



# The YLD Review

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

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## A Conversation with the Chief

by Yari Lawson and Rizza O'Connor

On the one side of his office sits a picture of Chief Justice **Hugh Thompson** and Justice **Robert Benham** posing with Atlanta Braves legend and his favorite Brave of all time, Henry Aaron. On the opposite side of his office is a picture of Mickey Mantle, his favorite American Leaguer of all time. When asked who his favorite Georgia Bulldog player is, he replied, "I believe [Todd Gurley] is headed to the St. Louis Rams. He is something else." The chief justice is quick to point out that he is just as fond of Bobby Dodd's legacy at Georgia Tech.



Newsletter Editors Yari Lawson (left) and Rizza O'Connor (right) with Chief Justice Hugh Thompson (center) at the Supreme Court of Georgia.

in the judiciary. "I think the perception of justice is as important as justice itself. I think the bench ought to reflect, as best it can, the population before it," champions the chief justice. Still, he is proud that Georgia currently boasts one of the most diverse state supreme courts in the country. Of the seven justices, two are African-American and Justice **Carol Hunstein** has served on the state's highest court since 1992 when she was appointed as only the second woman to permanently serve on the Court. Chief Justice Thompson has fond memories of serving with former Justice **Leah Ward Sears**, who was the first African-American woman to ever serve as chief justice on any state's highest court.

Chief Justice Thompson acknowledges that the legal profession is not without challenges. One issue that arises is ensuring that our court systems remain robust and efficient in accordance to our state's population growth. "We're supposed to grow from 10 million now to 14.4 million in the next 15 years. We are now the eighth most populous state, just behind Ohio. The courts have to prepare for that growth. The highway department worries about highways and other modes of transportation to support the increase, other parts of government worry about generating enough electricity. We have to plan for adequate resources, too."

Finally, Chief Justice Thompson also compels that the legal profession can afford to improve its reputation amongst the public. "What we all have to do is take the high road and show we're honest, ethical." He also believes that the Young Lawyers Division is ideally suited to help improve the reputation of the profession. He praises the work of the Leadership Academy and has taken note of the positive service work that the Young Lawyers Division continues to do across the state. His encouragement to young lawyers is to be proud of the profession and to remember that the profession is summarized by the competence of the lawyers within it. "I'm sold on the big Bar. But a lot of the big Bar comes from the young lawyers. I think the future is very, very bright, as long as people remember they have a lot invested in their career." YLD

Chief Justice Thompson was born south of Macon in Montezuma, Ga. His roots in the law are just as firmly planted in rural Georgia as is his family history. He was born during World War II, where his father was trained and served as a bomber pilot. When the chief justice was just 18 months old, his father was killed and the family moved to Macon with his grandparents. During the summer months in Macon, he was an avid Boy Scout. One camp counselor, in particular, who breathed an impact on him, was the son of legendary U.S. District Court Judge **William Bootle**, who signed the 1961 order desegregating the University of Georgia. Later, when Chief Justice Thompson himself returned to work as a camp counselor, the influence of many of the staffers, who were attending law school at Mercer University, convinced him to follow in their footsteps.

Since he was sworn in on Aug. 15, 2013, as the 30th chief justice of the Supreme Court of Georgia, one issue that he has often discussed publicly is the lack of lawyers in some areas of rural Georgia. "I hate to see people have to travel a great distance to get the support they need. The availability of attorneys means access to the advice they need." Chief Justice Thompson would know for sure. Before his appointment to the Supreme Court of Georgia in 1994 by Gov. **Zell Miller**, he practiced as a trial lawyer in Baldwin County and served as a judge for years in Baldwin County City Court, Baldwin County Court and the Ocmulgee Judicial Circuit. He has acknowledged recent efforts by the Legislature and the State Bar of Georgia to develop programs to extend legal counsel in rural areas as steps in the right direction.

Just as important to him as the issue of access to affordable legal counsel to all, is also the notion that citizens are confident that the justice system works to provide justice for all. While there is noticeable diversity in the judiciary in metro-Atlanta, outside of metro-Atlanta there is little diversity

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## From the President

# New Places + New Faces = A Great YLD Year

by Sharri Edenfield

Traveling is my favorite thing to do. So far, I've been fortunate enough to visit 48 states. (Utah and Alaska, you're next.) It's exciting for me every time I go to the airport to consider that later that day I will be somewhere completely different, somewhere out of my comfort zone, a new place to learn and experience.

Serving as president of the YLD this year has afforded me the opportunity to log more miles on the road and in the air than I am able to count. In addition to visiting every corner of the great state of Georgia, YLD business has taken me across the country – Boston, Portland, Houston and Chicago – not to mention across the Atlantic Ocean, to London, my current destination. In fact, I am typing this article in Amsterdam's Schiphol airport during a layover on my way to the ABA's London Sessions, celebrating the 800th anniversary of the signing of the Magna Carta. I'll be sure to give Queen Elizabeth (who will be in attendance!) Georgia YLD's regards.

As YLD president, I have found it extremely valuable to venture out of my comfort zone in Statesboro and meet other people and hear what's on their minds. These travels on behalf of the YLD and interaction with our members and other lawyers from around the world have taught me many things, including that people want to be a part of something larger than themselves. Further, people feel inspired when they are able to work with others to accomplish something. And I have certainly learned that you can't accomplish anything big unless all parties involved are moving in the same direction.

As YLD president, I appointed the largest Board of Directors ever, with 31 members. Besides the obvious benefit of having many hands making less work, I think that having such a big board has enabled the YLD to include as many people as possible in our projects in service to our profession. Also, by virtue of having such a massive group, I had the opportunity to meet and work with a number of new faces. Some of our board members were recommended for their appointment, but I had never worked with them before. It was very energizing to work alongside so many colleagues who were new to me in service to the YLD.

Bringing more people into the fold of YLD leadership was, I believe, a major factor in all of the milestones we were able to accomplish this year, including these:

- Attendance at YLD meetings was often two or three times greater than our expectations and broke attendance records. A total of 104 YLD members came to our Spring Meeting in New Orleans, a record attendance for a meeting not held jointly with the Bar.
- Our newly created military support initiative resulted in more than 40 lawyers being trained to volunteer at the State Bar's Military Legal Assistance Clinics around the state and become accredited to represent veterans in VA benefits appeals through CLEs offered at the YLD Fall and Midyear Meetings.
- A total of 221 lawyers, judges and guests helped raise \$87,795 for "Stars and Stripes," our ninth annual Signature Fundraiser, of which more than \$60,000 was donated to the Augusta Warrior Project.
- In leadership development, we had 45 registrants attend our first-ever YLD Next Step Institute CLE at the Midyear Meeting, with a second installment of the successful new program scheduled for the Annual Meeting.
- Our new Succession Planning Pilot Program – matching new and recent law school graduates with seasoned Georgia attorneys interested in succession planning for

their practices – has received strong initial feedback since it was unveiled earlier this year.

- The fourth annual Georgia Legal Food Frenzy, which the YLD co-sponsors with Attorney General Sam Olens and the Georgia Food Bank Association, collected the equivalent of 1.18 million pounds of food, a 3.5 percent increase over last year.
- Once again, the Georgia YLD was well represented in American Bar Association activities, an important avenue for our young lawyers to exchange ideas through interaction with our counterparts from across the country.

As I'm sitting in the Starbucks on Concourse D of the Amsterdam airport, I have been able to reflect on not only everything we've accomplished together in the YLD, but also on who I have to thank for allowing me to serve in this role. First of all, I want to thank everyone at the State Bar of Georgia, including Communications Director **Sarah Coole**, Executive Director **Jeff Davis** and Meetings Director **Michelle Garner** for their help, advice and support; however, I most especially want to thank our wonderful YLD staff members, **Mary McAfee** and **Danielle Buteau**, because I could not have accomplished anything without them. YLD Director Mary McAfee has been a great friend to me for several years and a true asset to the YLD and she and Danielle worked very hard to ensure that things ran smoothly and that my time away from the office was spent as efficiently as possible.

Speaking of time away from the office, none of what we accomplished this year would have been possible for me without the understanding and cooperation of the partners, associates and support staff of my law firm, Edenfield, Cox, Bruce & Classens in Statesboro. Every trip on YLD business meant at least a day out of the office for me (remember, it's four hours one way from Statesboro to Atlanta). I'm grateful for all they have done to step up in my absence.

Moreover, I am grateful for the example of Bar service and leadership that my partners **Gerald Edenfield** and **Susan Cox** have set for me and others. My father and law partner, Gerald, was the State Bar President in 2007-08 and Susan has served on the Board of Governors for many years and was the chair of the Board of Bar Examiners in 2013-14. They have been excellent partners and even more outstanding examples of the kind of lawyer and Bar leader I want to be. I would be remiss, however, if I didn't also mention my gratitude for my uncle, the late Judge **B. Avant Edenfield**, who served on the bench of the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Georgia since 1978 and who passed away on May 9, 2015, after battling cancer. He was a stalwart supporter of mine and someone I relied on heavily for advice. My rural lawyers initiative came into being through a conversation I had with him about his time in the State Senate when he helped get a bill passed establishing subsidies for rural physicians and nurses. He swore me in as YLD president in June 2014, so it seems strange and unbearably sad that he's not here to see me pass the gavel, but there is no doubt that without his advice and support, I would not have been elected to this position nor would I have set the goals I set for this year.

Finally, I want to thank you, my fellow YLD members, for the honor of serving as the 68th president of this organization. Representing the approximately 10,000 young lawyer members of the State Bar of Georgia has been an honor and a privilege and I thank you for it. As I prepare to hand over the ceremonial gavel to **Jack Long**, I am filled with appreciation for having had this chance to travel to more places, make new friends and, with your support, preside over a most successful year for the "service arm" of the State Bar of Georgia. YLD

# A Trial Judge's Perspective on Voir Dire

by Judge John Goger, Atlanta Circuit Superior Court



As a former trial attorney and now a Superior Court judge, I have had the opportunity to observe voir dire in a large number of cases, both civil and criminal. In so doing, I have come to a few conclusions about the process generally.

Lawyers too frequently spend an inordinate amount of time making an effort which appears to have no purpose other than to ingratiate themselves to the prospective jurors. Attorneys who have experienced a trial judge's impatience with their voir dire technique, should not assume that the judge is just short-tempered or has a quirk about controlling the lawyers during voir dire. Rather, the judge may be feeling and verbalizing much of what the members of the panel are experiencing (which does not necessarily rule out the short-tempered or control-quirky judge).

Consider a day in the life of a juror. It begins with arriving at court on time, 8:30 a.m. sharp. Then, the juror waits. The juror endures roll call and a video about jury duty. Then, the juror waits. When, and if, finally summoned to a courtroom, the juror sits and waits yet again with only those few interruptions caused by the need to respond to a question of the court or the lawyers. Questions which seem pointless are annoying and if the annoyance is compounded, the jurors begin to turn their feelings toward the court and the lawyers whose questions are keeping the jurors from their children, jobs, vacations and literally any other event in their lives which at this point has far more priority than sitting in a courtroom.

Too many of us approach voir dire with the notion that we can learn all there is to know about each panel member while simultaneously making each prospective juror our friend. In fact, we have no more than just a few minutes with each panel member. Instead of inquiring, we interrogate. This approach, far from revealing the partiality of a panel member, usually alienates the potential juror who might otherwise have been favorably disposed to our client's cause.

In contrast to the lawyer who wants to know everything about each panel member, there are those who select their jury by the application of certain pre-disposed classifications. Excluding people from the jury because of a pre-conceived strategy that certain types of people may not look favorably upon our case is just irrational or lazy or both. Typecasting rarely assures a well-placed strike.

When voir dire is done well, it is because the lawyer has carefully constructed an inquiry which is designed to expose whatever bias and prejudice exists in the room. The point of the questions are obvious, and the panel shares a general impression that their time is not being wasted. Well-conducted voir dire will probably be of only marginal help in terms of bonding the jury and the lawyer. However, poorly conducted voir dire can have a serious and perhaps fatal impact on the trial of a close case. If the jury felt that the lawyer wasted their time or that the process was generally confusing, this impression will stain the remainder of the case.

In the final analysis, the time spent in voir dire is best spent finding the enemies to the case rather than its friends. Every question should have a purpose. Respect the answers provided by the panel members, as well as their time and, above all, be sure to communicate that respect to them. YLD

## From the State Bar President

by Patrise M. Perkins-Hooker



The future of the legal profession is as bright as ever! When I was sworn in as president of the State Bar, I challenged all lawyers to provide pro bono and community service in order to give something back to their communities as a part of our professional responsibility. The work being performed by the successful efforts of the Young Lawyers Division makes me proud to recognize them as an extraordinary group of lawyers, who are engaging in the type of professional activities that I encouraged and setting a powerful example of how you provide service to those in need.

This year was a busy one for all of us from beginning to end. Under **Sharri Edenfield's** leadership, they have tackled several programs with a determination to complete every task. I am pleased to congratulate her on the YLD's successes. All lawyers should be especially proud of the following sample projects.

The **2015 YLD Signature Fundraiser** benefited the Augusta Warrior Project (AWP), a local nonprofit program designed to raise funds specifically for the benefit of veterans and their families and provide necessary resources to help improve the quality of their daily lives. By donating \$60,000 to the AWP, the YLD helped facilitate the provision of legal aid services to many veterans in need regardless of their tour of duty, ranging from WWII to tours in Afghanistan.

The **Georgia Legal Food Frenzy** is a jointly sponsored program by the YLD, the Office of the Attorney General and the Georgia Food Bank Association. This program impacted the lives and livelihood of thousands of individuals and families throughout the metro-Atlanta area. The YLD acknowledged the need of public school children to gain access to adequate lunches this summer by challenging lawyers and law firms to put forth their best efforts to raise approximately 1.2 million pounds in donated food (or the cash equivalent) to the Georgia Food Bank Association. We are pleased that the young lawyers in the YLD, once again, are leading the way by example and through their hard work showing that giving and helping others is the real meaning of service.

The **iCivics Program** is designed to teach students about American government and civil society. The program was developed by former U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor. YLD President Sharri Edenfield asked the YLD Law-Related Education (LRE) Committee to assist the State Bar Law-Related Education Committee's iCivics Steering Committee with this program. The YLD LRE Committee has done a stellar job to ensure that the inaugural year of the iCivics Program successfully assigned lawyers who are willing to work alongside educators in Georgia's public school classrooms. This was a wonderful example of

how this division of the State Bar worked to support the mission of the president to reinforce civics education in our schools. We hope to inspire students to be active participants in our democracy and to do so with the aid of a lawyer serving as a classroom advisor and role model.

This was a wildly successful program which is expanding from the initial five counties during the next Bar year. I want to thank **Shiriki Cavitt** as the co-chair of the State Bar's iCivics Steering Committee for all that she did to lead the volunteer lawyer coordination efforts throughout the state.

Almost 70 years ago, the YLD was created in order to further the original goals of the charter members of the State Bar, along with fostering among the members of the Bar the principles of duty and service to the public, and to encourage the interest and participation of younger members of the State Bar. I commend the YLD members' dedication and commitment to hard work on worthwhile projects that continuously provide service to the citizens of Georgia. Job well done, YLD! YLD



President Patrise M. Perkins-Hooker with YLD Leadership Academy members. (L-R) Kimberly Bourroughs, Brock Brockington, Perkins-Hooker and Liz Brown.

# Committee Updates

## Litigation

By Ryals Stone and Kevin Patrick

In keeping with its goals of involving young litigators and law students throughout our entire state, the Litigation Committee took its “War Stories” Lecture Series on the road this year.

The first installment was held at the University of Georgia School of Law on March 18. We were honored that Hon. **Ronnie Joe Lane** spoke to us. He received his undergraduate degree from the U.S. Military Academy and earned his law degree from the University of Georgia. Lane served with distinction in the Pataula Judicial Circuit from 2001 until 2014, and he has also served as the director of the Judicial Qualifications Commission. Lane shared valuable insights about the importance of professionalism, as well as humorous anecdotes about avoiding distracting tendencies, such as “dehydration crisis,” during oral arguments.

On April 2, we hosted our second part of this series at Emory University School of Law. We had the pleasure of welcoming **Lloyd Bell** of the Bell Law Firm. Bell received his undergraduate degree from the Virginia Military Institute and earned a law degree from Mercer University Walter F. George School of Law. He began his legal career with the U.S. Army JAG Corps. Now, Bell devotes his practice to representing seriously injured people. He has been lead-counsel in more than 100 jury trials, successfully argued cases before the Supreme Court of Georgia, and recovered numerous multi-million dollar verdicts. Bell told us about some of his most memorable trials, such as one stemming from a hotel-shooting, and the importance of preparation and hard work.



(L-R) Dylan Kidd, Patrick Seamens, Melissa Weems, Beau Goodrick, Emily Labutta, Lacey Elmore, Kristen Cawley, Kevin Patrick, Jeni Lamb, Baylie Fry, Lloyd N. Bell, John David Hadden, Jake Evans, Ryals Stone and Win Cook at War Stories, Part II at Emory University School of Law.

Our third lecture took place at Mercer University Walter F. George School of Law on May 7 with Prof. **Charles Adams III**, a distinguished Mercer graduate. Adams is a member of the Brainerd Currie Honor Society and a recipient of the school’s Meritorious Service Award. He has also served as an adjunct professor since his graduation and is noted for his many legal treatises, like the *Georgia Law of Torts* and *Georgia Law of Torts: Preparation for Trial*. Adams has also been the editor-in-chief of the *Journal of Southern Legal History* since 1996. We enjoyed hearing about his wide-ranging experiences in the practice of law. Adams truly has a wealth of knowledge for younger attorneys to guide them through their practices.

The co-chairs, **Jake Evans** and **James Stone**, deserve to be recognized for all of their commitment, hard work and tireless planning for this series.

We hope that all of you will be able to attend them again next year. For more information on the Litigation Committee, please contact the co-chairs, **Kevin Patrick**, kpatrick@gmlj.com or **Ryals Stone**, ryalsstone@booneandstone.com.

## Ethics & Professionalism

by Ami Koldhekar Rodrigues and Neal Weinrich

The 2014-15 YLD Ethics & Professionalism Committee Co-Chairs, **Neal Weinrich** and **Ami Koldhekar Rodrigues**, would like to extend their thank you to all YLD members who participated and contributed to this year’s Ethics & Professionalism Committee events and activities. We had an especially successful year hosting a happy hour, three CLEs and numerous lunch meetings, all with exceptional turnout. Thank you to everyone who participated. We invite you to continue with the Ethics & Professionalism Committee’s activities and events for the upcoming 2015-16 year.

Additionally, we are proud to announce that the recipient of the 11th annual Ethics & Professionalism Award is **Andrea Megan Wood** of Koufman, Levine & Greiner LLP in Atlanta. Wood is described by her nominator as, “an exceptional individual who displays fairness, integrity, diligence, good judgment and professionalism on both a personal and professional level.” Wood received her award at the State Bar’s Annual Meeting on June 19.

## Juvenile Law

by Araceli Jacobs



(L-R) Jill Roth and Ashley Barnett at the 2015 Georgia Juvenile Defenders Conference at Atlanta’s John Marshall Law School.

From May 4-6, the Juvenile Law Committee participated in the 2015 Georgia Juvenile Defenders Conference held at The Blackburn Center at Atlanta’s John Marshall Law School. This three-day conference convened about 50 juvenile defenders from several jurisdictions throughout the state. The conference included training and materials developed by the National Juvenile Defender Center

entitled Juvenile Training Immersion Program.

“Both the material presented and the ability of the public defenders to be together, many both day and night, provided a unique and excellent opportunity for growth and learning,” said **Nicki Vaughan**, Hall County Public Defender and chair of the Child Protection & Advocacy Section of the Bar.

“I hope that this is just the beginning of the development of juvenile defense. New knowledge is constantly being gained by researchers in the areas of brain development and maturation, as well as the effects of trauma on adolescents,” she continued.

Juvenile Law Committee Members **Jill Roth**, **Victoria Starks**, **Ashley Barnett** and **Aisha Success** attended the conference and provided service to the overall administration of the event.

This conference was presented by the Georgia Public Defenders Standards Council with support from The Annie E. Casey Foundation, Child Protection & Advocacy Section, Atlanta’s John Marshall Law School, Barton Juvenile Defender Clinic at Emory University School of Law, the National Juvenile Defender Center, the Georgia Association of Counsel for Children and the Juvenile Law Committee of the State Bar. YLD

## Congratulations to the Northview High School Mock Trial Team for their second place finish at the NHSMTC on May 16 in Raleigh, N.C.!

As the 2015 Georgia HSMT Champion, Northview (Johns Creek) made their first ever trip to Nationals, earning a spot in the Championship Round against Nebraska by amassing a 4-0 record in the preliminary rounds against Wyoming, Idaho, Colorado and Iowa.

Thanks to all the YLD members who gave their time to the competition this past season. As a program of the YLD, the Mock Trial Competition is one of the most visible public outreach opportunities for both the YLD and State Bar. Without the volunteers’ time, this invaluable opportunity for Georgia’s students wouldn’t be possible.

Visit [www.georgiamocktrial.org](http://www.georgiamocktrial.org) for more information about the program.



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## Affiliate Updates

### Glynn County YLD

by *Melissa Cruthirds*

The Glynn County YLD hosted its monthly networking event at Nazzaro's Ristorante Italiano on St. Simons Island on May 7, 2015. The event was sponsored by Addington McBride Financial Services, and attendees learned about the importance of implementing a financial plan at this stage in their career.

### Macon YLD

by *Terri Benton*

In support of the Georgia Legal Food Frenzy, in April the Macon YLD organized a kick-off networking event. The event's focus was to ensure that the Macon young lawyers knew the Georgia Legal Food Frenzy had begun and how easy it was to participate for such a worthy cause. With more than 15 attorneys in attendance, the Macon YLD helped ensure that the Georgia Legal Food Frenzy was a success.

### Savannah YLD

by *Bryan Schivera*

The Savannah young lawyers continued their 2015 calendar with a full schedule of events. In March, the YLD board put their full culinary expertise on display while volunteering at the Ronald McDonald House to cook dinner for the residents. Also in March, the YLD hosted a pre St. Patrick's Day happy hour at Zunzi's 2.

On April 10, the Savannah YLD hosted a cocktail hour for law students at the Top Deck Bar of the Cotton Sail Hotel. Students from Savannah Law School and Mercer Law School were in attendance. Young lawyers and current law students networked and socialized while enjoying an incredible view of the Savannah River.

The exciting events continued on May 29 as the Savannah YLD hosted its 10th annual Charity Golf Tournament at The Landings to benefit the Chatham County Guardian Ad Litem Program. The golf tournament is the Savannah YLD's signature event and raised \$8,000 for the Guardian Ad Litem program last year. On that same day, the YLD hosted a Tailgate in the Park to coincide with the Savannah College of Art and Design's spring commencement concert in Forsyth Park.

The Savannah YLD continues to make plans for summer events, including a happy hour to welcome summer associates. In July, the YLD will also host its second annual alumni happy hour, which allows more experienced members of the local bar to relive their "young gun" glory days. Anyone interested in joining the Savannah YLD should contact Membership Chair **Kate Lawson** at [klawson@huntermaclean.com](mailto:klawson@huntermaclean.com). YLD

## The YLD "Let the Good Times Roll" in New Orleans

by *ShaMiracle Johnson*

With a record turnout, more than 100 young lawyers travelled from Georgia to New Orleans, La., for the YLD Spring Meeting, held March 19-22. The meeting kicked off with a CLE that explored the *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision in its historical and contemporary contexts. *Plessy* originated in New Orleans and led to the Supreme Court's 1896 decision allowing states to enact legislation requiring persons of different races to use "separate but equal" segregated facilities. The CLE was coordinated by the YLD Minorities in the Profession Committee. **Morgan Clemons** moderated a thought provoking panel on the professional obligation lawyers have to promote equal application of the laws, championing access to justice and professionalism. The panelists included **Avarita L. Hanson**, executive director, Chief Justice's Commission on Professionalism; Prof. Emeritus **Lawrence N. Powell**, Department of History, Tulane University; and Prof. **Robert St. Martin Wesley**, LOCHEF Professor of Legal Ethics & Professional Responsibility, Tulane University Law School. At the conclusion of the CLE, Keith Plessy and Phoebe Ferguson, decedents of the litigants and founders of the Plessy and Ferguson Foundation for Education, provided insight regarding steps the foundation is currently taking to ensure that all the children of New Orleans receive equal access to education and the arts.

YLD members continued to learn about the city of New Orleans, while participating in the service project, a scavenger hunt that benefited Tipitina's Foundation. Split into teams, for three hours YLD members strolled the French Quarter in search of historical monuments, interesting eateries and traditional New Orleans flare. A monetary donation from the YLD was made to Tipitina's Foundation on behalf of the winning team. YLD members continued their exploration of the city while bonding over dinner at Broussard's and Pat O'Brien's, where the YLD had its own patio!



YLD members enjoy the view from the balcony of Pat O'Brien's in New Orleans, La., at the 2015 Spring Meeting.

During the General Session, YLD President **Sharri Edenfield** provided a recap of the programming that occurred during her presidency. YLD members were thrilled to learn that the YLD Signature Fundraiser, "Stars and Stripes," raised more than \$60,000 for the Augusta Warrior Project. **Heather Riggs** reported that the YLD has increased its presence with the ABA by sending delegates to represent Georgia at the ABA's annual, fall, midyear and spring meetings. **Sean Ditzel** provided an update on the Law Schools Fellows Program. A number of committee chairs gave reports on their success, programming and future events. Following the General Session, a Bar Leadership Roundtable Lunch was held for YLD members who are interested in holding leadership roles in the YLD. A special thank you to the YLD Spring Meeting Sponsors listed below. For more information regarding future meetings, please visit [www.georgiayld.org](http://www.georgiayld.org). YLD

### Meeting Sponsors

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#### Candidates for YLD Secretary

Philip Catalano  
Rizza O'Connor  
Shalamar Parham  
Kevin Patrick

# Tips for a Young Lawyer

by Ira L. Foster, Managing Attorney, Macon Regional Office, Georgia Legal Services Program



Starting the practice of law can be stressful whether you are beginning your career in a large firm, government agency, or hanging up your shingle and starting a solo practice. Most experienced attorneys will generally say that it will take between three to five years for a new attorney to become comfortable practicing law. As in any profession, a key for professional development is being patient and understanding that it will take time to gain experience. The following are some general tips that may help in the transition process for a beginning lawyer.

- 1. Always adhere to the State Bar of Georgia Rules of Professional Responsibility.** Always try to represent your clients to the best of your ability by using sound judgment and by being as professional and as ethical as possible. Do not use risky legal tactics or make questionable judgment decisions. Your character and reputation will help you a lot as your legal career develops. Never underestimate the influence that your demeanor, attitude and appearance will have on your clients, juries and judges. Try to be confident and poised, yet humble. Also, remember that disbarred lawyers cannot practice law.
- 2. Get involved.** Look for opportunities to get involved with your local bar associations and the State Bar of Georgia. Also, look for opportunities to get involved with your local bar's Young Lawyers Division and with the State Bar Young Lawyers Division. By getting involved with local and state bar activities, you will develop networking friendships and relationships. Those friendships and relationships can help, for example, with referral of clients, insight and guidance on legal issues, and with career advancement opportunities.
- 3. Give back.** It is a privilege to be a lawyer. Take pro bono cases and do community service. When you give back, you will feel rewarded for making a difference. There are many people in society who need a lawyer. For various reasons, some of those individuals cannot afford a lawyer. Taking pro bono cases will help your professional development. Taking pro bono cases will also allow for you to help someone who is less fortunate and who is in need of legal assistance. Doing community service and giving back will also help with your professional development and growth. For example, volunteer and help coach a High School Mock Trial team, attend and participate in career day programs at schools in your community, and organize self-help community legal presentations.
- 4. Prepare as much as possible.** Always know and understand the facts of your cases. Know and understand the rules and procedures for the various courts of law. When preparing a case for court or when you are working on a complicated case, be prepared to work long week day hours and on the weekend if necessary. Be prepared to work long hours if that is what's necessary to provide the best possible representation for your clients. It is better to be over prepared than to be under prepared. Remember that you have taken an oath to represent your client to the best of your ability. As you develop as a lawyer, working long hours and taking extra steps when necessary will help you provide the best legal service you can to your clients, and it will help you to become the best lawyer that you can be.
- 5. As your career develops, become a mentor to a lawyer with less experience than you.** As you develop in your career, try to support and help lawyers who have less experience than you do. In order for our profession to become the best that it can be, it is important that we encourage and support each other. Take time to share with younger lawyers some of the helpful experiences and knowledge that you gain from older and more experienced lawyers. The legal profession is at its best when lawyers work together and support each other for the common good of the legal profession. YLD

## Trade Names vs. Trademarks: The Important Difference

by Sonia Lakhany

One of the most common misconceptions my clients are surprised to learn is that their registration as a limited liability company or corporation with a state's secretary of state does not provide them trademark protection. Indeed, filing documents with the secretary of state constitutes only a business trade name. Trademark protection, on the other hand, is established only through registration with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO).

When you file documents with the secretary of state, you are establishing only the name of the actual business entity at the time of incorporation. This is the company's "official" name. Incorporating with the secretary of state gives a company the right to use its name for official purposes, such as banking, on legal documents and for tax purposes. You may or may not purchase a domain name at the time you incorporate, but neither of these is a trademark.

A trademark, on the other hand, is a particular word, phrase, symbol, design or a combination thereof (such as a logo) that is the public-facing brand of the company. A company uses its trademark in business (known as "in commerce") in connection with selling its goods or services. As I mentioned above, registrations for federal (nationwide) trademark protection are submitted to the USPTO. A company may, alternatively, elect to only apply for trademark protection in its own state, in which case this would be done through a local state office. Lastly, for companies with international brands, trademark protection can be applied for with specific countries individually. To determine whether state or federal trademark protection is right for your company, or if you have any other questions about trademarks, please contact **Sonia Lakhany** at [sonia@lakhanylal.com](mailto:sonia@lakhanylal.com). YLD



## YLD Summer Meeting

Aug. 20-23, 2015

The Ritz-Carlton Lodge,  
Reynolds Plantation

Greensboro, Ga.

# A Year in Pictures



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1. The 2014-15 YLD Executive Committee at a retreat in July 2014.
2. (L-R) Sean Ditzel, Philip Catalano and Yari Lawson at the Glenn Hotel Sky Lounge after the Committee Chair Orientation on Friday, July 25, 2014.
3. Alex Brown and his wife, Meredith, enjoy dinner at Columbia in Ybor City, Fla., at the 2014 YLD Summer Meeting.
4. (L-R) Jana Edmondson-Cooper, Sarah Kjellin and Whitney Knox at the 2014 YLD Summer Meeting in St. Pete Beach, Fla.
5. (L-R) Atlanta Volunteer Lawyer Foundation representatives Martin Ellin, Michael Lucas, Julia Black and Liz Whipple, YLD Family Law Committee Co-Chairs Katie Kiihnl, Jamie Perez and Kelly Reese, YLD President Sharri Edenfield, YLD President-Elect Jack Long and YLD Immediate Past President Darrell Sutton at the ninth annual Supreme Cork at 5 Seasons Brewing Westside on Oct. 16, 2014.
6. (L-R) Kristie Piasta, YLD President Sharri Edenfield, Bobby Lee Cook, past State Bar President Gerald Edenfield (2007-08) and Ed Piasta at the 2014 YLD Fall Meeting on Jekyll Island.
7. (L-R) Past YLD presidents Kendall Butterworth (2000-01), Elena Kaplan (2007-08), Michael Geoffroy (2010-11), Damon Elmore (2005-06), YLD President Sharri Edenfield and past YLD presidents Bill Barwick (1984-85), Donna Barwick (1988-89) and Stephanie Kirijan Cooper (2011-12) at the 2014 YLD Holiday Party.
8. 2015 Leadership Academy participants team up for trivia during Session 1. (L-R) James "Jed" Douglas, Shawn Hoover, Liz Brown and Currie Hitchens.
9. 2015 Leadership Academy participants with Gov. Nathan Deal at the Capitol during Session 2.
10. YLD Affiliates Conference and Solo/Small Firm Conference on Feb. 21, 2015, at Mercer University Walter F. George School of Law. (L-R) Rustin Smith, Ashley Browning, Carrie Trotter, State Bar Law Practice Management Program Director Natalie Kelly, Rachel Wilson and Zack Tumlin.
11. 2015 Leadership Academy participants Shariyf Muhammad and Samuel Broucek help with a beach cleanup service project on Tybee Island during Session 5 on May 25, 2015.



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## Editor's Block

## He Said

by Yari D. Lawson

I joined the YLD because I believed, and still do, that merely showing up to the office every morning as a lawyer did not sufficiently satisfy my career purpose. Surely, there are times like the one when a depressed widow in a small middle Georgia town contacted me because she had no idea how to approach an insurance company regarding her deceased husband's life insurance policy. I spent a couple of days speaking with this gentle lady and at the conclusion she asked me how much she owed. When I told her the cost was nothing, she cried and stated that she thought all "lawyers were jerks." Days later, I attended

a lecture on how strong leadership within the legal profession bolsters public perception about the profession. That week dynamically reinforced my desire not only to practice law, but to also assist on issues affecting the profession.

One issue that I care deeply about is diversity in the legal profession. I believe this important because I have witnessed firsthand the distrust between attorney and client based on nothing other than cultural unfamiliarity or even more fundamental, a language barrier. Through my service to the YLD, along with **Adriana Sola Capifali** and **Ivy Cadle**, we introduced the Diversity Dinner, featuring our state's top judges and bar leaders, as a session of the YLD Leadership Academy. The Diversity Dinner has been included as a session ever since. I was even more humbled when my good friend **Jonathan Poole** asked me, for consecutive years, to serve as leadership with the increasingly popular Legal Food Frenzy.

The unique benefit about service to the bar is that it provides a truly compassionate counselor the opportunity to improve our profession. Despite our best efforts to advance access to justice to all, there may be times when legal aid is not available to a poor single mother who needs to petition the courts to enforce critical provisions of a divorce decree against a non-compliant father and ex-spouse. Some day, a young lawyer will start a Family Law Clinic to tackle such a problem. Sometimes, the help we can provide just to thank our first responders, by offering free wills and basic estate advice is a big deal. **Brandon Elijah** and **Katie Willett** have made the Wills Clinic an especially important initiative.

I am eternally fond of every memory that I have as a member of the YLD and every relationship forged. I am excited that the heritage of leadership and service championed through the YLD will continue to strengthen our profession for future practitioners and current ones. More importantly, I am proud that through the YLD, ours has been a commitment to more than just the profession. After all and contrary to the belief of some attorneys, ours is not a profession about lawyers, but about the people we serve. YLD

## She Said

by Rizza O'Connor

As I reflect on this past year as co-editor of *The YLD Review*, and as I approach the five-year mark since I graduated from law school, it really hits me how quickly time passes and how short the time is during which we have to make an impact. In my relatively short time as a lawyer, there have been humble teaching moments, occasions of anger and frustration, rushes of intense excitement, and periods of satisfaction and fulfillment. It is difficult to balance all of the responsibilities that we bear while also meeting our professional goals. However, I feel safe in saying that members of the YLD have made good use of their time this past year. Through the leadership of President **Sharri Edenfield** the YLD has created or strengthened a number of programs and initiatives this year. Here are a few highlights from this amazing year:

**Succession Planning Pilot Program** – The YLD recently instituted the Succession Plan Challenge. The inspiration for this program was a concern about the transition of a lawyer's practice to a younger generation. This is especially concerning in rural areas or small towns where there are not many lawyers servicing a community. Attorneys in the baby boom generation have begun to retire or slow down and may be reluctant to fully retire because of the lack of younger lawyers to succeed them. At the same time, younger attorneys may be hesitant to move to a small town because of the uncertainty of business or ability to make a living. The YLD along with Georgia law schools have created a Succession Planning Pilot Program aimed at linking new and recent law school graduates with seasoned attorneys. The goal is for younger attorneys to work and gain experience from older attorneys so that the younger attorney can eventually assume leadership of the practice.

**Military Support** – The YLD took on a number of projects this year to support our veterans. First, the YLD provided pro bono legal clinics at VA Medical Centers to assist veterans in civil practice areas like family law, consumer issues and estate planning. Next, the YLD, in partnership with the State Bar at the Midyear Meeting in Atlanta, put on a VA Accreditation CLE which enabled attorneys to become certified to represent veterans on VA appeals. Lastly, the YLD Signature Fundraiser, held in Atlanta on Feb. 28, raised approximately \$60,000 for the Augusta Warrior Project which will use the money to connect warriors with resources to find housing, employment or education opportunities.

I look forward to the YLD continuing to allow us young lawyers to maximize our impact on our profession and state in the limited time we have to do so. As I look back on my first five years as a lawyer, my only regret is that I did not become involved with the YLD sooner. When I attended the YLD's Spring Meeting in 2013, little did I know that that meeting would foster a future love for this organization and its members. I hope you will be encouraged to join in on a YLD event or committee meeting in the future. YLD



## Editor's Block