon Versfeld

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KCMBA
Kansas City Metropolitan Bar Association

Discover the Promising Future of the Greater Kansas City Legal Community at the 19th Annual Heartland Diversity Legal Job Fair.

The primary purpose of the Heartland Diversity Legal Job Fair (HDLF) is to increase the participation of under-represented groups in the practice of law in Kansas City. The founders and organizers of the HDLF strongly believe that the inclusion of diversity in its many facets, including, without limitation, race, ethnicity, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, marital status, age, and veteran status, enriches us all.

Over the course of the Job Fair, you will meet dynamic law students and post-graduates from a broad range of demographics and law schools. You will have the unique opportunity to find part-time clerks, summer interns, and entry-level associates.

HDLF is managed by the KCMB’s HDLF Committee. With the generous support of our members, employers, and sponsors, more students and job candidates are able to participate in the job fair.

In December 2021, KCMB launched the Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (DEI) Action Plan/Collaborative – a forum for developing, curating, and sharing a range of practical, effective law firm DEI resources, practices, and strategies that fit the respective needs of differently situated firms, and for considering and recommending innovative practices and evolving DEI strategies over time.

The shared purpose of the DEI Collaborative is to help member firms achieve continued, meaningful, and measurable progress toward the firms’ shared objectives of diversity, representation, inclusion and belonging. HDLF is at the heart of their ongoing commitment dating back to Fall of 2005.