

Wellness Committee Seminar

SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

by order of presentation

Natalie Ecker Phillips

*Canal Insurance Company
Greenville, SC
(Course Planner)*

Natalie has been a member of the South Carolina Bar's Wellness Committee for a number of years and is currently serving as the committee chair. She is in-house coverage counsel at Canal Insurance Company in Greenville, South Carolina, where she lives with her husband and son.

Javoyne Hicks

*Magnifying Snergy, LLC
Atlanta, GA*

Meet Javoyne Hicks, the dynamic owner and CEO of Magnifying Synergy. As a certified executive leadership, life, and mindset coach and a certified mediator with a distinguished legal background, Javoyne brings a wealth of experience in leadership roles and a steadfast commitment to wellbeing. She also holds certification in the Tree of Humanity coaching program, aimed at helping individuals attain the life they desire and deserve. Javoyne also serves as the Deputy Court Administrator for the City of Atlanta Municipal Court where she oversees the day to day Municipal Court operations.

Javoyne chairs the State Bar of Georgia Wellness Committee and the newly established Center for Lawyer Wellbeing. She also serves as the Treasurer for the State Bar of Georgia which makes her a member of the Executive Committee for the Board of Governors. Her leadership journey has been marked by resilience through personal challenges, including overcoming a husband's suicide, divorce, the death of a parent, and career transitions, all while raising two exceptional children.

Formerly an Acting District Attorney and Chief Assistant District Attorney for DeKalb County, Javoyne has a profound understanding of the legal system and an unshakeable dedication to justice. Her executive journey extends to roles such as Chief of Staff in the federal government, Associate Magistrate, and Clerk of Court. Throughout these positions, she has spearheaded high-level policy decisions, initiated community engagement projects, and optimized organizational processes to enhance technical, financial, legal, and administrative performance.

Driven by her experiences, Javoyne has championed the integration of wellness—covering physical, mental, social, and financial aspects—into daily living. She is a sought-after speaker, panelist, and keynote presenter at various organizations, legal education sessions, and conferences. Beyond her State Bar of Georgia committee chair position, she serves as the Vice President of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion for the Institute for Lawyer Well-Being (IWIL) and is a board member of the Georgia Chapter of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP).

These roles have honed her management skills, enabling her to guide individuals and teams toward success. With a genuine passion for people and deep insights into human dynamics, Javoyne empowers a diverse range of clients, fostering growth and unlocking their full potential. Her

unique combination of legal acumen, leadership experience, and personal resilience sets her apart as a trusted coach for attorneys and executives striving to excel in today's complex business environment while maintaining holistic wellness.

Paul Knowlton

Stanton Law, LLC

Atlanta, GA

Paul brings a unique and hard-fought perspective to the issues of attorney wellbeing and profitability.

Prior to law school he managed a busy corporate career as an engineer and construction manager with national builders in the metro-Atlanta and metro-Philadelphia markets, and then as a forensic engineer with a national footprint at Georgia-Pacific. After law school his legal career includes six years in BigLaw; co-founding and co-managing an IP boutique; being turn-around director for a different IP boutique; being turn-around CEO for a residential foster care agency; and, currently as a partner at Stanton Law. From law clerk to partner, he is no stranger to the stresses of the practice and business of law.

In addition to being licensed in GA and the 11th Circuit, a registered patent attorney, a Henning trained mediator and arbitrator, a Martindale Hubbell AV (Preeminent) rated attorney and Georgia Trend Legal Elite, Paul has chaired the Wellbeing CLE programs for the State Bar of Georgia's Attorney Wellness Committee since its inception. His CLE presentations include:

Attorney Wellbeing Through the Art of Power

Honoring Yourself in an Honorable Profession

Spiritual Wellbeing in Action

Spirit of the Law – Spirit of the Lawyer

The Business Case for Attorney Wellbeing

Co-author of the 2021 Amazon No. 1 new release business ethics book, *Better Capitalism: Jesus, Adam Smith, Ayn Rand, and MLK Jr. on Moving from Plantation to Partnership Economics*, Paul is an economic theologian and fractional CEO of the emerging 501(c)(3) think-tank, Institute for Better Capitalism, Inc., Decatur, GA.

Paul earned his Bachelor of Science in engineering from Temple University, his Juris Doctorate from Georgia State College of Law, and most recently his Master of Divinity from Mercer University.

Tara Simkins

Soul Shine Lab

Augusta, GA

Tara Rice Simkins, J.D., is a lawyer-turned–Master Certified Life and Money Coach, author, and founder of Soul Shine Labs. With over 30 years of combined experience in the legal profession, coaching, and advocacy, Tara brings a rare blend of professional insight, emotional intelligence expertise, and lived experience to her work on lawyer wellbeing and boundaries as a core competency.

Tara began her legal career after graduating from the University of Georgia School of Law in 1992. She practiced law in Atlanta (Nelson Mullins) and Augusta (Hull Barrett, P.C.), navigating the demands, pressures, and expectations that shape the modern legal landscape. She excelled in her career, but like many attorneys, she carried internalized beliefs about productivity, perfectionism, and availability—beliefs that later contributed to profound burnout.

In 2009, Tara’s world changed when her middle son, Brennan, was diagnosed with leukemia. For years she lived on the front lines of one of the most challenging—and ultimately successful—childhood cancer journeys. She co-founded the Press On Fund for childhood cancer research with her husband and two other couples and became a widely respected advocate for families navigating pediatric cancer.

After Brennan returned home from 3 years of treatment at St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital, Tara attempted to return to her legal practice; however, she began experiencing severe panic attacks and ultimately stepped aside from the practice of law. What followed was a decade-long deep dive into trauma, overwhelm, scarcity psychology, emotional regulation, and the nervous system—alongside her training as a certified life coach through The Life Coach School and a Master Coach with Meadow DeVor.

Through this work, Tara discovered there was nothing “wrong” with her. What was wrong was a profession that was keeping up so fast with the pace of technology that it missed the need to teach her how to protect her emotional bandwidth, regulate her nervous system, or set boundaries that honored her humanity. She learned that her panic attacks were not personal failure—they were the natural consequence of a high-stakes profession that prizes endurance over wellbeing and rewards overfunctioning until the system collapses.

Today, Tara teaches what she wishes every lawyer knew 20 years ago:

A lawyer without boundaries is a burned-out lawyer—and a burned-out lawyer is a broke lawyer.

Her work integrates evidence-based research on burnout, scarcity, trauma, technology overuse, and emotional intelligence. She draws from her own lived experience in the legal field, her years of navigating medical crises, and her decade plus of coaching high-achieving women, lawyers, and leaders to build lives that support both purpose and wellbeing.

Tara has presented multiple CLEs for the State Bar of Georgia, including *How to Set and Honor Boundaries: A Path to Wellness*, *Mindset Hack: Upgrading from Scarcity to Abundance*, *Financial Hacks: Creating and Living in Abundance*, and *Emotionally Intelligent Lawyers Make Better Decisions and More Money*. She is also the author of *Boundaries: The Secret to Being a Lawyer Who Lives Well*, published in the Georgia Bar Journal. Her teachings are known for being accessible, grounded, deeply compassionate, and refreshingly honest.

Tara’s mission is simple: **to help the legal profession stop losing good lawyers to burnout, overwhelm, and self-abandonment.** Through her classes, workshops, and Soul Shine Labs membership, she equips lawyers with the emotional tools, practical skills, and boundary frameworks they were never taught in law school—so they can practice with clarity, confidence,

and sustainability.

She lives in North Augusta, South Carolina with her husband, Turner, and their three sons—Nat, Brennan, and Christopher—who continue to inspire her work on resilience, gratitude, and what it truly means to live well.