

Family Law Section Podcast Could Enhance Professional Development

Legal professionals love law podcasts, noted Clio.com, a Canadian legal services consulting firm and a PBA preferred partner.

Clio said podcasts are a convenient and effective way to consume content for individuals with packed schedules and little free time. A podcast's informal, casual format can be attractive to listeners.

One PBA section sees strong value in using podcasts to educate and inform. In a way, they resemble a mini, noncredit CLE and could give attorneys insights into their own practices:

a potentially potent addition to the practice toolkit.

A podcast was launched early this month by the Family Law Section, called "Law in the Family," and is available at <https://anchor.fm/lawin-thefamily>.

While much of the podcast may focus on familiar topics, such as alimony and health and wellness, podcast hosts — family law attorneys Aaron D. Weems and Anthony M. Hoover — want to look at unique ways of presenting information in a compelling format.



Helen E. Casale



Aaron D. Weems



Anthony M. Hoover

"I think the idea is to really pick topics that are a little bit off the beaten path," said Helen E. Casale, chair, PBA Family Law Section.

A family law attorney with the law firm of Hangley Aronchick Segal Pudlin & Schiller, Norristown, Casale said the podcast was the "brainchild" of former Family Law Section Chair Dave Schanbacher.

Hoover, an attorney with Levin Hoover Family Law, Lemoyne, and Weems, an attorney with Fox Rothschild LLP, Blue Bell, "brought this idea to Dave and thought it would be a really good idea to put together content that we can disseminate to our members on a rolling basis," Casale said.

The goal is to provide "interesting topics, and people can tune in at their leisure to get more information about what the Family Law Section

is doing, what are the hot topics and what are the hot issues," she said. "We thought it would be a nice benefit to our members.

"It's geared toward everyone. Hopefully it's a benefit that all members can find and tune into. Using a social media platform, such as a podcast, is the trend that we're leaning toward right now."

Lawyers as Hosts

As co-hosts, Hoover and Weems assemble the theme and format the questions. Hoover operates the recording equipment and readies the audio files for producer Nick DeMatteo, of nickdematteo.com, in New York City.

"The basic premise is 1) to try to increase the reach of the Family Law Section and to engage more members of the PBA and 2) provide something of value, where we can talk about top-

continued on page 8



Family Law Section Podcast Could Enhance Professional Development

continued from page 1

ics through the lens of family law, but that might not be completely exclusive to that area,” Weems said. “We want to be able to introduce niche areas and issues in a shorter format rather than spend an hour on CLE, and speak with some people that aren’t necessarily exclusive to the practice of family law.”

Weems sees the podcasts as a “corollary” to a family law practice.

“We started with the premise of trying to do something that is a little bit different,” he said. “Podcasts are not new or unique or anything like that, but not something that the Pennsylvania Bar Association is necessarily doing on a larger scale. So, we thought it would be a great way for us to connect with a wider variety of membership, and with corporate people who don’t necessarily have an opportunity to get heavily involved through the annual meetings and other events.”

“The folks at the PBA and the resources and time that they’ve spent to get this thing off the ground have been impressive,” Hoover said.

Podcasts Available

As of *Bar News* press time, three podcasts were available on the Anchor site.

In early October, the podcast was connected only to Anchor and Spotify, according to DeMatteo.

“I’m in the process of setting up distribution to other outlets such as Apple and Google,” DeMatteo said.

“We’re going to try to get it on all the normal platforms,” Weems said.

The podcast lineup includes an array of different topics.

One is “Secondary Trauma in Attorneys: A Candid Discussion of Mental Health,” by Brian S. Quinn, education and outreach coordinator for Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers of Pennsylvania Inc. (lclpa.org).

This lawyers’ assistance program was established in 1988 for the purpose of helping lawyers, judges and law students recover from alcoholism, drug addiction and mental health disorders.

Another features Casale, who provides a general description of what the Family Law Section does in “What’s in Store for the PBA Family Law Section in the Year Ahead?”

A third features Catherine McFadden, attorney from Momjian Anderer LLC, Philadelphia, on “Is the Death of Alimony Exaggerated?”

A fourth episode, taped late in September and in the podcast pipeline, features Mitchell Benson, forensic accountant from Savran Benson LLP, Bala Cynwyd.

“We did a podcast recently from a financial perspective on how COVID-19 and the federal IRS laws and regulations, as well as the stimulus package, have affected businesses and what it looks like on a tax-return perspective,” Hoover said. “If we talked about them in a CLE planned nine months from now, it really wouldn’t be all that relevant. It is relevant today and it might be relevant with somebody walking into a courtroom tomorrow. It’s just a very efficient way to get information.”

“We’re hoping to be able to release a batch of podcasts at a time that people can just go ahead and listen to when they get a chance, whether it’s during their commute or when they’re exercising, any free time,” Weems said. “We’re not trying to make these episodes hour-long or two-hour-long marathons. We’re trying to look at something ... people can easily jump in, listen to, get something out of and then move on with their day.”

The Family Law Section podcasts vary in length, but about a half-hour session each is the goal, according to Hoover.



‘I think the idea is to really pick topics that are a little bit off the beaten path.’

Helen Casale, chair, PBA Family Law Section

Weems said the co-hosts want to look at this “as being consumable in a short period of time that you can get something worthwhile from.

Hoover sees the podcasts as an alternative way to provide pertinent information and advice to family law practitioners and review the “substantive issues of family law in a different way,” he said.

“I’m not saying different is always going to be better, and oftentimes it’s not, but just to have a modern, quick way to get recent trends in both the practice of law and for family law to our memberships in an efficient way,” Hoover said.

The podcasts serve a wider purpose. “We get into areas into not necessarily law, but practice, that doesn’t fit in the four corners of a CLE,” he said. “Not necessarily controversial, but different ways to think about what

modern law practice is. Modern law practice could be better, and it could be worse.”

The podcasts aren’t necessarily cutting-edge, Hoover said, but include “maybe some of the things that a lot of attorneys are thinking about, but they don’t necessarily talk about.”

Gestation of Idea

There are several people that were involved in the gestation of the idea, Weems said.

But over time, “as we were trying to figure out ways to get this off the ground, Anthony and I volunteered to host and take on the planning role of the podcast.

“We are just trying to find interesting people we can talk to and hope we get some exposure to a lot of different things in our section.”

The audience can be those who want to stay up-to-date in their practice area or material that any legal professional may find appealing.

“Our younger members know and are familiar with podcasts,” Casale said. “So, this was a good way to kind of put together an avenue that they’re familiar with and that they feel comfortable with and get information.”

Casale’s contribution involves what her vision was for the section for the year.

She said Weems and Hoover asked her a series of questions “about what my vision is for the year and what my goals are, and what I’d like to accomplish.”

Her plans from her podcast include increasing “our membership, increase the idea of diversity within the family law section and provide what I call ‘deliverables’ to our members, such as producing a video that helps parents communicate better with each other when it comes to custody exchanges

continued on page 10

Family Law Section Podcast Could Enhance Professional Development

continued from page 8

and providing that video to the courts and to attorneys across the commonwealth so they can have it available for their clients as a resource.”

Casale envisions putting together programs “that improve the health and wellness of family law attorneys, because while we talk about health and wellness for attorneys, health and wellness for family law attorneys is a little bit different, because we have a very emotionally charged practice, so the things we see in our practice are a little bit more unique than some other attorneys, so addressing those issues as well.”

The available podcasts, she said, are about topics “that aren’t necessarily always talked about,” she said. “They have a podcast on alimony and the changes in alimony, as to what’s happening in Pennsylvania. Then there’s the thought of maybe doing something about marijuana and how that’s being used in custody cases, and how now everybody has a marijuana card and what that means. These kinds of unique topics that we sort of see in our family law practice, but we don’t always talk about.”

Casale enjoys the informal setting for interviews.

“I got the opportunity to kind of outline my goals and my objectives for this year, which I may not have had the opportunity to do, except in written form,” she said. “So really it provides a more relaxed atmosphere, more casual questions, and that makes it even more attractive to people.”

“Really that’s what the podcast is about. It’s not about me providing reports, it’s about Aaron and Anthony finding these unique issues that we think our members need to know about.”

Hoover said the podcast can be a way to bring “relevant, up-to-date information about the practice of family law” to listeners, he said, “and the substantive issues that affect our clients, to make our membership better.”

Launch of Podcast

Producer Nick DeMatteo in New York City was busy at the end of September putting the final touches on the podcast.

“I’ve been ‘law adjacent’ for many years,” DeMatteo said. “I was married to an attorney, and both my brother and his wife are lawyers, so I’m very comfortable with law talk in general. That said, this is the first legal podcast I’ve ever listened to, and I really enjoyed it. Anthony and Aaron asked great questions and kept a good pace. Catherine McFadden provided thorough and very useful information in a way I think anyone could understand. It made me look forward to future episodes.”

Working with people with a first-time podcast platform proved challenging but rewarding to DeMatteo.

“It takes some time to exchange all the vital information needed to get things running smoothly,” he said. “We first had to make sure the sound quality and recording format worked for us. Once we tested and confirmed that, everything else gradually fell into place.”

DeMatteo commended the PBA team for “making key decisions and filling in all the blanks I sent their way, such as podcast titles, descriptions, graphics, text for voiceovers and choosing theme music. They create the actual content, and I put it all together.”

There was some back-and-forth communication with the hosts.



‘We get into areas into not necessarily law, but practice, that doesn’t fit in the four corners of a CLE. Not necessarily controversial, but different ways to think about what modern law practice is.’

Anthony M. Hoover, a host of PBA Family Law Section podcast

“Funny, though, the most back and forth we had was for the theme music,” he said. “I sent them 10 options from my catalogue. They narrowed it down to their favorite, for which I created three editing options. There was some deliberation before they landed on the one they liked best: which, for the record, I think they chose very well. It’s often the least content-dependent elements that are the hardest to decide on. So, it’s taken some time, but now that it’s all come together I think it has a distinct shape and identity. And because everyone is so easy to work with, there haven’t been any major challenges.”

Does DeMatteo think any of the podcasts compare favorably to the rest?

“Personally, my favorite so far has been Brian Quinn’s episode,” DeMatteo said. “Mental health is a topic I’ve always been interested in. The episode shed so much light on the pressures of working in the legal world, and really any similar professional career. It confirmed some ideas I’ve held for years and added so much more than that.”

Better than that, the episode showed how much compassion and support there is, and how so many people are trying to rethink what it means to be productive in the context of a healthy and fulfilling life.”

Podcast Hosts

Besides their work on the Family Law Section podcast, what do the podcast hosts and contributors like to listen to?

Weems enjoys the “Green Light Podcast with Chris Long, “Pro Say by Law360” and “The Tim Ferris Show.”

Hoover’s favorite personal podcast is “How I Built This,” about individuals who build companies.

Casale said she loves to listen “to all the podcasts as they relate to crime. I am a big crime junkie podcast fan. And I also love any podcast dealing with sports and basketball.”

Basketball is her favorite sport, and she recently recalled listening to one about the LA Clippers.

But she said she loves “the ‘Date-line’ and crime stuff.”

continued on page 12

5 Questions for Helen Casale

Helen Casale is chair of the PBA Family Law Section. Casale, with Hanglely Aronchick Segal Pudlin & Schiller, Norristown, provides a general description of what the Family Law Section does in her “Law in the Family” podcast, “What’s in Store for the PBA Family Law Section in the Year Ahead?” Here she answers some questions:

Do you have a favorite practice area?

I don’t like custody more than I like support more than I like equitable distribution. The favorite part of my practice is the challenge of finding a solution in any of those three areas. If I can find a way to get the parties to an agreement without having to go to court, that’s a real big win. So that’s how I approach each case. And that’s a challenge for me and it’s fun to see that. But if we must go to court, we go to court, and I love being in court as well. But settling out of court is the biggest benefit that I can provide to my client.

There are always those cases where you cannot get to a settlement. Perhaps there is too much money involved, too little money, or you’re fighting about your kids. Those cases happen all the time. But the key is to find those cases in between, and get those resolved, because there are so many cases out there that go through the rigmarole. And they don’t need to. Try to get a resolution. The cases that you have to try will always be there. Get the ones settled that you can.

What drew you into the family law practice?

I started my practice in New Jersey and then came over to Pennsylvania as a young lawyer. I started working for a firm where the partners were very engaged in the PBA and the Family Law Section.

So, it was just a matter of course for me to become involved as well. The partners really guided me in getting involved in writing and speaking and attending the meetings. As a result, I became engaged in that way and met a lot of people throughout the commonwealth, learning about different family law practices across the state. And then I fell into leadership as a result: I sat on Council, I was co-chair of the programming committee and, as a result, I really wanted to achieve my goal to work my way up into leadership and hopefully run the section one day.

Why did you get involved with the PBA?

I have been involved in the PBA for about 20 years and have now made my way to chair the section. I started in the association when I was 30 years old, a baby lawyer, and now I finally can say I have worked my way into leadership.

I love being the spokesperson. It’s been exciting as the chair. I get firsthand knowledge about what’s happening, the upcoming legislation, the new rules, what cases have come down, and being able to communicate that information to our members, being that point person, is a big responsibility, but it’s exciting. I love the idea of putting a plan into place and showing, hopefully, everybody by the end of my chairmanship that it’s a real benefit to be a member of the section, and what those benefits are. It’s exciting to have that challenge in front of me.

What are the benefits of being a member of PBA?

The relationships that you fall into. The friends I have made, the colleagues, those relationships I think are very important and make practicing family law a whole lot easier. Family law is a small community and our paths cross often because of the volume of cases. We all know each other. I like knowing my opposing counsel on a different level, rather than just on the other side of a case.

What would you change or add if you had the opportunity?

When I look around in the Family Law Section, I would love to see younger members become more engaged. And I would love to see more diverse members. I don’t think we have enough diversity in the Family Law Section, and I think that ends up hurting us in how we practice and what our practice means. I not only want a more diverse group of members, but I want them to be active. I want them to get involved in speaking, writing and leadership. What I see as a glaring omission is we are heavily represented in the southeastern part of the state and not as represented in the central and western part of the state. And I would really like to see more involvement and more members from underrepresented counties. Pittsburgh’s well represented, but outside of the city, it is not.



Pennsylvania Bar Association Judicial Evaluation Commission Quick Voting Guide

To better inform voters about the candidates in the Nov. 2 statewide election, the Pennsylvania Bar Association Judicial Evaluation Commission (PBA JEC) has issued ratings for all appellate judge candidates appearing on the ballots.

Voters will cast ballots to fill one seat on the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, one seat on the Superior Court of Pennsylvania and two seats on the Commonwealth Court of Pennsylvania. Voters will also decide whether to retain two judges on the Superior Court of Pennsylvania and two judges on the Commonwealth Court of Pennsylvania.

Ratings of Candidates Seeking to Fill Vacancies:

Supreme Court of Pennsylvania

Highly Recommended

- Judge P. Kevin Brobson (Dauphin County)
- Judge Maria C. McLaughlin (Philadelphia County)

Superior Court of Pennsylvania

Recommended

- Judge Timika R. Lane (Philadelphia County)
- Megan Sullivan (Chester County)

Commonwealth Court of Pennsylvania

Highly Recommended

- Judge David L. Spurgeon (Allegheny County)

Recommended

- Judge J. Andrew Crompton (Cumberland County)
- Judge Lori A. Dumas (Philadelphia County)

Not Recommended

- Stacy Sorokes Wallace (McKean County)

Ratings of Retention Candidates:

Superior Court of Pennsylvania

Recommended for Retention

- Judge John T. Bender
- Judge Mary Jane Bowes

Commonwealth Court of Pennsylvania

Recommended for Retention

- Judge Renee Cohn Jubelirer

Not Recommended for Retention (for failure to participate)

- Judge Anne E. Covey

For more information, including the PBA JEC’s rating paragraph for each candidate and the candidates’ questionnaires, visit www.pavotesmart.org.



CLIP AND TAKE TO THE POLLS.

Family Law Section Podcast Could Enhance Professional Development

continued from page 10

The future looks bright for the PBA podcast.

“We’re also looking at some other interesting and unusual topics, whether it’s privacy or name image and likeness, some of the things that we’d like to try to look at,” Weems said.

“What I’d love to see this podcast do is to take some of those more

unique issues like, for example, the marijuana issue and talk about that more in depth than what we would be able to do during a CLE or during a meeting,” Casale said. “It’s medical marijuana and how that’s being used in custody cases now, and what is the judge’s perception of somebody using recreational marijuana and how that

may impact a custody case, versus, for example, somebody who drinks occasionally.

“That was just one of the topics that Anthony had brought up that I thought was a little unique, a little bit off the beaten path, but gives us the opportunity to meet with somebody or to interview somebody who is an expert in that field that can give even more in-depth information than we’d ever be able to do during a winter or summer meeting.”

‘We’re also looking at some other interesting and unusual topics, whether it’s privacy or name image and likeness, some of the things that we’d like to try to look at.’

Aaron D. Weems, a host of PBA Family Law Section podcast

October *PBA Quarterly* Available Online

In addition to receiving printed copies by mail, members also have access to the *PBA Quarterly* online.

The October 2021 issue includes these articles:

- “*MASS v. UPMC*: Muddying the Waters of Therapist Liability in Pennsylvania”
- “Special Education Funding: Fund Services for Kids, Not Profits for Charter Managers”
- “Calculating Income Available for Support of Owners of Privately Held Businesses”
- “The Pennsylvania College Cases: 150 Years Later.”

Read the October issue and find past issues of the *Quarterly* in the online archive, which is located under News and Publications on the PBA website, www.pabar.org.

Supreme Court Committee and Board Vacancies

There are seven vacancies on Pennsylvania Supreme Court Boards and Committees, and they have been posted on the UJS website, <https://www.pacourts.us/courts/supreme-court/committees>.

There are four vacancies on the Criminal Procedural Rules Committee. Applicants should be knowledgeable about the Pennsylvania Rules of Criminal Procedure and experienced in state criminal practice in Pennsylvania.

There are three vacancies on the Continuing Legal Education Board. Applicants must be active members of the Pennsylvania bar with their primary residency in Pennsylvania.

In addition, applicants should be knowledgeable about legal practices and procedures in Pennsylvania state or federal courts.



Upcoming Events

Unless otherwise noted, find more information in the PBA Events Calendar at www.pabar.org or call the PBA Member Services Center at 800-932-0311.

- Oct. 27** PBA Environmental and Energy Law Section and Shale Energy Law Committee Oil and Gas Conference webcast
- Nov. 5-6** PBA Commission on Women in the Profession 2021 Fall Retreat, The Hotel Hershey
- Nov. 9** PBA Civil Litigation Section Harrisburg Regional Dinner
- Nov. 9-10** Business Law Institute webcast
- Nov. 18** PBA Virtual Committee/Section Day
- Nov. 19** PBA House of Delegates Meeting

Please check the PBA website (www.pabar.org) and PBI website (www.pbi.org) frequently for updates.