



Meet Our New Team Member, Michal Jones

Stratton & Reynolds is proud to announce the association of our newest attorney, Michal Jones. Michal will be helping our firm assist clients in the areas of Probate and Trust Administration. Michal always knew what she wanted to be when she grew up and set out from an early age to achieve that. She does not remember ever seriously wanting to be anything except an attorney. Having set her sights on this goal, she worked hard throughout her education, graduating *summa cum laude* from Presbyterian College and then from the University of South Carolina School of Law.

For over 20 years, Michal worked for a respected civil litigation firm in Columbia. She represented individuals and businesses statewide through their insurance companies. Through the litigation process, Michal strategized with her clients to determine the best path toward resolution, whether through a carefully crafted settlement or trial. Litigation was rewarding, requiring meticulous attention to detail, a strong focus on unique aspects of cases, and often a great deal of creativity to help parties come to an equitable and fair settlement. Michal relates that some of



her most rewarding cases involved representing school districts, where she was able to protect the interest of her clients while also ensuring the children's interests were protected in accordance with specific South Carolina law.

As her career progressed, Michal found herself wishing for more personal interaction with her clients and grew interested in probate administration. Soon thereafter, she decided to make the change to Stratton & Reynolds to practice probate administration, which is the process of managing a deceased person's estate and transferring their assets according to the decedent's wishes. The process is defined in a very specific way in South Carolina and includes proving a will is authentic, identifying assets and how they will be distributed, paying any debts owed by the estate, and other tasks. The process can go very smoothly if a good estate plan is in place and there are no disagreements among heirs. Unfortunately, when someone passes away, their family members often learn there was no estate plan in place, and/or there are disagreements about how assets should be distributed. Probate administration is time-consuming and can be burdensome during a time when family members are grieving the loss of a loved one and coming to terms with the emotional side of death.

Michal believes it is a privilege to work alongside families as they navigate this process. By using her knowledge of probate law and her skills in organizing and taking care of details, she can lift the burden of probate administration's legal side from the family's shoulders and allow them to grieve as needed. Untangling the confusion and guiding families through the probate process is uniquely rewarding.

Michal is a South Carolina native and has deep roots in the Newberry and Lexington County areas. She maintains an impressive AV peer-review rating from Martindale Hubbell®, which is the highest rating possible for ethics and ability in the legal profession. She is admitted to the South Carolina Bar, United States District Court for the District of South Carolina, and the United States Court of Appeals, Fourth Circuit. Michal is a member of the Richland County Bar Association and the South Carolina Defense Trial Attorneys Association. Along with her husband and children, Michal is an active member of Mt. Horeb Church where she is a member of the lay leadership.

-TC and Charity



Is there really such a thing as “organized chaos”? It depends on whom you ask! If you thrive in clutter, this article isn’t for you. Creating an organized space is simply a matter of ensuring household items have a place to be stored — and not in the one drawer filled with everything from ketchup packets and paper clips to a random Cheeto! Whether you’re preparing for house guests or diving into a spring-cleaning marathon, these organizing tips will bless your cluttered mess!

TENSION RODS FOR SHOE STORAGE
Need more shoe space? Not a problem — just grab a few tension rods! If you have

GET IT TOGETHER!

DIY Organization Tips to Bring Order to Your Living Spaces

two sturdy objects — dressers, a wall and nightstand, etc. — you can place two tension rods between them and create a “shelf” to place your shoes on. Add multiple rows of tension rods for extra storage.

CLOTHES PINS FOR CABINET DOOR STORAGE

Kitchen cleaning supplies, especially lightweight items, don’t always have to be placed on the floor inside the under-sink cabinet. Putting double-sided tape onto clothes pins and sticking them inside the cabinet doors creates an excellent place to hang rags/sponges, kitchen gloves, and sink stoppers.

NAPKIN HOLDERS FOR POT LIDS

Using zip ties and upright wire napkin holders, you can create a lid organizer for your pots and pans. Rather than flipping the lid upside down on top of the pot, you can create a designated space for all the

lids to reside. You can even organize your lids from smallest to largest!

POOL NOODLES AS HANGER SPACERS BETWEEN CLOTHES

Pool noodles work as spacers to keep your clothes hanging neatly. Just take a pool noodle and make one cut lengthwise to open the noodle, and then cut it horizontally into 1-inch pieces. Place the pieces on the bar in your closet and hang your clothes according to how many hangers you want between each spacer!

HONEYCOMB ORGANIZER FOR SOCKS AND UNDERGARMENTS

Drawers that house undergarments and socks tend to get disorganized quickly. Honeycomb organizers are the perfect addition to ensure all items fit in the drawer, making it easier to grab what you need. These organizers are also adjustable, so they’ll fit any drawer size!

Powers of Attorney for Children in College

It’s that time of year again. Many of our clients have children and grandchildren graduating from high school soon. While this is a wonderful and exciting time as these young adults look toward their future, what many parents and grandparents don’t consider is that these children are now legally considered adults. That means parents no longer have the right to, for example, access their child’s health care information due to HIPAA laws.

But what if your child gets into an accident or has an emergency while he or she is at college or on the job? If they are not able to give consent, parents often cannot even get information or talk to doctors without going through lengthy and expensive Guardianship and/or Conservatorship proceedings through the local probate court. Because of this, we highly recommend that anyone over the age of 18 has a Health Care Power of Attorney and a Financial Power of Attorney. We can help young adults get these important documents in place before they head off to the next chapter of their lives. If you have someone in your family who has recently turned 18 and may still want you to be able to make decisions if it becomes necessary, give us a call to schedule an appointment today!



TAKE A BREAK!

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Green Thumbs in Training

HOW TO MAKE GARDENING A FAMILY ADVENTURE

There's nothing better than spending time with your kids outside, enjoying an entertaining, creative, and informative activity. But sometimes, these activities are hard to coordinate. Thankfully, gardening appeals to parents and kids from all walks of life. All you need is a dedicated area in your yard or patio and seeds, and you're ready to get started.

LET YOUR KIDS CHOOSE THE PLANTS.

This is arguably the most crucial part of igniting your children's interest in gardening. If you pick out the fruits, veggies, and flowers you want to grow and invite your kids to help plant, water, and pick, they may lose interest quickly. Instead, include them in the process from the get-go. Take them to the store and let them pick out seeds or plants. Encourage them to choose produce they already enjoy eating, making it even more fun for them! Just be sure their choices can grow in your area during the current season.

MAKE SPACE AND PLANT TOGETHER.

After choosing your seeds, you must ensure your garden is ready to sustain life. Dedicate a section of your lawn or patio to your gardening efforts and start laying soil or filling your planters. Help your children transplant their seeds or young plants directly into the area. Now, put them in charge of caring for the plants by checking on and watering them. You may want to follow behind to ensure they aren't over or under-watering.

MAKE IT FUN AND INFORMATIVE!

You can get your kids more involved by encouraging them to research their plants and track their growth. They can even look online to see how their plants should be developing. Soon enough, those fruits and vegetables will be ready to eat, and you should let your children pick anything ripe when possible. Seeing the fruits of their labor (literally) will make this experience even more enlightening and enjoyable for them.

LEMON GARLIC BUTTER CHICKEN

INGREDIENTS

Inspired by DietDoctor.com

- 4 chicken thighs, bone-in, skin-on
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 2 tbsp unsalted butter
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1/4 cup low-sodium chicken broth
- 2 tbsp heavy cream
- 1 lemon, zest and juice
- 2 tbsp chopped parsley, for garnish

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 400 F and season chicken with salt and pepper.
2. Heat olive oil in an oven-proof skillet over medium heat. Sear chicken skin-side down until crispy, about 5 minutes. Flip and cook 2 more minutes; remove from skillet and set aside.
3. Melt butter in skillet, then sauté garlic until fragrant. Add broth, cream, lemon juice, and zest. Simmer for 3 minutes.
4. Return chicken to skillet, spoon sauce over, and bake in oven for 15–20 minutes or until cooked through (165 F internal temperature). Garnish with parsley before serving.

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All Aboard the Alaska Railroad!

Why Traveling Alaska by Train Beats the Cruise Ship



While Alaskan cruises get all the buzz, traveling the Last Frontier by train offers an equally breathtaking — and perhaps more intimate — experience. With panoramic views, unforgettable pit stops, and access to remote regions, the Alaska Railroad delivers a journey unlike any other.

Imagine gliding through the rugged wilderness in a GoldStar Dome car, where glass ceilings offer a 360-degree view of snow-capped peaks and glistening glaciers. For the adventurous, the outdoor viewing platform lets you immerse yourself in the stunning scenery while breathing in the clean, crisp Alaskan air. Whether you choose the premium GoldStar class or the more budget-friendly Adventure Class, you'll be awed by Alaska's natural beauty.

The Alaska Railroad operates year-round with five seasonal routes, each

brimming with wonder. The **Coastal Classic** is any traveler's dream, winding from Anchorage to Seward along the Turnagain Arm waterway. Highlights include spotting bald eagles and hopping on a boat at Resurrection Bay to explore Kenai Fjords National Park, famous for its orca whale sightings.

For those drawn to Denali's majesty, the **Denali Star** is your ticket. This flagship route connects Anchorage to Denali National Park, offering stops like Talkeetna, a charming artsy town and basecamp for climbers scaling Denali. It's a 12-hour journey of awe-inspiring landscapes and rich history.

The **Glacier Discovery** route takes you south from Anchorage to Girdwood, Whittier, and the Spencer Glacier. Whittier is a standout destination with

its sleepy charm and world-class Alaskan fish. This train provides remote access to places you can't reach by car, making the trip a unique experience.

And if you're looking for an offbeat adventure, the **Hurricane Turn** and **Aurora Winter** trains cater to locals and intrepid travelers alike, offering stops by request and transporting you into the heart of Alaska's untamed backcountry.

With the Alaska Railroad, the journey is as memorable as the destination. Whether you're marveling at wildlife, enjoying a sit-down meal, or booking excursions to explore iconic landmarks, every mile of track is packed with adventure.