



The YLD Review

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

Volume 51, Issue 3 Young Lawyers Division Spring 2010

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YLD Raises \$50,000 for the Public Interest Internship Program

by Elizabeth Fite and Meredith Wilson

On Jan. 9, the YLD held its fourth annual Signature Fundraiser, "Black Tie & Blackjack," at the Atlanta office of King & Spalding LLP to benefit the YLD's Public Interest Internship Program (PIIP). PIIP will provide law school students and recent graduates with employment opportunities in public interest, government and non-profit organizations throughout the state of Georgia. The net proceeds from the evening



Signature Fundraiser Committee Members: (Back row L-R) Amy Howell, Darrell Sutton, Elizabeth Fite, Ben Chastain, Colin Kelly and Rachel Zichella. (Front row L-R) Moses Kim, Que Lynch, Meredith Wilson, Tamera Woodard and Shiriki Cavitt.

Craps, Texas Hold'Em and slot machines. Mingling among the crowd were several notable guests, including YLD past presidents **William Barwick, Donna Barwick, Stan Brading, Henry Walker, Joseph Dent, Damon Elmore** and **Josh Bell**.

The focal point was the silent auction, which included more than 50 items ranging from jewelry to autographed guitars. There was no doubt that guests were in a charitable mood with the amount of bidding. **Cheryl Cavan** won two round-trip airline tickets on AirTran Airways, the grand prize of the main event raffle. Other raffle winners walked away with a one-night stay at the W Midtown Hotel, \$100 gift cards to Taco Mac Midtown and a \$50 gift certificate to Pizza Bar.



Signature Fundraiser Chairs Elizabeth Fite and Meredith Wilson

will fund 10 \$5,000 stipends for the inaugural class of PIIP interns and enable them to serve the legal needs of Georgia's growing indigent and underprivileged populations. Despite the economic crisis facing individuals and businesses alike, this year's event raised more than expected. The ability to fund 10 stipends for PIIP could not have happened without the support and generosity of the event sponsors, in-kind donors and individual ticket holders (listed on page 4).

Black Tie & Blackjack began with a VIP reception for Host Committee members, who were entered into a raffle to win gift certificates to Taco Mac, FLIP Burger Boutique and Rosebud restaurant. After the reception, more than 215 guests were invited into a Vegas-style casino room to try their luck at Blackjack, Roulette,



Irma Espino, Amy Howell, Michael Geoffroy and Cecily McLeod enjoy Black Tie and Blackjack.

Throughout the night, guests enjoyed hors d'oeuvres, desserts and an open bar. By the end of the evening, many showed off their best dance moves to music provided by DJ **Jeff Gilman**. Pictures from Black Tie & Blackjack, taken by **Gavin Jackson**, can be viewed at www.flickr.com/photos/yld. The co-chairs of Black Tie & Blackjack would like to thank all who participated in making this year's Signature Fundraiser a huge success.

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From the President

As Lawyers, We're All in the Business of Public Service

by Amy V. Howell

Upon taking his oath of office as the speaker of the Georgia House of Representatives, practicing lawyer Rep. **David Ralston** of Blue Ridge said, "I still believe that public service is noble and honorable."

While Speaker Ralston's remarks were directed to his fellow House members, those words can also inspire his fellow Georgia lawyers. Whether we hold elected office or not, whether our workplace is on government property or not, whether we are paid by our clients or the taxpayers, all of us in the legal profession are in the business of public service.

For me and many others, public service is our full-time job. At the federal, state and local levels of government, we represent the interests of the people of a particular jurisdiction. We help write laws and regulations. We work in the offices of attorneys general, prosecutors and the legal departments of governing bodies and public agencies. We serve as judges and magistrates and court clerks. And as public defenders and legal aid lawyers, we provide representation for those who cannot afford it.

But a lawyer does not have to work in the public sector to serve the public interest. Throughout the history of our justice system, great things have been accomplished by lawyers in the private sector, whether they represented citizens in a class-action environmental lawsuit or represented an individual child seeking educational equality.

Regardless of our specific roles, all lawyers are integral parts of a court system where our constitutional rights are upheld and upon which all parts of American society—including our economy and our national security—are dependent. That is public service at its highest calling.

U.S. Supreme Court **Justice Samuel Alito**, speaking to University of Virginia law students last year, acknowledged that commercialization and an increasing focus on salaries because of rising tuition costs were having an impact on the legal profession. But he also said he remained optimistic that a new model of "lawyer-public servant" would prevail in today's society. He encouraged the audience members to devote at least some of their career to public service, which he said "permeates our consciousness." Alito also noted that new areas of need created by the economic downturn offer even more public service opportunities. "Lawyers," he said, "can think institutionally as we face new challenges."

This year the YLD is working to face these challenges with the Summer Public Interest Internship Program (PIIP) and our statewide service projects. The YLD is committed to public service and our fellow Georgians.

A familiar Thomas Jefferson quote is displayed in the lobby of the State Bar of Georgia headquarters: "The study of law qualifies a man to be useful to himself, to his neighbors, and to the public." This reminds us of our high calling as lawyers, one that is indeed still noble and honorable.

Georgia Legal Services: Hello Friend!

by Damon Elmore

You've likely heard that nearly 40 years ago, a conscientious group of young lawyers like you, developed a plan to raise awareness about and address the concerns of legal services for the poor across Georgia. The Georgia Legal Services Program (GLSP) grew out of this work. The mission of GLSP is to provide access to justice and opportunities to overcome poverty for Georgians with low incomes.

What some of you may not know is that since that time, GLSP has grown to serve residents in 154 counties throughout Georgia. The number of GLSP clients served also grew to nearly 10,000 last year. Since then, the types of complex legal matters have grown and expanded. GLSP lawyers and staff volunteers handle family law matters, including issues of domestic violence; housing and consumer matters; health and income assistance concerns; and their work with immigrants has changed since those early days in 1971 as well. GLSP has expanded to involve special projects, such as the State Bar Pro Bono Project, the Landlord/Tenant Housing Helpline and the Elder Legal Assistance/Elder Abuse Prevention Projects.

Consistent with the YLD's 2009–10 focus on public interest, allow us to re-introduce GLSP. It is still meaningful and relevant to the profession and our neighbors served. It is still meaningful and relevant to the YLD as evidenced by the three YLD past presidents and current and previously active members of the YLD serving on its Board. The partnership between GLSP and the YLD is still meaningful and relevant. Take the time to meet or re-introduce yourself to GLSP.

Visit www.glsp.org and learn how you can directly help clients recover financial losses, how you can empower domestic violence survivors or make a contribution that prevents homelessness and engages volunteers. GLSP has 11 offices across Georgia and enlists the support of volunteers to give of their time and talents in pursuit of justice for all.



YLD Spring Meeting 2010

April 29 – May 2

Key West, Fla.

Pier House Resort & Caribbean Spa

YLD Rate: \$249/night plus tax

Events include: reception, group dinner, sunset sail and snorkel, YLD business meeting and CLE

Please visit the State Bar's website for a full meeting brochure or register online at

<https://www.members.gabar.org/Core/Events/Events.aspx>

Hotel cut-off date: April 13, 2010

Cool Project Tools

by **Natalie R. Kelly**

The opportunity to help others presents itself almost every day in a lawyer's life. For young lawyers and firms, here are some resources and tools to investigate.

Project Management

Organizing resources and managing deadlines and events are critical to the success of most projects. Some project management programs that can help you keep your work on track are:

- Existing practice management systems (even if just Outlook or an Excel spreadsheet) can provide integrated project management alongside your normal client file management. A new Outlook add-on system for up to three users that works well is Credenza (www.credenzasoft.com). Contact the LPM department for lists of the more robust managers.
- BaseCamp (www.basecamp.com)—This online project manager is free for one project, unlimited users and no document collaboration. There are pricing plans that accommodate small to larger firms.

Scheduling

Scheduling a convenient time to meet with others, especially those outside your firm, can result in hundreds of e-mails with dates, times and other confusing information about scheduling conflicts. Instead of enduring this, try some of these services to make your next meeting set-up a breeze:

- TimeBridge (www.timebridge.com) sends one e-mail to multiple parties and negotiates a best time to meet.
- Doodle (www.doodle.com) is another tool that provides synching tools for many calendar formats.
- Schedule Once (www.scheduleonce.com) is an online scheduler that features add-ons for Firefox and Chrome web browsers, as well as add-ons inside your Google Calendar and Gmail account. It even offers a Google Apps Calendar gadget for mobile devices.

Document Collaboration

Need to work on the same documents with multiple people? Here are some quick, free document collaboration tools:

- GoogleDocs (<http://docs.google.com/>) allows you to share documents of any type up to 250 megabytes with others.
- Microsoft Office Live Workspace (<http://workspace.officelive.com/>) allows you to store and share Word, Excel and PowerPoint files.

Charitable Giving Resources

Want to help with larger community service projects or make contributions to charity? Check out these sources to get started:

- Charity Navigator (www.charitynavigator.org) provides lists of charities with rankings and allows users to search for and donate directly to specific charities.
- Better Business Bureau's Resource Library for Charities and Donors (www.bbb.org/us/Charity-Resources/) contains newsletters and other useful tools to help you pick a charity.

What's Love Got to Do With It?

by **Michael L. Monahan**

It isn't easy being a lawyer. And there isn't just one answer to the question of how to improve the image of lawyers. One answer will do for today: lawyers must continue to make a real difference in the life of each client, love us or hate us.

Let me begin by saying I don't know what the image of a lawyer is supposed to be. I know many, many lawyers, and each is unique. They all have much in common with each other and with all the non-lawyers I know! One common thread among lawyers is a deep appreciation for the rule of law. The individual who tries to bring order to chaos, to begin a dialogue where there is angry silence, to develop opportunity where there is scarcity, or to debate to clarify an issue—that is the lawyer.

"Chaos," "angry silence," "scarcity" and "debate" are not exactly public relations buzz words. But lawyers cannot avoid wading into difficult, often life and death matters because of bad publicity. Substance must prevail over style. But you already know that.



What you may not know or appreciate as you should is that all the work you do on a daily basis for people with limited or no income, for marginalized and unpopular clients, for charitable organizations and for the very personal and private causes you hold dear, is work whose importance cannot be overestimated. Lawyers distinguish themselves from every other professional because lawyers invented and nurtured the concept of pro bono publico—for the public good. As lawyers, we live our professional lives by that rule.

The YLD has a long history of pro bono service. For young lawyers just entering the profession, your membership in the YLD provides you with many opportunities to learn about pro bono service, to put your talents into action and to develop legal skills you might not otherwise acquire in your practice. One quote that I like to share with young lawyers is taken from Lily Tomlin's "Search for Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe": "All my life I wanted to be somebody, but now I see that I should have been more specific."

We in the pro bono support community are working hard to provide you with the tools to do the job we ask of you. Whether you have taken on a protective order, adoption or eviction, we have support for you in the form of online trainings, forms and manuals. Visit and join www.georgiaadvocates.org/gojc—our statewide volunteer lawyer support website. There is no time like the present to become the lawyer you want to be, to love and enjoy the work that you do, and to share your passion for justice.

The YLD Wants You for Executive Council

Interested in serving as a representative on the YLD Executive Council? Now is the time to throw your hat in the ring! Elections for representatives occur at the YLD Annual Meeting, which will be held this year at the Amelia Island Plantation in Amelia Island, Fla., from June 17–20.

The Executive Council is composed of 10 representatives from each of Georgia's Federal Judicial Districts (Northern, Middle and Southern) and two representatives from outside Georgia. Representatives participate in the YLD's five annual membership meetings, provide input and perspective with respect to YLD activities and serve on various YLD committees.

If you are interested in standing for election to the YLD Executive Council, please send a biography or resume to Mary McAfee, YLD director, at marym@gabar.org or fax it to 404-287-4990 by June 1. For more information about the elections, contact Mary McAfee, or YLD President-Elect Michael Geoffroy at michael@thegeoffroyfirm.com or 678-202-1290.



January 9, 2010
An Evening to Benefit the YLD
Public Interest Internship Program



(L-R) Michael Geoffroy, State Bar of Georgia President Bryan Cavan, Cheryl Cavan and Tyler Browning



(L-R) Noshay Collins, Anna Brumby (standing), Jennifer D'Angelo (seated), Rebecca Crawford (seated), Alison Elko (standing), Debbie Butler (standing), Sage Sigler (standing), Rachel Fell (seated), Leslie Curry.



(L-R) Amy Howell, Charlotte McClusky, Lisa Roberts and Megan Sirna

Event Co-Chairs:

Elizabeth Fite and Meredith Wilson

Host Committee:

Jason S. Alloy
Andersen, Tate & Carr, P.C.
Donna & Bill Barwick
Balch & Bingham
Josh & Deana Bell
Jennifer A. Blackburn
Joshua I. Bosin
Lindsey Bowen
Stan Brading
Jared Brandman
Tyler Browning
Tippi & Sam Burch
S. Kendall Butterworth
Ivy & Leslie Cadle
Kelly E. Campanella
Jennifer Campbell
David Carpenter
Bryan M. Cavan
Shiriki L. Cavitt
Benjamin D. Chastain
Bryan & Kathryn Cigelske
Robin Frazer Clark
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Phyllis J. Holmen
Trinity Hundredmark
Nicole G. Iannarone
Elena Kaplan
Colin & Kelly Kelly
Moses & Diana Kim
Rachel R. Krause
Renee Y. Little
Jeremy U. Littlefield
David Lipscomb
Tyler Mann
Kelley and Keith Mauriello
Whitney D. Mauk
T. Shane Mayes

Mary McAfee
Mr. & Mrs. Edward McAfee
Stephanie L. Oginsky
Jonathan B. Pannell
Nita Passyn
John H. Rains
Garland L. Reid
Laura Reis & Michael Monk
Lisa Roberts & Keith Neilson
Curtis Romig
Jessica Sabbath
Ken & Sally Shigley
David & Megan Sirna
Jaliya Stewart
Darrell & Carrie Sutton
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Henry Walker
M. Kristi Wallace
Nancy J. Whaley
Sarah E. White
Meredith L. Wilson
Rachael Zichella

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Varzi Group with Merrill Lynch
YLD Community Service Projects
Committee
Rachael Zichella

Silent Auction Items Donated by:

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Rebecca Vandiver
W Hotels
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Local YLDs Around the State

Macon YLD Carries Successful 2009 Bar Year Into 2010

by Sarah E. White

The Macon YLD began 2010 with a January Happy Hour featuring Court of Appeals Judge **John Ellington** and YLD Treasurer **Stephanie Kirijan**. In February, the Macon YLD hosted the regional qualifying competition for the High School Mock Trial Competition, where eight local teams competed for a spot in the state tournament.

These events followed a successful 2009 Bar year that included the continuation of monthly happy hours and a "Mentor/Mentee" event for all new lawyers and their mentors. This event, sponsored by Navigant Consulting and Capstone Financial Partners, was attended by special guest YLD President-Elect **Michael Geoffroy**. In November, the Macon YLD hosted YLD Secretary **Jon Pannell** at its annual Low Country Boil. This is an event that honors the Macon young lawyers who were recently admitted to the State Bar.

The Macon YLD would like to congratulate its three members selected to participate in the 2010 YLD Leadership Academy: **Canon Hill, Matthew Myers and Blake Sharpton**.

The Macon YLD looks forward to its spring events. For more information about the Macon YLD and its events, please e-mail Canon Hill at canon.hill@jonescork.com or visit the Macon YLD on Facebook.



(L-R) Court of Appeals Judge John Ellington, YLD Treasurer Stephanie Kirijan, Macon YLD President Sarah White and Ivy Cadle

Another Winter to Remember with the Savannah YLD

by Quentin Marlin and Ben Perkins

The Savannah YLD held its annual Tacky Christmas Sweater Party on Dec. 4, 2009, at the home of **Ben and Sally Perkins**. This year's party included an oyster roast in addition to plenty of tacky sweaters. **Daniel Jenkins** and **Nick Bruce** won the contest, braving a rainy night with well-lit sweaters. In addition to the fun for those who attended, the Christmas party raised \$400 for Greenbriar Children's Center, Inc. Greenbriar is a non-profit organization that matches needy children with services, including an emergency shelter, residential group home, runaway/homeless programs and early childhood development programs.

On Jan. 29, the Savannah YLD hosted its first happy hour of the New Year, sponsored by Pro Legal Copies (PLC). The event drew a great crowd. YLD members, PLC and local law firms,



Among the participants in the SBA YLD's Tacky Sweater Contest are: Back row, (L-R) Patrick Connell, Winner Nick Bruce, Quentin Marlin, Robert Hughes, Runner-up Daniel Jenkins, Blake Greco and Stephanie Penick; Front row, (L-R) Miguel Cossio, Dawn Lasusky, Louise Connell, Jolie Brant and Ben Perkins.

Brennan & Wasden LLP and Oliver Maner LLP, contributed over \$1,600 to a local family who endured a devastating fire that resulted in the death of a two-month-old child and serious injuries to the father who attempted to save his child.

The Savannah YLD also participated in a charity chili cook-off on Jan. 30. The event was hosted by the Savannah Bar Association to raise money for bicycle helmets for local children.

The Savannah YLD looks forward to warmer weather arriving in the spring, and its annual golf tournament to benefit the Chatham County Guardian Ad Litem Program.

The Sixth Annual YLD Ethics and Professionalism Award

The Ethics and Professionalism Committee of the YLD invites nominations for a YLD member who demonstrates and exemplifies professional and ethical conduct in the practice of law.

Eligibility:

A YLD member in good standing of the State Bar of Georgia who is not a member of the YLD Ethics and Professionalism Committee.

Selection Criteria:

The nominee should embody the Lawyer's Creed adopted by the Chief Justice's Commission on Professionalism.

Required Information:

1. Nominating Party: Name, address, telephone number and e-mail address.
2. Nominee: Name, address, telephone number and e-mail address.
3. Narrative: Explain how the nominee meets the selection criteria above, including specific instances where the nominee's ethical qualities were evident.

Send Nominations to:

Joshua I. Bosin at joshua.bosin@hklaw.com

A complete nomination form with instructions can be found at www.gabar.org/young_lawyers_division/.

Deadline for receipt of submissions: April 23, 2010

Committee Updates

Advocates for Students With Disabilities Committee Helps “Tear Down The School-to-Prison Pipeline”

by *Stacie Kershner*



Advocates for Students With Disabilities Committee members (L-R) Leslie Lipson, Randee Waldman and Stacie Kershner

On Dec. 3, 2009, the Advocates for Students with Disabilities Committee (ASDC) hosted a one-hour luncheon CLE at the Bar Center entitled “Tearing Down the School-to-Prison Pipeline.” Guest speaker **Randee J. Waldman**, director of the Barton Juvenile Defender Clinic at Emory University School of Law, presented to a full house of more than 40 attorneys, advocates, parents and academics concerned with issues affecting children with special needs. Students with disabilities are among the most at-risk for becoming caught up in the pipeline.

The Advocates for Students with Disabilities Committee is committed to providing support and networking opportunities for attorneys whose practice or passion includes students with disabilities and their families. ASDC is comprised of attorneys who work primarily in the field of special education law (including IEPs and Due Process hearings), who practice in areas of the law that may overlap this field (such as child advocacy, juvenile justice or general education), who are interested in doing pro bono or advocacy work in this area or who are parents of students with special needs seeking to learn more to advocate for their own child. Contact Co-Chairs **Stacie Kershner**, spkershner@yahoo.com, or **Leslie Lipson**, lleslie@thegao.org, for additional information about the committee and its events.

William Daniel Mock Trial Competition Committee

by *Nicholas P. Smith and Barbara Marschalk*

The YLD hosted the annual William W. Daniel National Invitational Mock Trial Competition at the Fulton County courthouse, Nov. 20–22, 2009. The 2009 problem, developed by **Tom Jones**, retired Fulton County assistant district attorney, involved a killing in a metro-Atlanta pawn shop. Eighteen law schools from across the United States were invited to compete head-to-head in front of local lawyers who volunteered their time to judge the students. All 18 schools competed in three preliminary rounds. After the preliminary rounds, four schools were



2009 William Daniel Mock Trial Competition winning team (University of Houston Law Center) with presiding Judge Craig Schwall

left standing and proceeded to the semi-finals: Georgia State University College of Law, Loyola University Chicago, Michigan State University and the University of Houston. In the final round, Loyola University Chicago and University of Houston tried their case before Judge **Craig Schwall**. The University of Houston Law Center emerged victorious.

Congratulations to all of this year's law school competitors: Georgia State University; Loyola University Chicago; Michigan State University; University of Houston; Catholic University of America; Creighton University; Samford University; Emory University; Faulkner University; John Marshall; St. Mary's University; University of South Texas; Texas Tech University; Thomas M. Cooley; University of Alabama; University of Buffalo; University of Georgia; and William and Mary.

The committee thanks all the lawyers and judges who served as evaluators for this year's competition. The committee also thanks Tom Jones for his devotion to this nationally-recognized competition; Judge Schwall for presiding over the final round; the judges who allowed the students the use of their courtrooms; and 2009–10 State Bar President **Bryan Cavan**, who spoke at this year's banquet honoring the competitors.

Litigation Committee

by *Christopher Abrego*



(L-R) Edward McAfee (immediate past co-chair), Christopher Abrego (co-chair), Cobb County Superior Court Clerk Jay Stephenson and John Perry celebrate another successful Holiday Luncheon for the YLD Litigation Committee.

The Litigation Committee held its Fifth annual Holiday Luncheon for metro Atlanta court clerks and committee members' paralegals and assistants in December. Hosted at Maggiano's Little Italy in Buckhead, the luncheon was sponsored by Regional Litigation Support Services (RLSS). More than 80 metro area clerks, committee members and staff attended. The committee thanks those who participated and especially thanks RLSS for being a great friend and sponsor to the committee. At the conclusion, the committee bestowed its first Clerk of the Year Award to Cobb County Superior Court Clerk **Jay Stephenson**.

The committee is already planning next year's luncheon and will continue to expand its list of invitees to include clerks from additional metro area counties. As Fulton County Superior Court Clerk **Cathelene “Tina” Robinson** remarked, “This is a wonderful event and the clerks truly appreciate the committee hosting this event. I am already looking forward to next year.”

Community Service Projects Committee

by **Jennifer Blackburn and Sumeet Shah**

The members of the Community Service Projects Committee had another busy winter volunteering, collecting donations and raising money. On Dec. 19, more than 30 volunteers helped the Fulton County Department of Family and Child Services sort and wrap hundreds of toys for children in the program. On Jan. 6, the committee teamed with 10 other YLD committees to host a happy hour to raise money for the YLD's Signature Fundraiser. The happy hour, held at Gordon Biersch in Midtown, raised more than \$300 for the YLD's Public Interest Internship Program.

The committee rang in the new year with its annual Suit & Cell Phone Drive. Many carloads of business attire and cell phones were collected and donated to the Atlanta Union Mission, Women's Resource Center, YLD Aspiring Youth Committee's Great Debaters Program and Raksha.

The committee has also given time and resources this year to children hospitalized at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta. Committee members have played Wii games, basketball and made arts and crafts with the kids in "The Zone," a fun area that was created to help children, teenagers and their families forget—for at least a little while—they are at the hospital. The committee also donated Wii games and iTunes gift cards to the "The Zone" to help implement a music program for patients and families that will bring an element of escape and relaxation to their experience while at the hospital.

There are many exciting upcoming events of which we would love for you to be a part. To find out about opportunities to sponsor these events or for more information about them, please contact **Jen Blackburn** at jennifer.blackburn@troutmansanders.com.



Members of the Community Service Projects Committee gather to sort and wrap toys for the Fulton County Department of Family and Child Services.

Parents and Caregivers in the Profession Committee

by **Tawanna K. Morgan**

On Saturday, Jan. 23, the YLD's newest committee, Parents and Caregivers in the Profession, hosted a non-traditional networking event. This Family Festival, held at Woody's Jump-n-Play in McDonough, was very successful. More than 30 professionals brought their children to this event and door prizes were provided. While the kids were busy jumping, the parents, who were a mixture of YLD regulars and newcomers, were able to network and enjoy each other's company. The committee was delighted to have a variety of distinguished lawyers attend to show their support for the new committee and the event, including **Justice Robert Benham**.

Special thanks to the event sponsors: **Jackie Woods**, owner of Woody's Jump-n-Play, and state Representative **Robert Abdul-Salaam**, who sponsored the massage therapist and facilitated the high school volunteers that kept an eye on the children. Thanks also go out to those that attended and donated coats, jackets and blankets to the homeless through the Hosea Feed the Hungry and Homeless program.

For information about the committee's upcoming events, e-mail the committee at yld-parents-caregivers@live.com.



Volunteers for the Great Debaters Program and DJJ Commissioner Albert Murray attend the final debate and reception at the DeKalb Regional Youth Detention Center.

Aspiring Youth Program Committee

by **LeRoy C. Jennings and Janet C. Scott**

On Jan. 16, the Aspiring Youth Program Committee (AYPC) members converged upon the Department of Juvenile Justice Regional Youth Detention Center (RYDC) for the second year of the Great Debaters Project. The Great Debaters Project is a program designed to teach the young men at the RYDC how to use debate rather than violence to resolve conflicts.

The number of committee volunteers doubled from last year and met with the participants on Saturdays to teach them about teamwork and the principles of debate. Participants are taught that debate is disciplined combat, and through the program participants learn to use their words instead of weapons to resolve conflict. The young men are often challenged to argue a position contrary to their personal belief. Many of the topics are chosen by the participants, and they have debated numerous topics, such as "should students attend year-round school?"

On Feb. 23, the AYPC hosted a final debate and reception at the Youth Detention Center. This provided an opportunity for the participants to demonstrate to their family members, friends and other youth at the facility what they have learned, dressed in suits donated by the Community Service Projects Committee. When the young men were asked what they thought of the program after the second Saturday session, one of the participants said, "I think this program is going good because it teaches you not to give up on your opinions in life."



YLD TO HOLD CEREMONY FOR GEORGIA'S RETIRING ATTORNEYS

The YLD would like to invite any attorney celebrating his or her retirement from the practice of law to join us in a small ceremony and be recognized for distinguished service to Georgia's citizens and the Bar.

The ceremony will be held at the Bar Center in Atlanta on May 6, from 4–6 p.m. If you or someone you know retired in 2009 or plans to retire in 2010 and would like to attend the event and be recognized, please RSVP by April 23 to **Michael Geoffroy** at

michael@thegoffroyfirm.com

or 678-202-1290.



Editor's Block

He Said

by *Darrell Sutton*

I have written twice before about the influence family members have had on me. Family is our primary source of education; not necessarily in a substantive sense, but in a temporal sense. It is our families to whom we are exposed before anyone else and, whose traits are the first to be adopted and whose lessons are the first to be learned.

I have drawn knowledge not only from the lessons explicitly taught to me by my family, but also from what I have observed of their behavior. For example, I have a family member who has constantly and routinely faced choices – from the simple (Where should I eat dinner tonight?) to the complicated (Do I drop out of school?). He invariably chooses the path of least resistance; he chooses the easy way out.

While this particular family member has made a respectable life for himself, he certainly hasn't flourished in any sense. He has a steady job, but no career. He's experienced love, but he has never had a significant committed relationship. He has many friends, but no true companions. Being a gambler, I equate him to the \$5 per hand blackjack player: betting \$5 per hand won't lead to large losses if the table goes cold, but it won't bankrupt the casino if the table gets hot.

What I have gleaned from watching this family member over the years is that the only way to excel is to make the difficult choice—bet all your chips at once rather than \$5 at a time. While doing so might lead to monumental failure—the elimination of your gambling fund in one fell swoop—if you make the wrong choice, it will lead to roaring, lasting success—doubling, or more, your gambling fund in one hand—if you make the right choice.

The problem is that the hard choice requires a willingness to take risk. You have to convince yourself to go after a result that is uncertain and far from guaranteed. And at the same time you have to ignore the easy choice, which is the pursuit of a result you feel reasonably confident will occur. To further the gambling analogy, only with high risk do you acquire high reward. As a whole, we are a risk-averse society, and lawyers, more so than others, are trained in the art of risk aversion.

This is why the choice to serve the public, community and Bar is a hard choice. First, the benefit of doing so is not only uncertain, but is often unquantifiable. And everyone knows that lawyers like certainty and tangible results. We want to know the answer to a question before we ask it. We want to know how a provision will be construed before it is inserted into a contract. Service also requires time, of which there is a finite amount. In our business, time truly is money. So the choice to allocate an hour to a pro bono case means the choice to take that hour away from a paying case. The choice to spend a day volunteering for charity means the corresponding choice to allocate that day to a non-revenue-generating pursuit. The choice to attend a Bar function means the choice to spend time with other lawyers in a context where money likely won't be made.

The only certain thing about the choice to serve a cause other than our practices is that the result of doing so is uncertain. But if there is a tangible result to be gained by doing it—and I truly believe there is—the only way you'll find it is to take the risk and head down that uncertain path.

She Said

by *Sharri Edenfield*

There are days when I wish I did something other than practice law. For instance, my hairdresser seems to have a pretty good gig. She has no student loans, takes regular time off and has normal working hours. She also seems to make good money and takes nice trips to fun places for hair shows. Having worn “the Rachel” haircut for about 10 years, long after the tv show “Friends” was canceled, I welcome her continuing education. In my opinion, the best part of being a hairdresser is that when you go home at night, you are probably not worried about whether or not Jill's bangs are too short or Jane's highlights are too bright. Even if a hairdresser is concerned with these situations, I doubt too many wake up in the middle of the night worrying about them. I wish I could say the same about the practice of law.

A good friend of mine decided to apply to law school and asked me to write him a letter of recommendation. I asked him how he reached his decision and his answer was illuminating to me. He told me that, while he enjoyed his corporate job, he had come to realize that to truly help people, he needed to be a lawyer. He said that lawyers are the ones who bring about social change, pointing to the real-life example of Thurgood Marshall and the fictional example of Atticus Finch. He reminded me that lawyers are often the only ones willing to stand up for the rule of law, like the Pakistani lawyers did in 2007 when they successfully protested their dictator's decision to suspend the judicial system there by terminating more than 60 judges, including the Chief Justice of the Pakistan Supreme Court. And, he pointed out, lawyers are generally the role models in their communities for public service.

It was gratifying to hear a non-lawyer recognize these truths about the role lawyers play in society. He reminded me why I went to law school and why I still enjoy the practice of law. We are given the unique opportunity to help people in ways that other people cannot. We represent people in court and defend their innocence or ask a jury to take away their liberty for a crime they committed. We help people with some of the most important decisions of their lives including: adoption, divorce, real estate purchases and estate planning.

Along with this privilege of helping people, comes the drawbacks: putting in long hours, being the perennial butt of vicious jokes, and losing time with family and friends. But, is it worth it? I think it is if you make it worth it to yourself. I think the vast majority of young lawyers went to law school because they wanted to help other people. Even if dreams of wealth were what enticed you to become a lawyer, you certainly don't continue practicing law for the money because there are much easier ways to make money. Once we become lawyers, many people become dissatisfied with the practice of law because it has left them unfulfilled. Maybe you've felt this way yourself. I've noticed that the unhappiest lawyers are the ones who haven't found a way to use their talents to help others. It makes sense. If you went to law school because you wanted to help people and you feel that's not what you're doing, then life as a lawyer is very unsatisfying. What I have realized is that if public service is important to you, you have to find a way get that outlet. Even if your firm or company is not as supportive as you would like, you have to find a way to serve others so that your soul receives its chicken soup, so to speak. With this edition's emphasis on public service, I urge you to take a self-inventory and figure out if you are happy as a lawyer and, if you are not, discover who you can serve to change that.



Editor's Block