

State Bar of Georgia Young Lawyers Division

THE YLD REVIEW

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Working for the Profession and the Public



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20 Percent Tax Deduction in April? | 3

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From the President

Opportunities to Bloom This Spring With the YLD



**Rizza
O'Connor**

The Bar year runs from July 1 to June 30 each year. Thus, my time as president has passed the midway point. In the past eight months, I observed our young lawyers go through many highs like starting families, being promoted to partner or winning big cases. Conversely, I have witnessed young lawyers go through hardship and heartbreak like losing a parent or struggling with the responsibilities of being a new lawyer.

We all recognize that this stage of life as young lawyers can be challenging. On top of personal hurdles, we as young lawyers have to balance the stresses of a demanding profession. Bar involvement can help with that balance. What I have seen the YLD do best these past eight months is support and encourage young lawyers both professionally and personally. Bar involvement frequently demonstrates the warmest and most human element of our profession. I will share some of what I have seen our members do well in this regard. As president, I could not be more proud of their efforts.

Young lawyers continue to create and foster programs that encourage and make young lawyers better. With more than 30 YLD committees, there are multiple events taking place each week. There have been CLEs, panels, and Lunch and Learn series taking place on a variety of topics like educational rights for students with disabilities, navigating your first 20 years in real estate practice, and how to run and start your own law firm. Young lawyers are learning important skills that will aid them in their particular area of practice. If there is not a committee that supports a particular interest, young lawyers are creating committees to meet the need. For example, this past January, young lawyers Baylie Fry and Toby Morgan created the YLD Health Law Committee, and in

March, Tina Lute and Ivy White formed the YLD Workers' Compensation Committee.

Young lawyers have also made a difference in the lives of those who need it most: those individuals who are indigent and without adequate resources and those affected by personal tragedy. Last year, young lawyers devoted many hours to take on pro bono cases for those in the 11 counties devastated by Hurricane Michael. Young lawyers have also served first responders with preparation and execution of basic estate planning documents through the Wills Clinic. The YLD will hold Wills Clinics this year in Macon, Vidalia and Atlanta.

Lastly, what young lawyers have arguably demonstrated best is collegiality through participation in Bar activities all over the state. We had the Summer Meeting in Savannah, Fall Meeting in Greensboro and committee meetings outside of Atlanta. We also have 10 affiliate YLD organizations like Columbus, Macon and Augusta that increase the YLD's reach. I have seen young lawyers get together for tacky Christmas sweater parties, haunted ghost tours, yoga, kickboxing and the most epic game of kickball at the Fall Meeting. The connections and friendships that form from these networking events will hopefully last throughout our careers.

As we go into the last half of the Bar year, the YLD will continue to serve the profession, public and each other. I want to highlight a few of the YLD's bigger events coming up and hope you will join us.

Signature Fundraiser

April 13 at Terminal West in Atlanta. This year's beneficiary is Lawyers for Equal Justice. The event will feature decades themes from the 80s, 90s and 00s. The evening will include fun games, a live band, dancing, food and open bar. For more information, visit www.gabar.org/signaturefundraiser.

YLD Spring Meeting

April 25-29 in Washington, D.C. The weekend will feature a CLE about the merging of politics and the law with the general counsel from the Kemp for Governor campaign. The weekend will also include the General Session meeting and fun activities such as a food tour, nighttime monument tour and a comedy show. Register online at www.gabar.org.

Build a Better Georgia Day

May 4 in Atlanta, Macon and Savannah. The YLD Community Service Projects Committee will facilitate a Habitat for Humanity house build in each federal judicial district in Georgia on the same day. At least 10 volunteers are needed in each location. Lunch and T-shirt

provided. More information at www.gabar.org/calendar/eventdetail.cfm?id=75566.

National High School Mock Trial Championship

May 16-18 in Athens, Georgia. Championship high school mock trial teams from across the nation and some from across the world will be in Georgia to compete at the highest level. The YLD is looking for volunteer lawyers to serve as judges. CLE credit is available. Visit athens2019.nhsmtc.org for more information.

I hope you will come to a YLD event near you soon and see for yourself all the benefits of Bar involvement. YLD

Will Solo Practitioners Qualify for a 20 Percent Tax Deduction in April?



Conner Watts

With the Tax Day just around the corner, it is that time of the year where many practitioners are thinking about taxes.

One of the provisions of interest to the solo practitioner will be the new “QBI Deduction” which is provided for in the new Section 199A of the Tax Code. Under this new provision, certain business-owning taxpayers can deduct 20 percent of their net “qualified business income”¹ from their personal, adjusted gross income.

This will be in addition to the increased standard deduction, so “Married Filing Jointly” taxpayers, for example, will be eligible for the new \$24,000 standard deduction and will also get the 20 percent QBI Deduction. Assuming the solo practitioner and her spouse were diligent in otherwise paying estimated taxes throughout the year, the QBI Deduction has the potential to pro-



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vide self-employed practitioners with a substantial refund.

There are several conditions the tax-paying-attorney must fulfill to receive this deduction. The legal profession is one of several fields specifically excluded from the deduction under certain circumstances, so careful analysis with a tax advisor is recommended when a lawyer claims it. Following are some general rules affecting attorneys.

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From the Editors

Mentorship

**Audrey Bergeson
& Baylie Fry**

This issue of *The YLD Review* focuses on mentorship. In keeping with this theme, we are taking the opportunity to share some advice on mentoring from the perspective of a mentee, and provide you examples of two mentorship programs established by sections of the State Bar of Georgia.

Mentorship Advice: From the Mentee Perspective

- Think of mentorship broadly. Mentorship does not have to be a long-term, monogamous relationship. In today's busy world, it can be helpful to have multiple mentors. You can have a mentor that practices in the same or different area of law than you, one that practices in the same or different law firm or setting, or one of each. Each will bring something different to the table, and you will have more than one person from whom to seek advice when you need it.
- Find a mentor. Think about your network. Who can you call on from law school, work, a past job, or even a past career? Consider the type of advice you're seeking. You may need advice on a particular case or transaction—this advice should come from a mentor practicing in the specific area of law; you may need career advice—this should come from a trusted confidant that likely knows how to get where you would like to go; or you may need personal advice—this should come from a mentor that you feel comfortable sharing personal information with (and likely would not be someone who works in the same law firm or company as you).
- Be an equal participant in the relationship. You will get as much out of a mentor relationship as you are willing to put into it. Mentor relationships do not develop

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Adulting 101

An Overview of the Labor & Employment Mentorship Academy: An Interview With Jay Rollins



**J. Daniel
Cole**

What is the Mentorship Academy?

The Mentorship Academy is a program that was started in the Labor & Employment Law Section in the summer of 2016 to pair seasoned labor and employment lawyers with those less seasoned. People always assume mentoring means younger lawyers, but that isn't necessarily always the case. The Mentorship Academy has had mentees that have been practicing law for many, many years but are new to labor and employment law or people who went to law school later in life.

What is the driving goal or purpose of the Mentorship Academy in creating these mentoring relationships?

The ultimate goal, at least from my perspective, was to serve three purposes: 1) to foster a sense of community within the Labor & Employment Law Section; 2) to elevate the professional and ethical among attorneys; and 3) ultimately to give mentees a safe place to discuss issues that come up with more experienced attorneys, whether those issues be professional development, firm politics, marketing or any number of areas.

What types of attorneys are served by the Mentorship Academy?

The Mentorship Academy serves 15 mentees with 15 mentors on average each year. We have a plaintiff's side and defense side, as well as union attorneys. Every year, we have also had at least one or more in-house counsel mentor/mentee pair, as well as government attorney pairings.

Not everyone is fortunate to be in a structure that provides or encourages mentorship. What is the importance of finding mentors as a young, or less seasoned, attorney?

Let's face it, the practice of law is not easy, and the concept of doing something on your own is daunting at best. The importance of having someone to turn to, whether it is with regard to substantive law or administrative tasks or simply how to run a practice, it moves the process forward more quickly.

Before the Labor & Employment Law Section Mentorship Academy, there was a smaller program in the Georgia Affiliate of the National Employment Lawyers Association, or NELA-GA. The reason for instituting the program was that people were coming out of law school and could not find a job during the recession and were hanging out a shingle and didn't have the experience to navigate plaintiff's employment practice, much less running a practice. A lot of our NELA-GA mentees were solo practitioners and just needed guidance or someone to go to with basic questions or frustrations of running a practice. The Mentorship Academy grew out of NELA's program to expand mentoring opportunities to labor and employment lawyers statewide, outside of NELA-GA and the plaintiff's employment practice.

Who were your personal mentors?

I always have to start with Judge Duross Fitzpatrick, whom I clerked for. Judge Fitzpatrick was a great judge but, even more so, an awesome person. He taught me the value of the word professionalism and that ours is a profession. I went from Judge Fitzpatrick to working at Fisher Phillips where Don Wright was probably my biggest mentor. When I think of mentors, I don't necessarily think of people I turn to when it comes to the law. I think of people who guided me in my practice and my profession.



James E. "Jay" Rollins

Also, Bert Brannen, who was an instrumental founder of the academy and is on the board, had just made partner when I started at Fisher Phillips. Though we were about the same age, he was terrific as a younger and newer partner with helping me talk through issues.

Given that the Mentorship Academy is now in its third year, how has it fared?

I am biased, but I believe the program has been very, very successful. We have received nothing but very positive feedback from the participants. Every year, we try to add new wrinkles to the program. This year, for the first time, we added a courtroom experience, where mentors and mentees argue points of law before actual federal judges in a federal courtroom. There is at least one other section that has begun its own mentoring program in part because of the success of the Labor & Employment Mentorship Academy. Other sections have also expressed interest in replicating the program. YLD

Judicial Spotlight

Behind the Bench: An Interview With Judge Margaret Head, Cobb County Probate Court



Mandy Moyer

Judge Margaret Head is a fellow young lawyer and currently serving as associate judge of the Cobb County Probate Court, an Article 6 expanded jurisdiction court. She was admitted to the State Bar of Georgia in 2010, having graduated from the University of Alabama and the Walter F. George School of Law at Mercer University. She is the current co-chair of the YLD Litigation Committee, a former co-chair of the YLD Judicial Law Clerk Committee and a 2014 graduate of the YLD's Leadership Academy. Learn more about how the YLD has helped shape her legal career, and her tips for fellow young lawyers.

You recently became a judge in Cobb County. Congratulations! How is it going?

Thank you! It is going well. As with any new job, there is an adjustment period but after seven months, I am finally getting settled.

What has been the biggest learning curve for you as a judge?

There have been a lot of learning curves, but part of the reason that I accepted the appointment was to have those opportunities for learning.

It has been an adjustment to realize the ways lawyers practice law differently. When I took the bench, I assumed that the lawyers practicing before our court took the same approach to practicing law as I did. Instead, I have been reminded that there are instances where different methods can be employed to reach the same goal . . . even though it might not be the same way I would have approached the issue if I were on the other side of the bench. For example, as you know, we

have standard forms in probate court, but not everyone uses them. So I am learning to step back and examine the big picture. I find myself asking whether the pleading as presented is legally sufficient for the petitioner to obtain the relief requested, even though it might not be presented as I would have anticipated or how I would have done it if I were the lawyer in the case. If there's a legal path presented for them to reach their desired outcome, then we're able to move forward. I find this skill particularly helpful when dealing with pro se parties, which is pretty common in our court.

I've also gained additional perspective on how the public interacts with the court system, and the prevalence of the need for the court's assistance within the public. In my short time on the bench, I've noted how close to home—both literally and figuratively—the issues that come before me can be. I've had neighbors appear in our court. I've had the opportunity to resolve difficult situations in families that are just like mine. For me, it has really solidified the importance and significance of the role the court plays in people's everyday lives.

What aspect of taking the bench has been the most rewarding for you?

For me, it's the opportunity to serve and interact with the public. I hear their stories and use the law to help them accomplish their goals. It can be overwhelming trying to navigate the legal system, but I attempt to lessen that uncertainty when they are in my courtroom. Even though I sincerely enjoyed private practice and I do miss it, this work leaves me with the feeling that I am helping my community.

Was becoming a judge always a goal of yours? What attracted you to the idea?

It was not my goal. Generally, I think that most attorneys wonder what it would be like to be a judge at some point in their ca-



Judge Margaret Head

reers, but for me, it was not on my radar. After I was offered the appointed position, I was attracted to the idea of having an opportunity to observe other attorneys and to learn from Chief Judge Kelli Wolk. I knew it would be challenging, and it has been. There are a lot of varied reasons why individuals consider becoming judges—for me, though, it was about the invaluable experience and the legal learning opportunities it presented.

What did your path to the bench look like?

I got my start in the area of probate law, when I accepted a clerkship position with Judge Lynwood Jordan in the Forsyth County Probate Court. I served as his staff attorney and chief clerk for three years, which laid the foundation for what I am doing now. While there, I observed and learned from great attorneys who conducted themselves with professionalism and competency. After a three-year clerkship, I entered private practice at Cohen & Caproni. The attorneys at Cohen & Caproni taught

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overnight, nor are they created out of thin air. You need to be intentional and persistent, but also be understanding and accommodating. The relationship should be meaningful, but convenient. This can mean grabbing coffee or lunch, corresponding via email or text, or jumping on a quick call. Maintaining consistent communication with your mentor will help the relationship last.

- Always give back. If you have been lucky enough to have the benefit of one or many mentors, return the favor. Take time to mentor someone in your circle. Remember how many attorneys met you for coffee or lunch when you were a law student looking for guidance? Make sure to say yes as often as you can when law students or other attorneys seek out your time and advice.

Examples of Mentorship Programs Within the State Bar of Georgia

Labor & Employment Mentorship Academy

Established in 2016, the Labor and Employment Law Section launched its mentoring program to connect less experienced section members with more experienced section members. Applications to apply to the Mentorship Academy are located on the State Bar of Georgia Labor and Employment Law Section webpage. The application deadline to submit a mentee application is Friday, May 31.

Health Law Section Mentorship Program

Established in 2018, the Health Law Section Mentorship Program was created to

connect section members with less than five years' experience in the health care practice with section members with more than 10 years of experience. The program hosts multiple events throughout the year and encourages mentors and mentees to connect on a regular basis. The Health Law Section sends the Mentorship Program application and instructions via email to Health Law Section members in the summer.

For other practice areas, check with local bar associations and other specialty bar organizations to get involved in a formal mentorship program. Of course, you can always connect organically with other lawyers in the profession on your own. Regardless, if you have not already, we encourage you to find a mentor today! YLD



YLD Signature Fundraiser

Decades Game Night
Benefiting Lawyers for
Equal Justice

Saturday,
April 13
7-11 p.m.

@Terminal West

Buy tickets and view sponsorship opportunities
at www.gabar.org/signaturefundraiser

Professional Development

How to Make Small Talk



**Baylie
Fry**



**Tara
Ravi**

Many lawyers are terrified of large (or small) social situations, and as a group, we are not known for our gregarious personalities. Learning the art of small talk is a life vest in a sea of potentially awkward conversations. Whether it is the two-minute lull before everyone joins the conference call, catching up with your work colleagues on a Monday morning or striking up a conversation with a stranger at a networking event, we always should be prepared to initiate, respond to or transition the conversation. One size does not fit all, but here are some practical tips and tricks to making small talk in social settings.



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The Basics: Learn to Be Personable

For some, this comes naturally, but we are not all blessed with the social gene. Read a book (or two or three) on how to be personable. Your goal in any conversation should be to make the other person feel good about themselves and the conversation. This means that you should smile often and not interrupt, talk too much or seem distracted. Intentionally listen to the other person and engage in thoughtful follow-up questions and remarks that are relevant to the discussion. Some highly recommended books that examine these strategies are “How to Win Friends and Influence People” by Dale Carnegie, “The Social Animal” by David Brooks, “The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People” by Stephen Covey and “Emily Post’s: The Etiquette Advantage in Business” by Peter Post, Anna Post, Lizzie Post and Daniel Post Stenning.

Catch Up with Today

We are all guilty of checking our email and text messages first thing when we wake up. Start making it a habit to check the news,

weather and sports. You want to know who lost the big game yesterday, what political crisis happened this morning, and what the weather will be this afternoon. Set up news alerts on your phone to keep you updated on headlines throughout the day. These are all easy talking points to connect with others during conversations (except for politics—that’s just to keep you current).

Read that Pile of Periodicals Stacked on Your Desk

You probably have a pile of magazines, professional association newsletters and articles sitting on your desk or bedside table. If not, start collecting. Don’t get overwhelmed by that pile of paper. Start reading (or skimming). Take two or three of them on your next trip and recycle them one by one as you finish reading. Staying up-to-date in your practice area is certainly helpful, but having a little bit of knowledge in other practice areas will help you connect with other lawyers.

Read Something Different

Take five to 10 minutes to learn something new. Pick up a hobby magazine in an unfamiliar area of interest, e.g., gardening, fishing or knitting. Read spoiler alerts on new and trendy television shows or series that everyone is talking about. Listen to a podcast while commuting. There are always easy and interesting ways to learn something new, and this will be especially helpful in connecting with people across generations.

The New Comfortable is Being Uncomfortable

Finally, get comfortable with being uncomfortable. The moment you stop breaching comfort zones, you stop developing. Always make a point to do something you are not used to doing. This may be a small task like attending your first networking event or getting involved in an organization, or a larger task like running for an elected position or interviewing for a board seat. Regardless of the task, the more you breach comfort zones, the higher your tolerance becomes and the more you develop. YLD

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Exclusions for Legal Practitioners

The QBI Deduction is not available to those in a “specified service trade or business,”² which expressly includes those performing services in the legal field. A lawyer will not be able to take the deduction unless he or she falls into certain income ranges, as defined by the IRS.

For the full 20 percent deduction, the solo’s taxable income³ must be less than \$157,500 (or \$315,000 if Married Filing Jointly). Therefore, a single solo practitioner whose taxable income is \$140,000 will qualify for the full 20 percent QBI Deduction. A solo practitioner who files jointly with her spouse will qualify for the full QBI Deduction if, for example, the total household taxable income is \$280,000.

Phase-outs begin after the attorney (or his or her household) exceeds the \$157,500 threshold (or \$315,000 for Married Filing Jointly). Beyond that limit, the attorney will only be able to take a smaller percentage of the QBI Deduction until the phase-out amount is completely reached (\$207,500 for single taxpayers; \$415,000 for Married Filing Jointly taxpayers).

The code does not suggest that multiple income streams with “specified” service trades or businesses will disqualify a family. For instance, if the solo practitioner is married to a physician who has his/her own medical practice (another specified profession), the family will still qualify for the full QBI Deduction as long as total taxable income is less than \$315,000.

Law Firm Entity-Type

The code allows for the QBI Deduction for individuals, but not corporations.⁴ On its face, this rule may sound as though it disqualifies all solos who have organized their practice under a legal entity. Fortunately, this is not the case.

For most solo practitioners, their law firm is a separate legal entity, such as an LLC or a P.C. For tax purposes, however, the firm is commonly structured as a “disregarded entity” because there is only one member or shareholder. In other words, the solo receives the benefit of limited liability from the business organization, but for ease

of administration and processing, the IRS does not require a separate entity tax return as a result of having only one owner. Accordingly, the IRS will “disregard” the entity, and income will be reported directly on the attorney’s personal tax return, allowing the QBI Deduction to remain open to the “individual” practitioner.

On other occasions, a solo firm is structured as a single-member entity, with tax treatment as an S-corporation. In this scenario, the attorney is able to pay herself a reasonable salary as an employee, on which she must pay self-employment tax. The leftover firm profits can then, in turn, be distributed as a dividend to the attorney, on which no self-employment tax is necessary (because the income is distributed to the practitioner by virtue of an ownership interest in the firm, rather than an employment relationship).

In the S-corporation arrangement, the firm must file its own corporate tax return, yet a solo practitioner may still take the QBI Deduction as an “individual.” S-corporations are considered “pass-through” entities wherein there is no tax imposed at the corporate-level. The net profit reported on the S-corporation tax return will be carried over to the solo’s return and taxed at the individual level.

Potential for a Windfall?

If planned properly, taking the QBI Deduction has the potential to provide the solo practitioner with a larger springtime refund. In a legal market that is ever-increasingly rewarding virtual law offices and solo-hustlers, 20 percent of qualified business income will often be a significant amount.

Nonetheless, careful planning and return preparation should be done with a tax attorney, CPA or federally Enrolled Agent. While the QBI Deduction is available to qualifying taxpayers, all should be aware of new offsetting limitations, such as the capped State and Local Tax Deduction (now limited to a maximum of \$10,000).

At any rate, many will still see substantial savings. An April windfall could provide a nice opportunity to reinvest into the firm, upgrade technology, improve client sys-

tems, launch a local marketing campaign or just take a needed vacation. YLD

Endnotes

1. See 26 U.S.C. § 199(A)(c)(1). “Qualified business income” refers to “the net amount of qualified items of income, gain, deduction, and loss with respect to any qualified trade or business of the taxpayer.”
2. IRC § 199A(d)(1).
3. If the household has any capital gain, such as from the sale of stock, then this amount must be subtracted from taxable income prior to the 20 percent QBI calculation.
4. IRC § 199A(a).

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On Being a Citizen-Solider



**Titus
Nichols**

In normal life, if you were to tell a person they were “squared-away” or called someone a “blue falcon” or even answer a question with “Hooah,”¹ the other person would be completely bewildered. On the other hand, those words make absolute sense to anybody who has ever served in the military. My life in the military began in 2015 when I was commissioned as a Judge Advocate General (JAG) for the Georgia Army National Guard. Since then, I have served in various roles, including military prosecutor, legal advisor, and now as defense counsel. Serving in the Guard means that I have the privilege of serving my country, but it also comes with the added responsibility of maintaining family life and a civilian law practice (or, trying to).

To become a JAG, you must have a law degree, be admitted to practice and be eligible to receive a security clearance. Once accepted, your training will be split into two phases. Phase 1 is six weeks at Fort Benning, Georgia, known as the Direct Commission Course (DCC). The DCC’s purpose is to introduce you to being a soldier and also an officer. You will reside in traditional military-style barracks, learn military protocol and procedure, and also train on military weapon systems. If you fail to meet any of the designated requirements, then you will be “recycled” and will have to retake the entire course. Phase 2 involves 11 weeks at the Judge Advocate Officer Basic Course (JAIBC) in Charlottesville, Virginia. The curriculum for the JAIBC consists of learning and applying military law, running, conducting mock courts-martial, running and running some more. Both phases place a strong emphasis on exercise because physical fitness and readiness is the cornerstone of being a soldier regardless of your role.

After finishing school, you are immediately assigned to a unit in your home state.



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I previously was assigned to an Infantry Brigade where I was a legal advisor to the commander and prosecutor for soldier misconduct. Currently, I serve as defense counsel for the Trial Defense Services whose motto is, “Defending those that defend America.” As a defense counsel, I have represented soldiers accused of everything ranging from drug usage to sexual assault.

What makes serving in the Guard more difficult is that I still have to juggle an active civilian practice and being a family man. More times than I can count, I have had to contact opposing counsel and judges seeking continuances due to being placed on military orders. I have had countless conversations with my wife explaining why we need to rearrange our plans at the last minute. On some days, I can be either a great solider, a great lawyer or maybe a great family man. When I’m really lucky I can be great at two out of the three. Fortunately, my struggle has been made easier because

I have a wife and an employer that support my efforts.

Whether it is for the Guard, Reserves or Active Component, every person who raises their hand and takes the oath to become a JAG will have to follow their own unique path. As a JAG, I have the unique privilege of defending the rights of more than 11,000 soldiers in the Georgia Guard. People may believe that the Guard is only active “one weekend a month, two weeks a year,” but I routinely work nights, weekends and every other day of the year for my clients. My path has involved me being a family man, a private attorney and an officer. It is an evolving path that will be filled with other complexities as my career continues. However, I can truly say that it has been a most satisfying journey. YLD

Endnote

1. Pronounced WHO-AH.

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me how to practice law and the importance of relationships and service to the client. They instilled in me a desire to do things correctly and to work diligently. I was working there when Judge Wolk asked me to become her associate judge. At first, I was not interested because I had worked really hard to build a practice at Cohen & Caproni, and I was starting to see momentum in my efforts to build my business and my skill. Thankfully, Judge Wolk was patient with me, and, ultimately, after seeking counsel from my family, colleagues and mentors, I decided to accept the opportunity. I realized that if I did not take advantage of the opportunity, there would never be a good time to make a change.

What advice would you give to other young lawyers who hope to take a seat behind the bench one day?

I'm not sure I am qualified to give that advice yet! Everyone's path is different, and as I said, there is more than one way to accomplish your goals. That said, I think there's a way to take the pressure off some of the decisions we have to make when we are young and just getting started in our careers. Rather than obsessing over whether a career move is the right and best move for the rest of your life, I would encourage people to consider whether the move they are considering is the best next move for their career. Does the opportunity that you are being offered propel you in the direction of where you desire to go? It doesn't have to

check every single box. Beyond that, I have the regular advice: Do a good job, take pride in your work, be consistent personally and professionally, pay attention to detail, do the right thing even if no one is watching, work hard, serve your community and treat everyone you meet with respect. You've heard it before, but it all bears repeating.

You've consistently been active in the YLD. Did your YLD involvement have any impact on your decision to become a judge, or influence the steps you took on your way to becoming a judge?

The YLD is known as the service arm of the Bar, and the directive of "being of service" to the profession and the community has become an integral part of my life, both personally and professionally. The initiatives of the YLD have helped me see the importance of community involvement and allowed me to give my time to meaningful projects. As young lawyers, we are lucky to have such an active bar association that makes opportunities to serve and connect so readily available. My involvement with the YLD has without a doubt been influential in my path to the bench.

Even now that you have become a judge, you've remained active in the YLD. What advantages does your involvement in the YLD provide you in your current role?

I love the YLD! I will continue to be involved as long as I am eligible, although I am not too far from joining the "O-L-D." The Young Lawyers Division is such a

tremendous resource. There are so many opportunities to learn and improve your craft. The CLEs and seminars help keep me apprised of new developments. I hope to return to private practice one day, so it's also a continuing chance to grow my professional network and friendships. I find the stories and paths of other young lawyers inspiring. After attending a YLD event, whether it is a meeting, networking happy hour, CLE program or community project, I always feel good—I feel inspired to do better and be better. It's motivational for me.

What advice do you have for young lawyers appearing in court? Have you had any realizations since taking the bench that you wish you would have known earlier?

I would tell younger lawyers to relax when you're in the courtroom; although, I realize that is hard to do. You'll be able to respond to questions better, and you will seem more confident. Be the most prepared person in the room. Surround yourself with people smarter and/or more experienced than you are—good, professional and competent mentors. Don't be afraid to ask for help, or admit that you don't know the answer. Most importantly, be kind to everyone you meet because everyone deserves to be treated with respect and dignity. Your reputation for how you treat your clients, clerks, opposing counsel and others will last a lifetime, and a good reputation is invaluable. YLD



RUN FOR THE YLD REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL

Now is the time to throw your hat in the ring! Elections for representatives will occur during the YLD Annual Meeting at The Ritz-Carlton Orlando, Grande Lakes, on Friday, June 7.

The Representative Council is comprised of 10 representatives from each of Georgia's federal judicial districts (Northern, Middle and Southern), two representatives from outside Georgia and 12 members-at-large. Representatives participate in the YLD's five annual membership meetings, provide input

and perspective with respect to YLD activities and are appointed to serve on various YLD committees.

If you are interested in standing for election to the YLD Representative Council, please send a biography or resume to Stephanie Wilson, YLD director, at stephaniew@gabar.org or fax to 404-527-8717 by May 17. For more information about the elections, contact Stephanie Wilson or YLD President-Elect Will Davis at will@nsfamilylawfirm.com.

YLD Calendar of Events

For more information on the events listed below, visit www.georgiayld.org.

APRIL

13 YLD Signature Fundraiser

Terminal West

887-C W. Marietta St. NW | Atlanta, GA

YLD Signature Fundraiser Committee

The event will have a decades theme and will offer opportunities for food, drinks and dancing. The beneficiary of the 2019 YLD Signature Fundraiser is Lawyers for Equal Justice.

22-23 Georgia Legal Food Frenzy

The Georgia Legal Food Frenzy is a two-week food and fund drive competition done in partnership with the Georgia Attorney General, the State Bar and YLD, and the Georgia Food Bank Association. The competition is open to everyone in the legal community to see which law firm, legal organization and corporate/in-house counsel can have the biggest impact on hunger. Everything you raise stays local and benefits the regional food bank that serves your community. Register today at galegalfoodfrenzy.org.

25-29 YLD Spring Meeting

Hamilton Hotel

1001 14th St. NW | Washington, D.C.

Young lawyers will travel to our nation's capitol to enjoy a weekend of networking, sightseeing and professional programming. Some of the highlights include a CLE that discusses the intersection of technology, politics and the law; a nighttime monument tour; an indoor food tour in President Lincoln's cottage; and a comedy show.

27 MBLC Cook-Off

Hammond Park

750 Hammond Springs Drive | Sandy Springs, GA

The Multi-Bar Leadership Council (MBLC) Cook-Off is scheduled for Saturday, April 27, from 12-3 p.m. with the competition starting at 1 p.m. Again this year, there will be three categories for the competition: appetizer, entrée and dessert. Please consider signing up for one of the categories; each category needs to have a minimum of four teams but no more than five. Email your request ASAP to Denisha Wise at dwise@atlantabar.org to reserve your spot.



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MAY

4 Build a Better Georgia Day

Atlanta, Macon and Savannah

YLD Community Service Projects Committee

Young lawyers in each federal judicial district in Georgia will build a Habitat for Humanity house simultaneously in Atlanta, Savannah and Macon.

16-18 National High School Mock Trial Championship

Athens, GA

State Bar of Georgia Young Lawyers Division

Georgia High School Mock Trial Competition

Each year approximately 30,000 students participate in local high school mock trial competitions throughout the United States, Guam, South Korea and the Northern Mariana Islands. This event highlights the best high school mock trial teams competing for the championship title—and it's being hosted in Georgia! For more information, to donate or to volunteer, visit athens2019.nhsmtc.org or email athens2019@gabar.org.

JUNE

6-9 YLD Annual Meeting

The Ritz-Carlton Orlando, Grande Lakes

4012 Central Florida Parkway | Orlando, FL

YLD events include the YLD Leadership Academy Graduation Ceremony, the YLD Pool Party and Meet the Candidates Reception, and the YLD Dinner and Swearing-In Ceremony. (This meeting is held in conjunction with the State Bar of Georgia.)



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2019 SPRING MEETING

April 25-29 | Hamilton Hotel | Washington, D.C.
Visit www.georgiayld.org for more information.

