



2023 OUTSTANDING CLE CONTRIBUTOR AWARD

KEVIN JOHNSON

KCMBAs 2023 Outstanding Continuing Legal Education (CLE) Contributor Award is given to an individual who has been instrumental in suggesting, implementing, organizing, or otherwise supporting the CLE program.

I am happy to write about my friend and partner, Kevin Johnson, who is honored to be presented with the 2023 KCMBAs President's Award for his contributions to Continuing Legal Education programming.

Kevin, a shareholder at Wallace Saunders, is a true student of the law. Kevin has a number of unique interests. Kevin was a music major in his undergraduate studies, which most would admit is a rare path to law school. Kevin has interests which vary from sports and Star Wars to suits and nice shoes. I believe Kevin's background of diverse pursuits and his personality characteristics allows him to be able to focus on the practice of law and still be able to devote time to assist the bar with CLE programming, year in and year out.

Kevin was initially admitted to The Missouri Bar, but followed up with licensure in Kansas, Illinois and Pennsylvania. Kevin devotes his practice to workers' compensation law, with a large clientele of transportation, trucking and logistics companies. These clients and the cases they bring to Kevin require travel throughout the country. It is not unusual for Kevin to be in Court or in depositions in multiple states in a given week. He is constantly striving to improve himself as a lawyer and advisor to our clients.

Kevin's commitment to servicing his clients extends to his commitment to carve out the time to also service the legal community. Kevin has a strong dedication to providing continuing legal education. Kevin has been a frequent presenter and moderator of CLE programs since 2007, primarily relating to workers' compensation law. Kevin is the Chair of The Missouri Bar Workers' Compensation Subcommittee for Continuing Legal Education. In addition, Kevin is the Chair of the KCMBAs Workers' Compensation Law and Procedure Committee and The Missouri Bar Workers' Compensation Law Committee. Kevin teaches and moderates numerous programs per year, which is a magnificent feat when considering the amount of work Kevin does for his clients. Kevin recognizes the importance in educating lawyers, on both sides of the bar, to ensure they are on the top of their game. Otherwise, Kevin feels lawyers run the risk of not providing the best advice and assistance to their clients, which is a disservice to the individual lawyer, their clients and profession as a whole.

As an observer, I am always impressed by Kevin's drive to meet the challenges of his practice, while at the same time providing a helping hand to lawyers. Kevin is one of the hardest workers I know. He is also one of the most reliable people I have ever met, so his ability to meet these challenges is not surprising. Finally, Kevin is loyal: loyal to his family, friends, partners, clients and the bar. I am proud of Kevin's accomplishments in being honored with the Outstanding CLE Contributor Award. A person with this level

of drive, commitment and personality characteristics is deserving of such an Award.

Many lawyers want to service the bar, but with the demands of private practice simply throw their arms up and declare there isn't time, or it isn't as important as what is on their desk. That is not Kevin. Not once have I ever heard Kevin complain of the time commitment involved with preparing CLE materials or spending time teaching or moderating a program. Instead, it is a task which Kevin vigorously tackles on each and every occasion. While educating lawyers is important to Kevin, it is equally important to use CLE to ensure and further the civility of the workers' compensation bar. Kevin describes CLE as the "watering hole" of the savannahs. All types of animal lawyers from lions to giraffes can gather with the same goal in mind: to learn the law and establish camaraderie in a friendly environment.

I believe this description which Kevin gave to me as I interviewed him for this article really sums up the type of person he is. Kevin is inclusive. He wants others to succeed. I described him above as being reliable and loyal, and in my book those are perhaps the most important human characteristics. To Kevin, becoming a lawyer doesn't end with law school and the passage of a bar exam. Instead, Kevin believes lawyers, to be effective, should continue to study and learn. Kevin involves our associates in CLE presentations, as he believes the best way to learn is to teach. From a personal (and somewhat selfish) standpoint, I lean heavily upon Kevin to give me the latest on the law. It is not unusual for Kevin to send our workers compensation department an update on the latest case law development, with thoughtful analysis about its impact upon our practice. When a complex or unique legal issue arises, my partners and I can always count on Kevin to take time out of his day, listen to the legal quandary, and provide most recent latest case law about the issue at hand. His analysis is always correct. It is this same prompt and conscientious level of commitment which Kevin demonstrates to our clients and the workers' compensation bar which makes him special and deserving of the Outstanding CLE Contributor Award. I am proud to congratulate him on this feat. ■

About the Author



Chris McCurdy is a shareholder at Wallace Saunders, where he is the Chair of the Workers Compensation Department. Chris is a fellow of the College of Workers Compensation Lawyers.