



The YLD Review

The State Bar of Georgia — Lawyers Serving the Public and the Justice System

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Young Lawyers Division

Spring 2007

YLD Visits Georgia's First City for Midyear Meeting

The State Bar of Georgia held its 2007 Midyear Meeting Jan. 18-20 in Savannah, Ga., at the Hyatt Regency Savannah. The YLD sponsored two CLE programs, along with the Institute of Continuing Legal Education, on Jan. 19. The first was "Hanging Out A Shingle Part I: Practical Tips For the New Lawyer On How To Get Started and Successfully Keep Going," which was for new lawyers considering starting their own law practice or experienced attorneys thinking about a change in career. The second part of the seminar, "Hanging Out A Shingle Part II: Professionalism Issues A Solo or Small Firm Must Handle In Order To Keep Going Successfully," addressed issues facing lawyers considering starting their own practices or thinking about a change in career.

The YLD Business Meeting was held Friday afternoon to update members of happenings in various YLD committees, projects, upcoming events and meetings. The infamous YLD Group Dinner and Pub Crawl was held on Jan. 20, beginning with a seated dinner at Garibaldi's. The sold-out event was the largest attended dinner for the YLD, thanks to the attendance of much of the Savannah YLD and the efforts of Savannah YLD members Kristie Edenfield, Robert Hughes, Matt McCoy, Jon Pannell, Jason Pedigo and Susannah Pedigo. The Haunted Pub Crawl, led by Greg of Savannah by Foot, took the group to Molly McPherson's, Murphy's Law, Churchill's, Kevin Barry's and ended at Moon River Brewing Co. on Bay Street. 🍷

Top: The YLD Review Editor Stephanie Kirijan, Court of Appeals Chief Judge Anne Elizabeth Barnes and YLD Executive Director Deidra Sanderson

Middle: Jason Alloy, Amanda Koeningsknecht and Erin Payne

Bottom: Deidra Sanderson, Pub Crawl Guide Greg of Savannah by Foot and Kristie Edenfield



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from the President

Momentum Continues into Second Half of Bar Year

By Jon Pope

As I move past the halfway point in my year as president, I want to pause a moment and thank all of you who have given of your time over the past Bar year. We have accomplished many of the goals we established and I look forward to keeping the forward momentum to the end of the Bar year.

Many of you are aware of our efforts to raise money for Tipitina's Foundation, a New Orleans based non-profit organization that provides musical instruments to musicians and public schools in New Orleans affected by Hurricane Katrina. I am proud to announce that we were successful in raising approximately \$10,000 for this wonderful charity. The majority of the funds were raised at the YLD Mardi Gras Casino Night on Fat Tuesday, Feb. 20, at Paris on Ponce's "Le Moulin Rouge" in Atlanta. Through ticket sales, casino table sponsorships, a silent auction, a raffle and corporate sponsorships, we were able to make this event a huge success and raise an incredible amount of money for this wonderful charity. We will present the funds raised at the Tipitina's Foundation's Instruments a Comin' celebration on April 30. Great thanks go to YLD Executive Director Deidra Sanderson for all her hard work in helping us make this event a success. I would also like to thank all of our casino table sponsors:

- Josh Bell, YLD Treasurer
- Capstone Financial Partners (Blair Enfield)
- Hill Kertscher & Wharton, LLP
- Metro Atlanta Reporters, Inc.
- Optimum Investigative Services (Walter Reddick)
- Jon Pope, YLD President and the YLD Litigation Committee
- Rogers & Goldberg, LLC (Michael Goldberg)
- Sutherland Asbill & Brennan, LLP

Thanks to everyone who attended the Midyear Meeting in Savannah on Jan. 18-20. The meeting was a great success and was highlighted by the YLD group dinner at Garibaldi's and the pub crawl co-sponsored by the Savannah Bar's YLD. This event was one of the most well attended events in recent YLD history, with almost 100 YLD members participating. For their help coordinating this wonderful event I want to give special thanks to YLD Executive Director

Deidra Sanderson, Savannah YLD President Matt McCoy (McCorkle, Pedigo, and Johnson LLP); Savannah YLD members Kristie Edenfield (Hunter Maclean Exley & Dunn); Robert Hughes (Brannen Searcy & Smith); Jon Pannell (Oliver Maner & Gray); Jason Pedigo (Ellis Painter Ratteree & Adams) and Susannah Pedigo (Inglesby Falligant Horne Courington & Chisholm).

The YLD Spring Meeting will be held in New Orleans, La., April 26-29. For those YLD members who are music lovers, this is the meeting you want to attend, as it will be held during the first weekend of Jazzfest. Scheduled performers for this weekend include Rod Stewart, Norah Jones, Ludacris, Dr. John, Jill Scott and many others. In conjunction with the Louisiana YLD, we will conduct a service project involving cleaning up debris that still remains from Hurricane Katrina. The YLD has a block of rooms at the W New Orleans, and if you have not signed up (and assuming rooms are still available at the time this is published), I encourage you to join us—it will be a meeting you do not want to miss!

I would like to thank all of you who participated in the Georgia High School Mock Trial Competition this year. I would especially like to thank Stacy Rieke, Georgia High School Mock Trial Competition coordinator, and this year's Co-Chairs of the YLD High School Mock Trial Committee, Tania Trumble and Sally Evans, for the countless hours they devoted to working on this great program. I would also like to thank the YLD Litigation Committee and its Co-Chairs Scott Masterson of Hawkins & Parnell and Shane Mayes of Moore Ingram Johnson & Steele for providing volunteers for the competition.

Finally, I would like to congratulate YLD Treasurer Josh Bell and his wife Deana, on the birth of their son Finnley Martin Bell on Feb. 1, as well as YLD Secretary-Elect Michael Geoffroy and his wife Tara, on the birth of their son Hudson Levi Geoffroy on Feb. 6.

As always, if you have questions regarding YLD activities, membership, or ideas for new programs, please give me a call or send me an e-mail. ☎

Upcoming Family Law Committee Event at Zoo Atlanta

Please save the date! Join the Family Law Committee at Zoo Atlanta for a Spring Networking Event hosted by the YLD's Family Law Committee, the Atlanta Bar Association's Family Law Section and the Hispanic Bar Association.

This premier event will be held May 5 from 11:30 a.m. until 3 p.m. There will be something for everyone—networking, good food and plenty of time to tour the zoo. We look forward to seeing you there! ☎

Memorial Fund Established for Rajeeni Thomas

On Feb. 3, newly-admitted Bar member and young lawyer, Rajeeni Thomas was killed in a car accident. Rajeeni graduated from the University of Alabama School of Law in 2006 and was sworn into the State Bar in November. She had already become an active member of the YLD High School Mock Trial Program. Both Rajeeni and her boyfriend Dale Richardson, who was injured in the crash, were attorney coaches with the Morrow High School Mock Trial Team.

An account fund has been set up to help defray the costs of her funeral. Checks can be made payable to "Friends of Rajeeni Thomas" and contributions may be made by the following:

Wachovia Bank	Friends of Rajeeni Thomas
Friends of Rajeeni Thomas	P.O. Box 348
Account # 2000035389710	Morrow, GA 30260-0348



Lessons Learned. . . About Being Successful in the Practice of Law

By Albert H. Parnell
Hawkins & Parnell

- No one owes you a thing. It is up to you to demonstrate worth.
- Choose your partners carefully. Your law partners are, arguably, as important as your spouse. Choose partners who will see you through the troubles of life that are sure to visit you.
- Choose your enjoyment values early and let your life style choices dictate your practice. Understand how your life style choices affect your income and your relationships with your partners.
- Idealism and romanticism aside, for many us, it is the money. Know how much money your family needs and what practice you have to be in to get it.
- Understand the balance sheet. It is impossible to understand the law firm as a business if you don't.
- Money won't buy friends, but it will buy a better class of enemy—often the enemy is you!
- Remember: What goes around comes around. Be professional at all times and with all people. You are not allowed one mistake with your professional name.
- Know your place: Someone has to make rain and not everyone can be a rainmaker. If you are not a rainmaker—find, nourish and support one that you can make your own.

- Remember your staff. Your staff can make or break you both inside and outside the office
- The only reason to open a file is to close it. Always expect change and be ahead of the curve. 🎁



Albert Parnell is one of the nation's leading asbestos lawyers, and he is a pioneer in other toxic tort litigation. He has served as lead trial counsel in more than 75 asbestos and toxic tort cases in more than 30 states. He is responsible for the management of complex litigations nationally, and has participated in successful outcomes for many Fortune 500 firms.

Parnell has served as vice-chairman on the committee of Toxic and Hazardous Substances and Environmental Law Section of Tort and Insurance

Practice. He has also served as president of the Georgia Defense Lawyers Association and as a member of the Board of Directors for the Defense Research Institute. Parnell is a founder of the DRI Law Institutes Committee, and currently serves on the board for the Law Institutes Committee. He is also member of the International Association of Insurance Counsel. Parnell earned his law degree from Vanderbilt University after attending undergraduate school at the George Mason College, then a division of the University of Virginia and receiving his undergraduate degree from Arkansas College.

Committee Strives to Serve Georgia's Elderly Community

By Kori Woodward
Elder Law Committee

This is an exciting year for the YLD Elder Law Committee, which is publishing a 2007 edition of the Senior Citizens Handbook. This free publication is an easy-to-read guide that provides basic legal information and a listing of resources and programs for older Georgians.

For the past few years, the committee has coordinated Advanced Directives Day at various locations around the Atlanta area. This event provides information to the public about the importance of living wills and durable powers of attorney for health care. During Advanced Directive Day, seniors can actually complete these documents which are provided free of charge by the Georgia Division of Aging Services. Attorneys from the committee give presentations and answer questions about advanced directives. The committee hopes to expand the program to other areas throughout the state, but needs YLD volunteers from these communities.

The committee also encourages advocacy for the elderly. Each year, the committee awards the Elder Rights Advocacy award to an individual who has made significant contributions toward advancing the rights of older persons in Georgia. The 2006 award was presented to Karen Boyles, director of the Atlanta Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program.

In addition to these initiatives, the committee also monitors elder law legislation and legal issues affecting the elderly community. Issues like long-term care, estate recovery, guardianships and prescription drug coverage are a few of the recent legal issues seniors are facing. Any YLD member with a heart for these issues is encouraged to get involved. The committee meets the third Wednesday of every month by teleconference. Please contact one of the co-chairs, Althea Caces at caceslaw@bellsouth.net or Ophelia Chan at owchan@mijs.com for more information. 🎁

Community Service Projects Committee Update

By Terri Gordon
Community Service Projects Committee Co-Chair

DFACS Gift Wrap

On Dec. 9, the YLD Community Service Projects Committee once again assisted the Fulton County Department of Family and Children's Services to sort and wrap holiday gifts that have been donated to foster children in Fulton County.

YLD volunteers spent a Saturday morning in the DFACS gift warehouse organizing, sorting and wrapping toys, games, dolls and bikes. With holiday music in the background, everyone got a chance to enjoy the spirit of the season.



On Dec. 9, committee members wrapped gifts for foster children in Fulton County.

Happy Hour

The committee hosted a happy hour at Globe Restaurant in Midtown on Jan. 25, to raise money for the Fulton County Court Appointed Special Administrator and Tipitina's Foundation. Fifteen attorneys were able to attend the happy hour to socialize and raise money for two worthy causes. The Community Service Committee's next happy hour will be April 25 at a location to be decided to raise money for Tipitina's Foundation before the YLD 2007 Spring Meeting. 🎁



YLD Holiday Party

The annual YLD Holiday Party honoring committee chairs was held on Dec. 14, on the 50th floor of the Four Seasons Hotel in Midtown Atlanta. It was a night of celebration and fellowship for the YLD officers, directors, executive council and committee chairs during the holiday season. 🎄

Left: Leslie Thomasson, *The YLD Review* Editor Stacy Silverstone and Laura Fahey Fritts

Below: Ben Vinson, George "Buddy" Darden and Sharri Edenfield



YLD Immediate Past President Damon Elmore, Shiriki Cavitt and Terri Gordon



YLD President Jon Pope, Ashley Harris, Cristen Freeman and Michael Geoffroy



Justice Harold Melton, Edward McAfee, Damon Elmore, Scott Masterson and David Gruskin



Evelyn Fletcher and Lawyers Foundation of Georgia Executive Director Lauren Larmer Barrett



19th Annual Legislative Affairs Event a Success

By Ashley Harris
Carlock, Copeland, Semler & Stair, LLP

On Feb. 1, the YLD Legislative Affairs Committee held its legislative event, a luncheon at the Georgia Freight Depot. The luncheon replaced the annual breakfast of years past, where lawyers had a chance to meet with lawmakers to discuss issues pertinent in the General Assembly.

The luncheon this year was no different, and the YLD was fortunate to have House Speaker Glenn Richardson and Sen. Kasim Reed speak at the well-attended event. Other distinguished guests included Presiding Justice Carol Hunstein, Justice Harold Melton, Judge Alan Blackburn, Judge John Ellington, Sen. Seth Harp, Sen. David Adelman, Rep. Barry Fleming, Rep. Wendell Willard, Rep. Robert Mumford, Rep. Robbin Shipp, Rep. Stacey Abrams and Rep. Margaret Kaiser.

The speakers addressed the need for more lawyers to become involved in the political process, as well as various pieces of current legislation including issues regarding admissions to the State Bar, judicial elections and changes to Georgia's tax code. The YLD Legislative Affairs Committee would like to thank both speakers and attendees for making the event such a great success. 🎉

Top: Tyler Mann, Court of Appeals Presiding Judge Alan Blackburn, Jennifer Blackburn, Ragen Marsh, Sandy Zayac and William Still attend the Legislative Affairs Luncheon on Feb. 1.



Spencer Bomar greets Sen. Kasim Reed at the legislative luncheon.



Court of Appeals Judge John J. Ellington and YLD President-Elect Elena Kaplan

Call for Candidates—YLD Executive Council

Interested in serving as a representative on the executive council? Now is the time to throw your hat in the ring! Elections for representatives occur at the YLD Annual Meeting, which, this year, will be at the Sawgrass Marriott Hotel & Resort in Ponte Vedra Beach, Fla., June 14-17.

The executive council is composed of 10 representatives from each Federal Judicial District in Georgia (Northern, Middle, and Southern), two out-of-state representatives, and 12 at-large representatives. 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: Deidra Sanderson, YLD executive director, at deidra@gabar.org. For more information about this position or the elections, contact YLD Executive Director Deidra Sanderson at 404-527-8778 or deidra@gabar.org or YLD President-Elect Elena Kaplan at 404-880-4741 or ekaplan@phrd.com. 🎉

YLD Spring Meeting 2007 April 26-29 New Orleans, La.

W Hotel New Orleans
333 Poydras Street
YLD Rate: \$239 per night

First weekend of Jazzfest, featuring Rod Stewart, Van Morrison, Ludacris, Jill Scott, Norah Jones, Dr. John and more!

Meeting package will include: Cocktail Reception, Group Dinner, Transportation to/from Jazzfest, New Orleans Service Project, and YLD Business Meeting. Please contact YLD Director Deidra Sanderson for registration information at deidra@gabar.org or call 404-527-8778

Registration deadline: March 27, 2007



Committee Hosts Annual Happy Hour

By Curtis J. Romig
Ethics & Professionalism Committee Co-Chair

The YLD's Ethics & Professionalism Committee hosted its annual happy hour on Feb. 8 at Front Page News in Midtown Atlanta. The committee hosts the annual event to thank its committee members and supporters for their work, and to collect canned goods for the Atlanta Community Food Bank. Twenty committee members and supporters attended the event, including several members of the YLD's Executive Council. Everyone who attended had a grand old time and, more importantly, the committee collected a significant amount of canned food for the Atlanta Community Food Bank. The committee would like to thank Ekonomu Atkinson & Lambros, LLC, for sponsoring the event. The Ethics & Professionalism Committee is chaired by Chris Atkinson and Curtis J. Romig. 🎁

Left: Committee Co-Chair Chris Atkinson, Rebecca Vandiver, Erin Greenfield and Kristen Kelly



Stephanie Kirijan, Curtis Romig and Sarah Tosone



YLD President-Elect Elena Kaplan, Whitney Mauk and Chris Giovinazzo

Savannah YLD Hosts Holiday Party

The Savannah YLD hosted their annual holiday party on Dec. 15 at the home of Jon and Kimberly Pannell. They had a "worst Christmas sweater" contest, which was won by Robert Hughes. The YLD also collected money, clothing and toys for a family they "adopted" for the holidays. 🎁

Below: Contestants in the "worst Christmas sweater" contest were—Robert McCorkle, Savannah YLD President Matt McCoy, Robert Hughes (winner) and Dan Jenkins.



Top: Teasha Riley, Helen Bacon, Rebecca Grizzle, Dan Jenkins, Susannah Pedigo and Edward Piasta



Left: Wayne Shifflett, Wendy Owens and Andy Gaunce





from the
Editor

We Must Take the Lead to Protect Judicial Independence

By Stephanie Kirijan

State Bar President Jay Cook first called on us, as a Bar, to take the lead in protecting judicial independence in an article published in the October 2006 *Georgia Bar Journal*, in the midst of Georgia's most vicious state Supreme Court election. As attacks on the foundation of the judiciary increase, protecting our judicial system has never been more important. Because our third branch of government is charged with upholding our Constitutional rights, our judges must be free to rule on the facts and the law in the cases before them without political backlash. It is for this reason that Georgia judges are elected in non-partisan races and why it is vital that our judges remain independent, even in appearance, of politics and special interests.

As lawyers, we should be alarmed by the increasing influence of money and politics in judicial elections because when special interests knock at the courthouse door, it reduces the public's trust in our judicial system. On a national level, the average cost of winning a seat on a state Supreme Court is continuing to rise. According to a study by the nonpartisan advocacy group, "Justice at Stake," state Supreme Court candidates raised nearly \$47 million nationwide in 2004. Last year, in Georgia's Supreme Court race between Presiding Justice Carol Hunstein and Mike Wiggins, more than three million dollars in direct contributions and independent expenditures were reported. Special interests are pouring money into judicial elections in hopes of electing a judge that will support their cause. It is difficult for citizens who do not know our judges and do not have contact with the courts to believe that large monetary contributions do not influence judicial decisions and this belief undermines the integrity of our judicial system.

Part of the increase in the cost of judicial elections is due to the 2002 U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Republican Party of Minnesota v. White*, giving judicial candidates greater latitude in campaign speech and consequently, increasing advertising. "Justice at Stake" reports that nearly 10,000 attack ads ran nationwide in 2004 state Supreme Court races. The extreme negativity of the attack ads that ran in Georgia in 2006 has people inside and outside of the legal community calling for judicial election reform. Deceptive and partisan ads, quoting a few words from an entire judicial opinion, are replacing justice with politics.

North Carolina has become a model for judicial reform since it adopted the nation's first publicly financed elections for state Supreme Court candidates and was used to elect two state Supreme Court justices in 2004. The voluntary system is funded by state taxpayers who may earmark \$3 of state income tax for the program. Georgia is looking into similar reforms after special interests and political parties pumped millions of dollars into the last two contested Supreme Court of Georgia races, making them the most expensive judicial races in our state's history.

The American justice system is unique and it is incumbent upon us as lawyers to protect it. Public confidence, the backbone of our judicial system, is being eroded by the perception that justice is for sale. U.S. Supreme Court Justice Anthony Kennedy has said, "The law makes a promise—neutrality. If that promise gets broken, the law as we know it ceases to exist." As lawyers, we must take the lead in protecting judicial independence by educating the public about our judges and courts, supporting judicial campaign reform and protecting judicial independence from party politics. ✎

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