



The YLD Review

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

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2015 Leadership Academy Recap

by Garon Muller, Ryan Ingram and Matthew Jones

The 2015 YLD Leadership Academy program consisted of 53 participants. This year's class boasted a broad array of backgrounds and practice areas from all parts of Georgia. The class met once a month for six months, with each meeting organized around specific topics aimed at developing the skills necessary to be a leader in the Bar and local communities.

The 2015 Leadership Academy began in January at the Bar Center in Atlanta. Following rousing introductions from **Bill Barwick, W. Scott Henwood** and then YLD President-Elect **Jack Long**, the class took a tour of the Bar Center and learned about the State Bar. Next, the class broke into groups to compete in the annual Leadership Academy Trivia Competition, after which the class attended the YLD General Session at the Midyear Meeting at the Marriott Marquis Hotel in Atlanta.

The second session of the Leadership Academy was held in February at the State Capitol Building and State Judicial Complex in downtown Atlanta. The class met with Gov. **Nathan Deal** as well as Georgia's lawyer-legislators, who shared their experiences representing the public and their profession in the General Assembly. The class was then addressed by the State Bar's Legislative Outreach Team, who discussed their work within the General Assembly, advocating for lawyers and the Bar. The class later toured the Supreme Court of Georgia and Court of Appeals of Georgia, where participants met with Justice **Keith Blackwell**, Presiding Judge **John Ellington** and then Presiding Judge **Sara Doyle**. Finally, the class took a tour of the historic State Capitol Building that culminated in observing the legislative session in action.

In March, the third session of the Leadership Academy coincided with the YLD Spring Meeting in New Orleans. Leadership Academy activities focused on team building and professionalism. The CLE portion of the program was a panel discussion exploring the *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision in historical and contemporary contexts, including moderator **Morgan Clemons**, speakers **Avarita L. Hanson**, Prof. **Lawrence N. Powell** and Prof. **Robert St. Martin Westley**. The panel was also joined by **Keith Plessy** and **Phoebe Ferguson**, descendants of the litigants and founders of the Plessy and Ferguson Foundation for Education. Participants then enjoyed a scavenger hunt around historic New Orleans, followed by dinner at Pat O'Brien's on Bourbon Street. The following day, participants attended the YLD General Session.

The fourth session of the Leadership Academy took place on the campus of Mercer University in Macon in April and addressed the importance of diversity in leadership. Former State Bar President **Charles L. Ruffin** (2013-14) addressed the class with an honest and frank discussion of diversity issues from the perspective of a Middle Georgia lawyer. **Erica V. Mason**, a shareholder with Baker Donelson Bearman Caldwell & Berkowitz, PC, then led participants in an engaging discussion of their own life experiences with diversity issues. The workshop was followed by a diversity panel discussion featuring Judge **Carla Wong McMillan** of the Court of Appeals of Georgia, Judge **Verda Colvin** of the Superior Court of Bibb County and **Jeffery Monroe**, a partner at Jones, Cork & Miller, LLP. Each panel participant shared the importance of diversity in their own lives with the class.

The fifth session of the Leadership Academy took place in Savannah in May and focused on pro bono and community service. The class enjoyed a stroll through downtown Savannah and a tour of the historic Federal



2015 Leadership Academy participants with Gov. Nathan Deal (front row, center) at the Georgia Capital on Feb. 24.

Courthouse. U.S. Magistrate Judge **G. R. Smith** engaged the class in a candid discussion on practicing as young lawyers in federal court. Next, U.S. District Court Chief Judge **Lisa Godbey Wood** invited the class into her courtroom to discuss the importance of leadership in the profession. The day was capped with a reception at the courthouse attended by judges, court staff and local attorneys. The next day, the class enjoyed a discussion with **Michelle West**, director of the Transition Into Law Practice Program, about the importance of pro bono work and community service. Then, the class hit the beach at Tybee Island to participate in a beach cleanup community service project.

Lastly, the sixth and final session of the Leadership Academy convened at the State Bar Annual Meeting in Stone Mountain in June. Participants were treated to remarks from U.S. District Court Judge **Leigh Martin May** regarding Bar involvement and finding joy in the practice of law.

The 2015 Leadership Academy class wants to thank program co-chairs **Rachel Fields**, **Sarah Kjellin** and **Anne Kaufold-Wiggins**, and the entire 2014-15 YLD Executive Committee for their tireless work of organizing the sessions that provided the class with invaluable learning opportunities. Organizing the class is a monumental task. Thanks to each of you for your continuous work!

If you are interested in applying for the 2016 Leadership Academy, please visit www.georgiayld.org. Applications will be posted in early October. YLD

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From the President

Reviewing, Restructuring, Revamping

by Jack Long

In this, our first edition of *The YLD Review* for the 2015-16 Bar year, I want to take advantage of the opportunity to tell you what an honor it is to be serving as your president. With close to 10,000 members and growing, we are each part of a large organization—one that has proven time and time again that we can work together and achieve great things while living up to our reputation as the “service arm” of the State Bar of Georgia.

In each of the past several years, the YLD has successfully implemented new initiatives and broadened our focus of service to our members, the legal profession as a whole and the general public. Unfortunately, many of these once great programs have dwindled as YLD leadership evolves over time. While I commend all of my predecessors for their vision in constructing these many new avenues of service for the YLD, my focus this year will be on ensuring that these and all of our core programs remain relevant to our overall mission and are receiving the support necessary to accomplish their objectives.

I believe an organization like ours should take a step back at least every decade or so for a period of review, restructure and revamp if necessary, to ensure its continued success in the future. Under the leadership of State Bar President **Bob Kauffman**, the Bar is engaged in a comprehensive strategic planning process this year. Likewise, it is a good time for the YLD to take an inward look at our programming, in order to make our organization stronger.

While we are evaluating and, in some cases, tweaking our existing projects and programs, the YLD’s work goes on, and this will be an exciting year that all of our members are going to enjoy. Hopefully, the attendance records that were established for our regular YLD meetings in 2014-15 will be broken this year as we gather in locations throughout the state and beyond. Our Summer Meeting at Lake Oconee took place in August, and was met with excellent attendance. An informative CLE and panel discussion was presented by local rural judges. Our future meetings promise more exciting programming and enjoyment. Please make plans to join us Nov. 5-8 for the Fall Meeting at The Greenbrier in West Virginia and Jan. 7-9, 2016, for the Midyear Meeting at Lake Lanier Islands. Our Spring Meeting will take us to Las Vegas in early March. Finally, we will travel to Amelia Island for the State Bar Annual Meeting next June. In order to promote inclusion and involvement, we are offering “at home” participation via the Internet for each of these business meetings and the CLEs that they include.

I am grateful for the solid platform from which we were able to jump off of this YLD year. Thanks to the leadership of Immediate Past President **Sharri Edenfield** and the hard work of YLD members across Georgia, last year was indeed one to remember. In addition to the aforementioned record-setting attendance numbers for our meetings, the Georgia YLD was recognized nationally with four first-place awards out of five major categories, along with special recognition in the

fifth category, from the American Bar Association. This level of recognition is unheard of at the ABA, and is testament to the hard work and success that Past President Edenfield has achieved.

While I cannot promise a repeat performance of that magnitude where ABA awards are concerned, I do pledge—along with my fellow officers, board members and committee chairs—to do all we can to increase the effectiveness of every program, project and committee activity and keep the Georgia YLD on a successful course. We are working with some of our neighboring states to host a regional leadership summit as part of an initiative that the ABA YLD has started. We are also in discussions with the Texas Young Lawyers Association to form a joint project aimed at serving the legal needs of military service members and their spouses.

By way of just a few examples of the changes moving forward, we have reduced our leadership structure to an interactive organizational chart, and published it on our website. Our officers and committee chairs have already met twice this summer in an effort to share ideas and make our programs better for our members. The Minorities in the Profession Committee has been renamed to the Inclusion in the Profession Committee, and is being reorganized to promote inclusion of all minority groups, not just those based upon race. We are reviving the Estate and Elder Law Committee to oversee the Wills Clinic, a pro bono service project where attorney volunteers assist first responders in the preparation and execution of basic estate planning documents. This successful program has recently provided hundreds of estate planning documents to police, firefighters and other first responders and their spouses, completely free of charge. This committee will also revamp old projects such as the Senior Citizen’s Handbook last published in 2002, as well as update relevant parts of our Consumer Pamphlet Series. Finally, we are working to rejuvenate our Aspiring Youth Program Committee, which in the past worked to teach conflict resolution skills through the art of debate to incarcerated youth. The objective is to assist at-risk youth by working to increase rehabilitation rates and high school and college graduation rates by demonstrating the importance of education, hard work and commitment. Young lawyers serve as positive role models while developing mentoring relationships with these youth.

Rest assured your YLD leadership team is in the midst of maximizing the efficiency and effectiveness of all of our projects and programs. To be successful in doing so however, we need your help. The first step is joining a YLD committee and actively participating. I encourage you to visit our website, www.georgiayld.org, where you can see our organizational chart for this year and follow the interactive links to the contact information for each committee chair. A list of each committee along with its mission can also be found on our website. We are looking forward to another great YLD year, and I hope I can count on you to be a part of our continued success. YLD



YLD Fall Meeting
Nov. 5-8, 2015
The Greenbrier
White Sulphur Springs, W.Va.

The Georgia Latino Law Foundation

by Ana Maria Martinez

As of the 2010 census, there were 819,887 Latinos living in Georgia, making it the 10th largest state for Latinos in the United States. This number was reflective of a Latino population explosion that saw its numbers up from 462,000 in 1996. The 96 percent growth, however, has not been reflected in the growth of Latinos joining the legal profession in the state. As such, Latinos remain grossly underrepresented in the judiciary, Big Law partnership, elected office, in-house departments and the Bar in general. For example, of the more than 350 judges in a court of record in Georgia, only two are Latino. In part, the problem stems from the dismal high school graduation rates by Latino students (58 percent according to 2010-11 statistics from the U.S. Department of Education). Moreover, a vast number of those Latinos who are graduating high school and college do not have ready access to information on law school or how to navigate successfully the law school years. That is, many of the Latinos that are accepted into Georgia's law schools are either the first to graduate college in their families, are the first ones to go to law school, or if they have access to attorneys in their networks, these attorneys are in their country of origin and may not be familiar with the American legal system and its intricacies. With these challenges in mind, **Ana Maria Martinez**, State Court of DeKalb County; **Adria Perez**, Kilpatrick Townsend & Stockton LLP; and **Mark Newman**, Troutman Sanders LLP, set out to found the Georgia Latino Law Foundation (GLLF).

On Aug. 5, the newly formed foundation held its first ever event at the Georgia State University College of Law. It invited incoming and existing Latino law students from across the state to meet for a full day of law school and career preparation during the inaugural Georgia Latino Law Students Law Day. The event was presented in partnership with all Georgia law schools. In the morning, incoming Latino 1Ls met with GSU Law School Prof. **Kendall Kerew** and Cox Communications Vice President of Legal Operations **Mark Padilla** to discuss pre-law school expectations and gain invaluable insight about being successful throughout law school. At lunch, current Latino law students and practicing attorneys at various stages of their career joined them for an afternoon of networking and career preparation. Ultimately, the day's focus was to build community amongst Latino law students and to engage them in the Latino legal community. More than 30 attorneys participated throughout the day providing resume and career planning advice, discussing a myriad of practice areas and career paths, and helping law students design an action plan for their career

search. The day closed with a keynote address on professionalism by the two sitting Latino judges in Georgia, Hon. **Dean Bucci**, Superior Court, Paulding Judicial Circuit, and Hon. **Dax E. Lopez**, State Court of DeKalb County. A reception to kick-off the GLLF followed.

The GLLF was founded as a strategic partner of the Georgia Hispanic Bar Association (GHBA). It is designed to assume the GHBA's pipeline outreach and programming. Its mission is to increase the Latino community's access to the legal system by educating and empowering Latinos to join the legal profession, and thereby increase diversity in the legal profession. The organization's vision is to provide a pathway to success for Latinos interested in a career in law through pre-law education, mentoring and access to substantive legal experience opportunities. The GLLF seeks to make the Law Day an annual event. Moreover, the foundation will partner with four nonprofits that provide services to the Latino community, placing a GLLF fellow at each organization for the summer. Each fellow will receive a stipend for his or her work and will have access to numerous networking and career development opportunities. The GLLF board is chaired by YLD member Ana Maria Martinez, who also serves as the foundation's president. The GLLF is very cognizant of the fact that today's law students will be joining the profession in three very short years and it is working diligently to ensure Latino law students throughout the state are poised to meet the challenges of the state's population demographic shifts and to assume positions of leadership within the Bar and in the community. YLD

GABWA Roaring '20s Glitter Gala & Auction

Growing Stronger in our Passion, Purpose and Power

by LaKeisha R. Randall



GABWA President Adwoa Ghartey-Tagoe Seymour and Judge Glenda Hatchett shine at the Glitter Gala.



(L-R) Lisa Robinson, Erika Robinson and LaKeisha Randall attend the Roaring '20s Glitter Gala & Auction.

On Saturday, July 25, the Georgia Association of Black Women Attorneys and the GABWA Foundation, Inc., held its signature fundraiser, a Roaring '20s themed Glitter Gala & Auction at the InterContinental Buckhead Atlanta.

With active chapters located in Atlanta, Albany, Augusta, Columbus, Macon and Savannah, the women and men of GABWA came together to honor the recipients of its 2015 Founders Awards and raise money for their critical community initiatives.

Under the leadership of Gala Co-Chairs **Montoya McGee Ho-Sang** and **Tanesha Steward** and Auction Co-Chairs **Cherri Shelton** and **Lyndosha Griffin**, the evening was beautiful and a great success.

Proceeds from the Glitter Gala & Auction support the Sister to Sister Mentoring Program, Scholarship & Endowment and the Civil Pro Bono Wills Project.

Sister to Sister: Assists at-risk teen girls who have entered the juvenile court system in Fulton and DeKalb counties. GABWA volunteers meet bi-monthly with the young ladies and discuss topics such as goal setting, abstinence, STIs, self-esteem and choices. Since its founding, Sister to Sister has helped more than 500 girls.

Scholarship & Endowment: The GABWA Foundation is committed to providing scholarships to black women attending Georgia law schools to ensure that the pipeline of black women entering the legal profession remains strong. To date, GABWA has awarded more than \$250,000 in scholarships to deserving African-American women.

The Civil Pro Bono Wills Project: A partnership between GABWA and the Atlanta Legal Aid Society, Inc., GABWA members provide advanced health directives and wills to the elderly and citizens of Atlanta who suffer from AIDS/HIV, cancer and other terminal illnesses.

During the Glitter Gala, the GABWA Founders Awards were also announced. The recipients embody the mission of GABWA and the legacy of its founders: Former Chief Justice **Leah Ward Sears**, Judge **Bensonetta Tipton Lane** and Judge **Barbara A. Harris**. The 2015 Founders Award honorees are:

- *The Leah Ward Sears Award for Distinction in the Profession*—Chief Judge **Myra H. Dixon**, State Court of Fulton County
- *The Barbara Harris Award for Service to the Community*—**Bettianne C. Hart**
- *The Bensonetta Tipton Lane Award for Commitment to the Family*—**Tomieka Daniel**, senior staff attorney, Georgia Legal Services Program
- *Zenith Award for Distinction in the Profession*—Dr. **Helene D. Gayle**, CEO, CARE US
- *Zenith Award for Service to the Community*—The Atlanta Business League
- *Zenith Award for Political Action*—**Janice L. Mathis**, Rainbow PUSH YLD



(L-R) Avarita L. Hanson, executive director of the Chief Justice's Commission on Professionalism, and Patrise M. Perkins-Hooker, immediate past president of the State Bar of Georgia, at the auction.

Affiliate Updates

Augusta YLD

by *Garon Muller*

Young Lawyers of Augusta (YLA) enjoyed one of the city's hidden treasures at Rae's Coastal Café in May. There, we enjoyed Caribbean flavors and wonderful hospitality. In June, YLA gave back to our community by volunteering with Turn Back the Block, a local organization geared toward revitalizing a historic neighborhood in Augusta. At the "Block Party," young lawyers joined with the local young professionals to hang siding on a newly rebuilt home. For more information on Turn Back the Block, please visit www.turnbacktheblock.com.

In July, YLA had a scary good time on the Augusta Ghost Trolley Tour. During the tour, we learned about Augusta's haunted history, such as the Haunted Pillar and the MCG Grave Robber. In August, we enjoyed a happy hour at a new local restaurant, Southbound Smokehouse. We look forward to Go Kart racing at Adventure Crossing in September.



(L-R) YLA President Alex Brown and Young Professionals of Augusta President Jason Blanchard, team up to hang siding at Turn Back the Block.

Columbus YLD

by *Katie Hartford*

The Columbus YLD co-hosted its annual Summer Social with the Columbus Bar Association (CBA) in July. More than 75 local attorneys and summer associates enjoyed live music, food and refreshments at the RiverCenter for the Performing Arts in uptown Columbus. The event served as a farewell to summer associates as well as an opportunity for YLD and CBA members to connect. Also in July, the Columbus YLD swore in its new executive board consisting of **A. Binford Minter**, president; **Victoria Cuneo**, vice president; **J. Brandon Snellings**, treasurer; and **Katie Morris Hartford**, secretary. This fall, the YLD and CBA will welcome the Court of Appeals of Georgia for oral arguments at the historic Springer Opera House.

Houston County YLD

by *Ryan English*



Houston County YLD member LaToya Bell proudly displays a plaque signifying her successful completion of the YLD Leadership Academy program.

The Houston County YLD is excited to announce that two of its members, **LaToya Bell** and **Ron Daniels**, recently graduated from the 10th annual State Bar YLD Leadership Academy. For the upcoming year, Bell will serve as the co-chair of the state YLD Aspiring Youth Program Committee. Daniels will serve as the co-chair of the state YLD Leadership Academy. **Ryan English** (current local YLD president) will also serve as the co-chair for the state YLD Criminal Law Committee. All three individuals were selected by current YLD President **Jack Long** as part of his committee chair appointments.

In April, the Houston County YLD hosted a social event at Marco's Pizza in Warner Robins where funds were collected to help benefit the Georgia Legal Food Frenzy.

The Houston County YLD has several event plans in the works. Events include hosting a CLE in conjunction with the Houston County Bar Association, a social after-hours BBQ event, and preparing for their second annual YLD Christmas 50/50 Raffle where the proceeds go to benefit the Houston County Bar Association's Annual

Scholarship program. This program awards local high school seniors with a one-time scholarship award to aid in first-year college expenses. For more information about events going on with the Houston County YLD, please contact Ryan English at renglish@whgmlaw.com.

Macon YLD

by *Eva Hutcherson*

The Macon YLD hosted its annual fundraiser at the Museum of Arts and Sciences in Macon in July. The beneficiary of this fundraiser was Campus Clubs of Macon. **Robin Crosby** spoke on behalf of Campus Clubs and explained that the organization is an independent, 501(c)3 ministry offering academic-based afterschool and summer programs. More than 140 students ages 5 to 17 and their families are involved in programs offered at their independent community center. She explained that it is their organization's desire to see every student graduate high school, continue their education and come back to serve their community.

More than 15 local young attorneys attended this event and through sponsorships and donations, the Macon YLD raised more than \$2,000 for Campus Clubs.

Savannah YLD

by *Philip Thompson*

April and May were busy months for Savannah Young Lawyers, highlighted by heavy involvement of the YLD in the local community. In April and May, members of the YLD participated in the annual Law Day, visiting local public schools and participating in classroom discussions on the importance of the Magna Carta to the modern American legal system.

In May, the Savannah YLD held the 10th annual Savannah Guardian Ad Litem Charity Golf Tournament. Bar members, local business and judges participated in the tournament, the Savannah YLD's signature event. The tournament raised \$6,600 for the Guardian Ad Litem Program. Superior Court Judges **Michael L. Karpf**, **Louisa Abbot** and **Penny Haas Freeseemann** accepted the donation on behalf of the program.



Savannah YLD members presented proceeds from the golf tournament to judges of the Eastern Judicial Circuit on July 22, 2015. (L-R) Tawny Mack, Zack Howard, Chief Superior Court Judge Michael Karpf, Superior Court Judge Louisa Abbot, Ruari O'Sullivan, Superior Court Judge Penny Haas Freeseemann, Colby Longley, Heather Lundy, Kate Lawson, Bryan Schivera and Thomas Gore.

Finally, the YLD hosted its second annual gathering in Forsyth Park to coincide with the Savannah College of Art and Design's annual commencement concert. Members and their guests once again enjoyed an evening of great music in Savannah's historic park.

In July, the Savannah YLD again hosted an alumni happy hour at Hang Fire Bar, an event attended by numerous Savannah attorneys of all ages. The alumni event served as an opportunity for younger and older lawyers to socialize and share stories about their practice.

The Savannah YLD will next host a kickoff party to welcome all new attorneys to the area and begin the new membership year. For more information about Savannah YLD events or to become a member, please contact Membership Chair **Kate Lawson** at klawson@huntermaclean.com. YLD



AFFILIATE YLDs AROUND THE STATE

- Albany
- Augusta
- Cobb County
- Columbus
- DeKalb County
- Glynn County
- Gwinnett County
- Houston County
- Macon
- Rome/
Northwest Georgia
- Savannah
- Valdosta
- Western Circuit

Saturday Morning? Think AVLF



by Cole Thaler, Safe & Stable Homes Project Director, AVLF

A young woman sits across from you, twisting her hands. Through tears, she tells you about the two-bedroom apartment she moved into last June. It rained a week after she moved in, and she woke up to find the walls and carpet wet. The landlord promised he would come to investigate, but now he won't answer her calls. She pulls out her cell phone and shows you photos of the black mold spreading like poison across her toddler son's bedroom walls. Last night they slept in her car.

You've never handled a case like this before. Can you help her? Yes, you can—with the Atlanta Volunteer Lawyers Foundation's support.

For 40 years, AVLF's Saturday Lawyer Program has given volunteer attorneys a chance to help Fulton and Clayton counties' most impoverished tenants and workers. The clients are pre-screened to ensure their cases have merit. On Saturday morning, each client meets one-on-one with an attorney to discuss their housing or wage problem. The attorney assesses the case and is encouraged to accept it for further assistance.

It's obvious how the Saturday Lawyer Program benefits clients: They get pro bono help from an attorney that they could not have afforded to hire. But Saturday Lawyer Program volunteers, many of whom are young lawyers, get as much out of the program as their clients do.

Attorneys who are Saturday volunteers, manage a case from start to conclusion. Volunteer attorneys investigate the facts, study the evidence and craft demand letters. Additionally, the volunteer lawyer may also negotiate with the client's landlord or employer, and evaluate the pros and cons of litigation. AVLF provides valuable support to attorneys by sharing sample letters, research materials and pleadings. We connect attorneys with pro bono mediators, private investigators and forensic accountants. We brainstorm about strategy. In short, AVLF volunteer attorneys receive a supported—and supportive—advocacy experience that builds skills and develops professional confidence.

Hundreds of attorneys take advantage of this win-win situation every year. In 2014, 286 volunteer attorneys spent their Saturday mornings with AVLF—129 of whom were first-time volunteers. More than 300 clients were interviewed, and more than 80 percent of them went on to receive full representation.

Your State Bar of Georgia card is a powerful tool that can improve the lives of Atlanta's neediest residents. On Saturday mornings, if you bring your passion and your commitment to justice, AVLF will help you succeed. YLD

Litigation Committee Update

by Kevin Patrick, Ryals Stone, Jake Evans and Win Cook

In June, the Litigation Committee held its End-of-Year Reception and Awards Ceremony at SweetWater Brewing Company. We were honored to present three individuals, Hon. **Dax Lopez**, Sen. **Renee Unterman** and **James E. Butler III**, with the Award of Excellence for their exceptional legal accomplishments and commitment to the community. Lopez, State Court of DeKalb County, is only the second Latino judge in our state and has been nominated for a federal judgeship. He works tirelessly to foster true diversity within the profession. Unterman, Georgia State Senate, has successfully sponsored legislation to end the sexual exploitation of minors in Georgia and to establish more severe punishments for those found guilty. Butler, Butler Tobin, recently achieved a \$150 million verdict, which is one of the highest verdicts in Georgia, against Fiat-Chrysler for the defective placement of fuel tanks. We were also truly grateful for all of the excellent speakers at our "War Stories" Lecture Series, generous committee sponsors and hardworking sub-committee chairs.



(L-R) Kevin Patrick, Jake Evans, James Stone, Megan Pearson, Win Cook, Jeb Butler, David Boone, Judge Dax Lopez and Ryals Stone at the End-of-Year Reception and Awards Ceremony on June 15.

The Litigation Committee began the 2015-16 Bar year by hosting a College Football Kickoff Happy Hour on Sept. 3 at Ormsby's.

For more information on ways to become involved in the committee and other upcoming events, please visit the committee's Facebook page or contact the incoming co-chairs **Jake Evans**, jake.evans@lewisbrisbois.com, and **Win Cook**, edwin.cook@bryancave.com. YLD

Tips for Succeeding as a Young Attorney

by Jake Evans

Being a young attorney is not easy. Often, young lawyers are faced with challenges never discussed within law schools. This article will survey helpful tips to succeed as a young lawyer.

Treat Partners as Your Client. Unfortunately, few lawyers graduate from law school with clients. Therefore, particularly at larger firms, young lawyers will have to depend upon partners for work. This work is a young lawyer's livelihood. Without it, your hours suffer and, correspondingly, your job security and professional development suffers. Just as clients do, partners give their work to attorneys that timely produce a great work product and are amicable to work with. Form the habit of meeting this standard early in your career, and it will deliver considerable dividends now and later.

Immerse Yourself in Your Work. Early in a person's career, there is little from which to evaluate. A young lawyer's work product, therefore, becomes very important. Immersing oneself in his or her work greatly enhances work quality. Whether it is drafting a brief, closing a deal or preparing for a deposition, immerse yourself in that assignment. Absorb yourself in the details. Act as though it is the most significant assignment you have ever done. The best artists, in whatever capacity, obsess over their end product. In my opinion, lawyers are artists. So, all lawyers, particularly young lawyers, should obsess over their product.

Strive to be a Perpetual Learner. A lawyer's learning does not stop upon law school graduation. The learning process in the legal profession (and life generally) should never stop. By continually learning, a person gets more out of their work and progress at a more expedient rate. Appreciate your work, not only for paying the bills, but for providing an opportunity to learn and improve as a lawyer.

Life is Not About Making it Through the Storm, But Learning How to Dance in the Rain. The legal profession consists of a seemingly endless sequence of steps—taking the LSAT, graduating from undergrad, applying to law school, academically succeeding in law school, applying to jobs, taking the bar exam, starting work, making partner (or the equivalent). The list seems to never end and comes with unavoidable stress. Fixating on the next step distracts from life's joys outside the practice of law. YLD

The 10th Annual Supreme Cork!



Join the Family Law Committee of the YLD for our annual fundraiser on Oct. 22, at 6:30 p.m. at 5 Seasons Brewing Westside, 1000 Marietta St. NW, Atlanta.



The event includes a wine tasting and silent auction to benefit the Guardian ad Litem and Safe Families Office of the Atlanta Volunteer Lawyers Foundation.

YLD Officers



President: Jack Long is a solo practitioner in Augusta, where he and his wife, Paige, live with their daughter, Julia Reynolds. He maintains a general practice which includes civil and domestic relations litigation, criminal defense and appellate practice. He is also a certified mediator for both civil and domestic relations cases. He received his J.D. from Mercer University School of Law in 2006, having previously completed undergraduate studies at Georgia Tech.



President-Elect: Jennifer Mock practices law with The Mock Law Firm in Statesboro. She maintains a general practice while focusing on commercial and residential real estate law as well as juvenile law. She received her J.D. from the University of Georgia School of Law and a B.B.A. from Georgia Southern University. She is a YLD Leadership Academy graduate and has served as the secretary and treasurer of the Young Lawyers Division. She is an active member of Professional Women of Statesboro, the Bulloch County Bar and the Statesboro Exchange Club. Mock lives in Statesboro with her husband, Jared, and their three daughters, Kate, Ada and Lily.



Treasurer: Nicole Leet practices law with Gray, Rust, St. Amand, Moffett & Brieske LLP in Atlanta. She specializes in civil tort litigation, primarily in the areas of product, construction and premises liability. Leet received her J.D. from Samford University Cumberland School of Law and her B.S. from Texas A&M University. She is actively involved in the legal community, maintaining alumni relations as co-president of the Atlanta Area Cumberland Law School Alumni and having served on the board of the Georgia Association for Women Lawyers. Leet graduated from the 2011 YLD Leadership Academy and has served on the YLD Board of Directors and as a Northern District representative. She also enjoys her work in the community with Habitat for Humanity and Hands On Atlanta, a United Way service organization.



Secretary: Rizza O'Connor is the chief magistrate judge of Toombs County. She presides over small civil claims, dispossessions, criminal warrant application hearings and the issuance of arrest and search warrants. Prior to being appointed chief magistrate judge, she was an assistant district attorney with the Middle Judicial Circuit.

A native of Savannah, O'Connor is a "double bear" having received her J.D. and B.B.A. from Mercer University. She lives in Vidalia with her husband, Daniel, also a young lawyer, and their son, Judson.



Immediate Past President: Sharri Edenfield is a partner with the law firm of Edenfield, Cox, Bruce & Classens, P.C., in Statesboro. She maintains a general practice that focuses on litigating business/contract disputes and personal injury/wrongful death claims. She received her J.D. from Mercer University School of Law and her B.A. from the University of Georgia. Edenfield was in the first YLD Leadership Academy class in 2006 and went on to chair the program for five additional years. She has been on the Board of Directors since 2007 and also served as YLD president, president-elect, treasurer, secretary and newsletter co-editor. Edenfield serves on several local and statewide nonprofit boards as well as a host of State Bar and Supreme Court appointments for various commissions and boards. She supports Safe Haven Shelter in Statesboro through pro bono work and was honored by the YLD with the very first Signature Service Award in 2011.



The YLD Review Co-Editor: Yari D. Lawson is a partner in Lawson and Raines, LLP, in Lawrenceville. A native of Eatonton, Lawson is a graduate of Morehouse College in Atlanta. He received his J.D. from the University of Arkansas School of Law. Lawson focuses his practice on criminal defense and business law for small and mid-sized companies. Before going into private practice, he served as an assistant public defender in the Macon Judicial Circuit and as assistant district attorney in the Fulton County District Attorney's Office. Lawson is a graduate of the Leadership Academy and has served on the YLD Executive Council and Board of Directors. He was past instructor for the

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Women's Economic Development Agency and is on the Board of Directors for Willie Dean Ministries, Inc.



The YLD Review Co-Editor: Kevin Patrick is a senior associate at Goodman McGuffey Lindsey & Johnson, LLP, in Atlanta. He devotes his practice to civil litigation throughout the state with an emphasis in the areas of premises and products liability, as well as commercial and construction disputes. Prior to entering private practice, Patrick was a law clerk in the Northern Judicial Circuit. He earned his law degree from Mercer University School of Law and his undergraduate degrees from the University of Georgia. Patrick is a graduate of the Leadership Academy. He previously was appointed as a YLD district representative and as the co-chair of the Litigation Committee. Patrick serves on the Board of Directors for The Walker School's Alumni Association and enjoys volunteering through the Atlanta Volunteer Lawyers Foundation.

The YLD at the 2015 State Bar Annual Meeting



1. Supreme Court of Georgia Justice Keith Blackwell (at podium) swears in the 2015-16 YLD officers. (L-R) Immediate Past President Sharri Edenfield, Newsletter Co-Editor Kevin Patrick, Newsletter Co-Editor Yari D. Lawson, Secretary Hon. Rizza O'Connor, Treasurer Nicole Leet, President-Elect Jennifer Campbell Mock and President Jack Long at the YLD Dinner and Swearing-In Ceremony on Friday, June 19. 2. YLD members Ryan Ingram and Amanda Heath enjoy the YLD Pool Party and Meet the Candidates Reception. 3. (L-R) Past YLD President Stephanie Kirijan Cooper (2011-12), Edward McAfee, Tippi Burch, Alex Susor, Immediate Past President Sharri Edenfield and Rep. Dar'shun Kendrick (D-Decatur) following the YLD Next Step Institute, Part II on Thursday, June 18. 4. Participants in the YLD/Pro Bono 5K Fun Run at the starting line. 5. YLD Director Mary McAfee receives the State Bar of Georgia Employee of the Year Award. (L-R) Past YLD President Darrell Sutton (2013-14), Immediate Past State Bar President Patrise M. Perkins-Hooker, YLD Director Mary McAfee, Immediate Past YLD President Sharri Edenfield and YLD President Jack Long.

YLD Earns Top Awards at ABA Annual Meeting

by Heather Riggs

The Young Lawyers Division (YLD) of the State Bar of Georgia received the 2014-15 Outstanding Service to the Public Award, one of two awards presented to YLDs from states of all sizes, for its Military Support Initiative. The award was presented Saturday during the Annual Meeting of the American Bar Association (ABA) in Chicago.

The Georgia YLD also received four first place awards within its division for Service to the Bar for its Succession Planning Pilot Program, for Service to the Public for the Military Support Initiative, for Best Newsletter and as Overall Comprehensive Best YLD.

Additionally, the Georgia YLD received Special Recognition in the Diversity Project category for its *Plessy v. Ferguson* CLE session at its Spring Meeting in New Orleans. The Georgia YLD was thus recognized in all five ABA award categories in Division 1A, which includes the state YLD affiliates with the largest memberships (more than 8,000 young lawyer members).

"This is a record number of ABA awards earned by the Georgia YLD in one year, and I want to thank all of our officers, directors and State Bar staff for their contributions toward this success," said 2014-15 Georgia YLD President **Sharri Edenfield**. "Special appreciation goes to **Kristie Edenfield Piasta**, **Edward Piasta**, **Quentin Marlin** and **Katie Sullivan Dod**, who headed up our Military Support Initiative; to **Josh Bosin**, chair of our Long-Range Planning Committee, and **Stephanie Powell**, associate dean of the Mercer Law School Career Services Office and chair of our Succession Planning Program Committee; **Rizza Palmares O'Connor** and **Yari Lawson**, co-editors of our newsletter; and **Avarita Hanson**, executive director of the Chief Justice's Commission

on Professionalism, and **Morgan Clemons**, co-chair of our Minorities in the Profession Committee, who organized and moderated our *Plessy v. Ferguson* CLE session."

The Georgia YLD's Military Support Initiative provides support to Veterans Affairs Legal Clinics, training for veterans issues, law school mentoring programs and the Augusta Warrior Project, a nonprofit with a mission to connect service members with resources to improve their lives. The Succession Planning Pilot Program seeks to connect Georgia attorneys who intend to transition out of full-time practice with new attorneys and recent graduates who may be interested in succeeding the attorney. The Georgia YLD's newsletter, *The YLD Review*, is published quarterly.

The YLD is comprised of approximately 10,000 lawyers admitted to the State Bar of Georgia who are 36 years old or younger or who have been admitted to their first bar no more than five years. The YLD has been strengthened over the years through guidance by the State Bar of Georgia, its Executive Committee and Board of Directors, the Supreme Court, and through dedicated service rendered by its members. In keeping with its motto of "working for the profession and the public," the YLD has more than 30 hard-working committees that produce an array of projects and programs. YLD



Proud Georgia young lawyers take home top awards for the State Bar of Georgia's Young Lawyers Division at the ABA Annual Meeting in Chicago. (L-R) Daiquiri Steele, YLD President-Elect Jennifer Campbell Mock, YLD Immediate Past President Sharri Edenfield and Heather Riggs.



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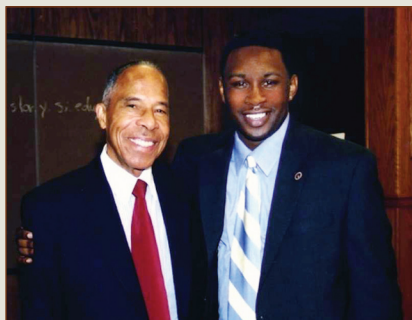
by Yari D. Lawson



Editor's
Block

I graduated from Morehouse College 53 years after Ambassador **George W. Haley** graduated from the same campus. The day I met Ambassador Haley in 2003, we talked for three consecutive hours about the legacy of our proud institution and what it means to the local Atlanta community surrounding it. He told me about his experience becoming the second African-American to graduate from my law school alma mater, the University of Arkansas School of Law and his boot camp experience as a neophyte lawyer supervised by then attorney **Thurgood Marshall** as their team prepared to litigate the landmark

case of *Brown v. Board of Education* of Topeka, Kan., before the U.S. Supreme Court. But no other parcel of our conversation resonated more with me than his insistence that I graduate from law school and use my position as a lawyer to offer service outside of my office to families and communities in need. It was the only arrangement by which he would agree to be my mentor.



(L-R) Ambassador George W. Haley and Yari Lawson at the University of Arkansas School of Law in 2003.

Ambassador Haley passed away in May of this year, leaving a legacy of public service, serving under three U.S. presidents, including serving as U.S. Ambassador to The Gambia. Most importantly, he was tirelessly devoted to using his wisdom and reference to raise awareness to a number of charities and educational organizations. Reflecting on Ambassador Haley's legacy and appreciating his mentorship, I could think of no better way to honor his legacy than to encourage as many young lawyers as I can to take some time to visit your local

YLD Affiliate or other local bar organization. Find a Habitat for Humanity home to build. Find a local shelter for women and children and gather clothing and books for those in need. If you cannot find a public service initiative, all you need to do is visit www.georgiayld.org and view our upcoming meetings. Visit with us and we will find a place for you to serve. Just don't wait until the meeting in Las Vegas. YLD

by Kevin Patrick

"You make a living by what you get; you make a life by what you give."

These words, which are commonly attributed to Winston Churchill, still ring true today for the Young Lawyers Division. A hallmark of the YLD is the commitment by all of its members to serve the public. This fall issue of *The YLD Review* accordingly highlights the contributions of the younger lawyers involved with the Atlanta Volunteer Lawyers Foundation, the Georgia Association of Black Women Attorneys and the newly formed Georgia Latino Law Foundation. What is more, these organizations underscore three universal aspects of our calling to public service.

First, we have the *ability* to engage in community service even though our practice settings are inherently varied and diverse. The volunteers through the AVLFF are a fine example of this principle. They pool their talents to provide legal representation, education, and advocacy for at-risk, low income individuals. Simply put, a commitment to the community transcends our respective practices.

Second, we oftentimes face long hours and daunting assignments as younger lawyers. Despite these challenges, we still have the *time* to benefit charitable organizations. GABWA's recent Glitter Gala & Auction was an overwhelming success because so many younger attorneys were willing to take the time out of their schedules to participate in this event.

Third, we have many different *ways* to give back to the community. The Latino Law Foundation demonstrates that community service extends beyond typical conceptions. This foundation formed a scholarship program for law students. Tellingly, community service is a way for us to remember our heritage and develop a greater sense of unity among underrepresented communities.

As we reflect on the contributions of these organizations, Yari and I kindly ask that you take a moment to consider supporting any charitable organizations that are particularly meaningful to you. You truly have an opportunity as a younger lawyer to forge a lasting legacy for our profession rooted in service. At the very core, the life of the law extends well beyond the courtroom. YLD



Editor's
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