



# The YLD Review

THE STATE BAR OF GEORGIA | LAWYERS SERVING THE PUBLIC AND THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

Volume 51, Issue 2 Young Lawyers Division Winter 2009

## YLD Officers

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Amy Howell, Decatur  
amyvhowell@gmail.com

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Michael Geoffroy, Covington  
michael.geoffroy@telrite.com

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sjkirijan@southernco.com

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jonpannell@graypannell.com

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josh@joshuabell.net

### Newsletter Editors

Sharri Edenfield, Statesboro  
sharri@ecbcpc.com

Darrell Sutton, Marietta  
dlsutton@baileydavis.com

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## Statewide Service Projects

by Darrell Sutton



YLD members deliver more than 100 teddy bears to children at Asheville's Mission Children's Hospital as part of the Summer Meeting Service Project.

From the Northwest Georgia mountains to the South Georgia plains, young lawyers have answered YLD President **Amy Howell's** call to devise and carry-out service projects benefiting worthwhile causes across the state.

The YLD's motto is "working for the profession and the public." With this in mind, Howell charged the representatives on the YLD Executive Council to devise and implement service projects that benefit charities and other worthwhile causes in their communities. Since that time, young lawyers across the state have individually and collectively sought out causes as diverse as the areas they represent and have developed ways to assist them.

In the Northern District, **Christopher Freeman** coordinated a toy and book drive to benefit Children's Healthcare of Atlanta (CHOA). Due to the generosity of lawyers young and old alike, Freeman was able to deliver 275 books and toys to CHOA in time for the holidays. **Sam Gowin, David Van Sant** and **Caroline Vann** have likewise dedicated their projects to the benefit of children with a pen-pal program, book drive and student mentoring and reading program, respectively.



YLD Executive Committee members assembled tricycles, which were donated to the Greene County Department of Family and Children Services for distribution to local children at their Long Range Planning Retreat.

Meanwhile in the Middle District, **Malia Phillips-Lee** has partnered with the Boys & Girls Club of Thomasville to establish a new Boys & Girls Club branch in Cairo. Husband and wife Middle District Representatives **Ivy** and **Leslie Cadle** partnered with Macon Bar Association YLD President **Sarah White** to enhance an annual holiday toy drive for underprivileged children served by the Macon/Bibb County Department of Family and Children Services (DFACS). The Cadles and White worked to continue a program begun by Director **Carl Varnedoe** that allowed Macon area lawyers the opportunity to sponsor a child in DFACS care and provide him or her with gifts for the holidays. At the same time, **Blake Sharpton** is working with Macon Golf for Kids to market and locate sponsors for its spring golf tournament.

Augusta young lawyers and Southern District Representatives **Jennifer Campbell** and **Matt Duncan** have partnered on a prom dress drive for underprivileged high school girls in the Augusta area. Over the next several months, Campbell and Duncan will be collecting gently-used dresses from local lawyers. In early spring they will distribute the dresses to girls who otherwise cannot afford one so that they can enjoy their high school proms.

Throughout its history, the YLD has been dedicated to serving causes in communities throughout the state. These projects and the many others being implemented by the members of the YLD Executive Council will ensure that the YLD's tradition of service continues. Anyone interested in a list of the Executive Council service projects or information on how to help with them can contact YLD Director **Mary McAfee**, marym@gabar.org.

Join the YLD for its 2010  
Signature Fundraiser  
"Black tie and Blackjack."

Details on page 7.



## From the President

# Tis the Season

by Amy V. Howell

The holiday season is a time for expressing appreciation and gathering for festive celebration. This year, I am grateful for many blessings. With respect to the YLD, I am grateful for the YLD Board of Directors, Representatives and Committee Chairs whose leadership and hard work I have had the privilege to observe firsthand since I took office back in June. Their dedication to the program of work outlined at the beginning of this Bar year has reaffirmed the YLD's commitment to community service. I appreciate the opportunity to work with a group of young lawyers that I refer to as the YLD Superstars. If you don't already know their names, you will because they are exceptional lawyers and leaders.

I am also grateful for a wonderful support network at home, work and in the State Bar. I am confident that the success of the YLD is based upon each of their contributions. I am especially thankful to be able to work on projects and

programs that have the potential to positively impact the profession and Georgia. This issue provides examples of the hard work and achievements by our members in support of citizens throughout Georgia.

In this issue there is a page dedicated to acknowledging those who are helping to sponsor and host the Signature Fundraiser. The Signature Fundraiser is the one time of the year the YLD gets out in our finest and mingles among the casino tables for a good cause. I appreciate the support of our sponsors and host committee of this new project and look forward to a really fun evening to celebrate with meaning. Even if you are not listed on that page you can support the PIIP by just buying a ticket and showing up for some fun. The Signature Fundraiser gives all of us a chance to extend the holiday celebrations while continuing to party with a purpose. I hope I will see you there.

# Listening to Our Leader: An Interview with YLD President Amy Howell

by Michael Geoffroy

YLD President-Elect **Michael Geoffroy** recently sat down with YLD President **Amy Howell** to find out more about what makes our leader tick. The following is an excerpt from their conversation.

**Question:** What attracted you to child advocacy?

**Answer:** I've always enjoyed working with kids. I even taught school for a couple of years prior to attending law school. While teaching, I observed some of the challenges that my students faced and I became interested in how the law could better serve children.

**Question:** Who is your all time favorite YLD President? (and don't say **Chuck Driebe**, because he is mine!)

**Answer:** Of course, I don't know all of the past presidents, but of those that I witnessed in action, there are many that I am trying to emulate and follow their examples. They all had different strengths and are all terrific people who I have enjoyed getting to know. But I can't give you just one name.

**Question:** The fourth YLD Leadership Academy class recently graduated. What mark has the Leadership Academy left on the YLD and what have you seen Academy graduates accomplish?

**Answer:** These graduates are accomplished lawyers who have left more of a mark in terms of changing our leadership in both the YLD and the Big Bar than perhaps any other group in the YLD. In the past year alone, we've seen graduates elected to the Big Bar's Board of Governors, increased YLD participation throughout the state and the reputation of young lawyers as leaders within the Bar has been greatly enhanced.

**Question:** You are the ninth female YLD President, yet there has been only one female Big Bar President. Why do you believe there has been so little diversity among the leadership of the Big Bar and what can the YLD do to help?

**Answer:** The YLD can continue to emphasize diverse participation among its membership and leadership that engages Bar members beyond the YLD. I'm not sure how to evaluate the need to increase diversity for the Big Bar. I do, however, have a better understanding of why the YLD has been able to make strides toward that goal. The YLD has not only adopted a philosophical belief in the need for diversity but has also put that belief into action in our programs, such as with the Leadership Academy and making sure our committees and programs fully represent and serve all of our membership. The time frame for being a member of the YLD requires us to constantly infuse new leadership, new ideas and grow to reflect our membership.

**Question:** How are you trying to serve and include young lawyers from outside Atlanta in the YLD?

**Answer:** This year our Executive Council members, who are from each of the state's three Federal Judicial Districts, are required to implement a service project in their district. We are engaging members from across the state to be leaders not only on a state level, but also in their communities. It is my hope that as the YLD leaders implement their projects, new young lawyers who have not had the chance to become involved in the YLD will take the opportunity become involved and to strengthen the presence and participation of the YLD throughout the state.

**Question:** What would people be most surprised to learn about you?

**Answer:** I love to laugh. I am a huge fan of silly comedies like *Talladega Nights: The Ballad of Ricky Bobby*. I am fairly shy and not a big fan of the limelight.

**Question:** If you could wave a magic wand and change one thing about the YLD or our profession, what would it be?

**Answer:** I wish we could do a better job of dispelling perceptions about who is involved in the YLD. I wish I could get each young lawyer to come to one YLD event, meeting or service project because I think their preconceived notions would be dispelled if they did.

**Question:** How do you handle the responsibilities of a career, professional involvement and a family?

**Answer:** I think that as a working mother I don't do anything different than a working father or parent who balances their career and personal life. My involvement certainly requires a sacrifice in terms of the amount of time that I might be away, but we are also a family that believes in service. I couldn't imagine it any other way.



# YLD Summer and Fall Meeting Highlights

by Sharri Edenfield

The scenic Grove Park Inn in Asheville, N.C., played host to the YLD Summer Meeting on the weekend of Aug. 27-30. YLD members from across the state traveled to the North Carolina foothills to gather, discuss YLD business and enjoy each other's company and the breathtaking views.

The meeting began on Thursday night with an open-air welcome reception sponsored by Esquire Court Reporting. Members were able to enjoy delicious food, cocktails, including wine bottled especially for the Grove Park Inn, and conversation with each other and sponsors against the backdrop of the Blue Ridge Mountains. YLD meeting regulars were excited to welcome and get to know several YLD members attending their first meeting. This was also the first opportunity for many of the newly-elected Executive Council members to discuss the service projects they had begun in their respective districts.

On Friday, members were able to attend CLEs on different topics presented by meeting sponsors BAY Mediation and Merrill Corporation. Friday afternoon brought free time to explore the city of Asheville and its surrounding area. Many members toured the Biltmore House and its winery, while others enjoyed the amenities of the Grove Park Inn, especially its world-renowned spa and golf course. That evening, everyone enjoyed a dinner on the Inn's patio overlooking the mountains and resort.

The YLD business meeting was held Saturday morning. Executive Council members in attendance presented information on the service projects they are coordinating in their districts and YLD President **Amy Howell** emphasized how important community service is to the YLD. To that end, Howell discussed the Signature Fundraiser, "Black tie & Blackjack," and how it will fund the newly-created Public Interest Internship Program (PIIP). The PIIP will provide law students and unemployed new lawyers with public interest legal jobs around the state and cost of living stipends.

On Saturday afternoon, members went to the Mission Children's Hospital to visit with the young patients. Accompanied by Major Bear, the Grove Park Inn's mascot, they presented the children and their families with bears that were collected in a teddy bear drive. The meeting concluded with dinner in downtown Asheville.

The YLD Fall Meeting took place in Georgia's first city, Savannah, the weekend of Oct. 16-17. Members were excited to stay in the Avia Hotel, a new boutique hotel near the excitement of City Market and River Street.

On Friday night, members attended a dinner held at The Chart House on River Street. After the meal, YLD members and their guests toured River Street and City Market and their many attractions. Later, old friends were reunited and new friends were made in Avia's hospitality suite.



(L-R) Melissa and Chris Freeman mingle with Anna and Blake Sharpton at the YLD Summer Meeting in Asheville, N.C.

On Saturday morning, members were treated to a CLE by **Spalding Nix**, "Art Theft: The Art of the Steal." Nix was entertaining and kept the group fascinated with stories of art heists from around the world. The business meeting followed the CLE. Plans for the Signature Fundraiser and the remainder of the Bar year were discussed at length.

Saturday afternoon, members toured the Savannah Area Family Emergency (S.A.F.E.) Shelter and dropped off donations of toys and \$1000 check. Everyone was then free to spend time sightseeing or watching football before the night's activities. A chillier-than-expected Saturday evening brought with it an oyster roast and canon firing at Old Fort Jackson on the coast. The cooler temperatures had many members looking forward to the Spring Meeting in Key West, Fla., scheduled for April 29 - May 2, 2010.



(L-R) Marquetta Bryan, Renee Little and Tippi Burch enjoy dinner at the Fall Meeting.



YLD Members from across the state dropped off toys and a check to a local Savannah Area Family Emergency (S.A.F.E.) Shelter. Back Row (L-R) Mari C. Chambers, YLD President-Elect Michael Geoffroy, Capt. Claire McCluskey, Quentin Marlin, Jennifer Campbell, Billy Norse and Jacob Masee. Front Row (L-R) Melissa Durand, Cheryl Branch and YLD President Amy Howell.



# Committee Updates

## Community Service Projects Committee

by *Jennifer Blackburn*

The YLD Community Service Projects Committee kicked-off what is sure to be a very busy year with cocktails and conversation, “Irish style,” at RiRa Irish Pub on Oct. 14. Despite the rainy weather, there was an incredible turnout and everyone who attended had a good time. More importantly, \$150 was raised for Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta and several bags of food were collected for the Atlanta Community Food Bank.

The committee’s Canned Foods and Tote Bag Drive, chaired by **Nicole Leet**, was a huge success. Several car loads of canned foods and tote bags were collected over a two-week period to be distributed to those in need. The Atlanta Community Food Bank was extremely appreciative of the YLD’s efforts and generosity. In light of the tough economic times and recent flooding, the canned foods were needed more than ever. The tote bags will be donated to the Fulton County DFACS for use by the children it serves. The committee thanks everyone that organized a collection site and all those who donated.

Be on the lookout for e-mails about the committee’s upcoming events. If you would like to be added to the e-mail distribution list or get more information on the committee, please contact **Jennifer Blackburn** at [jennifer.blackburn@troutmansanders.com](mailto:jennifer.blackburn@troutmansanders.com) or **Sumeet Shah** at [sumeets@listerholt.com](mailto:sumeets@listerholt.com).

## Supreme Cork

by *Tyler Browning*

On Oct. 1, the YLD Family Law Committee held its fourth annual Supreme Cork benefit at 5 Seasons Brewing Company-Westside. Guests enjoyed a specially brewed beer, “ALEmony,” in the perfect fall weather on the patio overlooking the Atlanta skyline. The wine tasting and silent auction raised nearly \$19,000 to benefit The Bridge, a treatment center, school and residential facility for abused and troubled adolescents and their families. Thanks to all the committee members, sponsors (see list below), donors and guests who made this event a success!



(L-R) Katie Connell, Beth Pann (development director at The Bridge), Katie Rohr, Tyler Browning and Gillian O’Nan at the Supreme Cork benefit at the 5 Seasons Brewing Company–Westside.

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## The Minorities in the Profession Committee: Moving Forward with Boldness and Purpose

by *Marquetta J. Bryan*



(L-R) JaDawnya Butler, Janet Scott, Josh Bell, Amy Howell and Marquetta Bryan at 11 Stories after MIPC’s first meeting of the Bar year.

From a second floor boardroom at Atlanta’s Glenn Hotel, **Justin E. Giboney**, a solo practitioner, entrepreneur and 2008 graduate of the YLD’s Leadership Academy, charged the standing room only crowd of attorneys attending the Minorities in the Profession Committee’s (MIPC) first meeting of the 2009-10 Bar year to leave the comforts of complacency and ordinariness behind and serve their communities and their practices with boldness. After the meeting, the Glenn Hotel hosted a rooftop happy hour at its renowned 11 Stories and held a raffle for a one night hotel stay.

The tone set by MIPC’s first meeting is indicative of the ambitious and exciting year that it has planned for its members. MIPC is focused on developing programs to increase the opportunities, access and abilities of young minority attorneys, as well as service to the community. MIPC will continue its signature “pipeline initiatives,” including law school information panels at Georgia’s law schools and its ABA award winning program, “If You Can See It, You Can Be It,” youth legal education project for third and fourth grade students.

MIPC also has substantive programming in store for practicing attorneys. One program is the Pathways Series, which provides attorneys with information related to professional advancement. The Pathways Series is devoted to ensuring that MIPC’s membership has the training and support that they need to be successful in their practices and to remain connected and informed about opportunities within the profession. In October, MIPC hosted its “Pathways to Partnership” program at the law offices of Morgan and Morgan, which featured a diverse panel of young lawyers. Other programs in the Pathways series include: Pathways to Public Service, Politics, Solo Practice, Judiciary and the Legislature.

# Thanks!

to the State Bar Corporate Sponsors:

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**1 Gavel**  
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## Litigation Committee

by *Christopher Abrego*

On Nov. 5, the Litigation Committee held its Fall Kick-Off Happy Hour. Over 40 young lawyers attended the event, which was held at New York Prime in Buckhead. Committee members and guests enjoyed cocktails and appetizers and socialized well into the night. The committee gives special thanks to its sponsors for a great event: Regency-Brentano Certified Court Reporters, Bay Mediation and Eagle Investigative Services.

The committee has a number of upcoming events, including the 3rd Annual War Stories Lunch and Learn Series and the spring Trial & Error CLE, as well as its spring and summer Happy Hours. The committee holds general membership meetings the last Wednesday of every month at the State Bar in Atlanta. Please contact committee co-chairs **Christopher Abrego** at [cabrego@wznd.net](mailto:cabrego@wznd.net) or **Whitney Mauk** at [wmauk@bentlaw.com](mailto:wmauk@bentlaw.com) if you would like to get involved or learn more.



Mark your calendars for the  
**2010 YLD Spring Meeting**  
April 29 - May 2, 2010  
Key West, Fla.

The Pier House  
YLD Rate: \$249/night  
plus taxes

Events include a welcome  
reception, dinner, YLD  
general session & CLE.

## Events Around the State



(L-R) Jonathan Poole, Matt Shaw, Tracee Benzo, Brianna Williams and Aamir Kazi at the Leadership Academy Luncheon on Dec. 17.



(L-R) Canon Hill and Sarah E. White at the YLD Fall Meeting at Old Fort Jackson.



(L-R) John Bush, Josh Bosin and Irma Espino at the YLD Holiday Party.



(L-R) Panelists Rob Teilhet, Stacey Evans and Jason Shepherd address the members of the Legislative Affairs Committee and share their experiences seeking public office.

# Ten Strategies for Job Searching

by *Rebecca S. Vandiver*

Gone are the days in which one phone call to a recruiter landed you an interview and a new position. In today's market, a systematic approach coupled with a lot of effort are needed to make a career transition. Try these 10 strategies if you are looking to make a transition in your career:

## 1. Amp Up Your Research

Resist the temptation to be so focused on billable work that you do not make time for industry reading. An easy and free way to keep up is to set up RSS news feeds on key topics or employers you are targeting. If you have a Google or Yahoo! e-mail account, the articles will be sent to your homepage in real time.

## 2. Network, Network, Network

The saying "location, location, location" is to the purchase of real estate as "network, network, network" is to job hunting. The most common mistake young lawyers make is to only network with people that they think might be hiring. Nothing is more off-putting than the sense someone is only contacting you to ask what you can do for them. When making a connection, do not broach the topic of job leads in an introductory e-mail. A more effective approach is to schedule a lunch or informational phone call to find out about your contact's career and ask for any advice he or she may have.

## 3. Hire a Professional to Review Your Resume

Do not use a "one-resume-fits-all" approach when applying to widely varying positions. It is time to update your resume and have it reviewed professionally. Do not assume your lawyer friends will review your resume with the same attention to detail of a professional resume writer.

## 4. Do Not Job Search Alone

Today, it is almost impossible to find out about open positions without inside information. Young lawyers are often surprised to learn that most jobs are found through tangential contacts. Although someone may not know of an opportunity at the precise moment you ask, they may hear of something later. Take the time to follow up. Something as simple as sending an article with a note can go a long way in helping someone keep you in mind for potential job openings.

## 5. Attend Seminars

Seminars are a great way to introduce yourself to people in your field outside your typical network. If you are making a big career transition, networking at seminars will give you a great platform to practice your "personal" sales pitch.

## 6. Don't Wait for the Perfect Job Opening to Arise

If you want to transition fields, flexibility is key. Realize that you may need to accept a position that is not ideal in order to move your career forward. Think outside the box and brainstorm ways to get experience now.

## 7. Use Social Networking Sites to Expand Your Network

Use LinkedIn to search for contacts you want to meet and to see if you share any mutual connections. Improve your profile by adding a description of what you do and highlight your expertise. Join interest groups and contribute to online discussions. Ask a colleague to add a recommendation to your profile for potential employers and clients to view.

## 8. Get Feedback

Gone are the days when "winging it" in an interview is acceptable. Practice interviewing with a trusted contact and get as much feedback as you can on your interviewing skills. If you receive a rejection letter or phone call, politely ask for information that led to their decision. Try to address these concerns going forward.

## 9. Measure Your Progress by What You Have Learned

Job searching today is a marathon, not a sprint. A lot of these strategies are effective in the long term. Just because none of your new connections has yet produced a job lead does not mean that you have failed to make progress. Measure your progress in how much you have expanded your network and what you have learned.

## 10. Give Back

Finally, if you are job searching and frustrated, see what volunteer opportunities are out there to help others. Sometimes opportunities appear and new contacts are made when we take a break from ourselves and give back to the world.

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# A Short Guide for Managing Law Office Finances

by *Natalie R. Kelly*

Managing money in a new law practice can be daunting, especially for those lawyers who consider themselves "mathematically challenged." Often it's not so much the actual tracking of money that's the concern; it's how to get client payments, and how to make the most of income when there are so many expenses. Additionally, there is sometimes confusion about what records you are required to keep. To help, below is a short guide on managing a law office's money business.

## 1. Plan Ahead

Use a cash flow budget projection tool (accounting software or a simple spreadsheet) to project your normal operating expenses and potential income for your first six to 12 months in practice. You should have an annual budget process and you should get into the habit of analyzing your financial statements (income and expenses) every month.

## 2. Keep Track (Accounting)

Shop around to find a bank with which you are comfortable doing business. Some banks will waive the setup and maintenance fees for professional accounts. You will need to set up an operating and a trust account for tracking client funds, payments from clients and money for operating your practice. Trust accounts are generally required for all lawyers. Contact the Georgia Bar Foundation about exemptions. The operating account holds funds you have earned and any capital that you might have used to "seed" your business. Be sure to reconcile it monthly and keep a check on all account transactions on at least a weekly basis. In a larger law office it may be more prudent to set-up a designated payroll account to handle firm compensation.

## 3. Get Paid

Bill up front and often. Getting a large retainer up front or using fixed or flat rates may prove to be more practical than spending valuable resources on a lengthy collection process. Monthly bills

and accounting for amounts owed on at least a biweekly basis should be the norm for your business. A good rule of thumb for any software you use is to have the system enabled to generate a bill at any time, and also to know exactly what's owed by any client at any time.

## 4. Pay Out Less

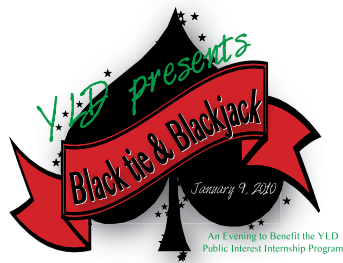
Examine expenses closely and work to save where you can. Do not sign up for long-term or monthly services or products without a written budget for the upcoming year in hand. Look to cut costs by using free and low-cost services and products like the State Bar's free online legal research product, Casemaker, instead of more expensive products.

## 5. Pay Taxes

Look for a good accountant early on in your new practice to help with year-end tax processing and other advanced financial issues. If you don't plan to do your own reconciliation or financial statement reviews, hire someone to do this for you monthly. Quarterly tax submission is common for law practices, so keep this in mind when you start out.

This short guide can help with some of the key things involved in managing your law office finances and additional, individualized assistance for managing your money business is available through the State Bar's Law Practice Management program.





# Please join

the Young Lawyers Division of the State Bar of Georgia for our Signature Fundraiser, **Black tie & Blackjack**, to benefit the

## Public Interest Internship Program

Saturday, Jan. 9, 2010 • 8 o'clock until midnight  
King & Spalding • 1180 Peachtree St. • 16th Floor

Tickets \$125 at the door; \$100 in advance  
\$85 for advance registration of Public Interest, Government or Transitional Attorneys

Black Tie Optional • Silent Auction • Casino Tables • Raffle •  
Hors d'oeuvres • Open Bar • Live DJ

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### For tickets or other information, contact:

**Mary McAfee**, YLD director, marym@gabar.org or 404-527-8778

**Elizabeth Fite**, event co-chair, efite@swflp.com

**Meredith Wilson**, event co-chair, meredithlwilson@gmail.com

# Notification of Elections

## YLD Officers 2010-11 Bar Year

In accordance with Article VII, Section 4 (a) of the YLD Bylaws, the following shall serve as Notification of Elections for YLD Officers for the 2010-11 Bar year. The positions of President-Elect, Treasurer and Secretary shall be filled by election by mail-out ballot.

You must be a YLD Member (as defined in the YLD Bylaws, but not an Honorary or Associate Member) at the time of the election to be eligible to serve as an Officer of the Young Lawyers Division.

There are two ways for a person to be nominated as a candidate for a YLD Officer position:

- The Nominating Committee (listed below) shall nominate one or more candidates for each office at its meeting on Jan. 8, 2010. You are invited to submit recommendations to members of the Nominating Committee prior to its meeting.
- Nominations may be made in the form of a nominating petition signed by two YLD Members submitted to the Election Committee (listed below) no later than March 4, 2010. The nominating petition must be in the form prescribed in Article VII, Section 5(b) of the YLD Bylaws, which may be found at [www.gabar.org/public/pdf/yld/yldbylaws.pdf](http://www.gabar.org/public/pdf/yld/yldbylaws.pdf).

The Election Commencement Date shall be April 2, 2010. Ballots will be mailed on this day to all YLD members. Members may return these paper ballots or use the code number on the ballot to vote online. Ballots must be cast by 11:59 p.m. on May 3, 2010. Election results will be available on the State Bar of Georgia website.

### Nominating Committee

Michael Geoffroy (chair) (Northern)  
Jennifer Blackburn (Northern)  
Tommy Duck (Middle)  
Robert Hughes (Southern)  
Ty Morrison (Northern)  
Ben Perkins (Southern)  
Amy Stone (Middle)  
Caroline Vann (Northern)

### Election Committee

Michael Geoffroy (chair) (Northern)  
Khurram Baig (Northern)  
Molly Barrett (Northern)  
Josh Dickinson (Middle)  
Renee Little (Northern)  
Ben Perkins (Southern)  
Andy Ramay (Middle)  
Christopher Smith (Southern)

Members of these committees may be reached at their contact information found in the member directory on the Bar's website at [www.gabar.org](http://www.gabar.org).



## Editor's Block

# He Said

by Darrell Sutton

Irresponsibility is roaming the halls of the state's law schools. It permeates a replica of Independence Hall in Macon and a law school just off Herty Field in Athens. It runs wild in Atlanta, from Decatur Street north to West Peachtree Street and east to Clifton Road. With this irresponsibility comes the negative effects on the population of young lawyers here and throughout the nation.

Lawyer employment is a two-sided equation. On the one side—the supply side—are the graduates produced by law schools. On the other side—the demand side—are the jobs available to those graduates. Ideally, the two sides are equal, and one adjusts for the other when they are not.

It should not be a surprise to anyone reading this column that the demand side of this equation has

suffered significantly in the past year. According to the *National Law Journal* survey of the nation's 250 largest law firms, the last year saw a 4 percent decline in the number of lawyers employed by these firms—from 131,928 to 126,669. More alarming for the young lawyer, the total number of associate jobs shrank by 8.7 percent (from 67,648 to 61,733), and 42 percent of the 2009 first year associate class—another 2,800 lawyers—had their start date deferred. This decrease in demand is compounded by the number of older attorneys who would have left the practice but continue to work because of the uncertain economic times or an unacceptable decrease in their retirement accounts.

All of this, creates a backlog of otherwise-employable young attorneys. It results in an increase in the competition for not only jobs at law firms, but also for public interest positions and judicial clerkships. Never mind that the number of the latter two positions has also declined in the past year because of cuts in funding and budgets. The young lawyer unemployment or underemployment situation is so severe that the ABA's Commission on the Impact of the Economic Crisis on the Profession and Legal Needs estimates that it will take six years for this backlog to disappear.

With such significant losses in the demand side of the equation, one would expect to see a corresponding decline in the supply side. This is where, I believe, the irresponsibility of law schools comes into play. Instead of decreasing the number of law students admitted and enrolled in law school to correspond with the declining needs of the legal profession, the 2008-09 academic year saw law schools nationwide increase their total enrollment by more than 2,000 students from the 2007-08 school year. Where will these 2,000 additional law students go for employment when there is an existing six year surplus of attorneys worsened by the loss or deferral of nearly 9,000 young lawyer jobs at the big firms alone?

Law students and new graduates undoubtedly bear some blame for their plight. They must be aware of the state of the legal job market now and what it is expected to be over the next several years. But in reality, how many 20-somethings entering law school have this foresight or the ready access to the statistics that bear out this dramatic surplus? I did not, but I know that the law schools and those who run them do have this crucial information. How, with any level of responsibility to the profession and those whose tuition they accept, can these schools increase the numbers of students admitted and enrolled when the availability of jobs to those being admitted and those they have already educated has fallen so dramatically? Can they not, at the very least, keep supply constant?

Young lawyers across the nation and this state are facing unprecedented economic problems. When these young lawyers take a step back to assess who is responsible for their trouble, they should turn at least a portion of their attention to those who run the hallowed halls and classrooms from whence they came. Now, more than ever, we have to be wary of those who control supply as much as we are of those in charge of demand.

# She Said

by Sharri Edenfield

I have had a lot of odd jobs during my life and each of them has taught me something different. My first job was at age 13, when I had the incredibly important job of stocking office supplies, answering the phone, making sure the soft drinks and coffee did not run out and anything else that I could do to help out at my dad's office. This job taught me many lessons I still draw on today about working in a law office. I was also a telemarketer for a week during college, which taught me I didn't like to sell things over the phone, no matter what it was or to whom. (I never liked to sell Girl Scout cookies either, so I should've known that my "telemarketing career" was doomed from the beginning.) I stuffed 40,000 envelopes for my hometown County Tax Commissioner over a holiday vacation in high school, which taught me that I definitely wanted to get a higher education.

The people I have met have made all of the jobs that I have had memorable, even the jobs that I would sometimes prefer to forget. Since it is the holiday season, I feel it is only fair to let you know that I was once Santa's elf. Yep, that's right: I wore red tights and pointy shoes and took pictures of kids sitting on Santa's knee at the Statesboro Mall when I was a freshman in high school. For those of you who are not familiar with the Statesboro Mall, it's not a large place and the locals generally call it "the Small." I spent roughly six weeks dressed-up as an elf, taking pictures of kids brought to the Small to meet Santa Claus, whose real name was Dudley. He was a really nice guy, whose full-time job was as an accountant; however, he went by the nickname "Dud." Think about that one for a second. I'm not making any accountant jokes. I swear.

My "elf experience" still sticks out in my mind, largely because of the people I met. There were kids who were terrified of Santa Claus and who would scream when their mothers would try to get them close enough for a quick picture. Other kids were more in awe of Santa and were struck speechless. Still other children were so excited to see Santa that they could not wait to give him their lists and enjoyed every bit of their short visit. One child got so excited that he wet his pants while sitting on Santa's knee, an event which I like to call the "original wardrobe malfunction." Santa Dud had to go back to the North Pole after that particular visit.

Another lesson that sticks with me from my elf experience is seeing the faces of the children whose parents could not afford to have their children's pictures made with Santa. It was also heartbreaking to see children who had dressed up in their "Sunday Best" for their Santa pictures, but their best clothes were riddled with holes and damaged with stains. Remembering these people reminds me that problems I think are huge are really quite small in the grand scheme of things. These are also the same people that the newly-created Public Interest Internship Program (PIIP) is designed to benefit.

On Jan. 9, 2010, the YLD Signature Fundraiser, "Black tie and Blackjack," will be held to raise funds for the PIIP. The funds raised for this program will enable unemployed or underemployed young lawyers to be placed in public interest jobs throughout the state as well as to provide a stipend to them while working there. I hope that your holiday spirit will continue into the New Year, and you'll join me at the YLD Signature Fundraiser to help support PIIP and the people it will benefit. I might even wear my red elf tights and pointy shoes!



## Editor's Block