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## MCBA President Joe Ohlin discusses his agenda

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He's been active in the Mahoning County Bar Association since he began his career in 2021, now attorney Joe Ohlin is leading the organization as its new president.

Ohlin began his term on July 1 after then-president T. Scott Kamenitsa Jr. passed the gavel during the annual election banquet, which took place on June 29 at the Youngstown Country Club.

"I am honored and excited to serve as president of this great association," said Ohlin, a partner at Hartwig & Ohlin.

"I think Joe has great ideas on how to move the bar association forward," said Kamenitsa, now past president. "He has been a member of the board of trustees since 2024, and on a professional level, I've heard nothing but good things about him both from local attorneys and mutual clients.

"We are in the process of transitioning the leadership to the next generation of attorneys and I think Joe is well suited to helping us adapt to the times," said Kamenitsa, co-founder of Schmidt Kamenitsa.

Mahoning County Common Pleas Court Magistrate Nicole Butler, the new bar associations' new president-elect, echoed similar sentiments.

"I met Joe Ohlin a few years ago and have presided over numerous hearings in which he was involved," said Butler, who serves as a magistrate for Mahoning County Common Pleas Court Judge Anthony Donofrio. "Joe is always well prepared, respectful and professional.

"Everyone who knows Joe likes him," said Butler. "Despite being a young attorney, Joe is already well respected and achieves great results for his clients.

"Attorneys like Joe are what make the profession great," said Butler. "I know he will make a wonderful bar president, and my hope is that he can encourage younger attorneys to join the bar so we can enjoy the collegiality that the older generations in Mahoning County have."

Born in Youngstown, Ohlin grew up in Springfield Township.

He majored in political science at Youngstown State University, receiving his bachelor's degree in 2016.

Prior to starting at The University of Akron School of Law, Ohlin worked as a docket clerk for now-Mahoning County Prosecutor Lynn Maro and attorney John Juhasz, who became chief of the Criminal Division in the prosecutor's office.

He also served as their law clerk for a year while pursuing his Juris Doctor.

"I went into the legal profession because I want to help people," said Ohlin. "In the criminal defense realm in which I work, I see my job as helping out good people who've made mistakes and are dealing with one of the worst periods in their lives as a result.

"I had not decided on a focus prior to law school but knew I wanted to help people in the profession," said Ohlin. "Admittedly, I also love a good argument and knew I wanted to be in a courtroom.

"Once I started my classes, I knew working as a criminal defense attorney was the right fit because I could litigate in a courtroom and ensure I was doing everything I could to make the process fair for my clients."

Ohlin graduated law school in December 2020, beginning his legal career in 2021 as an associate at what was then Hartwig Law.

"The founder, Ed Hartwig, primarily handled state and federal criminal defense matters," said Ohlin. "I knew after meeting Ed that working for him would do wonders for my career.

"From the very beginning, Ed taught me the ins and outs of practicing law and gave me invaluable hands-on experience while always providing guidance along the way."

The name of the firm was changed to Hartwig & Ohlin after he became a partner this year.

He represents clients in state and federal criminal defense matters across Ohio.

Now a member of the Mahoning County Bar Association for more than five years, Ohlin serves on the bar association's Criminal Law Courts Committee and Social Committee.

He joined the board of trustees on July 1, 2024.

In addition to the Mahoning County Bar Association, Ohlin is a member of the Ohio State Bar Association, the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers and the National Academy of Criminal Defense Attorneys, where he was named to the organization's Top 10 criminal defense attorneys list in 2025.

As president of the Mahoning County Bar Association, Ohlin said he has two main goals—increasing membership and making CLEs more accessible.

"Getting more people to join the bar association is probably my top priority because we have so many resources to offer," said Ohlin. "I want to highlight to my generation of lawyers that this area has an excellent legal community and great opportunities to build a successful career." Given the increasingly important role that technology plays in the legal profession, Ohlin said it is key members are able to complete their CLE requirements online.

Currently, Mahoning County Bar Association members have access to live, in-person CLE programs across several different areas of law, but they cannot view pre-recorded videos for credit, said Ohlin.

"I want to make the presentations available online so members who cannot attend in person still have the opportunity to participate and receive CLE credit from the Ohio Supreme Court, mirroring what is offered to Ohio State Bar Association members."

In addition to membership and CLEs, Ohlin said he plans to work with the board and the social committee to evaluate the bar association's in-person gatherings.

"Some of these events are very well attended, while others are not," said Ohlin. "That is just the reality of the ever-changing world we live in. I want to make sure we are putting maximum effort into the events that highlight the camaraderie offered by the bar association.

"Ultimately, my goal is to continue to build on what the bar association already does well while finding new ways to provide value to our members," said Ohlin. "I want our members to feel that being part of the bar association strengthens both their practice and their connection to our legal community."

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