

The Scrivener

A newsletter from Scribes—The American Society of Legal Writers



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Scribes, Southwestern Law School

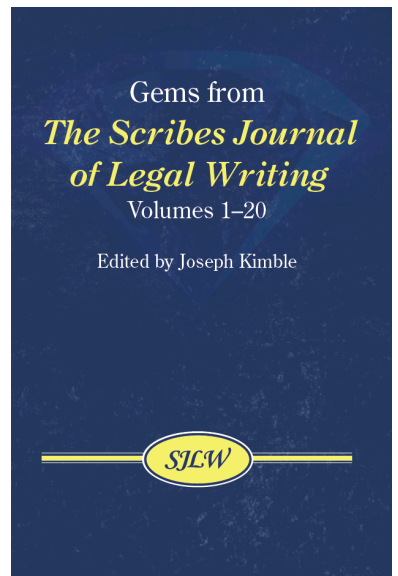
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Submissions

Please send items for upcoming issues of *The Scrivener* to scribeslegalwriters@gmail.com.

Coming Soon: A New Anthology from Scribes, Edited by Joseph Kimble

Scribes’ long-awaited, 600-page anthology will soon be available for purchase. Entitled *Gems from The Scribes Journal of Legal Writing: Volumes 1–20*, the book features selected works from the first 20 issues of Scribes’ flagship publication. The compilation offers a treasury of essays and articles that have influenced modern legal-writing style over the last few decades.



Edited by the renowned Joseph Kimble, the book points the way to achieving a clear, succinct, and persuasive style of legal writing. Readers will find gems of practical guidance from recognized masters of the craft, who share insights that illuminate both skills and process. Legal-writing buffs will delight in the tributes to plain language and relish the journeys into the legal lexicon by writers who educate, entertain, and inspire.

Both those new to the legal profession and more seasoned members are sure to find plenty to treasure in *Gems from The Scribes Journal of Legal Writing: Volumes 1–20*.

Scribes Board Welcomes Six New Directors

Scribes welcomes six new directors to the board. Their work spans the appellate bench, complex litigation, attorney training, legal-writing education, and law librarianship. Collectively, they bring a wealth of legal-writing expertise that will advance Scribes' mission and strategic goals. Read on for more information about their experience and accomplishments.

Stefan C. Love (Greines, Martin, Stein & Richland LLP)



Stefan C. Love is a partner at the Los Angeles appellate boutique GMSR. He graduated first in his class at the UCLA School of Law, served as a senior editor for the *UCLA Law Review*,

and clerked for Judge Paul J. Watford on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. Love earned a PhD in music theory at the University of Rochester, and before attending law school, he was a professor of music theory. He has also been included in *The Best Lawyers in America: Ones to Watch (Appellate Practice)* from 2024 to 2026.

Hon. Stephen Louis A. Dillard (Georgia Court of Appeals)

Judge Stephen Dillard is the presiding judge of the Georgia Court of Appeals. Before joining the Georgia Court of Appeals, he chaired an



appellate practice group in private practice, clerked for the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit, and served as chief judge of the Georgia Court of Appeals. His many accolades include receiving the William H. Rehnquist Award for Judicial Excellence in 2025 from the National Center for State Courts.

Ben Keele (University of Minnesota Law School)



Professor Ben Keele serves as Minnesota Law's scholarly services librarian, supporting faculty scholarship dissemination and research impact. He has served as editor in chief of the *Indiana Journal of Global Legal Studies* and is the editor of *Law Library Journal*. Before joining Minnesota Law, he worked at William & Mary Law School and the Indiana University Indianapolis McKinney School of Law. In 2020, the American Association of Law Libraries recognized him with an Emerging Leader Award.

Scribes Board Welcomes Six New Directors (continued)

Jill Barton (University of Miami School of Law)



Professor Jill Barton is the director of the Legal Communication and Research Skills Program and a professor of legal writing at the University of Miami School of Law. She has authored or coauthored three books

on legal writing: *The Supreme Guide to Legal Writing*; *So Ordered: The Writer's Guide for Aspiring Judges, Judicial Clerks, and Interns*; and *The Handbook for the New Legal Writer*. A former appellate judicial clerk and award-winning journalist, she brings a blend of rigorous legal analysis and professional writing craft.

Mac R. McCoy (Carlton Fields)



Mac R. McCoy blends high-level litigation and mediation experience with the perspective of a former federal judicial officer: He served as a U.S. magistrate judge in the Middle District of Florida from 2015 to

2023 and then returned to practice. He is also an influential bar leader, serving as the 2024–2025 chair of the ABA Business Law Section, and has chaired the editorial boards of major ABA publications. He is a certified mediator and panelist with the American Arbitration Association National Roster. He was recognized in *The Best Lawyers in America* (Commercial Litigation) in 2025 and 2026.

John Snow (Los Angeles City Attorney's Office)



John Snow is a seasoned trial lawyer who serves as director of legal and trial training at the Los Angeles City Attorney's Office. His prior work includes serving as a law clerk in the U.S. District Court for the Central

District of California and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit; an associate at Irell & Manella; and a partner at King, Holmes, Paterno & Soriano. His book, *Rules to Speak By: Present and Persuade Like the Country's Best Lawyers*, will be published by Carolina Academic Press in April 2026.

Scribes to Celebrate Its 75th Anniversary in Chicago This Summer

This year marks the 75th anniversary of the founding of Scribes as a national organization devoted to honoring legal writers and promoting a clear, succinct, and persuasive style of legal writing. More than a professional honor society, Scribes is a community of judges, lawyers, and academicians who share a keen interest in writing about the history, philosophy, and language of the law and about those who make, interpret, and enforce it. Founded in 1951, Scribes is the oldest organization of its kind.

To celebrate this year's important milestone, Scribes will present a 75th Anniversary Program on July 31, 2026, from 3:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m., at the University of Illinois Chicago Law School. Cosponsored by the American Arbitration Association and the Chicago firm Schiller DuCanto & Fleck LLP, the celebration will include a reception.

The program will open with highlights commemorating Scribes' founding and history

and then pivot to a look ahead to the next chapter with a CLE program featuring a top-notch panel of leaders in law offering perspectives on the future of legal writing in a profession struggling with the challenges of AI. See the following page for an overview of the 90-minute program, which will include 60 minutes of ethics credit.

Scribes members who cannot attend the celebration in person will have the option to attend the CLE portion of the program virtually.

Scribes President Michele M. Jochner (Schiller DuCanto & Fleck LLP) urges all Scribes members to plan to attend the celebration. "The 75th Anniversary Program will bring together practitioners, judges, and top scholars, including law school deans and professors, to celebrate Scribes. Beyond offering excellent CLE, the event will provide great opportunities for networking and fellowship," Jochner said. Look for a registration link on the [Scribes website](#) in the coming weeks.



Scribes to Present “The Future of Legal Writing: Balancing AI and Human Judgment”

As part of Scribes’ 75th Anniversary Program, which will be held July 31, 2026, the society will offer a CLE component titled “The Future of Legal Writing: Balancing AI and Human Judgment.”

Description of the CLE Event

The legal profession is grappling with how to use AI tools effectively while preserving the human judgment and accountability necessary to satisfy lawyers’ nondelegable duties of competence, supervision, and candor. This program will convene leading judges, appellate advocates, in-house counsel, educators, and legal-technology innovators to examine key issues, including the following:

- how judicial writing is evolving in light of AI tools
- judicial expectations for attorney writing and whether judges are approaching attorney submissions with greater skepticism
- how leading appellate practices are integrating AI tools without sacrificing creativity, voice, and sound judgment
- law firms’ approaches to training newer lawyers, developing proprietary AI tools, and implementing policies and controls to ensure that AI use aligns with ethical duties
- how corporate legal departments are deploying AI, whether the market will

continue to value (and compensate) human-created initial drafts, and what clients expect in terms of disclosures, guardrails, and accountability when outside counsel uses AI

- how law schools are shifting legal writing instruction to ensure students learn the fundamentals while also developing practical competence in using AI tools effectively and ethically

The program will conclude with a forward-looking discussion of agentic AI and other emerging systems, including implications for writing quality and professional accountability.

Event Details

Location

University of Illinois Chicago Law School
Goldberg Courtroom
300 S. State Street, Chicago

Date

July 31, 2026

Time

3:30–5:00 p.m.

Those who cannot attend in person will have the option to attend remotely.

Registration

A link to the registration will be available on Scribes’ website in the coming weeks.

In the Limelight

Margie Alsbrook



Margie Alsbrook (*right*) recently received the Judge Clyde Reese Board of Visitors Award for Excellence in Legal Scholarship from the Mercer

University School of Law. Karen Sneddon (*left*), dean of the Mercer University School of Law and a past recipient of the award, presented this year's award to Alsbrook.

Darby Dickerson

National Jurist magazine included Darby Dickerson, president and dean of Southwestern Law School, in the magazine's list titled The 25 Most Influential People in Legal Education. Additionally, in November 2025, Dickerson was inducted into the Stetson University College of



Law's Hall of Fame. She taught at Stetson from 1995 through 2011 and served as dean for eight years. She is also the immediate past president of Scribes.

Kem Thompson Frost



The Texas Bar College, a professional society of legal scholars who are champions of legal education, recently recognized Kem Thompson Frost, retired chief justice of Texas's Fourteenth Court of

Appeals, as a 25-year member of the Society of Legal Scholars.

On the Move



Ivy Grey is now a legal solutions advisor at iManage. In her new role, she will serve as a legal subject matter expert and contribute to product strategy and thought leadership. Grey sees her work at iManage as an opportunity

to expand her focus beyond the quality of individual documents to addressing how people access and use the knowledge contained in documents. Grey previously worked at WordRake, a company focused on legal editing. (WordRake was recently acquired by BriefCatch.)

At the Podium

On October 23, 2025, Mark Cooney moderated the panel discussion “Justice for All: A Dialogue on Access to Justice Efforts in Michigan,” which was sponsored by the Michigan Supreme Court Historical Society. He also contributed the

poster presentation “A Study of U.S. Court Cases Rejecting Legalese” at the Brussels Plain Language Experience 2025, held in Brussels, Belgium, November 5–7, 2025.

Recently Published

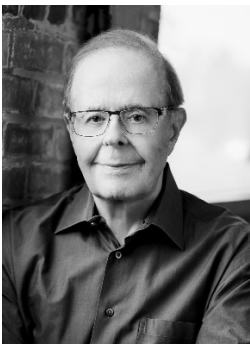
As usual, Scribes members have been busy writing. The following members have recently seen their writing hit the literal or virtual bookshelves.

Megan Boyd



Megan Boyd’s article entitled [“Storied Pleadings: The Power of Narrative Introductions”](#) was recently published in *Legal Communications & Rhetoric*. The article discusses the effective use of storytelling in complaint introductions.

Joseph Kimble



Joseph Kimble recently authored an online piece entitled [“Why Do Lawyers Resist Plain Language?”](#) in the ABA’s Your Voice column. He also published “Working with MAMA to Improve Ballot Proposals” as part of

the Plain Language column in the *Michigan Bar Journal*. The Kimble Center for Legal Drafting at Cooley Law School is hoping to collaborate with the Michigan Association of Municipal Attorneys to improve the models for local ballot proposals in Michigan. Kimble has been the editor of the Plain Language column for 38 years.

Mark Cooney



Mark Cooney wrote the article [“How Legalese Jeopardizes Enforceability”](#) which was published in volume 22 of *The Scribes Journal of Legal Writing*. The article presents cases in which courts refused to enforce documents plagued by legalese and poor design. The article made SSRN’s list of top-10 downloads for 6 e-journals, and the article was the top download in the *Rhetoric and Writing Education* e-journal.

Professor Wes Henricksen Shares Insights on His Award-Winning Book and His Writing Process

Scribes' March 5, 2026, CLE program featured Wes Henricksen, a professor at the Barry University School of Law and the winner of the 2025 Scribes Book Award. The program centered on Henricksen's acclaimed book, *In Fraud We Trust: How Leaders in Politics, Business, and Media Profit from Lies—and How to Stop Them*, and the recording is now available on the [Scribes website](#).

In a conversation with Michael B. Hyman, a justice on the Illinois Appellate Court and the chair of Scribes' Book Award Committee, Henricksen discussed the question driving the book: Why do large-scale lies in politics, business, and media that cause real harm often fall outside traditional fraud law? Henricksen explained that mass deception now moves faster and farther than legal rules designed for individual wrongdoing. He also discussed why any serious response to this problem must account for both public harm and First Amendment protections.

The program also highlighted why the book earned Scribes' top writing honor: Henricksen made a difficult subject accessible without watering it down. He spoke about how deception works, why it is so hard to detect, and how the law might respond more effectively. As the Scribes Book Award Committee recognized, the book stands out not just for its research but also for its clear writing.

The conversation also provided practical insight into the writing process. Henricksen described book writing as a long cycle of drafting, revising, cutting, and returning to the manuscript with fresh eyes. He also shared advice familiar to every good legal-writing teacher: Strong writing rarely appears in one draft; writing gets better through time, discipline, and revision.

The recording will be of particular interest to anyone interested in legal writing, free speech, and the growing problem of large-scale deception in public life.



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The American Society of
Legal Writers