



Missouri Coalition for the Right to Counsel Adds Shook Partner Charles Eblen to Board

KANSAS CITY, MO. (March 21, 2018) As it nears its one-year anniversary, the Missouri Coalition for the Right to Counsel (MCRC) adds Shook, Hardy & Bacon Partner Charles Eblen to its board of directors. MCRC is a nonprofit collaboration with private attorneys and the Missouri State Public Defender (MSPD) to provide courtroom training to early-career private practice attorneys by encouraging the attorneys to represent public defender clients. Founded by a small group of Missouri attorneys, the MCRC is unique in its handling of criminal cases, working with the public defender office.

“We are committed to giving our volunteer attorneys a realistic opportunity to gain priceless ‘first chair’ jury trial experience, while helping our valiant, but overworked and underpaid public defenders by easing their caseloads,” said Richard Scherrer, who serves as MCRC chair and former managing partner of Armstrong Teasdale. “Having an attorney of Charlie’s caliber onboard can only enhance our mission. Shook has been with us from the beginning and is one of our most dedicated and engaged firms.”

Shook has a strong commitment to pro bono causes and commits a full-time director, attorneys and staff. Eblen currently chairs Shook’s Pro Bono Committee and is leading efforts at the firm to enlist the help of his colleagues. When MCRC was launched in 2017, Shook, at its expense, hosted two training sessions for private attorneys to gain a better understanding of the public defender’s role and criminal work.

“There are many pro bono programs but MCRC is unique in that it has two equally important missions,” stated Eblen. “The volunteers from private practice represent indigent persons accused of a crime and, in return, they gain invaluable courtroom experience. I’m honored to serve on the board.”

Recently, the MCRC earned the prestigious Focus St. Louis, “What’s Right with the Region Award.” *Missouri Lawyers Weekly* named Scherrer its “Lawyer of the Year” in 2017 for his work for MCRC. The coalition has the written support of then Chief Justice Patricia Breckenridge of the Missouri Supreme Court; the presiding judges of the Circuit Courts of Jackson county and the city and county of St. Louis; and the president and immediate Past President of the Missouri Bar. Other supporters include the Missouri College of the American College of Trial Lawyers and the Bar Association of Metropolitan St. Louis.

MCRC was founded by a group of senior trial attorneys in St. Louis: Ed Dowd, Jr., Dowd Bennet; Gary Sarachan, Capes Sokol; Jerry Carmody, Carmody MacDonald; Jack Musgrave, Thompson Coburn; Barry Short, Lewis Rice; Charlies Weiss, Bryan Cave; Scherrer, Michael Barrett, the MSPDS Director and Community Member Gail Appleson.

The initiative provides free CLE training to less-seasoned lawyers in private practice to qualify them for assignment by the MSPD of felony jury trial cases in the Circuit Courts of Jackson County and the City and County of St. Louis.

Before being eligible for assignment of a felony case, volunteers are asked to attend two-days of no cost, Missouri and Illinois CLE approved training, sponsored and presented by the MSPD, where they will be instructed on fundamental trials skills and criminal law and procedure. More than 240 lawyers have taken the training and thereafter, volunteered for an assignment; a number working with a colleague; some more than once.

The next training session will be held May 11, 2018 in St. Louis and will focus on trying criminal cases. The one day program is open for those who already have some trial experience. For questions please contact Richard Scherrer via email at Richard.Scherrer@mspd.mo.gov or log into www.mspd.mo.gov or www.bamsl.org.

To schedule an interview with Shook Partner Charles Eblen or firm office leadership, contact Media Relations Manager Heather McMichael, 816.559.2016, hcmichael@shb.com

About Shook, Hardy & Bacon

Founded in 1889, Shook, Hardy & Bacon L.L.P. has 12 offices in the United States and London, with attorneys and professional staff serving clients in the health, science and technology sectors in areas ranging from product liability defense and

commercial litigation to intellectual property prosecution and litigation, environmental and toxic tort, privacy and data security, and regulatory counseling.