

## 2021 YEAR IN REVIEW

*In Omnia Paratus*

### Looking Ahead to 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration as Firm Co-Founder Ross Hollander Retires

In a bittersweet meld of hail and farewell, Joseph, Hollander & Craft wrapped up its 20<sup>th</sup> year of business in 2021 and bid a fond adieu to co-founder Ross Hollander as he retired after 45 years in practice.

Ross – who co-founded the firm as Joseph & Hollander PA with his friend and brother-in-law, Steve Joseph – retired in May 2021 to enjoy more time traveling with his wife, Judy, and more leisure time with his three children and three (soon to be four) grandchildren.

It's hard to get Ross to brag much about himself or his 45-year career as one of the Midwest's foremost labor and employment lawyers. Self-promotion just isn't his style; but ask about his family, and he's quick to tell you he's a man "blessed a thousand times over."

"Family is everything," Ross says. And he means that whether he's at home or at work, whether blood-related or not. "I was fortunate to work with people at JHC who felt like family — that family bond was a cornerstone of our founding.

"We always wanted to be mighty within the legal community, but never so pretentious that clients or colleagues felt we were unapproachable," he continued. "What distinguishes us is the way we treat one another and our peers, and our commitment to seeking those qualities when recruiting new lawyers and members of our support team.

"We started with five attorneys in Wichita and Topeka, and today have 23 attorneys and additional offices in Lawrence, Overland Park and Kansas City, MO," said Ross. "Much of that momentum has been attributable to my nephew, Chris Joseph, who joined us in 2002. Chris was instrumental in developing new practice areas and expanding our geographic footprint."

In 2012, the firm was renamed Joseph, Hollander & Craft, LLC when Julia Craft joined the firm's leadership and took the helm of the firm's growing domestic practice. By 2016, expanding criminal defense work on both sides of the Kansas and Missouri state line prompted a merger between JHC and Erickson-Scherff, LLC.

"I'm terribly proud of Chris's leadership, vision, and commitment to maintaining the firm's culture. It gives me great pride hearing JHC attorneys and staff still saying the firm feels like family 20 years later. I can't wait to see what's next for JHC," Ross said.

While Ross may not brag about himself, JHC is proud to do it for him. He is revered for his eloquence both in and out of the courtroom, his consummate professionalism, and his staunch advocacy for educational and civic causes dear to him. Among his many accomplishments as an attorney, civic volunteer and friend to us all, we salute Ross for his ever-lasting contributions as: past president of the Wichita Bar Association and the Wesley E. Brown Inn of Court, past president of the Wichita State University Alumni Association, passionate cheerleader for Shocker Nation and the Rock Chalk Jayhawks, past board member of HopeNet, supporter of Rainbows United, and mentor to the entire JHC family.

Ross's JHC family will miss his exhaustive legal knowledge, mentorship, motivational spirit and benevolent life view. May his legacy guide us toward even greater heights.

Plans for an in-person 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration are underway.



Ross remains a champion for numerous civic causes. (Left) At WSU with daughter Mary Ann and (right) with Dr. Timothy Shaver, of HopeNet's Board of Directors.  
Photos courtesy WSU and HopeNet



Wishing Ross many happy days ahead filled with sunshine, rainbows, and nymphs dancing upon the waters.

*Cheers  
to Ross!*

Pandemic protocols have prevented JHC from hosting a retirement party for Ross thus far, but in the meantime we're sharing a few toasts to him here. Because catching up with him these days might just require a rod and reel. As Ross once told the *Wichita Business Journal*, "If I hadn't become a lawyer, I would have been a fly-fishing guide."

"If there is one word I'd use to describe Ross, it is 'gentleman.' His actions are a constant reminder of what it means to be courteous and respectful to everyone."  
– Julia Craft

"Ross taught me to value life outside of work. He believes in the rejuvenating power of fresh air, a walk outside and good coffee. You'll be missed around the office, not only for your experience, but because you're genuinely a good human."  
– Katie Chlumsky

"Ross, you're humble despite your wealth of knowledge, skill, and accomplishments. You welcomed diversity of thought and mentored us to develop our own litigation style. I loved how you would tell me (and other young lawyers) 'Go get it, kiddo!' It was endearing, trusting and supportive."  
– Diane Bellquist

"To Ross and Judy: Safe travels and Godspeed. May your cast always be true, and may the fish always be biting."  
– Chris Joseph

### JHC LAWYERS DEFEND 3 JUDGES ACCUSED OF MISCONDUCT, PRESENT AT KU LAW JUDICIAL CONDUCT SYMPOSIUM

Chris Joseph and Carrie Parker's judicial conduct defense practice was busy this year. They defended three judicial conduct matters — including two that progressed to the Kansas Supreme Court. The conduct at issue included courthouse demeanor, political speech, and the judge's personal life.

Chris was honored by the invitation to share his lessons learned about judicial ethics issues as a speaker at the 2021 Kansas Law Review Symposium titled "Judicial Conduct & Misconduct: A Review of Judicial Behavior from Sexting to Discrimination." Joining a panel of judicial ethics experts for an afternoon of discussion, Chris's presentation focused on the disciplinary process — from preliminary proceedings before the Commission on Judicial Conduct to disposition by the justices of the Kansas Supreme Court. A recording of the symposium is available on KU Law's YouTube channel.

### New Personal Injury Plaintiffs' Practice Recovers More Than \$3.5 Million

In only its second full year as a JHC practice area, the firm's new personal injury practice group recovered more than \$3.5 million for clients in cases involving trucking/commercial motor vehicle accidents, wrongful death, and traumatic brain injury.

"Any new practice area takes time to build, but plaintiffs' work is particularly competitive. We're very pleased with the success we've seen in such a short time," said attorney Drew Goodwin who, along with attorney Matt Johnston, handles the firm's increasing caseload of plaintiffs' matters.

"JHC has always been known for its criminal, civil and family law practices, but it hadn't focused much on personal injury cases until recently. Now we have attorneys and staff concentrating on personal injury work, and our caseload is growing in both Missouri and Kansas," Drew said.

"We're seeing more and more cases of traumatic brain injury — clients who have suffered immeasurably due to accidents involving big-rig trucks and commercial vehicles," Matt added. "The good news for them is that Drew and I both have significant experience dealing with trucking companies and their insurance carriers. We're excited to see more courts reopen and more civil jury trials in 2022."



Drew Goodwin



Matt Johnston

## CLEs Presented by JHC and KU Law Professor Attended by More Than 2,100 Attorneys

Four free CLE webinars sponsored by Joseph, Hollander & Craft and legendary KU Law School Professor Michael Hoeflich drew attendance of more than 2,100 lawyers over the course of 2021, the broadest audience to date.

“We couldn’t be happier about this collaboration with Professor Hoeflich and the positive feedback from colleagues across all disciplines of the bar. It’s become so popular we’re planning to continue virtual quarterly CLEs in 2022,” said Diane Bellquist, a member of JHC’s Legal Ethics and Malpractice Group, which organizes the CLEs and whose members frequently serve as presenters.

“The virtual platform has made it very convenient for attorneys to slot an hour for the session without having to leave their offices. Kansas requires two hours of ethics CLE credit each year and Missouri requires three. With four sessions a year from which to choose, we offer a chance for attorneys to complete all their ethics requirements for free,” she said.

2021 CLE topics included Ethical Considerations & Conundrums When Representing Organizations, Ethical Issues in Family Law, The Lawyer Disciplinary Process, and Professional Ethics in Representing Law Enforcement Officers.

### PRAISE FOR 2021 ETHICS CLEs

*Once again, these ethics CLEs are some of the best I’ve attended.*

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS AND CONUNDRUMS WHEN REPRESENTING ORGANIZATIONS

*This was a top-rate program. Well worth my time and attention.*

PROFESSIONAL ETHICS IN REPRESENTING LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS

*Great panel!! Who could possibly be better on Ethics topics!?!?*

THE LAWYER DISCIPLINARY PROCESS

*I have been practicing for 44 years and have been to a lot of ethics seminars. This was the most interesting I have attended.*

ETHICAL ISSUES IN FAMILY LAW

To be notified of upcoming CLEs and to register, scan the QR code or visit [josephhollander.com/ethics](http://josephhollander.com/ethics).

You can also subscribe to the Legal Ethics and Malpractice Reporter (LEMR), a free monthly publication covering legal ethics, professional responsibility, and malpractice issues. LEMR was launched by JHC and Professor Hoeflich as a way for lawyers to stay abreast of licensing issues.



SCAN ME

## REGISTER FOR THE NEXT ETHICS CLE

### DEFENSIVE LAWYERING

Presented by Professor Michael Hoeflich, Chris Joseph, Diane Bellquist  
**February 10, Noon – 1 p.m.**  
 1 Hour CLE Credit\*

\*Approved in Kansas and Missouri.

## DIONNE SCHERFF SERVES ON VIRTUAL COURT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

As the pandemic provided a laboratory for testing the advantages and disadvantages of virtual courts, the benefits of remote operations became clear so in May 2021, Kansas Supreme Court Chief Justice Marla Luckert requested a Kansas Judicial Council study to determine whether the use of virtual courts could be expanded beyond emergency-use status. Dionne Scherff was asked to serve on this Virtual Court Advisory Committee, and she eagerly accepted.



Dionne Scherff

“The Advisory Committee researched how other states successfully utilized virtual courts — particularly how those states ensured a defendant’s constitutional rights were protected,” Dionne said. “The pandemic forced us to quickly adopt new technology in our courts and some of the changes are here to stay. Use of virtual courts, even outside an emergency setting, will give Kansas courts far more flexibility to handle their growing caseloads.”

Since court hearings are generally open to the public, the courts have had to embrace technology that also allows for public access. Some courts now post links to proceedings on their websites and some created their own YouTube channels. Whatever the means, Dionne said internet access to court proceedings has generated at least one unexpected benefit — increased public interest in the judicial process.

“Some of our smaller Kansas counties now have thousands of followers on their YouTube channels. Based on the numbers, people seem interested in court proceedings and now have greater access to watch their courts in action. Civic engagement can be a very positive thing, and it is good to see.”

## JULIA CRAFT HONORED AMONG WICHITA’S WOMEN WHO LEAD IN LEGAL SERVICES

Each year, the *Wichita Business Journal* honors the best and brightest women leading Wichita’s business and industry sectors. Their 2021 honorees for Women Who Lead in Legal Services featured Julia Craft, chair of Joseph, Hollander & Craft’s Family Law Division.

The firm is extremely proud of this recognition and congratulates Julia on this achievement. Julia’s wealth of legal expertise and her entrepreneurial spirit have been a driving force behind JHC’s success since she joined the leadership team in 2012. She continues to be an outstanding role model and mentor for all young lawyers.



### CRISIS IN COURT REPORTING

## Carrie Parker Joins Kansas Supreme Court Committee Studying How Records of Court Proceedings Are Made

Quality verbatim records of court proceedings are critical to ensure the credible operation of the courts. With this in mind, the Kansas Supreme Court established an Ad Hoc Court Record Committee to study methods and standards for capturing and ensuring the reliability of the court record and focus on standardization of case processes to make the user experience consistent across the state. Joseph, Hollander & Craft’s Carrie Parker, who is serving on the committee, notes that the committee was formed following a period of attrition among Kansas court reporters — especially in rural and frontier communities.



Carrie Parker

“Having a court reporter in the courtroom used to be standard,” said Carrie. “It still is in several jurisdictions. But too many court reporter positions are unfilled—particularly in non-urban areas. The committee’s task is to examine how we can best allocate human resources to cover all the various court proceedings across the state. And, for proceedings that aren’t taken down by a court reporter, we are charged to examine how we can utilize technology to ensure the accurate transcription of electronic recordings.”

Carrie said the 18-member committee of judges, attorneys, court reporters, transcriptionists and court administrators hopes to standardize case processing to facilitate workshare by court reporters and transcriptionists. Carrie noted, “We are researching every option to support these skilled positions. Zoom and similar technology has been leveraged for remote reporting services over the course of the pandemic; it is possible that could continue.” She added, “We are also considering how to make audio-recordings more accessible to reporters and transcriptionists.”

The committee’s recommendations will be submitted to the Supreme Court by July 29, 2022. Anyone with input or suggestions on the recommendations can contact Carrie at [cparker@josephhollander.com](mailto:cparker@josephhollander.com)

## DIANE BELLQUIST TAKES LEADERSHIP ROLES WITH KBA AND KADC

Service to the bar has always been a hallmark of Diane Bellquist’s career. After completing her tenure as President of the Topeka Bar Association in 2019 and wrapping up eight years on the TBA Board, Diane became President of the Kansas Bar Association’s Administrative Law Section in 2020 and was elected to the Board of the Kansas Association of Defense Counsel in 2021.



Diane Bellquist

“The KBA supports 25 different sections that allow lawyers to grow professionally by learning from colleagues in the same practice area,” Diane said.

“Both the KBA and KADC offer tremendous opportunities to network with peers and stay up to date with court decisions and the ever-changing issues affecting the practice of law.

“I strongly encourage all attorneys to join KBA, and all defense attorneys to join KADC,” she said. “I’m proud to be part of the work being done by both organizations to advance our legal community and contribute to the betterment of our justice system.”

## FORMER PROSECUTOR HANNAH WITTMAN JOINS FIRM'S FAMILY LAW TEAM

Former Douglas County Assistant District Attorney Hannah Wittman joined Joseph, Hollander & Craft in May 2021. Hannah splits her time between the firm's Lawrence and Topeka offices to support her growing practice. A prosecutor since 2017, Hannah honed her courtroom skills trying felony, misdemeanor and traffic cases.

The transition from criminal law to family law brings her full circle, she says, because, "I went to law school to pursue family law. Although I spent a summer working for the District Attorney in Osage County, I developed a passion for working on behalf of victims."

While Hannah loved prosecuting, she found the courts' calendars dictated her personal calendar which made work-life balance difficult. So, when an opportunity to go into private practice came up, she made the switch.

"Though I had reservations about leaving public service, I'd heard great things about the firm and its culture; after meeting with them the decision really made sense. The firm has supported my transition and the work is as satisfying as I hoped – I still have a positive impact on the community by working directly with families, which is what I originally set out to do."

Hannah holds a bachelor's degree in history from the University of Kansas, and a juris doctorate from Washburn University School of Law. Before joining the D.A.'s office, Hannah also worked as a research attorney for Judge G. Joseph Pierron at the Kansas Court of Appeals.



Hannah Wittman

## Two New Associates Join Wichita Office

With a growing number of referrals in both civil and family law cases, Joseph, Hollander & Craft's Wichita office recruited two new associates: Rylee Broyles and Desiree Smith. Both are graduates of Washburn University's School of Law and both re-join the firm after participating in the firm's summer associate program. With their addition, JHC now has 23 attorneys staffing its offices in Kansas City, MO, Lawrence, Overland Park, Topeka, and Wichita.

**Rylee Broyles** concentrates in the area of civil litigation as well as the family law areas of divorce, child custody, child support, spousal maintenance and paternity. She is licensed to practice before the Kansas Supreme Court, all Kansas state courts, and the U.S. District Court for the District of Kansas.

After completing the summer associate program, Rylee continued as a law clerk during her second year of law school. She was also a legal intern for the Kansas Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence, and worked as a deputy clerk for the Kansas District Court in Ellis County.

Rylee completed her undergraduate studies at Fort Hays State University in 2018 with a bachelor's degree in criminal justice. She received her juris doctorate, magna cum laude, from Washburn University School of Law in 2021, where she served as a staff writer on the Washburn Law Journal and was a member of the Rural Practice Organization.



RYLEE BROYLES SIGNS THE ROLL

**Desiree Smith's** family law practice includes divorce, child custody, child support, spousal maintenance, guardianships, and paternity matters. She is admitted to practice before the Kansas Supreme Court and Kansas state courts.

While attending law school, Desiree served as co-director of Washburn's Children and Family Law Center. As COVID-19 changed the model for child welfare, she co-authored a best-practices paper, "Making the Case for Videoconferencing and Remote Child Custody Evaluations (RCES): The Empirical, Ethical, and Evidentiary Arguments for Accepting New Technology," published by the American Psychological Association in 2021.

In addition to her summer associate role, Desiree worked as a law clerk for Bud Dale Law Offices in Topeka and the Kansas Department of Agriculture.

Desiree earned her bachelor's degree in political science and government communication from Colorado State University in 2018. She received her juris doctorate from Washburn in 2021, graduating with certificates in family law, oil and gas law, and natural resources law.

## Firm Wins Full, Unconditional Pardon for Refugee Facing Deportation

A full and unconditional pardon was the only way that Joseph, Hollander & Craft's client, Hiep Xuan Le (aka Xuan Hiep Le), could remain in the United States without fear of deportation. Of more than 200 individuals who submitted applications for clemency, Kansas Gov. Laura Kelly would grant only eight. Hiep's was one, thanks to the tenacity of attorneys Chris Joseph and Carrie Parker, who advocated that the governor should exercise her clemency authority in this case.



Hiep Xuan Le and his family

"All the years of fearing deportation and being sent far away from my loved ones are being replaced with happiness and assurance that I can be here for my family," Hiep told Chris and Carrie. "All [of this is] thanks to your hard work and caring."

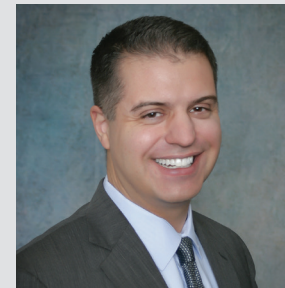
In the early 1990s, then teen-aged Hiep was convicted of robbery. After serving his sentence, he became a model citizen and successful businessman, started a family, and gained the respect of his community. His convictions were expunged.

However, because Hiep was not a U.S. citizen, immigration law left him subject to the possibility of removal to Vietnam – decades after he left as a refugee. Although an agreement between the U.S. and Vietnam blocked the deportation order, it was subject to change at any time. The only way to ensure Hiep could remain in the U.S. was to obtain a pardon and seek relief from the deportation order.

"Hiep made the absolute best of his post-prison life," said Chris. "Without a pardon, the decades he spent contributing to his community and supporting his family would have been for nothing the day the status quo changed. He was at the mercy of Gov. Kelly to grant a full and unconditional pardon, and we are grateful for her action."

## Peer and Client Reviews Earn Honors for Firm

Each year, the firm is honored to receive numerous accolades from Best Lawyers in America® and Super Lawyers®. All recognition results from surveys of legal peers and clients. During 2021, 15 members and associates were recognized for excellence in their respective areas of practice, and the firm congratulates them all.



**Chris Joseph**  
Topeka Lawyer of the Year  
Criminal Defense – General Practice

**Diane Bellquist**  
Banking and Finance Law

**Julia Craft**  
Family Law

**Jess Hoeme**  
Criminal Defense – General Practice  
DUI/DWI Defense

**Chris McHugh**  
Cannabis Law  
Criminal Defense – General Practice

**Casey Meek**  
Criminal Defense – General Practice

**Dionne Scherff**  
Criminal Defense – General Practice  
DUI/DWI Defense

**Ones to Watch**  
**Katherine Chlumsky**  
Family Law

**Keith Edwards**  
Criminal Defense – General Practice  
DUI/DWI Defense

**Lindsey Erickson**  
DUI/DWI Defense

**Rebecca Henry**  
Family Law

**Carrie Parker**  
Appellate Practice

## Super Lawyers®

**Diane Bellquist**  
**Chris Joseph**  
**Kris Lawless**  
**Chris McHugh**  
**Dionne Scherff**  
**Ardith Smith-Woertz**

**Rising Stars**  
**Katherine Chlumsky**  
**Drew Goodwin**  
**Rebecca Henry**  
**Casey Meek**  
**Carrie Parker**



Diane Bellquist



Katherine Chlumsky



Julia Craft



Keith Edwards



Lindsey Erickson



Drew Goodwin



Rebecca Henry



Jess Hoeme



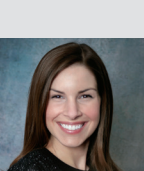
Kris Lawless



Chris McHugh



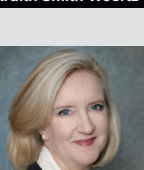
Casey Meek



Carrie Parker



Ardith Smith-Woertz



Dionne Scherff

# Firm's Charitable Giving Fosters Programs for Children, Families and Furry Friends

Every year, JHC attorneys and staff generously offer their time, money and talent to dozens of organizations. The firm is proud to support groups that uplift spirits, improve community health and safety, and care for furry friends statewide.

Highlights from last year include JHC's support of Wags & Whiskers, a fundraiser for the **Wichita Animal Action League (WAAL)**, and Cops & Kids/Operation Rudolph, a day of holiday shopping that unites disadvantaged kids with public safety officers from the **Overland Park Police Officers' Foundation (OPPOF)**.

"2021's event raised a record amount for WAAL," said firm member Julia Craft, an enthusiastic WAAL volunteer and fundraiser. "During the pandemic, animal shelters emptied as people sought pets to fill the void of lockdown. Sadly, as people returned to their in-person jobs, many of them returned their pets, too. Shelters are filled to capacity again, so the need for animal adoptions and foster families is greater than ever."

In Overland Park, the annual Operation Rudolph event was a chance for kids and officers to bond as they shopped together for gifts and food for their holiday meals.

"Kids need to know they have someone to turn to when faced with a potential crisis, and we're happy to support events that help break down barriers and build trust between the community and safety officers," said attorney Lindsey Erickson, who frequently handles juvenile cases throughout the Kansas City metro area. "Programs like these truly make a difference in the lives of children and families in Overland Park and surrounding communities."



Julia Craft and friends enjoy Wags & Whiskers' event and silent auction  
Photo courtesy Wichita Animal Action League

## Keith Edwards Leads New Gang Registry Task Force

A new task force formed by the Wichita Bar Association is reviewing the factors the Wichita Police Department considers when assigning a person to its gang member database, and how that information is utilized. Based on his previous work as a member of the WBA's Racial Justice Task Force, JHC attorney Keith Edwards was asked to chair this new endeavor, comprised of two judges, the Sedgwick County District Attorney, a member of the Public Defender's office, and another private practitioner.

"We know that Wichita's gang member database is huge compared to other cities in Kansas," said Keith. "We want to find out why. We're taking an unbiased look at the issue, investigating the real-world impact of being classified as a gang member or associate, to determine if any reforms are appropriate."



Keith Edwards

The task force is meeting with the WPD, the Kansas Legislature, and representatives of non-profit social justice organizations to ascertain if other actions could be taken that would better serve the community and the justice system.

"There are a lot of opposing interests and issues, but I'm optimistic that our work will bring some clarity to the process and ensure people are being treated fairly."

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Choosing a lawyer is an important decision that should not be based solely on marketing materials. Past results achieved by our firm are no guarantee of future results. Each case is different and is judged on its own merits.

Happy New Year!

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