

Your Professional Vitality Committee A New NCBA Resource for Legal Professionals

Legal professionals are accustomed to overcoming obstacles on the pathways to seeking creative solutions. Stress, inherent in the life of legal professionals, can reduce personal vitality and professional satisfaction. The objective of the Professional Vitality Committee (“PVC”) of the NCBA is to create, curate, and offer application of resources which infuse vitality into the professional and personal lives of lawyers, judges, and other legal professionals – from the threshold of entry into our profession, through the inevitable ups and downs of effective lawyering, into the winding down of practice and retirement.

The PVC is proud to announce that, in conjunction with Russell Rawlings, Director of External Affairs & Communications, it has established a new resource for the benefit of members of the Association. The resource is an online and published compendium of researched and vetted articles by experienced N. C. legal professionals which address the lives of individuals and the environments created by workplaces/firms. The compilation of material from the PVC is ongoing. Our objective is to stimulate thought and discussion about practices which serve to enhance the vitality, well-being, satisfaction, and joy in the lives of legal professionals. [Here’s the access.](#)¹ And here’s the background in brief:

In June 2019, incoming President LeAnn Nease Brown combined the objectives of lawyer effectiveness, quality of life and professional well-being and refocused them on professional vitality. Why?

“... vitality is the state of being strong and active; it is the power of enduring, the capacity to live and develop. We celebrate the humanity of our profession, not only as lawyers and legal professionals but as parents and grandparents, musicians and rock climbers, hikers and stamp collectors, painters and poets, dreamers and dancers.”

“Vitality,” Brown added in her installation address, “is having the strength in ourselves and our community to have full lives as lawyers.”

Erna Womble, chair, convened the first meeting of the Professional Vitality Committee on Sept. 12, 2019. At that time, no one could have known how the world we live in was about to change due to the spread of the coronavirus. The committee had its sights set on dealing with adverse situations and preparing for worst-case scenarios as lawyers always do ([‘Murphy’s Law,’ Or How an Aphorism Can Sum Up the Legal Mind](#)). Ironic indeed! But no one in their wildest dreams ever envisioned the upheaval brought about by COVID-19.

¹ Link: <https://www.ncbar.org/members/committees/professional-vitality/>

Yet it is because of this crisis that the work of the NCBA Professional Vitality Committee is even more important. The future is uncertain, perhaps more so now than ever in our lives, but life will go on and the legal community will play the critical role that it has always played in rebuilding and sustaining communities large and small.

A quote attributed to American philosopher and psychologist William James is apropos: “The greatest discovery of my generation is that a human being can alter his life by altering his attitudes.” Sometimes, all it takes to turn a stressful situation from a debilitating hindrance into a catalyst for success is a subtle shift in thinking. That’s what makes the James idea so powerful. **Putting our minds collaboratively to the task**, we can contribute toward a potential paradigm shift in our profession through empowering today’s legal professionals to achieve professional vitality – that state of professional success that works in tandem with a healthy, full personal life.

The resources being provided by the Professional Vitality Committee are unique. This new iteration of resources aims to address present-day challenges and longstanding obstacles. As expressed by President Mark Holt, the articles are valuable resources that address vitality as an objective which complements professional competence, attracting the interest of law students, lawyers, judges and paralegals as a community and as a benefit to the members of the NCBA. Through a developing catalog of articles, many of which are extensively researched, that are written and reviewed by committee members, legal professionals will receive peer-to-peer insight on issues impacting their daily lives.

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*The preceding article was written and reviewed as part of the work of the NCBA Professional Vitality Committee (“PVC”). The authors were **Russell Rawlings**, NCBA Director of External Affairs and Communications, Cary, NC, and **Erna Womble**, Clearly Bespoke Strategies, Inc., Winston-Salem, NC. Please direct comments and suggestions to [Erna Womble](#), Committee Chair, and [Holly Morris](#), Communities Manager. **See more** of the [PVC’s compendium](#) of articles and blog posts at (<https://ncbar.org/members/committees/professional-vitality/>).*