WSBA CLE #27570 WEB

Acknowledging Professional Excellence



THURSDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2026

Approved for 5.5 CLE credits
(1.25 Law and Legal Procedure + 1.0 Ethics + 3.25 Other).
$225 - Standard

Washington State Bar Association
1325 Fourth Ave., Suite 600 | Seattle, WA 98101

WEBCAST ONLY

DESCRIPTION

This inspiring CLE brings together a distinguished group of the 2026 APEX award winners to share the lessons, challenges, and values that have shaped their professional journeys. Through presentations on language, judicial decision making, professionalism and ethics, access to justice, public service, and the role of courage in legal practice, gain practical insights and renewed inspiration for your own career.

CHAIR
Sally Romero – *Washington State Bar Association, Seattle*

SCHEDULE

8:40 a.m. > Webcast Log-In Opens

8:55 a.m. > Welcome and Opening Remarks
- **Sara Niegowski** – *Washington State Bar Association, Seattle*

9:00 a.m. > Getting the Words Right: Further Adventures in Language and Law
60 minutes, 1.0 credits Other
In law, more than any other profession, clear and effective use of language is necessary to getting the job done properly. Robert Cumbow talks about how two English degrees and a career as a communications professional led him to a mid-life second career in law; how writing, presenting, and teaching enrich the practice of law; why getting the words right is essential and how getting them wrong can be fatal.
- **Robert Cumbow** – *Miller Nash LLP, Seattle*

10:00 a.m. > Public Policy and the WA Supreme Court's Role
45 minutes, 0.75 credits L&LP
This session will discuss cases in which the Washington Supreme court has declared public policy and explore the various rationale relied on by the court. This session will also consider cases in which the court, and the legislature have differing views of public policy, and how the court has resolved this conflict in specific areas.
- **Hon. Barbara Madsen** – *Washington State Supreme Court, Olympia*

10:45 a.m. > BREAK

11:00 a.m. > The Trial Lawyer as the Man of La Mancha: Tilting at Windmills & Reaching for the Stars
60 minutes, 1.0 credits Other
What do Cervantes and Tolstoy teach us about judgment, service, and purpose in the pursuit of justice? Aristotle understood human flourishing life as something built through our actions and habits. Plato placed justice at the heart of a virtuous life. Don Quixote challenges us to imagine what might be possible; Tolstoy's The Death of Ivan Ilyich asks us to consider what, in the end, truly matters. Between practical wisdom and the impossible dream lie the trial lawyer's questions: When are battles necessary? When are we tilting at windmills? And when must we stand up for something worth fighting for?
- **John Connelly** – *Connelly Law Offices PLLC, Tacoma*

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SCHEDULE

12:00 p.m. > LUNCH on Your Own

1:15 p.m. > Professionalism Under Pressure: Civility, Ethics, and Judgment in the Age of AI
60 minutes, 1.0 credits Ethics
Lawyers practice in an environment of increasing pressure, rapid technological change, and heightened client expectations. Drawing on lessons from an immigration practice, this program explores how lawyers can remain strong advocates while preserving civility, credibility, and professional judgment. The discussion will examine where professionalism intersects with the Rules of Professional Conduct. It will also consider how AI, automation, and other legal technologies are reshaping advocacy and creating new tools but also risks when the stakes are highest and why human judgment, empathy, integrity, and civility matter even more in the age of AI.
- **Michele Carney** – *Carney & Marchi PS, Seattle*

2:15 p.m. > BREAK

2:30 p.m. > Making Justice Work
45 minutes, 0.75 credits Other
This session provides reflections on leading cross-system court improvement through research partnerships, co-design, judicial engagement, and hope-centered public service.
- **Kelly Warner-King** – *WA State Administrative Office of the Courts, Seattle*

3:15 p.m. > BREAK

3:30 p.m. > From Gap to Game-Changer: Reinventing Access to Justice Through Pro Bono Partnerships
30 minutes, 0.5 credits Other
This CLE explores how lawyers can identify an unmet access-to-justice need and respond with a smart, strategic pro bono model. Using the Scam Justice Legal Clinic as a case study, the course will examine how thoughtful partnerships among law firms, corporate legal departments, nonprofits, and community organizations can combine distinct strengths to close gaps in legal services. Participants will consider how limited-scope, trauma-informed legal assistance can make help more accessible and meaningful for survivors, and how innovative pro bono collaborations can transform the way underserved communities access justice.
- **Joanna Boisen** – *Davis Wright Tremaine LLP, Seattle*

4:00 p.m. > Speech, Courage, and the First Amendment: Lessons from a Washington Defamation Appeal
30 minutes, 0.5 credits L&LP
After a parishioner publicly alleged she had been raped by her pastor and employer, he sued her for defamation and claimed the encounter was consensual. Presenter Theo Lesczynski represented the defendant in her successful appeal, which resulted in a sweeping opinion strengthening First Amendment protections for those who speak out about sexual violence. Lesczynski will discuss the background and significance of the Washington Court of Appeals' decision dismissing the suit under the Uniform Public Expression Protection Act (UPEPA) and how litigators can use the statute's early dismissal and fee provisions in cases that implicate First Amendment rights.
- **Theo Lesczynski** – *Davis Wright Tremaine LLP, Seattle*

4:30 p.m. > Adjourn • Complete Online Evaluations

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Thursday, December 17, 2026 • #27570 WEB

REGISTRATION

To register online, please go to the **registration page**. Click to add to cart and complete your purchase. You may pay by credit card, or via ACH. Alternatively, you may print and mail an invoice seven business days prior to the program along with your check payable to WSBA. Credit card payments by mail or fax are no longer accepted. Note, our service provider will charge you a separate, non-refundable transaction fee of 2.5% on all bank card transactions.

If special accommodations are needed, please email **cle@wsba.org** or call toll-free at 1-800-945-9722.

☐ *Please omit my name from the networking list made available to exhibitors and/or attendees.*

PRICING INFORMATION

☐ **#27570 WEB, attend via webcast, 12/17/26**

◯ $225 - Standard

Seminar Registration Transfers, Refunds and Cancellations

In most circumstances, if you cannot attend the live event, we can transfer your registration to the on-demand product, once available (8-10 weeks from the program delivery date). Generally, for webcast/webinar registrations, tuition fees may be refunded, less $25 for processing, for written cancellations postmarked, emailed, or faxed up to the start of the event. For in-person registrations, tuition fees may be refunded, less $25 for processing, for written cancellations postmarked, emailed, or faxed by 5 p.m. up to three business days before the event. No refunds will be provided after the dates specified. You may also send a substitute in lieu of canceling. *When applicable, specific exceptions to these policies will be noted on individual event registration pages.* Please email cle@wsba.org with any requests or questions.

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PHONE > Call **800-945-9722** or **206-443-9722** with credit card and registration/order form in hand. Our service provider will charge you a separate, non-refundable transaction fee of 2.5% on all bank card transactions.