State Bar of Georgia Young Lawyers Division

THE YLD REVIEW

Volume 61, Issue 4, June 2020

Working for the Profession and the Public



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From the President

The Work is Just Beginning



Will Davis

I have written and rewritten my final column for *The YLD Review* over the past few weeks. So much has changed since our last issue, I wanted to ensure that I took the opportunity to end my term of service as YLD president on the appropriate note.

Thank you to everyone who has volunteered to lead a committee, raise funds, attend a meeting or serve on my Board of Directors this year. While as president, I was often the one to get a call for comment, those who put in the actual hard work also deserve the praise and credit. Since the last issue, we learned that this year's Georgia Legal Food Frenzy raised more than \$852,000 to provide meals for food insecure Georgians! Morgan Lyndall and Veronica Rogusky worked tirelessly to make this year's frenzy successful, and in the face of a pandemic, made amazing strides to more than double our fundraising goal. The YLD continues to be in a great position to continue serving the Bar, the profession and the public, and I truly look forward to becoming a member of the "O-L-D" and supporting the YLD in future years.

Our successes being considered and appreciated, I would be remiss if I let this final moment to address our members without taking the opportunity to acknowledge that the past few weeks have been a time of deep introspection and thought on how the YLD can continue to grow, adapt and support all of our members and all of our communities. As the first openly gay elected officer in both the YLD and State Bar of Georgia, intentional diverse appointments of Board members, committee chairs and CLE speakers were an important part of my presidential platform, and in light of recent events, the YLD must continue such efforts. I'm excited by Bert's plans to do so.

My column in the April 2020 issue of the *Georgia Bar Journal* focused on the impor-

tance of why diversity matters in the legal profession, and in light of the brutal deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Aumaud Arbery and countless others, that focus on diversity is even more important and relevant than it was when I was sworn in last June. We must be willing to listen and learn from voices that are different from ours but at the same time, we must recognize that it is not the duty or job of any other person to educate us about issues facing our minority colleagues and clients in this profession. We must be willing to educate ourselves, play catch up, and acknowledge that our often implicit and unintentional biases cause harm. We must strive to acknowledge and correct those biases to create a welcoming space for all young lawyers in Georgia.

We must be willing to create spaces at our events, our meetings and through our programming that are open to everyone where every attendee feels comfortable. I have met some of my best friends through the YLD, and everyone should have the opportunity and feel that same support. I've had many difficult conversations with friends and colleagues over the past few weeks, and I recently heard from a young lawyer who is active in the YLD that said, "The YLD seems like a happy and great group for a specific group of people." I'm privileged because I'm in that specific group of people, but everyone should be able to say that the YLD is a happy and great group for every young lawyer in Georgia.

These conversations are uncomfortable, but they are conversations that must happen. Privilege must be checked and recognized. It can seem strange to ask, "Well as a white leader, what can I do about this?" But that is a question that must be asked so that our black, gay, disabled and other minority members feel they are included, welcomed and are an active part of the conversation and organization.

All of that being said, these unanswered questions leave me incredibly optimistic about the future of the YLD. Bert has incredible programming and initiatives aimed to begin discussions about correcting issues

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related to systemic racial injustice facing our profession, our communities and our clients. The YLD owes it to our profession, the public and the Bar to combat racism, bigotry and intolerance in our communities. We are the group best suited and situated to take such an initiative, and Bert is ready to hit the ground running. We have a phenomenal group of leaders who will lead the YLD into 2021 and beyond. Coupled with initiatives to be established by incoming Bar President Dawn Jones, the Bar is in amazing and capable hands to accomplish great things over the course of the next year.

There is no room for racism and bigotry of any kind in the State Bar of Georgia. As lawyers, we have to call it as we see it and fight against racism wherever we may practice. We seek fairness and equity for all, and the work is just beginning under what is sure to be a fantastic YLD year under Bert's leadership.

It truly has been an honor to serve you over the past year in ways that none of us could have ever predicted. I am proud of what we accomplished. I am proud to be a member of the YLD and State Bar of Georgia. Thank you. YLD

Will Davis is an associate at Naggiar & Sarif in Atlanta and president of the Young Lawyers Division of the State Bar of Georgia.

Zoom Safer in an Unsafe Cyberworld



Titus Nichols

When you started 2020, you probably didn't think that your practice would include cybersecurity and data privacy issues. Unfortunately, COVID-19 has changed the world, and also the way that we practice law. Beyond the need for social distancing and vigilant (if not obsessive) hygiene practices, our legal practices must now integrate various technologies such as web conferencing.

Many professions have learned to adopt and fully utilize various video conferencing technologies for their particular services. For example, many in the medical community have adopted the use of doxy.me for continuing to meet with their patients regardless of the distance. Conversely, Zoom has proven to become highly popular amongst lawyers and other professionals. Zoom usage went from 10 million in December of 2019 to 200 million in March of this year.

Such an explosion in legitimate usage has also invited an explosion of illegitimate use by hackers and other ne'er-do-wells



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intent on causing chaos. One such act has become known as "Zoombombing." It occurs when hackers gain access to a Zoom meeting and forcefully insert derogatory pictures, videos and other disruptive items. It has become so prevalent that the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Boston Division had to issue a warning on March 30, 2020, about the threat of Zoombombing. So what can you do as a legal professional to protect your work environments and still deliver effective legal service to your clients (short of calling the FBI)?

► SEE **ZOOM**, PAGE 6

From the Editors

Thank You, Readers!



Ashley Akins



Audrey Bergeson

It goes without saying that no one could have predicted how the 2019-20 Bar year would have ended. The fall of 2019 seems like another lifetime, so we wanted to take this opportunity to look back at the past year in *The YLD Review*.

We spotlighted the wonderful work and professionalism of our YLD affiliates across the state, including the Cobb County YLD, Savannah YLD and Houston County YLD. We also had the opportunity to highlight the programming and work of our YLD committees, including the Family Law Committee's encouragement of young lawyers to attend Georgia's annual Family Law Institute, the Women in the Profession Committee's commitment to increasing lunch-and-learn and speaker events, and the Community Service Projects Committee's passion for supporting our communities.

We shared exciting updates about the Signature Fundraiser, and when the event unfortunately had to be canceled, our YLD members, supporters and sponsors stepped up to support the Georgia Legal Services Program, resulting in more than \$23,000 raised for this cause.

The YLD Review went green, transitioning from both print and digital to strictly digital and eliminating roughly 12 pages from being printed each quarter. The YLD is committed to being a good steward of the environment and YLD funds, so we were proud that this has been a smooth and successful transition.

Finally, we are bringing you this issue, spotlighting some of the ways lawyers have SEE EDITORS, PAGE 6

Judicial Spotlight

An Interview With Judge Jason E. Ashford, State Court of Houston County



LaToya S. Bell

Judge Jason E. Ashford has been the only State Court judge in the Houston Judicial Circuit since 2010. After graduating from Florida State University College of Law in 1993, Ashford was admitted to practice first in Missouri in 1996 and then Georgia in 2000. He practiced two years for a private firm and then started his career in the U.S. Air Force. Ashford requested to be assigned on the eastern seaboard and was stationed at Whiteman Air Force Base in Missouri where he met his wife. He was later stationed at Robins Air Force Base in Georgia. He then made Warner Robins, Georgia, his home and continued his legal career at the Houston County District Attorney's office where, over the course of 10 years, he was both chief assistant district attorney and acting district attorney. Ashford is a working family man and public servant. He is active in his community in various legal organizations. During this time of pandemic pandemonium, Ashford has kept the Houston County State Court on the cutting edge of out-of-the-box ideas to cope with this new normal in the judicial system.

Ashford is very approachable and always willing to share with the lawyers, young and old, of the local bar. He shared some of his most memorable moments and advice with me during our interview. When he was first elected as judge, he was told to "never wear your jacket under your robe," by one colleague. "Don't let them put a cash register on the bench. It's about justice," from another colleague. I can attest that Ashford has abided by this piece of advice. He doesn't let sentences become "about the money." He considers defendants' financial status and ability to pay. Ashford has also recently revised the fine schedule for certain offenses so that the fine matches the crime. He was

also given this wise piece of advice, "Don't get a big head. Don't get robe-itis."

While Ashford didn't graduate law school thinking he'd become a judge, he ran for this office because he felt there was "a big problem in State Court" and he "fancied himself a problem solver." Ironically, he has never considered himself to be a lawyer. He was first an Air Force officer, then a prosecutor, now a judge. The first time he walked out onto the bench, he described it as "surreal." He knows that he must not be "afraid to make mistakes and take chances." Because of this he doesn't worry about being overturned in the higher courts because as he sees it, "either he gets it right now, or they get it right later and either way it turns out right

in the end." Overall, his biggest concern is making sure he is being consistent and fair, while being aware of his emotions and being even-handed so as to not "play favorites."

When asked what he does not like to see in the courtroom from lawyers he said, "I do not like when attorneys make [] personal attacks in the courtroom." Ashford likes for lawyers to assume the best in people and "never ascribe to meanness what can be described as incompetence." This type of thinking is what makes his courtroom an environment of collegiality and fairness. He also does not like when lawyers are not prepared. He enjoys seeing continuous improvement from young lawyers and seasoned lawyers alike. We must learn from mistakes made and seek to correct whatever went awry.

If Ashford is not on the bench, speaking at his Optimist Club meetings, participating



Judge Jason E. Ashford, State Court of Houston County

in Rotary Club or any of the other various community and civic organizations he is a member of, he is doing or dreaming of doing one of his many hobbies that include, skiing, horseback riding, white water kayaking, weightlifting, playing chess, reading or "poorly" playing the piano.

Ashford's career is centered on this self-proclaimed motto: "Don't be a jerk! It's sometimes hard not to, but we must!" In all things, we are judged by how we treat people who can provide us no benefit or retaliate in no way. Having the opportunity to serve Houston County with a positive attitude and while focusing on judicial efficiency has been the core of Judge Ashford's judicial career. YLD

LaToya Bell is with the Houston Circuit Public Defenders Office. She currently serves on the YLD Board of Directors.

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Adulting 101

Budgeting Like a Pro



Jena **Emory**

I am aware that most people stopped reading when they saw the word budgeting. But for those of you who stuck with me, let's talk about budgeting!

I will start by saying that my mother is an accountant, and while that does not necessarily make me an expert, I have been budgeting with a professional since I started college. Every time I start a new job or pay off a debt, I sit down and create a budget to make sure I am meeting my financial goals. I have used an Excel spreadsheet in the past, but I normally just sketch out a budget on a plain old piece of paper.

Budgeting is not fun, but it is something that can seriously affect your life. Spending your money wisely will give you stability when life becomes hectic, provide flexibility in your career when you want to change jobs and allow you to meet your long-term financial goals.

In my experience, young lawyers are often tempted to believe that they make so much money that they do not need to worry about budgeting. Or they are on the complete other end of the spectrum, and they believe that they do not make enough money to survive. Both extremes are not true.

Everyone needs a budget. Obviously, everyone has different financial needs and obligations, but everyone needs a plan. This article will provide a loose framework for creating a budget and thinking through your finances in six steps.

Estimate How Much of Your Income is Going to Taxes

Your budget should always start with how much money you make, not how much money you want to spend. To make an accurate budget, you must first determine how much money is actually being deposited into



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your bank account and how much of your income is going to taxes.

My mother is an accountant, so it is fairly simple for me to determine how much of my income, so she is able to help me calculate how much of my income goes to taxes . For people who do not have access to an accountant, normally around 30 percent of your income goes to federal and state taxes. You can also look at your most recent pay stub for an approximation of how much of your income is actually coming to your pocket.

This step is crucial. If you make \$100,000 a year, but you are only taking home \$70,000, do not spend money like you make \$100,000. You should spend money like you make \$70,000. Once you determine the amount of money that goes to taxes, you can build your budget.

Save at Least 10 Percent

The money you save is the money you earn. As a general rule, you should have enough saved to live on for six months. This will give you security and stability when you lose a job or are surprised with a large purchase. This is a lofty goal, and it can only be met gradually. Just start off by saving 10 percent of your income.

I always set aside a certain day when I want to make a deposit into my savings account from my checking account. It gives me something to look forward to, and I am reminded of my budget and my financial goals on that day every month.

Once you accumulate some savings, you will have to decide what you want to spend your money on. You should always, however, keep a cushion. If you need to purchase ► SEE **BUDGETING**, PAGE 8

ZOOM, FROM PAGE 3

Create a Password for the Meeting

You need a password to access everything else in today's world. Why should a client meeting be any less secure? Enabling this feature is the easiest way to ensure that unwanted participants do not gain access and wreak havoc during the session. Passwords can be set for all sessions so that each participant would need to input it before they can join the meeting.

Block Screen-Sharing Options

A common aspect of "Zoombombing" involves hackers sharing pornographic or derogatory images to all of the participants in the meeting. To counter this, you should prevent others from being able to share their screens. As the host, you can prohibit other participants from sharing their screen by disabling the feature. You will maintain complete control over what is seen and heard

on the screen and thus prevent a potential vulnerability from derailing your session.

Use Waiting Rooms

The "waiting room" feature gives you the ability to keep new participants in a separate room prior to joining the main session. If the participants are unknown, then this allows you to segregate them until you find out if they're legitimate or a potential source of trouble. It is legitimately useful as it gives hosts greater control over session security.

Hold a Webinar Instead of a Meeting

Webinars through Zoom are like virtual lecture auditoriums and allow view-only attendees. Typically, webinar attendees do not interact with one another. Only the hosts and any designated panelists can share their video, audio and screen. They are great for large au-

diences or public events. Unfortunately, this is not a free feature. It requires a "pro" or higher subscription. However, the advantage of this feature is that it is a presentation to a group of 50 or more that doesn't allow mass participation, and thus, is less likely to be hijacked.

COVID-19 has forced us as lawyers to change the way we practice and to embrace different technologies than just six months prior. The use of passwords, waiting rooms, prohibiting screen-sharing and utilizing webinars allows us to counteract the effects of bad actors who wish to disrupt our legitimate sessions. Zoom can be an effective tool; however, its use requires us to become vigilant on best cybersecurity and data privacy practices in order to be as effective as possible for the people we serve. YLD

Titus Nichols is the founder of Nichols Law, P.C., in Atlanta. He is chair of the YLD Disaster Legal Assistance Committee.

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transitioned their practice to this new, remote world of practicing law.

We want to thank you for reading along this year, and we look forward to the wonderful content the next Bar year will bring. It has been a privilege to serve as your YLD newsletter co-editors. Next year, Ashley will remain, joined by LaKeisha Randall. Great things are in store for *The YLD Review* under their leadership! YLD

Ashley Akins is an associate at Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough LLP in Atlanta. She is a 2014 graduate and past co-chair of the YLD Leadership Academy. In 2015 and 2016, she co-chaired the YLD Signature Fundraiser. She has also served on the YLD Board of Directors.

Audrey Bergeson is managing attorney for the Family Law Program at Atlanta Volunteer Lawyers Foundation. She is a 2016 graduate of the YLD Leadership Academy. She also served on the YLD Board of Directors and as a co-chair of the 2017 YLD Signature Fundraiser.



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Committee Spotlight

YLD Advocates for Students with Disabilities



Jack H. Grote



Jenna B. Rubin

The YLD Advocates for Students with Disabilities Committee provides educational and networking opportunities for attorneys, advocates and parents of children with special needs. Although much of the committee is made of attorneys practicing in areas related to children with special needs, whether that be juvenile law, social security, education law or government agencies, many of our members participate because of a personal connection to the topics we discuss. We have a mailing list of more than 200 attorneys, parents and advocates.

During the 2019-20 Bar year, committee co-chairs Jenna Rubin and Jack Grote held several events aimed at fostering networking and promoting continued education in this field. Even though our year was cut short by the coronavirus pandemic, we had strong attendance at all our events and look forward to continuing the good work in the months to come.

In September 2019, we held a "back to school" networking social with popsicles at Steel City Pops in Decatur. Committee members used this opportunity to connect and share resources for specific issues, as well as discuss some updates to special education that occurred during the summer months.

In October 2019, school attorneys Ashley Akins and Sherry Culves from Nelson Mullins spoke with our committee about special education issues from a school attorney's perspective and tips on how to be an effective advocate while working with school attorneys.

In November 2019, long-time committee member Jamila Pollard from the Georgia Department of Education gave our committee a presentation on the many resources provided by the Georgia Department of Education to navigate special education dispute resolution.



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In February 2020, co-chair Jack Grote with Atlanta Legal Aid, presented to the committee on GNETS, the Georgia Network for Educational and Therapeutic Support. The covered topics included historical background, legislative history, advocating for a student in GNETS and practical tips.

The remainder of our planned programming for the year had to be put on hold. We anticipate lots of new topics to cover as the education landscape continues to evolve in response to COVID-19. Keep an eye out for new and topical programming next year! YLD

Jack Grote is an attorney with Atlanta Legal Aid in Atlanta and is the co-chair of the YLD Advocates for Students with Disabilities Committee.

Jenna Rubin is an associate at Gregory Doyle Calhoun & Rogers LLC in Marietta and is the cochair of the YLD Advocates for Students with Disabilities Committee.



▶ BUDGETING, FROM PAGE 5

a car or a house in the future, you need to plan out your savings. Thinking ahead and planning will make these larger purchases easier and save you money in the long run.

Maximize Student Loan Payments

Student loans are a major concern for most young lawyers. It is important that you have a plan for paying them off. My student loans have an interest rate of 6.5 percent, which is extremely high. Because of the high interest rate, student loans should be paid off as soon as possible. Do not just make the minimum payments. Pay the highest amount per month that you can afford. In the long run, you will thank yourself.

4 Calculate Appropriate Rent or Mortgage Payments

Everyone needs to live somewhere and rent or mortgage payments will always take up a large portion of your budget. As a general rule, it should be less than 30 percent of your income. When looking for an apartment, condo or house, think about this rule to determine the kind of home you can afford.

Account for All Miscellaneous Purchases

My budget includes an itemization of all necessary purchases through the month. This includes food, gas, car, electric, internet, yoga and even Netflix. You need to know where your money is going to determine the amount of money that you need every month.

If you find that after savings, student loans, rent or mortgage payments, and these miscellaneous expenses you are spending more money than you make, then you should examine whether you need to purchase all of these items every month. Are you spending too much on internet? Is your gym membership too expensive? Do you buy too many clothes? This is the part of the budget that is hard, but it is also the most necessary.

Give Some Money Away

Set some money aside in your budget to give away to charity or someone who needs it. After all of the above, you are going to feel as if you need every penny that you earn. I know it feels that way, but there are people in the world who need this money more than you do. Remember them when you are budgeting.

Finally, your budget changes when your financial obligations change, and the budget you set today may not work for you next year. When your income changes, work through these six steps and make a new budget. Your budget will always feel tight, but that is because you are getting the most out of your income. If you get off track one month, forgive yourself and get back on track. Happy budgeting! YLD

Jena Emory is an associate at Copeland, Stair Kingma & Lovell, LLP, in Atlanta. She is co-chair of the YLD Women in the Profession Committee and a member of the 2020 YLD Leadership Academy.



2020 YLD AWARDS OF ACHIEVEMENT

Service to the Bar

Christina L. Gualtieri Andrew J. Navratil LaKeisha R. Randall Danielle E. Russell

Service to the Public

Jack H. Grote Sarah R. Jett Morgan Lyndall Veronica Rogusky Jenna B. Rubin Kayla Winters Strozier

Service to the Profession

Jena G. Emory Donna-Marie Hayle David Bobo Mullens III Samantha Mullis Nicole L. Pope Erica T. Taylor

Service to the YLD

Henry J. Brewer III Morgan P. Carrin Jana J. Edmondson-Cooper Lauren C. Greer Abbey Morrow Jared Parrish Persephone K. Shelton Sarah Jean Yaeger

Outstanding YLD Affiliate Young Lawyers of Augusta

Award of Excellence for Dedication to the YLD Joshua I. Bosin Elizabeth L. Fite Goodman McGuffey LLP 16th Annual YLD Ethics & Professionalism Award Jana N. Dixon

Joe Dent Hospitality Award Zachary S. Howard

Signature Service Award Autumn Turner Cole

Ross Adams Award Tina Shadix Roddenbery

Distinguished Judicial Service Award

Judge Stephen Louis A. Dillard Judge Sara L. Doyle

Congratulations!

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Affiliate Spotlight

Young Lawyers of Augusta



Mitch Snyder

During the past year, the Young Lawyers of Augusta, an affiliate of the Young Lawyers Division of the State Bar, has been busy volunteering, networking and engaging in social functions. Monthly meetings have allowed the Young Lawyers of Augusta (YLA) to stay connected, enjoy each other's company, and discuss legal news and topics. The Executive Board of the affiliate ensures that the events are always fun and beneficial to the membership. The current board members are Matthew Padgett, president; David Bell, immediate past president; Kelly Williamson, vice president; Libby Watkins, treasurer; with attorneys Matt Andrews, Katherine Tobergate, Stetson Cromer, Tyler Baum and Cole Walker all serving as members-at-large.

This year the YLA supported several local philanthropic entities, specifically including Child Enrichment. YLA members auctioned off tickets to the Art of Chocolate, a local charity event which raises funds and awareness for Child Enrichment, Inc. Additionally, member and past YLA President Garon Muller, once again led the effort to set up an event where the group volunteered at Halloween with a Heart, which provides an opportunity for special needs children to trick or treat in a safe and supportive environment. Great fun was had by all at the event as many attorneys traded in courtroom attire for fun and quirky costumes.

In addition, the group hosted a CLE and river boat cruise planned by past YLA President David Bell. Court of Appeals of Georgia Judge Sara Doyle took time to come and enjoy a night on the Savannah River as well as speak to the group on professionalism. We heard advice on practicing with civility as well as some knowledge on the workings of the Court. There is no better place to learn and obtain CLE than on the Savan-



Matt Padgett



Members of the Young Lawyers of Augusta volunteered at Halloween with a Heart where children with special needs could trick or treat in a safe and supportive environment.



Members of the Young Lawyers of Augusta with Court of Appeals of Georgia Judge Sara Doyle (third from left, green dress) at the CLE and river boat cruise on the Savannah River.

nah River. We are grateful that Judge Doyle took time to come speak to our group.

Another fun event was a monthly Happy Hour, in which the YLA went bowling. During this event we learned that some of our bowling skills are not as adept as our closing arguments. There were also happy hours at local restaurants, breweries and minor league baseball stadiums where the group socialized, networked and mingled monthly. Attendees shared food and some drinks, but more importantly got to know one another better throughout the year outside our regular practices. We have several

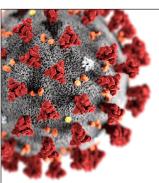
events planned when it is declared safe to begin meeting again. We invite anyone interested in joining the group to come to an event or reach out to any of our members for more information. We can promise that joining the Young Lawyers of Augusta will be good fun and a worthwhile endeavor. YLD

Mitch Snyder recently joined The Minor Firm in Dalton and serves on the YLD Representative Council from the Southern District.

Matt Padgett is an associate with Klosinski Overstreet in Augusta and serves on the YLD Representative Council from the Southern District.



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COVID-19 UPDATES

The State Bar of Georgia and the YLD have resources available to you during the pandemic. Please visit www.gabar.org for more information or email any of the YLD officers.

We're here for you!



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