



# The YLD Review

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

Volume 51, Issue 1

Young Lawyers Division

Fall 2009

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## YLD Creates Public Interest Internship Program

by Shiriki Cavitt and Colin Kelly

The YLD is excited to kick-off the 2009-10 Bar year with the launch of its Public Interest Internship Program (PIIP). The program's goal is to provide law school students and recent graduates with summer employment in public interest, government and non-profit organizations throughout the state of Georgia.

Beginning in September 2009, the YLD canvassed a broad range of legal-related public interest groups, judges and government agencies to gauge their interest in having eager law students or graduates available to them in the summer of 2010. In early 2010, interested law students and recent graduates will be asked to complete an application and describe their commitment to public service. The program's first group of interns will be selected from these applicants by early spring 2010.

The YLD aims to provide at least one internship in each of Georgia's three federal judicial districts by pairing each intern with a preselected participating public interest, governmental and/or nonprofit organization. For their service, the interns will receive a living stipend funded from the proceeds of the YLD Signature Fundraiser, Black Tie & Blackjack, to be held on Jan. 9, 2010. (See box out on page 2.)

PIIP is an excellent way to provide invaluable legal training and experience for participating interns while servicing the legal needs

of the indigent and underprivileged throughout Georgia. But this program cannot be implemented without your help! Be on the lookout for information about the Signature Fundraiser, buy a ticket and make a donation to support this worthy new program. With the help of every member of the YLD, we can make the Public Interest Internship Program a smashing success and ensure that it becomes a permanent part of the YLD.

If you know of or work for a public interest group, government agency or judge in Georgia who might be interested in having an intern next summer through the PIIP, or if you have any questions about the application process, donation or sponsorship opportunities, please contact **Colin Kelly** (colin.kelly@alston.com) or **Shiriki Cavitt** (shiriki.cavitt@oldcastlematerials.com).

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## Diversity and the YLD

*Three past presidents of the YLD comment on the YLD's progress in embracing the diversity of our nation.*



Justice Carley swears in a diverse slate of officers for the 2009-10 Bar year including the first African-American female president.

### Hopes and Aspirations Realized

by Elena Kaplan (YLD President 2007-08)

Recently, I had a conversation with a gentleman who attended Marshall University in the late 60s and early 70s. He was a student there when the school lost its entire football team in a plane crash on Nov. 14, 1970. He was also a student there during the Woodstock Festival, which he did not attend as his parents would not let him go, despite much begging. In reminiscing about these events, he recalled the hopes

and aspirations that his generation (the "Woodstock Generation") had for the world – hopes and aspirations that included equal rights for all people, regardless of their race or gender. He lamented that these had not been fulfilled, even these 40 years hence. While I would agree that the Woodstock Generation's hopes and aspirations have not been *fully* fulfilled, I think we should not be prevented from looking back on and celebrating the achievements that have been made.

For example, when my mother was pregnant with me in 1970–71, she worked as a secretary at a large beauty supply company. Her employer had a policy requiring women to begin maternity leave at the beginning of their third trimester, ostensibly because the liability insurer would not cover the "risk" of having a pregnant woman in the workplace so close to term. In that era, women in their last

*Continued on page 3*



## From the President

# Together We Can Accomplish Much

by Amy Howell

Why should you get involved in the YLD? I am involved for two simple reasons: I enjoy the work of the YLD and the people who are a part of it. If you are curious about what YLD involvement will do for you, both personally and professionally, ask a colleague who is already involved and I'm sure you'll hear the enthusiasm they have for the organization. Just browsing through this newsletter, you'll find numerous opportunities for service and professional development that are available. Additionally, as part of my presidency, I have created a program of work that, with your help and involvement, I know we will be able to achieve.

During this Bar year, the YLD is focused on achieving the following goals:

- **Supporting Children and Families:** This year, each member of the Executive Council has been charged with developing and implementing a service project in the district they represent supporting our "Children and Families" theme. **Sherry Neal** and **Tawanna Morgan** will start the Parents and Caregivers in the Profession Committee to provide networking and CLE opportunities that are family friendly and to provide a forum for discussion of the common challenges we face. We are also implementing family-friendly activities at our YLD meetings.
- **Innovative Programs and Projects:** President-Elect **Michael Geoffroy**, Treasurer **Stephanie Kirijan**, **Colin Kelly**, **Shiriki Cavitt** and I are working to initiate the YLD Summer Public Interest Internship Program. This program will be funded by our Signature Fundraiser in January and will provide opportunities for new law graduates and young lawyers to take jobs in the public interest sector. You can learn more about this exciting new program in this issue.
- **Promoting the Leadership of Young Lawyers:** The Leadership Academy, led by **Sharri Edenfield** and **Carl Varnedoe**, will continue to be a signature program of the YLD and will be strengthened by the development of an alumni network led by **Natalie Brunson** and **Whitney Mauk**. The alumni network will foster the continuing leadership of YLD members and alumni. The first annual class-wide Leadership Academy service project will provide participants an opportunity to put their leadership skills into action in their communities. **Jennifer Blackburn** will be working to help the YLD reach out to the future leaders of the Bar with a new law school outreach program.
- **Programs to Help Young Lawyers Around the State:** We will convene a meeting in October with all the YLD affiliates and affiliate bar presidents to discuss the current challenges young lawyers face and how we can support our colleagues during these difficult economic times. The YLD will host a statewide CLE "Hanging Out a Shingle" coordinated by **Sherry Neal** and **Kirsten Widner**. The committees have also been encouraged to partner with local affiliates to co-sponsor events and make greater use of the State Bar's South Georgia Office in Tifton and new Coastal Georgia Office in Savannah.
- **YLD Meetings:** Recognizing the economic challenges facing many businesses and lawyers, it is important to organize meetings that are more productive and cost effective. Each YLD meeting will

include more CLE hours and content interesting to a cross-section of lawyers. Service projects will be incorporated into our meetings, and **Melissa Carter** is organizing meaningful opportunities for service.

- **Technology:** An internal Technology Committee, led by **Meredith Wilson** and **Quentin Lynch**, has been established to assist the YLD and the Bar with keeping up with the technology expectations of our membership. This committee will review existing technology and make recommendations to the YLD and Communications Committee about technology needs and possibilities for the Bar.
- **Communication:** With 10,000 young lawyers in Georgia, communication among our members is critical. Our award-winning newsletter, *The YLD Review*, has a new format, and this issue includes some of our new features, such as a series contributed by **Natalie Kelly**, director of the Law Practice Management Program, a return of the "Lessons Learned" series, as well as guest columns addressing debt management and other financial matters. We will also increase our outreach to the YLD membership with messages on our website and our new Facebook page.

While the YLD is serious about our work, we also know how to have fun. Over time, I have come to really appreciate the "having fun" part because it has led me to develop friendships with people who were previously just colleagues. Since this is a life-long profession for many of us, it's reassuring to know we'll have friends for life as well. I look forward to working hard for the YLD during this Bar year, getting to know more young lawyers and having some fun along the way. I hope you'll join me in this ambitious program of work for the new Bar year and get involved!



## YLD 4th Annual Fundraiser

Casino Night & Silent Auction

Jan. 9, 2010

King & Spalding

1180 Peachtree St., 16th Floor



trimester of pregnancy were also not eligible for unemployment benefits under the theory that they should not be working anyway. We could never imagine such treatment of women today.

Likewise, the Bar and the YLD have come a long way in realizing these hopes and aspirations. Over the past 40 years, the YLD has sworn in its first female president (**Donna Barwick**, 1988-89) and its first African-American president (**Derek White**, 2002-03). In fact, from mid-1992 through mid-1996, the YLD had four female presidents in a row. And, in true YLD style, and in the interest of diversity, for the four years thereafter, mid-1996 through mid-2000, the YLD had four male presidents in a row. And in embracing the diversity of the profession, the YLD has truly been moving forward to realize the hopes and aspirations of the Woodstock Generation.

## One Step Closer

by **Josh Bell** (YLD President 2008-09)

On June 19, 2009, **Amy Howell** was installed as president of the YLD. Upon being sworn in by **Justice George H. Carley** of the Supreme Court of Georgia, she became the first African-American woman to serve as YLD president. While this is a milestone in that Howell is the first YLD president to reflect this particular combination of attributes, it is par for the course in the YLD's history of breaking ground. We have had presidents who are African-American and presidents who are female. We have had presidents with young children and even female presidents with young children in tow at Executive Committee meetings. She may, however, be the first Georgia YLD president born in New York City. (Despite my Georgia credentials, I think I may be the first Georgia YLD president born in Boston!)

The YLD will, no doubt, continue to achieve new milestones –swearing in its first Asian or Hispanic president. As I have said before, the best thing about the YLD is that it is an organization that continues to look past race and gender and other classifications that are so commonly used to divide people and instead seeks to unite all young lawyers in a common purpose of serving the profession and the public.

## For the Benefit of the Public Served

by **Damon Elmore** (YLD President 2005-06)

There's a bit of irony blended in the fact that **Josh Bell** and I have been asked to provide our thoughts in an article commenting on the topic of diversity and its evolution and progeny through the YLD. All of you who have seen us in person know the two of us couldn't appear more different – starting with our zip codes, moving through to our jacket sizes and then on along to our differing ethnic backgrounds. However, what you may not know is that, with respect to values, opinions, and interests, our commonalities, believe it or not, are more than you think. So too is the M.O. of the YLD, where this common diversity serves as its hidden talent and reserve bank.

For more than 60 years, the YLD has been working and building to recast the meaning of diversity and its purpose within our profession. Whether it is through its special projects, standing committees, or leadership teams, the YLD has worked to look beyond diversity not just as it applies to race and gender, but also those broader sets of differences. We can see in this year no difference. In fact, it appears as if we are witnessing merely the next page of the YLD's diversity evolution, as the YLD launches the newly formed Parents and Caregivers in the Profession Committee, established to provide family friendly networking and continuing legal education opportunities and also provide a forum for discussing the challenges facing young lawyers who are also parents and caregivers.

The YLD's leadership is also reflective of the commitment to finding value and appreciation in the skill sets that black women or white men; public interest, transactional and corporate attorneys; legal legacies; or residents of urban, southern, middle and coastal Georgia, can provide. For more than 20 years, the YLD's membership has worked hard to ensure that its annual slate of officers was similar to the current stew. Josh Bell, **Elena Kaplan** and I (and all of YLD's leadership over the years) have been a part of that and recognize how, at the same time that it is important in an abstract sense to ensure diversity, it is also important in a practical sense. Diversity and inclusion have been subtly significant and glaringly important to bringing service projects into different communities throughout the state and, more important, to generating interest in, support for and commitment to the Bar from men and women who, otherwise, may not have taken interest.

Even with all that, the best part of the maturation and mix of these diverse ingredients is when we use those skills and differences to serve – effectively, wisely and completely – the public. That is what we all should keep in mind. The State Bar, the YLD and the profession have come a long way in its look and its leadership. However, that shouldn't be a surprise – lawyers have always led the way when it comes to practical but often controversial issues.

We have enjoyed working in that process and everyone we have been able to meet. We've enjoyed doing it for young kids in southwest Georgia, as well as the solo and small firm practitioner. We've enjoyed it, for the benefit of the public.

## Annual Meeting at a Glance



(L-R) YLD Members Ivy and Leslie Cadle complete the YLD/LFG Fun Run.



Members of the 2008-09 Board of Directors attend the YLD Dinner on June 19.



(L-R) Janet Scott, Hilary White Young and Ty Morrison enjoy the festivities at the YLD Pool Party/Meet the Candidates Reception.



(L-R) Scott Masterson, Edward McAfee, Paul Painter and Ben Perkins compete in the annual golf tournament.



2008-09 YLD President Josh Bell presents Elizabeth Fite with an Award of Achievement.



# Committee Updates

## Community Service Projects Committee

by *Shiriki Cavitt*

The Community Service Projects Committee wrapped up a busy year with several successful events. In March, a group of volunteers sorted food items at the Atlanta Community Food Bank. Volunteers packed 9,829 pounds of food which will provide 6,552 meals for the underprivileged. The committee also held a toiletries drive and collected several boxes of toiletries for the benefit of Chris Kids, Inc., an organization whose mission “is to heal children, strengthen families and build community” through core values of “Creativity, Honor, Respect, Integrity and Safety: CHRIS.”

June brought with it several committee events, including a day at Six Flags and a day at Zoo Atlanta with foster children and an Arts & Crafts Fair and Wii Tournament at Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta. The committee ended the year by partnering with the Chief Justice’s Commission on Professionalism in the 20th Annual Service Juris Day. Committee volunteers worked with Hands on Atlanta in cleaning and refurbishing the Atlanta Area School for the Deaf in Clarkston. The committee thanks all of its volunteers and sponsors who made this annual project a raving success: **Sherri Jefferson**; Neal & Wright, LLC; and Esquire Solutions.

Anyone who is interested in the Community Service Projects Committee should contact co-chairs **Jennifer Blackburn**, [jennifer.blackburn@troutmansanders.com](mailto:jennifer.blackburn@troutmansanders.com), or **Sumeet Shah**, [sumeetshah77@hotmail.com](mailto:sumeetshah77@hotmail.com). The committee would love your help!



Volunteers from the Community Service Projects Committee gear up for their annual Zoo Day.

## Litigation Committee Honors Co-Chair

by *Christopher Abrego*

The Litigation Committee held its final happy hour of the Bar year on May 28. More than 50 young lawyers attended the event, which was held on the rooftop terrace at Shout in Midtown. The committee used the happy hour to thank outgoing Co-Chair **Edward T. McAfee** for his service to the committee over the past several years. McAfee has successfully planned and organized the committee’s annual Holiday Staff and Clerks Luncheon, the annual War Stories lunch and learn speakers series, the Spring Trial & Error CLE program and the annual 3L Spring Mixer. The committee thanks him for all his service. The committee also gives special thanks to its sponsors for another great event: Wheeler Reporting, Bay Mediation, The Hawkins Firm, RLSS, Visual Litigation Services, LLC, and OxyGen Financial.

The Litigation Committee is the largest YLD committee. The committee holds general membership meetings the last Wednesday of every month at the Bar Center in Atlanta. The committee’s next meeting will take place on Oct. 28. Please contact committee co-chairs **Christopher Abrego** at [cabrego@wznd.net](mailto:cabrego@wznd.net) or **Whitney Mauk** at [wmauk@boydcollar.com](mailto:wmauk@boydcollar.com) if you would like to get involved or learn more about the committee.

## 2009 Celebration of Excellence

by *Darice Good*

On June 10, 300 foster youth who are recent high school, vocational, GED and college graduates, were serenaded by Still Waters Youth Sinfo-Nia of Metropolitan Atlanta as they entered the Rialto Center for the Arts to celebrate their great achievement. The capacity crowd cheered and applauded as former foster youth and Mistress of Ceremonies Gwendra Samuels began the 17th Annual Celebration of Excellence with the graduates’ procession.



Juvenile Law Committee Co-Chair Darice Good presents a gift bag to a college graduate.

**Gov. Sonny Perdue** and First Lady **Mary Perdue** encouraged the youth and spoke poignantly about their success. Inspirational speaker **Keith Brown** had the students and the audience out of their seats. Video screens showed dance performances by Moving in the Spirit and shout-outs by local and national celebrities congratulating the youth played throughout the evening.

Catalyst for Care, through its Starry Night Fundraiser, and The Nsoro Foundation, through its Children’s Ball Fundraiser, raised over \$75,000 at events held prior to the celebration. This money provided scholarships to 23 of the graduates to help them continue their education.

The event could not have taken place without the work of the YLD Juvenile Law Committee. With the support of co-chairs, **Darice Good** and **Kirsten Widner**, **Cassandra Kirk** chaired the Celebration of Excellence Committee with subcommittee chairs **Amber Walden**, **Gloria H. Wynn** and **Laurie-Ann Fallon**. The committee collaborated with The L.E.A.D. Foundation, the Georgia Department of Human Resources, the Georgia Independent Living Program coordinators, The Floyd-Bryant Agency and Bleu House Café to host the event. Interfaith Children’s Ministries volunteers and other public and private donors joined committee volunteers to make the evening a success.

The members of the Juvenile Law Committee thank and congratulate the dedicated Celebration of Excellence committee. For more information on how you can participate or contribute to the event, please visit [www.celebrationofexcellence.org](http://www.celebrationofexcellence.org) or contact the Juvenile Law Committee at [www.gabar.org/young\\_lawyers\\_division](http://www.gabar.org/young_lawyers_division).



(L-R) Jennifer Blackburn, Shiriki Cavitt, LeRoy Jennings and Janet Scott. The Community Service Projects and Aspiring Youth Program Committees kicked off the 2009-10 Bar year with a “Back to School Supplies Drive” happy hour at Aja Restaurant. While taking the time to unwind and socialize, the young lawyers in attendance donated much needed school supplies for students at four schools in the metropolitan Atlanta area. A special thank you to Esquire Solutions for sponsoring this event!



# 10 Office Start-up Tips for New Practitioners

by **Natalie R. Kelly**

Starting a new law practice can be a daunting process, but the tips below will help any new lawyer get a practice off the ground and headed in the right direction.

1. Begin with a written business plan. By not writing out the goals for your practice, you can easily miss some important aspects of setup that you might end up learning about the hard way. There are specific business plans for law firms that can keep you from having to use a generic plan or start from scratch. Check out the automated one in the list of resources below and get ready to be a success!
2. Don't forget to formulate a realistic budget with cash flow projections. If you have little to no money when beginning your practice, be sure to budget based on your current financial situation. Do not make the mistake of assuming that you will be paid immediately for work that you do, unless you have taken an up-front retainer or fee. If you are billing hourly for work, make sure to build 30 to 60 days lag time in your budget for actual receipt of payment for the work you complete. Have a conversation with each client about your expectations for payment and be sure to get everything in writing.
3. Create and implement a marketing plan before you begin your practice. Have a plan that puts you in proximity to your desired client base. Create your referral network to leverage your associations so that you not only have lawyers referring business to you, but you have a list of trusted practitioners to whom you will send work that you do not handle. This marketing plan lays out the steps you should take to keep work coming to your practice and should be a part of your written business plan.
4. Specialize early. By deciding what areas of practice you want to focus on, you are laying the groundwork for your future. While experimenting in various areas with the appropriate amount of study and mentoring is acceptable, if you are able to nail down the areas you want to concentrate in sooner, you are able to focus more keenly on your overall goals and plans.
5. Get involved. The local bars and State Bar provide many opportunities to get involved. Even your local community can benefit from having a professional readily available to them for certain types of activities. Getting involved not only promotes a new practice, but helps to foster the professional image of lawyers in the community. You have to strike a balance with what you are doing in your practice and what you give back to your community. Remember, you need to spend time both working for the clients you've retained and selling your services to potential clients that do not know you or what you do.
6. Hire staff, even if just part-time or temporary, when you reach a point of peak workload or overflow. Assess your ability to pay a part-timer as you work whether you intend to hire someone on that basis or not. By determining what it would take to pay a part-time staffer, you are always aware of the minimum amounts you need to be making or the volume that will be appropriate for your practice when you do have help. Hiring staff is key to keeping you from being buried by tasks that can be handled by those who are lesser skilled. Freeing up the highest charging timekeeper or billing staff person for more complex work allows for the best use of human resources.
7. Learn how to extend your practice with outsourced services and associated assistance on larger matters. Have outside vendors lined up even if you don't need them

right away. If that big case lands squarely in your lap, be prepared by having the resources to handle it. Remember, you could end up with a Bar grievance or malpractice claim if you take on matters without the proper level of competency.

8. Have a client relations plan in place before taking your first client. Know what you will do with client file information; when, where and how clients will meet with you; and what is the best way to deal with client emergencies and your schedule. Getting these basics down early can save you time going forward, and give you a scheme by which you are able to deliver excellent customer service.
9. Plan out your office systems before you begin. What filing system do you have? What billing procedures will you follow? How will you handle new work? What tools will you need? Who is doing your accounting and paying the firm's bills? These questions, and many more, need to be considered so that you are not stumbling around during your very first days. A good policies and procedures manual is a tool for which it is never too early to develop. Also, investing in a practice management and time billing and accounting program will serve you for years.
10. In addition to our free office start up kit – *Starting Your Georgia Law Practice*, check out some of these resources to help you get started with planning your new practice:
  - How to Start and Build a Law Practice
  - Flying Solo
  - Lawyers' Guide to Creating a Business Plan
  - The Lawyer's Complete Guide to Marketing
  - The 101+ Practice Series: Breaking Down the Basics
  - The Complete Guide to Designing Your Law Office
  - Busy Lawyer's Guide to Success: Essential Tips to Power Your Practice

Business planning for any new venture can be exciting. These tips and resources, courtesy of the Law Practice Management Program, should help any new or young lawyer get going. Please contact the program at 404-527-8772 for access to resources and start-up assistance.

## 2009 YLD Awards

The following awards were presented during the YLD Dinner on June 19:

Distinguished Judicial Service Award – Awarded to Judge **John F. Salter**

Ross Adams Award – Awarded to **Damon Elmore**

YLD Ethics and Professionalism Award – Awarded to **Paul Fancher**

Award of Achievement for Outstanding Service to the Profession – Awarded to **Christine Barker, Judge Michael Barker, Peggy Caldwell, Justice George Carley, Stacey G. Evans, Elizabeth Hodges, Jennifer Mann, Roy Manoll, Aimee Maxwell, William Noland, Stacy Rieke**

Award of Achievement for Outstanding Service to the Bar – Awarded to **Sharri Edenfield, John Jackson, Schreeder Wheeler & Flint, LLC, Carl Varnedoe**

Award of Outstanding Service to the Public – Awarded to **Jennifer Blackburn, Kelly Campanella, Shiriki Cavitt, Elizabeth**



**Fite, LeRoya Jennings, Colin Kelly, Stephanie Kirijan, Whitney Mauk, Janet Scott, Amy Stone, Texas Young Lawyers Association, Meredith Wilson**

Award of Outstanding Service to the YLD – Awarded to **Douglas Ashworth, Shiriki Cavitt, Thomas Duck, Stephanie Kirijan, Whitney Mauk, Shane Mayes, Edward McAfee**

Dedication to the YLD Award – Awarded to **Sarah Coole, Jennifer Mason, Derrick Stanley, Stephanie Wilson**

# Local YLD Updates

## Savannah YLD Golf Tournament Raises \$3,800

by *Quentin Marlin and Ben Perkins*

On July 16, the Savannah YLD held a happy hour for the purpose of promoting the Georgia Appleseed Heir Property Project. The project seeks to provide legal services to those affected by heir property issues.

The Savannah YLD has continued making news during the summer. Its annual golf tournament raised \$3,800 for the Chatham County Guardian Ad Litem Program. The donation was made to Superior Court Judge **Penny Hass Freeseemann** on behalf of the Guardian Ad Litem Program on July 29.

Officers for the Savannah YLD for 2009-10 are: **Ben Perkins**, president; **Patrick Connell**, president-elect; **Jacob Masee**, treasurer; **Quentin Marlin**, secretary; **Jason Pedigo**, social chair; **Nick Bruce**, membership chair; and **Blake Greco**, logistics coordinator. The Savannah YLD will continue its mission of providing service to the public and helping young lawyers integrate into the legal community with a number of events in the fall.



(L-R) SBA YLD Past-President Robert Hughes, Tournament Chairman Miguel Cossio, Court Services Professional Maria Hunt, SBA YLD Secretary Quentin Marlin, SBA YLD President Ben Perkins, Judge Penny Hass Freeseemann, SBA YLD Treasurer Jacob Masee and SBA YLD President-Elect Patrick Connell

## Macon YLD Celebrates With Summer Happy Hour Series

by *Sarah E. White*

The Macon YLD cooled down this summer with a series of happy hours. July featured a happy hour hosted with the Macon Bar Association at Wine Cellar. The event was sponsored by Macon YLD member **Brian Adams**'s local business, Ocmulgee Expeditions, and provided an opportunity to meet the city's summer associates. A second summer happy hour was held in August at the Tic Toc Room.

The Macon YLD is looking forward to the fall and with it, the admission to the Bar of its new members. There are several events scheduled, including the second annual Mentor Social. The Macon YLD encourages all new members to bring their mentors to this event so everyone can mingle outside the office.

For more information about the Macon YLD and its upcoming events, e-mail **Canon Hill**, canon.hill@jonescork.com, or visit the Macon YLD on Facebook.

## Cobb YLD Installs Landscaping at Addiction Recovery Center

by *Sarah Cipperly*

The Cobb County YLD hosted its annual Great Day of Service on May 30. A group of Cobb Bar members installed landscaping in the garden of The Extension's new Women's Residential Recovery Center. Since 1987, The Extension has provided addiction recovery services through a comprehensive Residential Recovery Program, outpatient counseling, and various outreach initiatives. The weather was gorgeous and the hard-working volunteers created a beautiful outdoor space for the residents of the women's center to enjoy. Thanks to everyone who came out to help!

## 2009 Leadership Academy Curtain Call

by *Carl Varnedoe*

The YLD Leadership Academy recently turned the page on another successful year. Held in conjunction with the Annual Meeting, the June 19 graduation luncheon was a fantastic event.

This year's Leadership Academy graduates were joined by Supreme Court of Georgia **Chief Justice Carol Hunstein**, **Presiding Justice George Carley** and Court of Appeals of Georgia Judge **Alan Blackburn** and Judge **Anne Barnes**. State Bar 2008-09 President **Jeff Bramlett**, Treasurer **Lester Tate** and Immediate Past-President **Gerald Edenfield** also joined the graduates at the luncheon.

Attorney General **Thurbert Baker** gave the keynote address, offering words of wisdom and encouragement for these trying times. He reminded everyone that our struggling state and national economies have highlighted the need for leadership from the legal community and challenged everyone to answer the call to serve and lead not only clients, but our communities.

The Leadership Academy reflects on the many successes the 2009 class enjoyed and is excited about the opportunity the 2010 Leadership Academy affords to bring together young lawyer leaders from across the state to further the Leadership Academy's mission of developing and refining participant's leadership skills and forging relationships among the participants and with legislative and judicial leaders from across the state. Without the participation of budding leaders of the Bar, the Leadership Academy would not enjoy the great success it has. While there is only limited availability for each year's class, everyone is encouraged to apply for a spot in the 2010 class! The 2010 Leadership Academy application can be found at [www.gabar.org/young\\_lawyers\\_division/](http://www.gabar.org/young_lawyers_division/) and the deadline for applying is Oct. 30. Academy participants will be notified of their acceptance into the 2010 class by Dec. 1. The first session will be Jan. 8, 2010. Please make sure to get your application and recommendation in early!



Carl Varnedoe and Attorney General Thurbert Baker present 2009 Leadership Academy graduate Jennifer Dickinson with a plaque of completion.



## YLD Officer Bios



**President:** Amy Howell is the deputy commissioner of administration for the Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice. Previously, Howell was an assistant public defender with the Stone Mountain Judicial Circuit in the DeKalb County Juvenile Court. Howell is an alumna of Leadership

Academy class of 2002 and the LEAD Atlanta class of 2008. She has been active in the YLD since 2004, when she chaired the Juvenile Law Committee.



**President-Elect:** Michael Geoffroy is a solo practitioner with the Geoffroy Firm in Covington. A graduate of the University of Florida, he received his law degree from the University of Georgia School of Law. He sits on the Board of Directors for the Covington Family YMCA and the Arts Association

of Newton County. He is married to Tara McFarland Geoffroy and the proud father of Mac and Hudson.



**Treasurer:** Stephanie Kirijan is a senior staff attorney at Georgia Power. She previously served as an assistant district attorney in the Stone Mountain Judicial Circuit and as the DeKalb District Attorney's public information officer. She is a graduate of LEAD Atlanta and a past president of the DeKalb YLD. She

graduated with a journalism degree from the University of Georgia and received her law degree from Georgia State University College of Law.



**Secretary:** Jonathan B. Pannell (Jon) is a partner with the law firm Gray & Pannell LLP in Savannah. Pannell received his J.D. from Georgia State University College of Law and his BBA from the University of Georgia. He is a commissioner on the Chatham County-Savannah Metropolitan

Planning Commission and is a volunteer for the Meals on Wheels program. He is married to Kimberly White Pannell, has a son, James and is expecting another in December.



**Immediate Past President:** Joshua C. Bell received his bachelor's degree, a Master's in Public Administration and his law degree from the University of Georgia. Bell is a partner in the law firm of Kirbo, Kendrick & Bell, LLC, in Bainbridge. He also serves as municipal court judge for Cairo,

Climax, Bainbridge, Donalsonville and Whigham and as assistant magistrate judge for Grady County.



**The YLD Review Co-Editor:** Sharri Edenfield is an associate with Edenfield, Cox, Bruce & Classens, P.C., where she has extensive experience in litigating a variety of claims in both state and federal court. She received her B.A. in Political Science from the University of Georgia and

her J.D. from Mercer University Walter F. George School of Law. For the past two years, she has served as the co-chair of the YLD Leadership Academy.



**The YLD Review Co-Editor:** Darrell Sutton practices workers' compensation defense and general liability litigation at Bailey Davis Brown & Sutton in Marietta. He received his undergraduate degree from Berry College and his law degree from Mercer University Walter F. George School of Law.

He has served on both the Executive Council and the Board of Directors of the State Bar YLD and is a past president of the Cobb Bar Association Young Lawyers Division.

## Executive Council 2009-10

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##### 2009-10

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Caroline Vann, Atlanta

## SAVE THE DATE!

**Fall Meeting – Oct. 16-18, 2009, Savannah**

**Midyear Meeting – Jan. 7-9, 2010, Atlanta**

**Signature Fundraiser – Jan. 9, 2010, Atlanta**

**Spring Meeting – April 29-May 2, 2010, Key West, Fla.**

**Annual Meeting – June 17-20, 2010, Amelia Island, Fla.**



## Editor's Block

# He Said

by Darrell Sutton

In this space a few issues ago I wrote about my father's influence on me. I would be remiss (not to mention a bad son) if I didn't also tell you about one of the many ways my mother influenced me.

My mom is a history lover who instilled in me an appreciation of history since I was a child. It wasn't enough for her to take me to museums, she also made sure I read every word of every exhibit's description. To this day I cannot pass a Georgia historical marker without pulling off the road and reading it. It was also my mom who taught me to learn and enjoy the history of every venture in which I get involved.

It is due in part to mom's influence that I enjoy visiting the Bar Center so much. The building is full of history. There's a replica of Woodrow Wilson's first law office in the lobby, and just a few feet away from here are plaques that list the Georgia governors and U.S. presidents who were lawyers. A few floors above is a display on famous trials in U.S. history. The Bar Center in Atlanta is as much a museum as it is the center of operations for our Bar.

However, none of these exhibits are my favorite part of the Bar Center. On the conference center level, just down the hall from the President's Boardroom, you can find what I call the "Wall of Presidents." The Bar has devoted two walls to portraits of each former President of the Georgia Bar Association and its successor, the State Bar of Georgia. I study these walls each time I visit the Bar Center. Maybe it's seeing the funny beards of the presidents during the 1890s or the funnier sideburns of the 1970s. Or maybe it's learning the various cities and small towns from which each past president hails that draws me to the wall. Regardless of the reason, it was during one such visit recently that the most significant difference between the YLD and the big Bar was made clear to me: diversity in leadership.

The past presidents of the big Bar have been from every corner of Georgia, but in the history of the Bar and its predecessor there has been only one female president and never has a racial or ethnic minority been Bar president. This is so even though since 2000, six of the 10 presidents of the Young Lawyers Division, have been minorities – four women and three African-Americans. And the YLD's current president is both.

It is the YLD, for whatever reason, where diversity seems to have found a natural home, and this natural diversity is yet another reason why service to this organization is so appealing to me. I was at the Bar Center one day recently to speak at the YLD committee chair orientation. I saw a manifestation of the YLD's natural diversity across the room that afternoon. It was a mix of men and women of all races, ethnicities and geographic locations. All of these young lawyers were attracted to active participation in the YLD not because someone mandated that they do so, but because they care about the success of both this organization and their profession. I hope you are one of those and will find your way to serve with us.

# She Said

by Sharri Edenfield

July 1, 2009, is a day that will live in infamy for me. It is the day that I realized in very concrete terms what friendship and a sense of community truly means. Ironically, I was on a conference call to plan next year's Leadership Academy when my assistant told me that I had to come to the phone to speak with one of my neighbors, who advised that my house was on fire and asked if I had a pet trapped inside.

When I arrived at my home, I saw a sight I'll never forget: smoke was billowing out of the windows and the roof was melting away. My cat was pulled out of the fire, but he spent a week in the hospital for smoke inhalation.

Thanks to the Statesboro Fire Department, the fire didn't burn everything; however, the water and smoke from the fire left a fine coat of soot and a terrible smell on everything. I remember sitting on my driveway in my work clothes, trying to save my senior year high school yearbook by drying each of the pages.

This was the worst day of my life; however, it was on this day that I learned many valuable lessons. I learned that Statesboro is a great place to live because its citizens support each other in times of need; that my family and friends are invaluable treasures because they helped me in so many ways without my even asking them; that my firm, Edenfield, Cox, Bruce & Classens, comes to the aid of their own; and that the benefits of being involved in the YLD go far deeper than imagined. While my loss was devastating to me; in the end, all I lost was possessions. What I gained was an understanding of how blessed I really am.

Since the fire, law school friends, YLD friends and other colleagues reached out to me from around the state and country, sending me countless cards with words of encouragement and "house-cooling" gifts. Older lawyers and judges I have met through my involvement in the State Bar reached out to me as well. The Savannah YLD sent me flowers and the State YLD Executive Board, along with Savannah law firm Oliver & Maner, LLP, sent me a gift to help me replace some of what I lost. **Maura Copeland**, a friend since law school and a fellow Statesboro young lawyer, brought her entire family to the fire scene and they helped me sort through what was left of my possessions. She and her husband stored some of my smoky belongings in their garage for the rest of the summer.

I want to thank everyone who has shown me such kindness and generosity during this difficult time, especially my parents. My fully-recovered cat, Sam, and I have recently moved into a brand new home and I am looking forward to creating new memories with everyone there. Recovering from a fire has taught me to count my blessings every day and never take my friends and family for granted. I have shared this story with the entire State Bar of Georgia because I want everyone to know that being a member of the State Bar can mean more than just carrying a laminated card around in your wallet and getting your parking validated downtown. I have also learned that my involvement in the YLD has provided me with some wonderful, life-long friends. I wish the same kind of lessons, minus the fire and smoke, for you.



## Editor's Block