



MEMBERS' JAM



HOW MUSIC INTERACTS WITH LIFE & LAW



Donna Branch

“Working from home while these cuties are home isn’t easy. We love to have scheduled music breaks to reset our focus and extend our concentration.”

Pictured with Lela and Brooklyn



Leslie Copeland

Leslie Copeland truly believes she wouldn’t get any work done without her high quality noise cancelling headphones!



Stephen Coger

Music is one way that I keep my heart from getting clogged up with suffering. A lot of my asylum-seeking clients are, like me, members of the LGBTQIA2S+ community and so sometimes it helps to turn the suffering into song. Also, I just have so much love for Arkansas and the natural world we get to access so easily by living here. So, as nature also helps me to return to a centeredness, it often combines with my music to make really fun art. One song that was all about LGBT+ love and Arkansas has a music video that even made the selection of a film festival in Australia!



Skye Martin

“I started taking piano lessons when I was in elementary school and continued through high school. I am out of practice but working on relearning because piano was really important to my grandmother.”



Blake Hendrix

Pictured outside of the Village Vanguard, NYC (“The World’s Greatest Jazz Club”)

“Jazz and criminal defense, particularly cross-examination, are the exact same thing to me. Both are disciplined. They require a structure, a logical progression, and a theme. With that foundation, you can then improvise. Listening, thinking on your feet; a bit like creating order out of chaos. To me, jazz and litigation mirror each other. I couldn’t have become a criminal defense lawyer without first having been a jazz musician.”



Kara Butler

(Top) Pictured with Ben Harris

"I remember in Civil Procedure class Prof. Brill discussed that law is both horizontal and vertical when looking at Federal and State law. This immediately made me think of the horizontal aspects of a melody that combine with the vertical harmonies to coincide together to make music."

I am an attorney and also a music teacher and performer. I studied music education and flute performance at the University of Illinois in C/U. After receiving those bachelors degrees I taught elementary music and beginning band before teaching as a grad assistant at the U of A while studying for my Masters in Music. After receiving my Masters Degree in 2007, I continued to teach and perform music around NWA and at home while raising my 3 children. As my children entered elementary school I started teaching as an adjunct music professor at NorthWest Arkansas Community College where I taught courses in wind ensemble, wind methods, private lessons on wind instruments and music appreciation.

Around 2017 I decided to enter law school and become an attorney. Many people have asked me why I made this change. It was not really a change as I just added the practice of law to my life. I did not take music and teaching out of my life. I completed law school in Fayetteville in 2021, passed the Bar and started practicing in 2022.

I continue to perform music in a trio with my oldest daughter and my longtime boyfriend, Ben Harris. (Ben Harris is the Grandson of the late Chief Justice Carlton Harris and son of late Judge Kayo Harris. He is an exceptional professional musician and the general manager of the Symphony of Northwest Arkansas.) My life as a musician has been essential to my development and career as an attorney. I can go on at length about how my two worlds intertwine in the literal sense of networking.

Below are a few thoughts and philosophical perspectives I have from being both a musician and attorney:

Law is a practice, a journey, a skill, that is never perfected. Day after day like a musician, an attorney gets completely new pieces to work on that present original challenges to conquer and understand for the purpose of creating a great performance and the best possible outcome for everyone involved. Many performance practices in music are applicable to preparing and litigating a case in court. This includes creating a tone and manner of presenting thoughts verbally or musically to convey the correct tone for the message that the presenter/performer is trying to get across to the audience, or jury. I find that studying a piece of music for hours on end is very similar to studying the law and perfecting the details in a pleading I am writing. Teaching a small music ensemble to listen to each other and create a single musical product is similar to working in a mediation setting to create a unified contract.

Working one on one with a client to understand what they need help with and educating them to understand how to approach their legal issues is synonymous with working with a private music student.

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Steve Giles

"I am convinced that early education in music helped me to become an attorney. When I graduated from law school the River City Band asked me to join them as a keyboard player/vocalist as they were going on tour of the Southwest Conference and recording in Memphis at Stax and Ardent studios. On our tour we opened shows for various A-list touring bands such as Styx, The Guess Who, and others. I have to believe that my experience on stage as a musician is the catalyst that helped me with public speaking on the law to get me where I am today." Pictured at his home studio.

I am convinced that early education in music helped me to become an attorney. I began to play the piano by taking lessons from a teacher in my Little Rock elementary school, 3rd grade as I recall. I didn't much like learning scales and chord progressions but with patience and with encouragement of my teacher I stayed with it. By the time I was in 8th grade I was playing recitals of classical and popular music to live audiences, eventually learning to "play by ear" songs I heard on the radio and records.

At the same time, my father would sometimes take me to his downtown office and introduce me to attorneys he knew. I was impressed with their demeanor and kindness to me, and their nice cars, homes and families. I was thinking it would be cool to be a lawyer and a musician. So, in high school and in college in Fayetteville, I played in several local bands at various events and venues, achieving some notoriety in the Rock 'n Roll scene.

I continued to play in Fayetteville bands in college, and occasionally jammed with a popular Fayetteville-based band named River City Band. When I graduated from law school that band asked me to join them as a keyboard player/vocalist as they were going on tour of the Southwest Conference and recording in Memphis at Stax and Ardent studios. On our tour we opened shows for various A-list touring bands such as Styx, The Guess Who, and others.

In 1972 our band was nominated and won an award as "Best New Instrumental Group" category in the Memphis Awards Show held in the Cook Convention Center. As an Award recipient we performed on stage in the event, after Jerry Lee Lewis and The Memphis Horns, and other celebrities.

After this tour I returned to Fayetteville, passed the bar, and opened a solo law practice on downtown Center Street where my focus centered on various areas of practice in Real estate, Land Use and Development, and frequently presented at CLE courses for 17 years.

At one such presentation on the subject, "Smart Growth", my topic was working with Walmart Stores, Inc., on developing a Super Center in Chenal Valley in West Little Rock. As it happened, there was a Walmart in-house counsel attendee in the audience, who, after my presentation, asked me if I would be interested in interviewing with Walmart's General Counsel. That led to my engagement as Walmart Arkansas Outside Land Use counsel for 15 years, opening many new stores. Very soon I began to get clients from other attorneys and friends, but moved back to my home town, Little Rock.

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Joe Purvis

"Little Joe and the BK's has performed for 40+ years in Arkansas, Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi and Florida. We've opened for famous Riverfest acts for 17 years and played for several annual meetings of the Bar Association." Pictured with the LLC Band.

I have always loved music and both of my parents were musical. My dad paid his way through college in Mississippi in the late 30's playing piano and singing in a swing band and my mother was a music major at Hendrix until she got married. Even though I do not play any instrument, I have always "sung in the shower" so to speak singing along with the radio or other stuff going on. Since you have limited me to 100 words about the band and how it got its start, this gets you the highlights:



In 1980, Dr. James Argue, our senior pastor, put together a rock and roll band of church members. We, John Roberts, Buddy Villines, Phil Price, the late Skip Cullum and three wives singing backup, performed five songs - all oldies and from that Little Joe and the BK's emerged. We decided to give all the profits to charity and set up a scholarship fund through the United Methodist Church. For 40+ years we've in Arkansas, Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi and Florida. We've opened for famous Riverfest acts for 17 years and played for several annual meetings of the Bar Association. (Pictured left.)

I have worked hard to be the best attorney I can through the years and have been privileged to argue before the United States

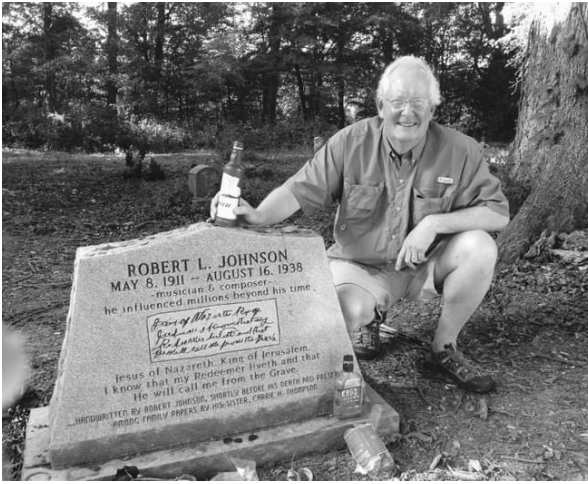
Supreme Court on two different occasions as well as arguing cases in State and Federal Court and at the 8th Circuit Court of Appeals. I have been lucky enough to be voted Best Lawyers in America and Super Lawyers of the Midsouth yet I think right now I am known by almost as many people for singing in a rock and roll band as I am for the practice of law. You can simply call me grateful!



Greg Jones

"Its 2010. I duck into a blues joint on Las Ramblas in Barcelona, hoping to jam with the locals. Asked 'De donde es?' No one recognizes 'Arkansas.' So I say, 'Cerca de Mississippi.' The harmonica player grins, pulls me onstage and yells 'Es de MeeCheeCheePee.' The place erupts: for 20 seconds, the crowd chants 'Elveees, Elveees, Elveees.' Instantly, I have street cred."

Pictured at Las Ramblas.



Charles Roscoff

"I've spent some part of the last 20 years studying the blues. I've done quite a bit of research on the early bluesmen/women and listening to their music. I've also visited around 30 gravesites of blues greats, in four states: Arkansas, Mississippi, Tennessee, and most recently Texas." Pictured at Robert Johnson's gravesite. I've spent some part of the last 20 years studying the blues. I've done quite a bit of research on the early bluesmen/women and listening to their music. I've also visited around 30 gravesites of blues greats, in four states: Arkansas, Mississippi, Tennessee, and most recently Texas (Blind Lemon Jefferson is buried at Wortham, TX).

One of my first visits was to Robert Johnson's gravesite north of Greenwood, Mississippi. Robert Johnson only recorded twice, in San Antonio and Dallas. He spent a lot of time in Phillips County, around Helena and Turkey Scratch (on the Lee/Phillips County line). His songs have been covered by so many artists, including the Rolling Stones and the Grateful Dead.



Christina Baker

"Often our career becomes our life, especially in the practice of law. Dance is great as a stress-reliever and is a surprisingly rigorous physical activity, which every lawyer can benefit from. But, for me, dance goes beyond just that. I am often looking for ways to break the tension with colleagues that my career path inevitably brings."

Approximately two years ago, my husband and I starting taking dance lessons. While we thought it might be something fun to do together after a stressful week, we could never have guessed how much it would add to our personal and professional lives. Dance was something totally new for us and we had no idea of the robust dance community in the area. From Ballroom to Latin, Swing, Country, and Disco, there are local dancers who will always fill the room. I am proud to count myself as one of them.

Often our career becomes our life, especially in the practice of law. Dance is great as a stress-reliever and is a surprisingly rigorous physical activity, which every lawyer can benefit from. But, for me, dance goes beyond just that. I am often looking for ways to break the tension with colleagues that my career path inevitably brings. Finding out that I dance is always a conversation-starter, and as a result we have a much fuller relationship than we would ever have had across the table. Some of my colleagues have even joined us in a lesson or attended a weekend dance when they probably wouldn't have before. I consider myself even luckier for it.



Kathryn Pryor

Pictured in the role of Mama Rose in Gypsy at The Studio Theatre in 2022. "Music and the performing arts are part of my DNA. My artistic side has made me a happier lawyer amidst the stress of the practice of law. And it has made me a better lawyer in the craft of relating to and communicating with witnesses and juries and in developing themes and strategies to which jurors can relate when preparing a case for trial."

Music and the performing arts are part of my DNA. Gratefully, during my legal career at Wright Lindsey & Jennings, I have been able to continue to hone my artistic craft on theatrical stages in Arkansas and on a cabaret stage in New York City. My artistic side has made me a happier lawyer amidst the stress of the practice of law. And it has made me a better lawyer in the craft of relating to and communicating with witnesses and juries and in developing themes and strategies to which jurors can relate when preparing a case for trial.



Jenifer Tucker and Alison Lee

Jenifer Tucker and Alison Lee are board members and active volunteers for the Committee of 100 for the Ozark Folk Center. The COOH supports the Music Roots Program that provides free musical instruction to children in the Stone County school district. Pictured are Jenifer and Alison hosting a game show to educate members about the organization.

Jenifer Tucker (J.D. '93) and Alison Lee (J.D. '05) are board members and active volunteers for the Committee of 100 for the Ozark Folk Center. The members of the COOH are comprised of women from around the state of Arkansas who are dedicated to supporting the Ozark Folk Center in Mountain View, Arkansas. The COOH supports the Music Roots Program which is a program that provides free musical instruction to children in the Stone County school district. Establishing the Music Roots program within the school system was the brainchild of Danny Thomas and, over the

25 years of this program, folk music has permeated all generations, literally saving the musical culture of this community.

Partnering with the Ozark Folk Center, and then music director, Elliott Hancock, the Music Roots program was formed. The idea was to teach kids how to play the folk instruments of guitar, fiddle, autoharp, dulcimer, and banjo. Even better, the classes were during the school day, the lessons were free, and the students had access to free loaner instruments! Hundreds of children gained skills, some went on to become professional musicians and many can be found playing around the court square today.

Jenifer and Alison have deep roots in Mountain View, and love being able to support this program. Both Jenifer and Alison have family members who have been volunteering with this group since its inception. Although they both practice law in NWA, they frequent Mountain View and the Ozark Folk Center.