



## Meet CBA-CLE Board President Danaé Woody

BY HALEY HEMEN

It's a story you hear often now, about how things have changed during the pandemic. For the CBA Continuing Legal Education (CBA-CLE) Board of Directors, the challenge was met with relative ease. "It was an adventure!" says Board of Directors President Danaé Woody. "But because of the amazing staff at CBA-CLE, we were able to convert to a virtual

programming model swiftly and smoothly. All our meetings and presentations went virtual, and we found that we were able to reach far more people with meaningful content than ever before."

In fact, going virtual provided many benefits Woody sees as enduring. "We will continue to see hybrid programming, perhaps forever. People

can easily participate in CLEs from their desks with no commute or parking, and our larger conferences are now even more accessible and affordable for those who decide to engage from home. Many lawyers very much appreciate the flexibility to attend CLEs from anywhere, while others really miss the networking opportunities that used to go hand in hand with CLEs. Many lawyers want the ability to have both options, depending on their mood or schedules. We also now have far greater ability to bring in national speakers, as we have the virtual option even in a live classroom setting. This has awesome implications for the quality of CLEs we're now able to offer far more often."

Woody's role as president means that she supports and facilitates member engagement and the creation of educational programming and published content. It's an ever-evolving mission. Recently, the Colorado Supreme Court passed a rule change requiring lawyers to complete at least two credit-hours of equity, diversity, and inclusivity (EDI) credit per compliance period. "We are already on the forefront of EDI training and plan to continue developing robust programming with an eye toward eradicating biases and supporting and promoting lawyers who have been and continue to be impacted by bias and aggression within the profession."

As stay-at-home orders have lifted, Woody has seen many great new ideas being proposed. "Lawyers are yearning for opportunities to interact with one another and faculty, and we are primed to provide such innovative educational programming like never before. We are developing new programs in the areas of civil and criminal discovery, ethics, and attorney mental health, to name a few. While we are adding new programs and doing them in fun and different ways, our annual conferences are also undergoing some fresh updates."

And what makes for a successful CLE? "In my view, CLEs should be inclusive, engaging, and relevant, and whenever possible, should also offer some 'bonus value,' such as opportunity for networking, engaging with the community, public service, professional development and mentoring, member exposure, and wellness." And Woody should know. Since becoming a





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- 1 Waialea Beach, Hawaii.
- 2 Enjoying Red Rocks views.
- 3 Whitewater rafting with the CBA YLD in Idaho Springs.
- 4 Family trip to Laupahoehoe Nui on the Kohala Coast, Hawaii.

lawyer, she has taken far more CLEs than the required 45 per compliance period. “I hope our vast content offers something meaningful for each and every lawyer, such that attending CLEs is enjoyable and remains an important intrinsic aspect of being a lawyer, beyond simply a requirement.”

Woody came to Denver for law school after a nomadic childhood that saw the family settled in places as diverse as Minnesota, Hawaii, and South Korea, among others. “Travel is in my bones to this day,” Woody comments. “I have moved states/countries 12 times (not counting in-town moves). I love to travel internationally and domestically, and one of my favorite hobbies is taking my son on family trips to new beaches.”

Reflecting on the effect of such travel at a young age, Woody says, “I believe my childhood caused me to approach new people, places, and opportunities with an open mind, and gives me great curiosity about others, especially others whose lived experiences are different from mine. However, I never felt I had a community until joining this profession. I don’t have one place I grew up, or lifelong friends, but I have so many amazing friends scattered around the world. Community is one of the reasons I am so grateful for the opportunities I’ve had to serve within the bar. Having a law degree affords me access to this amazing group of professionals and provides a place for me to be a part of meaningful work to give back to the public and greater community in Colorado. Some of the relationships I’ve built during my time as a lawyer are ones I will cherish for many years.”

In fact, Woody says she turned into a “bar junkie” after getting involved with the CBA as a young lawyer and realizing how much fuller and richer her experience in the profession had become. “I found that working with other lawyers in this capacity and the relationships I developed were major parts of what made my career fulfilling.” It was something that seemed to snowball for Woody. “A colleague took me





Remote work means fishing in the morning!

with her to a committee meeting at the CBA. I went back with her the following month, and before I knew it, I was signed up to speak at a program on limited scope representation in Colorado. Then, I applied to join the Executive Council of the CBA Young Lawyers Division. I continued to say ‘yes’ when asked to participate in programming or working groups and eventually began to find myself more and more at home within the bar. As I began to have ideas of my own for new educational and public service programs, I found that the CBA and CBA-CLE were organizations where those ideas could come to life, and they were full of people with whom to join forces and collaborate and make things happen.”

For example, during summer 2019, when Woody chaired the CBA YLD and was also a fairly new member of the CBA-CLE board, she and fellow board member Magistrate Judge Kato Crews began talking about the significant numbers of pro se parties appearing in federal

court and the apparent challenges young lawyers seem to face in getting “stand up” opportunities in federal court. “We realized what an important difference it could make for members of the public finding themselves in federal court, for newer federal practitioners seeking experiential and volunteer opportunities, as well as for the judiciary and the efficiency of the system generally, if we could find a way to match pro se parties in federal court with lawyers for even just a part of their case. This idea sparked many conversations and immediate collaboration with several lawyers and judges, and in November 2020, the Federal Limited Appearance Program (FLAP) was launched. The relationships built along the way and the work put into this program by so many volunteers and staff have left a permanent imprint on me. I’m truly moved by that experience and am honored I get to be a part of the program’s continuing life.”

Professionally, Woody has been running her own firm, Woody Law Firm LLC, since

2014, specializing in family law and family law mediation. She discovered her passion for family law after sampling a little bit of every area during law school. “As a psychology major, I think there was something about the real lives impacted within this practice area that stuck with me. Every day, I get to impact families, hopefully in healthy and positive ways, as they learn to begin new journeys. It gives me a sense that I am making a difference, and I also recognize and appreciate the significant responsibility that goes along with this role.”

As a student, she interned with a family law firm and was happy to return after passing the bar. The transition initially felt fairly seamless, “however, I quickly realized how much a first-year attorney doesn’t learn in law school about the practice of law!”

Based on her experience as a first-year associate, it became a passion of Woody’s to facilitate other young lawyers’ positive entrance into the profession. Generating useful and affordable CLE content was one way Woody could help, but it was her YLD involvement and employing other lawyers and law students that allowed her to mentor in a more direct way. “I have owned my firm for over seven years and have had the opportunity to work with and mentor many terrific individuals, some of whom I still work with today either in my firm, or as opposing counsel, or within the bar.” Woody has also served as a mentor through the Colorado Attorney Mentoring Program (CAMP) as well as DU Law’s Mentoring Program. “I also believe that anyone can be a mentor, nearly anytime. Our peers are our mentors, sometimes whether we realize it or not. I hope to always be both mentor and mentee.”

Outside the office, Woody and her partner balance the demands of her profession with his work owning and operating an energy service company. “He is very supportive, and we have been fortunate in that we can typically schedule around one another’s busier times. We spend a lot of time together, with our son, and with family when we’re not working.” As for fun, Woody immediately points to travel, and she also loves to read, but most important, she tries to “take every chance I get to glimpse the world through the eyes of my 5-year-old.” 