Message from Committee Chair Gerald L. Shoemaker Jr.

We had great attendance at Committee/Section Day on Nov. 14, 2019. In addition to having good turnout in the room, we had several members participate by phone.

Our big project for the next year is the Transgender Name Change Rules. Ellen Fischer has agreed to take charge of this subcommittee/task force. Several other members are participating in this project as well. I am hopeful we will have something formal to look at by the summer of 2020. This is a big project. After drafting it, we will need to reach out to the various Supreme Court committees to get input. After that is complete, we will need to prepare a resolution to be presented to the House of Delegates. There is work to be done and, if you are interested in assisting, please reach out to me.

The PBA Quarterly has agreed to publish an issue devoted exclusively to LGBT issues. We are currently lining up authors and articles for the publication. The issue will be published in fall 2020 with articles due in summer 2020. We need four articles and already have commitments from two authors so we are well on our way. Again, if this project interests you, please reach out to me. We have already formulated article ideas but it’s not too late to jump in on this project.

At the meeting in November, we had a lively discussion regarding Senate Bill 614, sponsored by Sen. Lawrence M. Farnese Jr. Sen. Farnese specifically asked the PBA for input on the bill, which amends the Human Relations Act to provide additional protections for minorities. It appears that CERC has already been working on this, so we are going to see if our committee is able to partner with them to advance this cause.

This will be our last issue of 2019, so I wish all of you and your families a happy holiday season.

Conversion Therapy is Child Abuse

Interview with Representative Brian Sims by Martricia O’Donnell McLaughlin, Nov. 25, 2019

Brian Sims has a long history of LGBTQ advocacy. A Pennsylvania attorney before being elected to the Pennsylvania Assembly in 2012, Sims worked as staff counsel for policy and planning at the Philadelphia Bar Association on issues ranging from gender and pay inequity to environmental regulation. He has a long history of advocacy for LGBTQ and human rights.

Sims introduced HB1293 in April 2019. The bill, Protection of Minors from Conversion Therapy, is the latest effort in the Pennsylvania House to eliminate conversion therapy.

What Is Conversion Therapy?

Conversion therapy is a controversial practice. It is also known as reparative therapy, ex-gay therapy, or Sexual Orientation Change Efforts (SOCE). Conversion therapy is, according to Sims, still widely used in Pennsylvania today. This practice lingers after previous extreme forms of “treatment,” such as institutionalization, electric shock and castration, formerly used to alter LGBTQ identity, have been recognized as inappropriate and harmful. Nonetheless, some mental health professionals still use physical treatments like

Continued on page 2
Conversion Therapy is Child Abuse

Continued from page 1

aversive conditioning, most commonly a variety of behavioral, cognitive, psychoanalytic and other practices that try to change or reduce same-sex attraction or alter a person’s gender identity. However, conversion therapy lacks scientific validity and poses serious dangers to patients — especially to minors. Minors are often forced to undergo conversion therapy by parents and guardians. The risk of long-term harm is high.

What Do Professionals Say?

A 2009 American Psychological Association report (https://www.apa.org/pi/lgbt/resources/therapeutic-response.pdf) revealed that the techniques therapists have used to try to change sexual orientation and gender identity include inducing nausea, vomiting or paralysis while showing the patient homoerotic images; stimulus-generated electric shocks; using shame to create aversion to same-sex attractions; and orgasmic reconditioning. In addition, behavioral therapy to induce heteronormative affect and behavior, hypnosis, teaching heterosexual dating skills, and even use of psychotropic medication have been used. All these techniques and methods proceed from a discredited premise that being LGBTQ is a defect or disorder.

All of the nation’s leading professional medical and mental health associations have rejected conversion therapy as unnecessary, ineffective and dangerous. These groups have cautioned that the practices do not work and have warned patients that they may be harmful. For example, the American Psychological Association “advises parents, guardians, young people and their families to avoid sexual orientation change efforts that portray homosexuality as a mental illness or developmental disorder and to seek psychotherapy, social support and educational services that provide accurate information on sexual orientation and sexuality, increase family and school support, and reduce rejection of sexual minority youth.”

In turn, the American Psychiatric Association “opposes any psychiatric treatment such as reparative or conversion therapy, which is based upon the assumption that homosexuality per se is a mental disorder or based upon the a priori assumption that a patient should change his/her sexual homosexual orientation.”

Regarding minors, the American Academy of Pediatrics has stated, “Therapy directed at specifically changing sexual orientation is contraindicated, since it can provoke guilt and anxiety while having little or no potential for achieving changes in orientation.”

In 2009, the American Psychological Association issued a report concluding that the reported risks of the practices include a host of serious conditions, including depression, suicidality, substance abuse, stress, sexual dysfunction, high-risk sexual behaviors and a feeling of being dehumanized. Suicide risks are even more significant for adolescents.

Representative Sims and experts in child health and development around the country call conversion therapy “child abuse.”

Legal Bans on Conversion Therapy

In 2012, California became the first state to protect LGBTQ youth from dangerous and scientifically discredited efforts by state-licensed therapists to change their sexual orientation or gender identity. This law (SB1172, now Article 15, §§865-865.2 of the Business and Professions Code) prohibits therapists licensed by the State of California from trying to change the sexual orientation or gender identity of people under 18. Other jurisdictions followed California, including New Jersey, Oregon, Illinois, New York and Vermont. Washington, D.C. enacted a ban as did cities where states failed to lead, including Cincinnati, Seattle and others.

Continued on page 3
Conversion Therapy is Child Abuse
Continued from page 2

Momentum is building so that, as of Spring 2019, 16 states had banned the practice, including Pennsylvania’s neighboring states of New Jersey and Delaware. In addition, as of November 2019, municipalities, including Minneapolis, have acted when the state Legislature failed.

Why Does Pennsylvania Need A Conversion Therapy Ban?

Since 1973, the American Psychiatric Association has recognized that being LGBTQ is not a mental disorder or illness. The Commonwealth has a long-recognized duty to protect children. It also has a similar interest in and duty to ensure that licensed health care providers follow professional standards of competence and do not engage in dangerous practices that have no scientific basis and put patients at risk of severe and long-lasting damage.

What Would A Ban In Pennsylvania Do?

Rep. Sims argues forcefully that HB1293 ([https://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/billinfo/billinfo.cfm](https://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/billinfo/billinfo.cfm)) is simple: practitioners risk losing their state licenses if they practice conversion therapy, or “commit conversion abuse.” If a member of the clergy or a religious counselor is not state licensed, he or she would not be affected by this law. (There is a companion bill in the Senate, sponsored by Sen. Anthony Williams.) Sims warns that, despite what he sees as widespread LGBTQ support in the commonwealth, LGBTQ individuals have no statewide protection of their basic civil rights: “People think we are further along than we are. In fact, Pennsylvanians think that these protections are already in place because frankly they should be — it’s 2019. But unfortunately, they are not.” Sims states that he supports science as the foundation for policy, and that was the driving force behind the language of HB1293. And the scientific evidence is overwhelming that conversion therapy is detrimental to the health and welfare of minors.

How Can One Help?

Sims suggests that the most helpful action those interested in joining the effort to protect LGBTQ minors from harm can take is to “speak up on the issue.” He indicates that any of his 202 colleagues in the House and any of the elected senators would be receptive to a supportive message from a constituent. Constituents can ask for their representative or senator to bring the bills to a vote and even urge that the official sign on as a cosponsor. Sims also recognizes the efforts of a coalition of groups, including Human Rights Campaign, the TREVOR Project, the House LGBTQ Caucus and others, who will join in targeted advocacy on the issue of conversion abuse in the spring of 2020.

Conclusion

Pennsylvania has demonstrated a commitment to keeping children of the commonwealth protected and safe. The practice of conversion therapy is not recognized as valid by any generally recognized medical or psychiatric association. LGBTQ children deserve to be free from harm in this commonwealth.
Sex as a protected class before the Supreme Court:
How to understand sexual orientation and transgender status without considering sex
By Sharon R. López

Title VII explicitly prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex. The Supreme Court of the United States (SCOTUS) is now considering whether sexual orientation and transgender status is a subset of “sex” in the statute. The cases are Bostock v. Clayton County, Altitude Express Inc. v. Zarda, and Harris Funeral Homes Inc. v. EEOC. These are the first big LGBT cases being heard by the court since Justice Kennedy left SCOTUS. Justice Kennedy was a champion of LGBT protections and his absence on the court leaves many wondering if the outcome of these cases will be protective of LGBT rights in the workplace. All three cases were heard together with oral arguments held on Oct. 8, 2019. I was lucky enough to attend argument.

The facts and history of the sexual orientation cases – Bostock and Zarda.

The same sex employment cases came from two different circuit courts — Bostock from the 11th Circuit and Zarda from the 2nd Circuit — and presented contradictory outcomes and legal analysis.

Bostock

Bostock, a gay man, claimed he was fired by the Clayton County Juvenile Court System in Georgia because of his sexual orientation. The county claimed they fired him because of misuse of funds.

Bostock filed a complaint in U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Georgia raising his sexual orientation claim. He later amended the complaint to include a claim of unlawful discrimination based on failing to conform to a gender stereotype. Clayton County moved to dismiss the complaint arguing that the complaint did not state a viable claim for relief because Title VII does not protect anyone from discrimination based on sexual orientation. The district court granted the motion to dismiss. The Eleventh Circuit affirmed the decision.

Zarda

Zarda, an openly gay skydiving instructor, was fired by Altitude Express after a female customer complained that Zarda had come out to her while preparing for a “tandem skydive” during which they would be strapped together. He claimed he was fired because of his sexual orientation and because he did not fit in the sexual stereotype of a man. The district court dismissed both claims. The latter claim was dismissed because Zarda testified under oath that he is masculine and the former because the court found the law did not protect sexual orientation under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act. During Zarda’s litigation of the matter, the EEOC issued the opinion of Baldwin v. Foxx, which found “allegations of discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation necessarily states a claim of discrimination on the basis of sex.” The district court dismissed, holding sexual orientation was not protected under Title VII. Zarda appealed, and the Second Circuit Court of Appeals ultimately reversed the Title VII holding below and found sexual orientation discrimination is a subset of sex discrimination. The rationale was based on sex stereotyping because a sexual stereotype of being a man or a woman necessarily includes being attracted to the opposite sex.

The facts and history of the gender identity case – Harris Funeral Home v. EEOC

Aimee Stephens was hired by Harris Funeral Homes (HFH) as Anthony Stephens in 2007. However, in 2013 Stephens wrote HFH’s owner and said she identified as a

Continued on page 5
woman and would be presenting as a woman at work. A few weeks later the owner, Rost, terminated Stephens. HFH argued Stephens violated company dress code and that it would have continued Stephens’s employment but for Stephens’s insistence on presenting as a woman.

Stephens filed a federal complaint under Title VII sex discrimination provisions. The district dismissed the complaint. The Sixth Circuit reversed, finding that the word sex in Title VII necessarily includes gender identity.

The argument in *Bostock* and *Zarda*: Is sexual orientation a subset of “sex” for the purposes of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act?

*Bostock* and *Zarda* were consolidated because both cases presented the same issue: whether sexual orientation was encompassed in the Title VII prohibition on discrimination “because of sex.” Professor Pamela Karlan of Stanford University argued for the gay men in the *Bostock* and *Zarda* cases. Justice Ginsburg opened the questioning by asking how Congress could have had sexual orientation in mind when in 1964 many states considered same sex relations criminal and a mental health condition. Prof. Karlan immediately redirected the argument to the plain meaning of the word “sex” in the statute and how sexual harassment was not contemplated in 1964 either but was later interpreted to include sexual harassment. She explained the plain meaning of the word “sex” encompasses sexual orientation just as it encompassed sexual harassment.

Chief Justice Roberts pitched the comparator question — that a policy against gay men and lesbian women does not present discrimination because men and women are being treated similarly. “What do you do with the argument that this is a non-discriminatory policy because it applies equally to relationships between women and relationships between men?” Prof. Karlan pointed out that such a policy would fail Title VII because it is the same as having a policy that requires a worker to conform with sex stereotypes, which has already been deemed a violation of Title VII.

Jeffrey Harris argued for the employers in the *Bostock* and *Zarda* cases. He opened by arguing Congress could not have meant to include sexual orientation in the term sex, therefore there is no protection for *Bostock* and *Zarda* under Title VII. Justice Sotomayor started the questioning of the employer by asking if someone is being fired for being too effeminate, which is a sexual trait, and someone is fired for being attracted to the same sex, which is also a sexual trait, if there is no BFOQ, isn’t that discrimination because of sex?

Solicitor General Noel Francisco also argued in support of the employers and on behalf of the government. He argued that if you fire men who are attracted to men and you also fire women who are attracted to women, you are not discriminating because of sex. After a round of questions from Justice Ginsburg regarding this manner of assessing comparators, Justice Kagan pointed out that his briefs and arguments were inappropriately focused on statutory history and interpretation, when the “lodestar of this court’s statutory interpretation has been the text of the statute, not the legislative history, and certainly not the subsequent legislative history.” Gen. Francisco responded that the statutory definition of sex does not list sexual orientation as a trait to consider when determining what is sex.

Continued on page 6
Sex as a protected class before the Supreme Court
Continued from page 5

The argument in *Harris Funeral Homes v. EEOC*: Does Title VII prohibit discrimination against transgender employees based on (1) their status as transgender or (2) sex stereotyping?

David Cole argued for the EEOC in support of Aimee Stephens, the transgender employee who was fired by HFH. Justice Gorsuch asked Cole to respond to the Circuit Court judge’s opinion below finding against the EEOC and Stephens, wherein he stated that this was a legislative decision, not a decision for the courts. Cole responded that “recognizing that transgender people have a right to exist in the workplace and not be turned away because of who they are does not end dress codes or restrooms.” Justice Gorsuch asked if interpreting the statute to include transgender status was not exercising “judicial modesty” because of the “social upheaval” it would cause. Cole responded that the text of the statute must be read consistently. “How in the world can the court interpret Title VII to say that Ann Hopkins (Price Waterhouse) can’t be fired for being insufficiently feminine, but my client can be fired for being insufficiently masculine?”

Solicitor General Francisco also argued for the government in support of HFH’s position that Title VII does not encompass transgender people in the definition of sex. During his argument Justice Gorsuch stated, “In *Obergefell*, this court made very clear that there were good and decent people who had different views with respect to gay marriage and they should be respected.” Justice Sotomayor responded, “And we can’t deny that homosexuals are being fired merely for being who they are and not because of religious reasons, not because they are performing their jobs poorly, not because they can’t do whatever is required of a position, but merely because they’re a suspect class to some people.” She asked when the Supreme Court should intervene to stop “invidious discrimination.” She said gay people are still being fired just because of their sexual orientation. At what point, she asked, do we say that Congress did address this? Many of the attorneys in front of me turned to each other and nodded.

Cole closed the argument with his rebuttal. “She’s not seeking any special protection. She is seeking and all transgender people are seeking the same protection that everybody else gets under the law. This court 30 years ago said in *Price Waterhouse*: “We are beyond the day when an employer could evaluate employees by insisting that they match the stereotypes associated with their group.”

Conclusion

If I am to read the tea leaves on the ruling, I would say it is a very close case. I believe the swing vote in this case will be Chief Justice Roberts. He may decide that the stereotype precedent is too much to overturn and that doing so would negatively impact the public confidence on an independent judiciary. After all, a large part of his job as chief justice is to protect the institution of the court. We will likely have to wait until the end of the term, the last week of June 2020, to find out.

Sharon R López is the managing partner of Triquetra Law, an employment and civil rights law firm located in Lancaster, Pa. She served as the 123rd president of the PBA. She is a past co-chair of the Minority Bar Committee and a member of the Federal Practice Committee, the Employment Law Section, the GLBT Rights Committee, WIP, and the Civil & Equal Rights Committee.
Open Court

Hear Ye! Hear Ye!

This feature provides up-to-date, brief bulletins addressing LGBTQ issues that might be relevant to readers’ lives or practices. Contributions from committee members and allies are welcome. Send the editors an item or an alert to the item.

New HHS Rules and Nonenforcement of Rules Imperil LGBT Youth and Adults

On Nov. 1, 2019, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announced a proposed rule that would allow HHS to issue grants to social service agencies that discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity, as well as religion and sex. HHS simultaneously announced its nonenforcement of Obama-era protections for LGBTQ individuals accessing basic social services through government-funded housing, food, education and health care programs.

“HHS is charged with protecting the health and well-being of all people, but its actions today demonstrate once again its complete disregard for its mission,” Sharon McGowan, Lambda Legal’s chief strategy officer and legal director, said. She further described the rollback and the rule proposal as a rollback of basic protections against discrimination based on sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and religion. She added that the actions risk “some of the most vulnerable members of our communities, including LGBT people who are poor or experiencing homelessness; LGBT seniors and LGBT youth in out-of-home care, including foster children in need of loving families, people living with HIV and many others.”

The new proposal would roll back protections that prohibit discrimination in HHS grant-funded programs based on sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or religion. It would invite discrimination against LGBTQ people, all women and people who are Jewish, Muslim, Catholic and of other minority faiths.

According to the ACLU, example of the effects implementation of the rule would include:
• Meals on Wheels and other HHS-funded community meal programs designed to support older adults could refuse to deliver food to older Americans who are LGBTQ.
• Federally-funded foster care agencies could refuse to place children with families because of the prospective families’ sexual orientation or religion, regardless of the children’s needs.
• Head Start grant recipients and other federally funded childcare facilities could refuse to serve children with same-sex parents. They could also refuse to provide services to transgender youth.

This new proposal comes as part of the Trump administration’s concerted effort to greenlight discrimination throughout the federal government. In HHS alone, there have been proposals to strip antidiscrimination protections in health care and to allow hospitals, clinics and doctors’ offices to refuse care based on the provider’s religious beliefs. The administration is also seeking to allow discrimination in housing, in workplaces with federal contracts, on college campuses and against immigrants who have disabilities. https://action.aclu.org/petition/hhs-dont-roll-back-anti-discrimination-protections. This link may also be used to voice your opinions to Secretary Alex Azar about the proposed rule a proposed nonenforcement.

According to its website, HHS would follow most of the provisions of the 2016 rulemaking verbatim:
“HHS would revise two provisions of the 2016 rulemaking to require grantees to comply with applicable nondiscrimination provisions passed by Congress and signed into law, including legislation ensuring the protection of religious liberty and to provide that HHS complies with all applicable Supreme Court decisions in administering its grant programs.

“The proposed rule represents the Trump Administration’s strong commitment to the rule of law the Constitution, federal statutes, and Supreme Court decisions. These require that the federal government not infringe on religious freedom in its operation of HHS grant programs and address the impact of regulatory actions on small entities.

“HHS is committed to fully enforcing the civil rights laws passed by Congress. The proposed rule would better align its grants regulations with federal statutes, eliminating regulatory burden, including burden on the free exercise of religion. HHS is affirming that it will comply with all applicable Supreme Court decisions in administering its grants programs.”


Continued on page 8
Fulton v. City of Philadelphia
Catholic Social Services (CSS) and three foster parents who cared for children CSS placed with them petitioned for certiorari in the U.S. Supreme Court on July 22, 2019, at No. 19-123. Six amici briefs have been filed, including one by 44 U.S. senators and representatives. On Oct. 30, 2019, the documents were distributed for conference. Petitioners are challenging, on free exercise grounds, the city’s action in no longer referring children to CSS for foster placement because it will not place them with same-sex or unmarried couples.

Certiorari petition: https://www.supremecourt.gov/DocketP-DF/19/19-123/108931/20190722174037071_Cert%20Petition%20FINAL.pdf


Surgery on Intersex Youth
California State Senator Scott Wiener introduced SB201, the first of its kind in the country, to ban surgery on young children to “normalize” genitalia affected by the child’s intersex status, where their genitalia do not fit traditional, binary definitions and structures; the bill exempts medically necessary surgery to preserve bodily functions or prevent pain. The United Nations and European Parliament condemned the practice; in 2017, Human Rights Watch issued a report on it. Hearings began in April, but the bill was shelved. Sen. Wiener plans to reintroduce it in January.

Bill information: https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201920200SB201

Members are welcome to share information on the arts and culture for the LGBTQ community. Items listed here are provided as information for our members and are not officially endorsed or promoted by the committee or the PBA.

Exhibits

Implicit Tensions: Mapplethorpe Now at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum will show the groundbreaking work of gay photographer Robert Mapplethorpe, a prolific artist known for celebrity images and “striking self-portraits.” The exhibition also showcases later artists influenced by Mapplethorpe, including Rotimi Fani-Kayode, Catherine Opie and Paul Mpagi Sepuya. This exhibition opened Jan. 25, 2019 and will close on Jan. 5, 2020. General admission tickets include access to all exhibitions on view. Admission $18 – $25.

The AIDS Quilt will leave its current residence in Atlanta to move to its permanent home at the National AIDS Memorial in San Francisco. The Quilt began in 1987 during the AIDS epidemic and currently is composed of more than 50,000 panels, representing more than 105,000 victims (although, unfortunately, the total number, in the United States and worldwide, is much higher). The memorial plans to develop a Center for Social Conscience to tell the story of the epidemic and progress since then. Relatedly, the memorial and the NAMES Project are donating the Quilt’s archival collection of more than 200,000 items, consisting of biographical records, correspondence, photographs, tributes, epitaphs, news clippings and artifacts, to the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress, where they will be available to the public. [https://aidsmemorial.org/theaidsquilt/](https://aidsmemorial.org/theaidsquilt/).

Film

Seahorse

British Documentarian Jeanie Finlay explores the story of transgender man, Freddy McConnell, otherwise known as “the man who gave birth.” Described by OUTFEST as a “sensitive and finely-tuned portrayal that challenges traditional notions of fatherhood and masculinity,” “Seahorse” examines the physical, medical psychological and emotional challenges McConnell confronts through conception, pregnancy and fatherhood. McConnell has stated, “This is a film about me having a baby, but what I feel like I’m going through isn’t me having a baby or pregnancy ... It’s a much more fundamental sort of total loss of myself. I just want to close my eyes and be on the other side of this.”

The film is reported to be seeking distribution and received highly positive reviews at the 2019 Tribeca Film Festival. [https://www.theguardian.com/film/2019/apr/27/seahorse-review-freddy-mcconnell-trans-man-gave-birth](https://www.theguardian.com/film/2019/apr/27/seahorse-review-freddy-mcconnell-trans-man-gave-birth)

Books

How We Fight for Our Lives by Saeed Jones

This highly praised memoir examining the life of a black, gay man growing up in the American South, How We Fight For Our Lives examines issues of race, class and gender in a fashion that has been described by reviewers as “extremely personal, emotionally gritty and unabashedly honest.” Jones was born in Memphis, Tenn., grew up in Lewisville, Texas, earned a BA at Western Kentucky University and an MFA at Rutgers University-Newark. His memoir exposes the importance of his love of language, his family, especially his mother, and his sexuality. NPR has called the book “an outstanding memoir that somehow manages a perfect balance between love and violence, hope and hostility, transformation and resentment.” [https://www.npr.org/2019/10/14/768755815/how-we-fight-for-our-lives-is-one-life-story-that-finds-connection-to-others](https://www.npr.org/2019/10/14/768755815/how-we-fight-for-our-lives-is-one-life-story-that-finds-connection-to-others)
Getting to Know One of Our Members: Caroline Szerenyi

Hi! Just for the record, as they say, what is your full name?
Hello! Caroline Szerenyi.

Can you tell our readers about your background, education and employment as an attorney?
I lived in Wisconsin for most of my life. I attended the University of Wisconsin-Madison for my undergraduate degree, majoring in psychology. While I was a student there, I took advantage of all the wonderful resources and organizations for LGBTQ+ students, and it was really where I first felt a sense of belonging and community. I’m just finishing up my first semester at Drexel Thomas R. Kline School of Law. Currently, my primary area of interest is family law.

Where do you live and work? How do you feel about it?
Right now I’m living in Philadelphia, “working” full-time in the library with my many textbooks. I’ve enjoyed the shift from Wisconsin to the city; it’s certainly different and a wild change of pace but it’s a lot of fun.

What made you join the PBA GLBT Rights Committee? Does it dovetail with other professional or volunteer efforts or ventures?
Firstly, I want to say how thrilled I am to be a member of the GLBT Rights Committee. I met the chair, Gerald Schoemaker, at a Family Law panel through Drexel. I reached out to him about how I could get more involved and wound up a member! It’s extremely important to me to advocate for members of the LGBTQ+ community in whatever ways that I can. I’m looking forward to contributing to the committee and its goals of serving the rights of LGBTQ+ individuals. As a student, I know I’m constantly surrounded by people I can learn from and gain tremendous insight from, and I’m grateful to have this opportunity. I’m also a member of OutLaw and the Women’s Law Society, student organizations at Drexel.

On a lighter note, what’s your favorite vacation spot?
My favorite vacation spot is Big Sky, Montana. I can’t think of a prettier place! Doesn’t hurt that I would also ski every day, if I could.

Do you have a favorite book and why do you love it?
Currently, my favorite book is Downtown Owl by Chuck Klosterman. I’m a Midwesterner whether I like it or not, and the book takes place in a tiny North Dakota town. It’s funny, sad and makes me miss home.

Do you have a favorite TV show? Which one?
My favorite show has to be “Malcolm in the Middle.” You can’t go wrong with it.

What about a favorite movie?
I’m obsessed with movies, so that’s tough. My favorite movie of 2019 is “Midsommar.”

What’s one thing that we don’t know about you?
I love to play ukulele and sing. Every once in a while, I’ll write a song.

Do you have a favorite band or type of music?
I don’t think I have a favorite, but I love James Taylor and Jim Croce.

Continued on page 11
Getting to Know Caroline Szerenyi
Continued from page 10

Do you have any pet peeves?
I hate when people look at their phones in the middle of a conversation! Who doesn’t, though?

Is there anything special you do after a particularly challenging day?
I watch reality TV and have a glass of white wine.

Is there any special photo or artwork on your office wall or in your office?
I have a really great paint-by-number of a mountain that my uncle did when he was 10 years old.

Do you have any pets?
I’ve got two West Highland White terriers: Dottie and Duncan. They are angels.

If you were not a lawyer, you would be a _______.
Musician or an author!

Open Court Co-editors

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Committee History:
The committee was formed in 2005. The committee’s mission is to study matters pertaining to the recognition and protection of the legal rights of the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) community. The committee monitors and makes recommendations on issues and developments in the law impacting GLBT people in the public and the legal profession.

Committee Membership:
The committee is open to GLBT lawyers and allies. The committee welcomes all members who are interested in promoting equal rights for the GLBT lawyers and the GLBT community at large.