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## From the President

# What I've Learned So Far as YLD President



**Veronica Rogusky Cox**

As we move past the midpoint of the Bar year and into spring, I've found myself reflecting on what this role has taught me so far. Serving as president of the Georgia Young Lawyers Division has been an honor, but it has also been a lesson in leadership, perspective and gratitude.

## People, Not Programs

First, I've learned that the YLD is powered by people, not programs.

Our calendars are full of CLEs, service projects, leadership meetings and networking events, but what truly makes the YLD work is the commitment of its members. Young lawyers who show up after long days in court. Committee leaders who take on extra responsibilities without recognition. Local affiliates who keep momentum going across every corner of the state. Titles and agendas matter, but the heart of the YLD is its people. Watching that dedication up close has been one of the most rewarding parts of this role.

## Early Involvement

Second, I've learned that involvement early in your career changes everything.

Many of us joined the YLD looking for CLE hours or a networking opportunity. What we found instead were mentors, ad-

vocates, collaborators and lifelong friends. The YLD offers young lawyers something that can be hard to find in practice: a place where your voice matters. At a time when many young lawyers feel uncertain or isolated, the YLD provides community and confidence. It reminds us that we are not navigating this profession alone.

## Listening

Third, I've learned that leadership doesn't require having all the answers.

Stepping into this role, I quickly realized that effective leadership is less about direction and more about listening. The best ideas often come from those closest to the work, from committee members, local affiliates and first-time volunteers. My role has often been to clear obstacles, suggest pivots, amplify voices and trust the process. The YLD thrives when leadership is shared, collaborative and inclusive.

## Impact on Georgia

Fourth, I've learned how deeply the YLD impacts Georgia communities.

Our service initiatives have real consequences for real people. Whether it's pro bono efforts, public service projects, or outreach to law students and the newly admitted, the YLD plays a critical role in

The YLD Review seeks to provide a forum for the discussion of subjects pertaining to the regulation of the legal profession and improving the quality of legal services, as well as other matters of general interest to Georgia lawyers. The statements, views and the opinions expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of State Bar of Georgia, its officers, Board of Governors, sections, committees or staff.

From the Editors

## Past, Present, Future



**T. Alec  
Chappell**



**Carlos  
Fernández**

advancing access to justice and strengthening public trust in the legal profession. Young lawyers are often on the front lines of these efforts, and the impact is undeniable. This is something we should celebrate loudly and often.

### Leading by Celebrating

Fifth, I've learned that celebration itself is a form of leadership.

In a profession that often emphasizes what we haven't done or what still needs fixing, pausing to recognize success matters. Celebrating the YLD means acknowledging progress, effort and growth. It means highlighting member achievements, thanking volunteers and taking pride in the work we do together. Recognition fuels engagement, and engagement fuels impact.

As we head into spring, I encourage every YLD member to reflect on what this organization has meant to you. If you've been attending events, consider stepping into a leadership role. If you've been leading quietly, know that your work is seen and appreciated. If you've been on the sidelines, there has never been a better time to get involved.

The YLD is more than a division of the State Bar of Georgia. It is a training ground for leaders, a support system for young lawyers and a force for good in our profession and our communities.

I am proud of what we've accomplished so far, excited about what's ahead, and grateful for every member who makes this work possible. <sup>YLD</sup>

*Veronica Rogusky Cox is senior associate general counsel at OpenText.*

**In this edition we reflect on the past,** the present and the future. What can we learn from the past? Are we where we want to be in the present? And how can we work toward the future to which we aspire?

As we write this on Feb. 1—more than a month into 2026!—the State Bar's Midyear Meeting is in the rearview mirror, and we look forward to the YLD Spring Meeting, April 24-26 in Asheville. Other events—the 19th Annual Signature Fundraiser on Feb. 28, not one but two kickball games (Savannah on March 7 and Decatur on March 21), and the Legal Writing Summit on March 13—are in our future, but for you, the reader, they likely are in the past. We hope you enjoyed them.

Ever since YLD President Veronica R. Cox assumed office, she has emphasized that this Bar year is the 20th anniversary of the Leadership Academy Program and the 15th anniversary of the Legal Food Frenzy Competition. These programs epitomize the YLD: the first, a unique training and networking opportunity for young lawyers who aspire to be leaders in the profession, and the second, a service project to provide meals to families in need around the state. We join Veronica in celebrating these anniversaries and honoring our organization's past.

On the flip side, we also focus in this issue on our present and future. In this issue, we invited blind submissions, listened carefully to the voices of our members and then used AI as an editorial tool to transform those insights into a cohesive article. This was not an exercise in replacing human judgment or authorship. It was a deliberate step toward expanding how we listen, how we synthesize ideas and how we communicate at scale. Like any meaningful innovation, it required curiosity, courage and trust in the process.

As young lawyers, we are builders. We inherit the wisdom of the past, take responsibility for the present and design the future we aspire to see. Our use of AI reflects that mindset. Technology is not something happening to our profession. It is something we can shape with intention, ethics and purpose. This issue asks us to reflect honestly on where we have been, assess where we stand today, and move forward with clarity and confidence. Progress does not arrive quietly. It comes through light, momentum and the willingness to lead before the path is fully visible.

Past, present and future converge in this moment. Society and technology continue to reshape how lawyers think, work and lead, and artificial intelligence now stands as a defining force in that evolution. Whether it becomes a standard instrument of practice or transforms the legal system at its core will depend on how this generation chooses to engage with it.

As we look ahead, we draw strength from those who came before us. They faced uncertainty, navigated change and built enduring legacies through action and conviction.

The question now turns to each of us. How will you shape the future of the profession, and what legacy will you leave behind? <sup>YLD</sup>

*T. Alec Chappell is career law clerk for Hon. Edward J. Coleman III, U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Southern District of Georgia.*

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# The Young Lawyers Toolbox: Domestic Violence—Strangulation



**Meredith L.  
Layman**

**When I moved into a place on my own,** the best housewarming gift I received was a toolbox. By no stretch of imagination was I a carpenter, but I had the basics of what I needed for housekeeping and simple repairs. Whether you are a prosecutor, public defender, defense attorney, family law attorney or an attorney putting in your pro bono hours drafting protective orders, this article aims to equip you with the tools to combat the common misconceptions and hurdles you may encounter in your domestic violence cases.

## “She Doesn’t Have Any Marks”

Stop saying this. This line of thinking is demonstrably and scientifically refutable. The pressure required to constrict the natural flow of another’s blood or breath is less than the pressure it takes to pull the trigger on most firearms.<sup>1</sup> Approximately 50% of strangulation cases will not have marks<sup>2</sup> and skin tone/limitations in photographic technology can reduce visibility of scratches, redness or bruising in photos. There are a wide range of signs and symptoms of strangulation that can support an allegation of strangulation.<sup>3</sup> “She doesn’t have any marks” is the lowest form of the argument that can be made in this area of law. This statement signals a lack of knowledge of the science involved, a callous disregard for the lives impacted by acts of domestic violence and a serious lapse of professionalism in resolving matters of violence.

## Expect the Expected: Recantations

There are an infinite number of reasons a victim will not want to participate in the



prosecution of a case or not want anything to do with their strangler. Be prepared to go forward without their assistance.

## Protect Your Case

Use the rules of evidence as your sword and shield. Create a list of the evidence to tender. Knowing the exceptions and exemptions from hearsay can admit evidence without the need for a victim to testify. Note how each piece of evidence is coming in (certified business record, self-authenticating document, witness(es)). Think of the objections you are likely to draw and prepare a response. Limit the objections you draw and use them effectively to limit the strength of your opposing counsel’s case. Motions in limine will help narrow the scope of your issues in advance and each side will have a lay of the battlefield before trial.

Be innovative with your evidence/witness list. Get everything that is available to corroborate the events including: 911 calls, photos, videos, officer/detective testimony, 3rd party witnesses, opposing party statements, medical records, planners, diaries, experts. Support

your case with 404B and 413 motions, and forfeiture by wrongdoing to help the jury to understand the history between the parties that led to a strangulation incident and what the evidence or lack thereof is for the case.

A victim may decide to recant on the stand. In this instance, an expert on domestic violence, coercive control or the neurobiology of trauma can help explain this to a jury. When the victim takes the stand, be prepared with the impeachment materials whether it’s a video, audio recording, photos or notarized affidavit. Remember to be kind but objective in the pursuit of presenting the truth to a jury.

## Study Up

Learn the language. If you go to Italy, you learn Italian. If you go to France, you learn French. When you go to DV court, you learn the terms so everyone can communicate effectively. For example, know what *petechiae*<sup>4</sup> is and how to spell/pronounce it. Know how laypersons describe acts of violence and how the experts describe acts of violence. You are the interpreter relaying this information to opposing counsel, judges

and juries. Many will be surprised to know there is a difference between choking,<sup>5</sup> smothering,<sup>6</sup> drowning<sup>7</sup> and strangulation.<sup>8</sup>

### Brush Up on Anatomy

Have an understanding on how blood and oxygen naturally flow through the body's cardiovascular system. Knowing how this delicate system should work helps connect the dots on why a hand to the throat is not as harmless as it may seem to a layperson. It is vital to survival for oxygenated blood to get to your brain and deoxygenated blood to leave. The neurobiology of trauma and memory is a key point for attorneys to be aware of when survivors of trauma testify. It will impact on what the witness will be able to testify and how a jury will perceive and weigh their credibility. Prepare your witness order to frame understanding and make courtroom accommodations as appropriate and necessary.

### Study the Studies

Be prepared for *Daubert* hearings by disclosing the studies your experts rely on and read the literature yourself. It is unethical and illegal to strangle research participants, so be prepared to show that the method used to simulate strangulation is distinguishable and/or similar to the facts of your case. Recognize that the studies in pristine labs do not equate to the violent volatility of a victim fighting for their life during a strangulation attack—pressure and grip change. Be cognizant that 'volunteers' in neck pressure cuffs monitored by scientists<sup>9</sup> or scientists' review of 14 filmed hangings<sup>10</sup> do not account for the variables involved in the facts of your case. Critically analyze studies for sample size, statistical analysis and the *Daubert* factors. The timeline of your facts will never fit neatly into an infographic timeline; be prepared to explain why.

### Experts

*A witness who is qualified as an expert by knowledge, skill, experience, training, or education may testify in the form of an opinion or otherwise ...*<sup>11</sup>

The Georgia General Assembly has gifted attorneys with a broad definition of who has the potential to be qualified as an expert. This is somewhere you can get creative with the resources available to you. Your fact witnesses will likely have the experience or resume to qualify as an expert. Meet with your witnesses in advance to know the scope of their knowledge. Ask the right questions for your witnesses' knowledge to shine light on all aspects of the case. Before hiring experts, run through the facts of your case and evaluate who can be an expert.

Law enforcement is likely the first person who is going to meet with the strangulation survivor. Patrol officers may not always have the technical expertise to qualify,<sup>12</sup> but most departments have a specialized domestic violence unit staffed with experienced detectives who will more than likely have the expertise to successfully get through a *Daubert* hearing. Next, consider the medical personnel a survivor may have encountered: emergency medical technicians, doctors and nurses.

Strangulation cases bring up a variety of specialized legal issues. A common issue is presenting a recanting and/or traumatized victim to a jury. Local victim services and advocacy centers are a wealth of experts in this area. Even when the expert hasn't reviewed your case, they can talk about the cyclical nature of domestic violence, coercive control and neurobiology trauma. This gives the jury the framework to understand why the victim doesn't look/act how they think a victim should.

Your imagination, budget and O.C.G.A. § 24-7-702 are the limitations of your witness lists. Get creative and use what you have available.

### Educate, Educate, Educate

It starts with you and grows outward. Continued education is required to stay up to date on the newest information on the evolving nature of domestic violence cases and the medical science underlying strangulations. Sharing knowledge with our colleagues regardless of whether they are co-counsel, opposing counsel or sitting on the bench, protects victims' lives and defendants' rights. That can be as simple as a

conversation or asking the right questions in the courtroom.

Jury trials are a forced classroom experience where attorneys and experts give the public an education on the intricacy of these atrocities. From questionnaires and voir dire, you are in direct contact with the public evaluating for bias and base understanding of domestic violence. Voir dire to close, you are at the front of a classroom. Use the time and attention to educate.

Strangulations are uniquely dangerous assaults. The effects are not always immediately seen, can cause damage that can kill over time and additional strangulations are more likely to be fatal due to damaged blood vessels. We have an obligation to protect victims from further violence and defendants from wrongful convictions. This starts with thoughtful examination of the facts, thorough preparation of theories/arguments and collaborative education of everyone involved. YLD

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### Endnotes

1. With caution, see *Acute Arrest of Cerebral Circulation in Man*, Lieutenant Ralph Rossen (MC), U.S.N.R.. et. al., *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*. 1943 (seeing serious effects of strangulation in controlled neck pressure cuff with ~11psi of pressure).
2. See *A Review of 300 Attempted Strangulation Cases Part II: Clinical Evaluation of the Surviving Victim*, George McClane, M.D. et. al., *The Journal of Emergency Medicine*. 2001 (finding 50% of non-fatal strangulation victims had no visible markings).
3. See generally, the Training Institute on Strangulation Prevention Signs and Symptoms of Strangulation infographic produced from Strangulation in Intimate Partner Violence, Oxford University Press, Inc. 2009 (demonstrating a variety of physical evidence to look for to support an allegation of strangulation).
4. See *Petechiae*, Ailbhe McGrath et al., *The National Library of Medicine* (defining

# Continuing Legal Education: An Opportunity to Grow, Not Just a Box to Check



**Damon  
Elmore**

*This article originally appeared in Vol. 31, No. 3, of the Georgia Bar Journal.*

**Change often invites questions, and questions are healthy.** That is especially true when the change touches something as familiar and longstanding as our continuing legal education (CLE) requirements. With recent updates to the CLE rules now in effect, I wanted to share some broader context for the work, offer my thanks to those who contributed to it and reaffirm a core belief that remains unchanged: continuing legal education is essential to our mission, to our profession and to the public we serve.

First, a word of gratitude. The revisions to our CLE rules did not happen quickly or casually. They were the result of sustained collaboration among Bar leadership, staff across multiple departments, volunteer lawyers and, critically, our liaisons at the Supreme Court of Georgia. This work followed thoughtful dialogue, careful study and a shared commitment to ensuring that Georgia lawyers remain competent, prepared and worthy of the public's trust. I am grateful for the Court's engagement, for the time and care invested by everyone involved, and for the spirit of partnership that guided the process from start to finish.

I am confident that our changes reflect a continued belief that CLE is vital, paired with a recognition that it can and should evolve in ways that better serve lawyers and, in turn, the public. At its core, the mission of the State Bar of Georgia includes protecting the public and improving the quality of legal services. Continuing legal education sits squarely at the intersection of those goals. Lawyers practice in a dynamic en-

vironment. Laws change. Courts interpret and apply statutes differently over time. New ethical questions emerge. Practice norms evolve. CLE is one of the few structured mechanisms available to ensure that lawyers pause, reflect, learn and recalibrate throughout their careers.

No one suggests that CLE is perfect. In fact, that acknowledgment was central to this work. As noted in the Georgia Lawyer Competency Task Force Report, CLE is "far from perfect," but it remains "reasonably effective and reliable, especially when compared to the alternative." That alternative is not hypothetical. It would be a profession in which lawyers are left to learn on their own with an imbalance in access to resources or without shared standards or expectations. Few would argue that such a system better protects clients or strengthens public confidence in our courts.

It is also true, and worth saying honestly, that no clear empirical data exists proving a direct correlation between CLE requirements and lawyer competence. That reality is often cited, sometimes critically. But it deserves context. Designing a study that conclusively proves such a correlation would require a control group of lawyers who receive no continuing education and are then compared against those who do. That approach is neither practical nor responsible. Moreover, discipline statistics, which are sometimes offered as a proxy, measure rule violations and not preparedness, judgment, civility or familiarity with evolving law. Those qualities are central to competence, yet difficult to quantify.

What we can do, and what we have done, is listen to our members. In January 2023, the Bar surveyed its membership to better understand attitudes toward CLE and identify opportunities for improvement. More than 2,300 lawyers responded. That is not an insignificant sample. It represents lawyers from across practice types, firm sizes, geographic locations and stages of ca-

reer. The feedback was candid, constructive and informative.

The responses reinforced several key points. An overwhelming majority of lawyers believe it is important, even essential, to stay current in their practice areas. Many value CLE for learning specific topics, sharpening skills and adapting to changes in the law. Others are motivated, quite frankly, by the requirement itself. That reality is not a flaw. Requirements often create structure and accountability, especially in demanding professions. What resonated with me was that the survey also highlighted preferences for flexibility, access and relevance. Lawyers want CLE that fits into real lives and real practices.

Those realities shaped the recent rule changes. They aim to preserve the substance and seriousness of CLE while reducing unnecessary friction. They reflect an effort to balance rigor with practicality and standards with flexibility. They also reinforce areas that matter deeply to the profession and the public, including ethics, professionalism and practice competence.

Beyond formal instruction, CLE provides additional benefits that are harder to measure but no less important. It creates space for lawyers to gather, exchange ideas and learn from one another. Networking is not incidental to education. Conversations before and after programs, questions raised during panels and informal exchanges among colleagues all contribute to better lawyering. CLE also offers a forum for discussing how laws are applied in practice, not just how they appear on the page. That shared learning strengthens the profession.

It is also worth remembering that CLE serves lawyers at every stage of their careers. For newer lawyers, it reinforces foundational knowledge and professional norms. For experienced practitioners, it offers updates, perspectives and sometimes challenges. For those practicing in smaller firms or solo settings, CLE can be a vital connection to the broader profession.

Throughout this process, the guiding question was not whether CLE should exist, but how it could be improved. Some ideas were easy to implement. Others, though appealing in theory, proved impractical or inconsistent with our obligations. The result is not a perfect system, but a better one. And it is a system designed to continue evolving, informed by data, feedback and experience. The prior rules served the Bar and its members for many years. The changes reflect growth, reflection and adaptation.

As we move forward, our CLE regulation and programming teams will continue to evaluate participation, feedback and outcomes. Improvement is not a one-time event. It is an ongoing responsibility. We will also continue to work closely with the Court and with our members to ensure that CLE remains meaningful, accessible and aligned with our mission.

At the end of the day, the public expects lawyers to be informed, prepared and ethical. Judges expect lawyers to show up ready to advocate competently. Clients expect lawyers to understand the law as it is, not as it once was. Continuing legal education supports all those expectations. It reinforces the independence, integrity and effectiveness of our judicial system, and it helps maintain public confidence in the profession.

As we move forward under these updated rules, I encourage every Georgia lawyer to do more than simply comply. Engage. Choose CLE thoughtfully. Take it seriously. Seek out programs that stretch your thinking, sharpen your skills and deepen your understanding of both the law and your role as a professional. CLE is most valuable when approached not as a box to check but as an opportunity to grow.

Our profession depends on lawyers who remain curious, prepared and committed to excellence over the full arc of their careers. Continuing legal education is one of the clearest expressions of that commitment. When lawyers invest in learning, the benefits ripple outward, to clients, to courts and to the public we are sworn to serve. YLD

*Damon E. Elmore is the executive director of the State Bar of Georgia and served as president of the Young Lawyers Division from 2005-06.*

## Officers' Block

# If Lawyering Had Trading Cards, What Would Be Your Special Power?



**VERONICA ROGUSKY COX** | YLD President

Coalition Builder. Effect: Once per turn, rally lawyers toward a shared goal. All allied cards gain +2 Collaboration and +2 Morale.



**VIRGINIA C. JOSEY** | YLD President-Elect

Compassionate Trial Counselor. Effect: Uses experience, creativity and empathy to gain strategic advantage and improve outcomes for clients and colleagues. #1 Creative Strategy—Leverages trial experience to turn complex facts into persuasive arguments; #2 Empathic Advocacy—Builds trust and diffuses conflict through compassion and understanding; #3 Experience Under Pressure—Maintains clarity and judgment when stakes are highest.



**KINDALL BROWNING-RICKLE** | YLD Treasurer

I wish my special power was to be able to be in two places at once. But realistically, my special power is the ability to talk to people through really difficult situations.



**CALEB RATLIFF** | YLD Secretary

I would love to have the special power of being able to multiply time where I could be in two places at once!



**KENNETH MITCHELL JR.** | YLD Immediate Past President

I wish I could fly.



**T. ALEC CHAPPELL** | YLD Newsletter Co-Editor

I draw aggro from sovereign citizens who think they don't have to pay their mortgage because FDR suspended the gold standard in 1933 or whatever.



**CARLOS FERNÁNDEZ** | YLD Newsletter Co-Editor

Salsa Surge | Fire | Psychic | Tempo Control  
Effect: The user ignites the battlefield with rhythmic Cuban energy and commanding presence. Opponents lose timing and composure as momentum swings instantly to the user. Allies gain confidence and act with precision.

# Welcome to Chambers: Tips for Law Clerks



**T. Alec  
Chappell**

**Under federal law, judges “may appoint necessary law clerks[.]”<sup>1</sup>** But no statute defines a law clerk’s duties (beyond certain criminal statutes of general applicability to government employees). Every judge has different procedures, habits and expectations for law clerks. So how is a law clerk supposed to know what to do? This article offers a few pointers based on the Federal Judicial Center’s “Law Clerk Handbook: A Handbook for Law Clerks to Federal Judges” (4th ed.), which in turn refers to the Code of Conduct for Judicial Employees available on the U.S. Courts’ website.<sup>2</sup> And although the handbook was designed for federal law clerks, state court law clerks would do well to take note of them, too.

## Duty of Confidentiality

“Law clerks owe judges complete confidentiality in case-related matters,” meaning “[y]ou cannot say anything about a case that is not a matter of public record or otherwise permitted.”<sup>3</sup> Judges communicate through their written opinions and orders, and through their oral pronouncements in the courtroom. A law clerk should not offer their personal commentary on the judge’s views or attempt to explain the judge’s rulings. Some judges may permit their law clerks to communicate with the media and with attorneys, but even when it’s permitted, a law clerk should be circumspect and avoid substantive discussion. In no event should a law clerk give substantive legal advice.

## Outside Activities and the Appearance of Impropriety

A law clerk may participate in “civic, charitable, religious, professional, educational, cultural, avocational, social, fraternal, and



recreational activities, and may speak, write, lecture, and teach.”<sup>4</sup> But those outside activities must not “detract from the dignity of the court, interfere with the performance of official duties, or adversely reflect on the operation and dignity of the court or office the judicial employee serves.”<sup>5</sup> In particular, political activity, both partisan and non-partisan, is prohibited.<sup>6</sup> To avoid the appearance of impropriety, law clerks should refrain from discussing political matters on social media. They may chafe at these restrictions, but they should keep in mind the Supreme Court’s jurisprudence holding that although public employees may speak on matters of public concern, those rights must be balanced against the rights of the government, as an employer, to efficiently perform its public services.<sup>7</sup>

## Legal Writing

A law clerk’s primary responsibilities involve legal research and writing. Writing may encompass both internal memos to prepare the judge for court and opinions and orders that are published on the court’s public docket. Although judges have differ-

ent styles, in general law clerks should write “succinctly, clearly, and precisely” and should avoid “[u]nnecessarily abstract or complex words and phrases, flowery language, or literary devices.”<sup>8</sup> For additional advice on improving their legal writing, law clerks (all lawyers, really) should consult books such as Bryan Garner’s “Legal Writing in Plain English,” Ross Guberman’s “Point Made and Point Taken” and “Thinking Like a Writer” by Stephen V. Armstrong and Timothy P. Terrell. And, of course, all law clerks should get a copy of “The Elements of Style” by William Strunk Jr. and E.B. White.

## Conclusion

This article is by no means comprehensive, so law clerks should familiarize themselves with the “Law Clerk Handbook” for more detail on these and other topics. But generally, most law clerk responsibilities are matters of common sense. Dress professionally. Maintain a neutral demeanor in the courtroom. Be polite when you encounter members of the public in the courthouse. Know the facts of each case and research the law thoroughly. Above all, remember that you

are a public servant, that your actions reflect on your judge and that your integrity is vital to public trust in the judiciary. <sup>YLD</sup>

*T. Alec Chappell is career law clerk for Hon. Edward J. Coleman III, U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Southern District of Georgia.*

## Endnotes

1. 28 U.S.C. §§ 156, 712, 752, 794.
2. Code of Conduct for Judicial Employees, United States Courts, <https://www.uscourts.gov/administration-policies/judiciary-policies/ethics-policies/code-conduct-judicial-employees>.
3. *Law Clerk Handbook* § 2.2(A), p. 7.
4. Code of Conduct for Judicial Employees, Canon 4 (found in *Law Clerk Handbook*, p. 130).
5. *Id.*
6. Code of Conduct for Judicial Employees, Canon 5 (found in *Law Clerk Handbook*, p. 134).
7. *See, e.g.,* *Garcetti v. Ceballos*, 547 U.S. 410 (2006); *Connick v. Myers*, 461 U.S. 138 (1983); *Pickering v. Board of Education of Township High School District 205, Will County, Illinois*, 391 U.S. 563 (1968).
8. *Law Clerk Handbook* § 5.2(A), p. 82.

# Copying With Purpose: The Attorney's Most Underrated Skill



**Carlos  
Fernández**

**In law, copying is not only acceptable but essential, and the profession's strength comes from gathering, refining and rebuilding the best arguments from everywhere—even as the rest of society condemns imitation in certain areas of life.**

Society prefers originality. A rapper reuses a flow and their fan base abandons them for lack of creativity. A designer takes cues from a silhouette and loses credibility. And, God forbid a comedian tell a similar a joke. People place value in innovation and chastise imitation. But other corners of society are allowed to breathe easily around borrowed ideas. Perfumers copy notes and rebuild them into new scents. Producers sample legends and flip them into fresh anthems. Architects reuse forms, material and concepts to bring the past back to life. In those spaces, imitation becomes evolution.

Law lives closer to that second world. It rejects the myth of the lone genius and rewards the lawyer who casts the widest net. Great motions come from studying other great motions. Strong briefs stand on the bones of older victories. Arguments gain force when they carry pieces that have already survived pressure. Lawyers read, gather, lift and sharpen. Our work should not be in isolation.

Young lawyers should cast the widest net possible by:

- Clicking the 'filings' tab when reading case law on WestLaw or Lexis.
- Staying up to date with trial calendars and observing a trial.



- Looking into the underlying briefs of recent opinions.
- Watching oral arguments on the Court of Appeals or Supreme Court of Georgia websites.
- Asking the CLE lecturer/panel for their slides and documents used during the presentation.

Originality still matters, but in litigation it shows up differently. It appears in the edit, in the structure, in the timing, and in the precision of deciding what stays and what gets cut. The law does not fear familiar ideas. The law thrives on refined ones. A strong brief is a remix. A clean argument is a sample arranged correctly. A winning motion carries the rhythm of past success but speaks in a new voice. <sup>YLD</sup>

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# Advocacy Is a Foreign Language



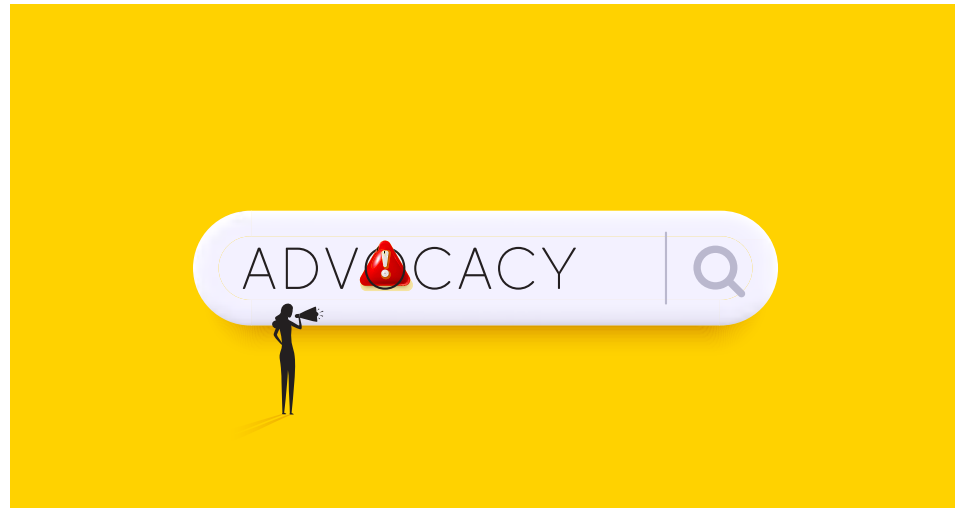
**Lisa  
Hernandez**

From as far back as I can remember, law was the goal. Even as a child who could not fully articulate what it meant to be a lawyer, I knew I wanted to help people, to speak up when others could not and to navigate systems that often feel intimidating or inaccessible. As a first-generation attorney, I did not grow up with a clear picture of what the practice of law looked like. I knew the destination, but not the path. And furthermore, I could not have predicted that a study abroad experience in a small town in southern France would quietly shape how I practice law more than 20 years later.

During college, I studied abroad in Annot, France, a small, historic village in the Alpes-de-Haute-Provence region of southern France. The village is surrounded by mountains and far removed from the pace of major cities as it is known for its narrow streets, stone buildings and strong sense of local community. Daily life offers an immersive setting where time unfolds slowly and traditions remain deeply rooted. I quickly realized that my academic exposure had not prepared me for the realities of navigating conversations, routines and expectations outside of the classroom.

As a result, I experienced something entirely new as the feeling of being capable but struggling to be understood continued to manifest in my daily interactions. I often knew what I wanted to say but expressing it clearly and confidently was not always easy. Conversations required patience and at times I felt underestimated or dismissed due to the lack of fluency. I became acutely aware of how much power language carries and how disempowering it can feel to lack fluency in the dominant system around you.

At the time, those challenges felt like obstacles. With the benefit of hindsight, I now recognize them as lessons that followed me long after the experience was complete.



Living in Annot forced me to listen more carefully, to pay attention to tone, body language, and context and to slow down my responses. I learned patience not only with others but myself as well. I learned how easily hesitation or imperfect expression can be mistaken for a lack of intelligence or credibility. I also gained insight into how systems tend to favor those who are most comfortable navigating them.

Those realizations stayed with me as I moved forward, eventually becoming a lawyer and later practicing on the plaintiff's side of personal injury law. Over time, I began to see clear parallels between my experience abroad and the experiences of many of my clients. People who come to me are often navigating unfamiliar legal systems during some of the most difficult moments of their lives. They are overwhelmed, intimidated and uncertain whether their stories will be believed or even heard. Much like I once felt in France, they know what happened to them but struggle to communicate it effectively in a system that feels foreign and unforgiving.

Through that lens, I have come to understand that advocacy is often an act of translation. My role is not simply to argue the law, but to translate lived experiences into a legal narrative. I am responsible for taking pain, confusion and fear, and presenting them in a way that courts, juries and insurance companies can understand.

The lessons I learned in Annot taught me the importance of listening carefully, asking thoughtful questions and never assuming that a lack of polish equates to a lack of truth.

Perhaps most importantly, the experience cultivated genuine empathy. I understand what it feels like to depend on someone else to help you navigate a system you do not fully understand. I understand the vulnerability that comes with placing your trust in another person's words. That understanding informs how I communicate with my clients, how I prepare them for the legal process and how seriously I take the responsibility of telling their stories accurately and respectfully.

Looking back now, I realize that studying abroad was not solely about becoming fluent in French. It was about learning humility, perspective and the human side of systems. It was about understanding how power operates through language, familiarity and access. As a first-generation attorney, I once believed that becoming a good lawyer followed a linear path of education, law school, bar passage and practice. While those milestones matter, they are not the whole story.

Some of the most formative lessons come from experiences outside traditional legal training. Experiences that teach us how it feels to struggle, to adapt and to persevere are sometimes the best educator. For young lawyers and law students, particularly those who may wonder whether their non-

traditional experiences count, I offer this reflection: *they do*. The skills that make us effective advocates often develop long before we ever step into a courtroom.

The lawyer I wanted to be as a child was shaped, in part, in a small town in southern France, while learning how to listen before I ever learned how to argue. That lesson continues to guide my practice today. YLD

*Lisa Hernandez is an attorney at the Fowler Firm in Atlanta.*

#### ► TOOLBOX, FROM PAGE 5

- petechiae [Say it with me now: puh-tee-kee-ia] as pinpoint non-blanching spots that measure less than 2 mm in size and affect the skin and mucous membranes).
5. See *Autopsy & Forensics Types of Injuries Asphyxia*, Lorenzo Gitto, M.D. et al, Pathology Outlines (defining choking as the “occlusion (partial or total) of the airways by foreign bodies”).
  6. *Id.* (defining smothering as a “mechanical obstruction of the mouth and nose by hands, soft or hard material, or mobile solids able to block airflow”).
  7. *Id.* (defining drowning as “asphyxia due to partial or complete submersion of the body in a liquid, resulting in liquid inhalation, impairment of pulmonary exchanges and oxygen deprivation”).
  8. *Id.* (defining strangulation as “asphyxia due to an external compression of the neck” and further subdivided into hangings, manual strangulation and ligature strangulation).
  9. With caution, see *Acute Arrest of Cerebral Circulation in Man*, Lieutenant Ralph Rossen (MC), U.S.N.R. et. al., Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease. 1943.
  10. With caution, see *Agonal Sequences in 14 Filmed Hangings With Comments on the Role of the Type of Suspension, Ischemic Habituation, and Ethanol Intoxication on the Timing of Agonal Responses*, Anny Sauvageau, M.D., American Journal Forensic Medical Pathology 2010.
  11. O.C.G.A. § 24-7-702(b).
  12. *Maxwell v. State* 348 Ga. App. 870, 825 S.E.2d 420 (2019) (allowing a patrol officer to testify on type of restraint hold the officer observed the defendant using and the effects of that hold based on his training).

### Split Decisions

## Clients would rather hire a lawyer who communicates well than one who is technically elite.

*Split Decisions puts lawyers on the record—no fence-sitting allowed. We ask a big question, and they respond with strongly disagree, disagree, agree or strongly agree (plus a little argument to make their case).*



#### COLIN ADEBAYO

Clients initially prioritize clear, relatable communication. However, as matters become complex and the stakes and risks are fully understood, most recognize that technical skill and judgment are decisive. So, effective communication attracts; technical excellence ultimately retains and protects the client.



#### MATT CAUDELL

A lawyer who communicates effectively helps their client understand risks, options and strategy, easing anxiety and avoiding surprises. While technical expertise is essential, its impact is limited if your client does not believe they've been heard or do not feel adequately informed about their case.



#### MARKUS RUSSELL

Clients want to talk to someone that listens and analyzes their legal problem. Most aren't looking for a technical “stud,” but one who will listen, provide guidance and fight their cause when necessary.



#### IYANA SMITH

Clients value being heard and knowing their matter is taken seriously. Expertise alone is not enough; clear communication and transparency are essential to a successful client experience.

THE  
GEORGIA YLD  
PODCAST



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## Member Spotlight | Northern District

Each quarter, The YLD Review highlights three of the Young Lawyers Division's most impactful members—one from each federal judicial district. Those featured in our Member Spotlight serve both the YLD and their local communities, excel in their practice and maintain the highest level of professionalism.

# Xander Melnick

### Tell us about yourself.

I am Georgia born and raised. I grew up in Marietta but spent much of my free time on farms in middle Georgia. Staying on theme, I earned my undergraduate degree from Mercer University and my law degree from Emory Law. Outside of work, you can find me at the gym, on the tennis court, on the golf course or spending time with my friends, fiancé and our two bunnies.

### What is your practice area?

My practice areas are local government defense and catastrophic torts. I am blessed to have parents that are lawyers and even more blessed to practice alongside one of them. I used to pretend that they were not a factor in my decision to become a lawyer. That was obviously not true.

### What is your involvement with the YLD?

While I was studying for the bar, a mentor encouraged me to attend a YLD event in Atlanta. He promised I would not regret it, and he was absolutely correct. My favorite part of being a YLD member is meeting new people and being inspired by my peers. The attorneys in the YLD are genuinely committed to improving our legal community, and it is an honor to contribute alongside them.

### What advice do you have for young lawyers?

While the Georgia legal community continues to grow to new levels, relationships still matter. It is far easier to burn a bridge than to build one, so treat every interaction with professionalism, humility and respect. The reputation you build early on will follow you for your entire career. YLD



PHOTO COURTESY OF XANDER MELNICK



# 2026 GEORGIA LEGAL FOOD FRENZY

## APRIL 20-MAY 1

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State Bar  
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## Member Spotlight | Middle District

Each quarter, The YLD Review highlights three of the Young Lawyers Division's most impactful members—one from each federal judicial district. Those featured in our Member Spotlight serve both the YLD and their local communities, excel in their practice and maintain the highest level of professionalism.

# Brandi M. Holland

### *Tell us about yourself.*

Hi, I'm Brandi! I like to use the example at trial that I grew up on a farm in South Georgia (Cochran), so there's nothing I can do about my accent (sorry about that). I graduated from Dodge County High School, then went on to graduate from undergrad at Augusta University. I went to Mercer Law, where I graduated in 2020.

### *What is your practice area?*

I have been a career prosecutor since I graduated from law school. I started at the Rabun County District Attorney's Office in the Mountain Circuit under George Christian. I worked there for almost two years, and it's still one of my favorite places in the world. I decided after a couple of years, it was time to come home. From there, I went to the Bibb County District Attorney's Office, followed by the Monroe County District Attorney's Office, before I landed at the Houston County District Attorney's Office in 2024. I was given the opportunity there to do what I've wanted to do since becoming a prosecutor, which is prosecute

sexual assault and crimes against children. I have been a special victims prosecutor since 2024, and I love what I do. Shoutout to my attorney-mentors Dawn Baskin and Sandy Matson—two wonderful role models who give me something to strive toward, who both very kindly taught (and continue to teach) a baby ADA how to practice. (And Ron Daniels, my mentor as a law student, who did in fact teach me how to be an attorney and who knows where I live and did not tell me to say this.)

### *What is your involvement with the YLD?*

My involvement with the YLD started as a law clerk. I went to my first YLD meeting while I was still a law clerk (thanks, Ron) and never looked back. Since then, I have co-chaired the YLD Wellness Committee, graduated from the YLD Leadership Academy and currently on the YLD's Board of Directors. The camaraderie within the YLD is truly like no other.

### *What advice do you have for young lawyers?*

The best piece of advice I received was to ask questions and watch others practice.



PHOTO COURTESY OF BRANDI M. HOLLAND

The practice of law is just that—*practice*. Watch from multiple perspectives in multiple fields and don't be afraid to ask questions. Go to court, watch hearings and trials, and enjoy learning more about what we do in the practice of law. YLD



## DON'T FORGET!

YLD committee membership expires at the end of the Bar year on June 30. Be sure to log in to your member portal at [www.gabar.org](http://www.gabar.org) and re-join one (or more!) of the 30 hardworking YLD committees. Membership is free of charge.

## Member Spotlight | Southern District

Each quarter, The YLD Review highlights three of the Young Lawyers Division's most impactful members—one from each federal judicial district. Those featured in our Member Spotlight serve both the YLD and their local communities, excel in their practice and maintain the highest level of professionalism.

# Andrew M. Ruberti

### *Tell us about yourself.*

I grew up on St. Simons Island and attended law school at Mercer, graduating in 2016. Practicing law just a few blocks from where I went to high school is a wonderful feeling. It is a privilege to wake up every day and use my skills to help people from my hometown.

### *What is your practice area?*

I practice in the areas of personal injury and wrongful death, as well as business litigation and general civil litigation. I ended up here because I wanted to help people during some of the worst times of their life. To me, this is how I can make the biggest impact in my community. Obviously, this profession requires that we are in an adversarial relationship with attorneys on the other side of the aisle from us. However, when I was clerking for then-Court of Appeals Judge (and now Supreme Court Justice) John Ellington—he told me “it doesn’t cost a thing to be nice.” Not only are these words to live by particularly in our profession, but I use this advice in every part of my life.

### *What is your involvement with the YLD?*

I have been involved with the local Brunswick YLD since I was a young attorney. I was the social chair from 2019-20 for our local chapter. What I love about the YLD is the memories made with the local attorneys who will be your colleagues and friends for the rest of your career. I think it’s important to see your colleagues as human beings—who deal with the same kind of problems in their daily lives both at the office and at home—especially if you are going to be adversarial to them. The YLD is instrumental in helping you see your colleagues in that light.

### *What advice do you have for young lawyers?*

Be willing to be a lifelong learner. The law is always changing no matter what area of the law you practice in, so you need to adapt regardless. In addition, you will get humbled in this profession—whether it’s by a judge, opposing counsel, your boss, a client or whomever—at least once, and likely more. For most young lawyers, they have probably excelled at every stage of their life prior to becoming



PHOTO COURTESY OF ANDREW M. RUBERTI

lawyers, so the first instance of failure—however slight—can be a punch in the gut. But what will make you a better lawyer—and person—is how you overcome failure and learn from your mistakes. YLD

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YOUNG LAWYERS DIVISION  
 STATE BAR OF GEORGIA

# Law in a Moment of Pressure



## Chat GPT

*At the State Bar of Georgia Midyear Meeting, The YLD Review Newsletter Editors conducted a quiet experiment.*

*Notecards were passed around the room. No instructions. No prompts. Just one request: write down whatever comes to mind when you think about the law. A word. A grievance. A fear. A purpose. A flaw. A calling.*

*Responses were collected without commentary.*

*Every card was entered into ChatGPT. What emerged was a mosaic, a composite. A reflection. A record. The ambition and the burnout. The pride and the pressure. The doubt and the discipline. A mosaic of what it means to be a young lawyer in 2026.*

*In the legal system, young lawyers are considered especially unproven.*

*In the state of Georgia, the dedicated young lawyers who serve their communities are members of an elite unit known as the Young Lawyers Division.*

*These are their stories.*

**The law is evolving. It is dynamic. And, at times, it feels deeply unfair.**

Across courtrooms, offices and communities, the same pressures keep surfacing. The systems lawyers rely on feel strained, while expectations placed on them continue to grow. Questions about the rule of law—its erosion, its enforcement and our fidelity to it—no longer feel abstract. Words like lawlessness, chaos and even constitutional crisis have become part of everyday professional vocabulary. Administrative proceedings with low evidentiary standards raise concerns about fairness. Standing orders collide with the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. Civility feels thinner. Ex parte communications still occur. Ethical “WTF moments” are no longer rare.

At the same time, justice itself feels unsettled. Conversations around racial sentencing disparities, access to justice, civ-

ics education and the lived experience of undocumented immigrants are no longer peripheral. Structural forces—white supremacy, patriarchy, capitalism—are being named openly, not as academic theory, but as realities shaping outcomes. The question “justice at any cost?” is no longer rhetorical; it is practical, moral and urgent.

Layered onto these concerns is technology advancing faster than the law can respond. Artificial intelligence (AI) is no longer hypothetical. Pro se litigants are using it. Lawyers are using it. Courts are confronting it in real time. Legal remedies lag behind innovation. Regulations struggle to keep pace. The profession debates how to check AI’s homework, how to maintain accuracy and what billing looks like in an AI world. Comparisons to Westlaw are inevitable—once resisted, now indispensable—but the stakes feel higher. Children’s images, creative works and personal data raise difficult questions about protection, accountability and harm in a digital environment.

Practice itself remains messy and pressured. Health care and insurance systems feel increasingly disconnected from reality. Taxes are often learned through experience rather than guidance. Contingency fees, PI runners and aggressive marketing practices test professional norms. Relationships with stubborn litigators must be managed even when cooperation feels elusive. Questions about inclusion persist: criminal law too? meaningful career paths for prosecutors? Why are there not more Latinas at State Bar of Georgia events?

These issues are not divorced from place or policy. Atlanta traffic and the lack of reliable transit affect access and quality of life. Rural attorney shortages raise serious access-to-justice concerns. Georgia tort reform continues to shape how cases are evaluated, litigated and resolved. Law does not operate in isolation from infrastructure, economics or state policy; it is shaped by them.

Despite these pressures, engagement still matters. Remote work has changed how law-

yers connect, and participation has declined in some spaces. Yet when programming is focused, intentional and relevant, people show up. There is a clear appetite for conversations that reflect the reality of modern practice rather than an idealized version of it. Better preparation for law students, clearer guidance for young attorneys and broader inclusion across practice areas are not abstract goals—they are practical needs.

Efficiency, while valuable, is not always the answer. Speed does not equal justice, and productivity does not always equal progress. The law requires judgment, deliberation and sometimes friction. Reducing everything to output risks weakening the legitimacy that gives the system its authority.

And through all of this—amid three-headed beasts, endless to-do lists and overwhelming complexity—lawyers remain human. They talk about cheese and pizza. Puerto Rico. Sports teams. Pop culture. These moments are not distractions. They are reminders that the profession is carried by people navigating pressure, responsibility and uncertainty at the same time.

The picture that emerges is not one of cynicism, but of strain. The law is being asked to do more, faster and under greater scrutiny than ever before. Young lawyers are navigating innovation, ethics, justice and practicality simultaneously. They are not rejecting the profession. They are wrestling with it.

That wrestling may be uncomfortable—but it is also a sign of engagement, accountability and care. And in moments like this, those qualities matter as much as any rule on the books. YLD

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*The State Bar neither endorses nor advocates for the use of ChatGPT in the practice of law. Artificial intelligence tools, like any tool, may contain errors or produce inaccurate information. Attorneys who choose to use these tools should independently verify citations, consider the Rules of Professional Conduct, and exercise sound judgment in their practice.*

# 2026 Midyear Meeting Recap



**Alex  
Clark**

The YLD kicked off 2026 with an outstanding State Bar Midyear Meeting at the Omni Hotel at The Battery Atlanta in January. The YLD enjoyed a productive weekend filled with continuing legal education, networking and informative meetings as we continued building momentum for the 2025-26 Bar year.

This is the 20th year of the YLD Leadership Academy, and we have many celebrations in store. Friday's YLD programming began with the first of six Leadership Academy sessions, a panel on leadership and professionalism. The group heard from State Bar of Georgia Executive Director Damon Elmore, Supreme Court of Georgia Justice Shawn LaGrua, Hon. Joe Dent, Chinnny Law and State Bar Secretary Shiriki Jones.

Later in the afternoon, the YLD Sports Law, Intellectual Property Law and Corporate Counsel committees hosted a dynamic CLE: "Changing the Game: NIL, AI and Athletes—A Sports Law Update." The star-studded panel included Cathy Hampton, Ron Gaither, Jonathan Smith and Karl Bostick. These experts discussed how name, image and likeness (NIL) rights and artifi-

cial intelligence are transforming sports law, diving into emerging legal and ethical issues that are changing the game of sports and specifically touching on sports betting, the transfer portal and product placement in visual media and in sports arenas. The session was well attended and sparked thoughtful discussions among Bar members.

The YLD then held its General Session, where YLD officers gave reports and members of the Executive Council provided updates on projects and events. YLD President Veronica Cox expressed pride in the successful first half of the YLD year that was filled with numerous CLEs, volunteering and networking opportunities. We learned about Middle Georgia Justice—the beneficiary of this year's YLD Signature Fundraiser—which is dedicated to expanding access to legal services for those in need across our state. And YLD President-Elect Virginia Josey announced exciting plans for her upcoming Bar year. (I'll see y'all in Puerto Rico, March 2027.)

The afternoon concluded with the YLD Leadership Academy Meet & Greet welcoming the 2026 Leadership Academy class. Bar members, including Leadership Academy alumni and judges, gathered to meet the new class members and celebrate the beginning of their leadership development. We were joined by Supreme Court

of Georgia Chief Justice Nels Peterson, who provided welcome remarks and impressed upon the group that our state is in need of lawyers who are willing to make the sacrifice to get involved in public service and that the courts need our help to protect the rule of law. We are grateful to each of the judges and Bar members who attended.

Friday night brought one of the most memorable Board of Governors dinners in State Bar history, with a murder mystery competition captivating the attention of every attendee. All I know is, somehow Bert Hummel's character did not end up being the murderer, Posh Spice was involved and YLD member (and assistant district attorney) Victoria Hicks' team ended up solving the murder. We ended the night with "networking" in The Battery.

The Midyear Meeting concluded Saturday morning with the Board of Governors Meeting, where important State Bar business was conducted and plans for the remainder of the year were discussed. We look forward to seeing you at the YLD Spring Meeting in Asheville, North Carolina, April 24-26, 2026. YLD

*Alex Clark, a 2025 Law Academy alumn, serves as chair of the YLD Leadership Academy Alumni Subcommittee. Clark currently clerks for the Supreme Court of Georgia.*



YLD Past Presidents, (front row, L-R) James Hyder, Jennifer Mock, YLD President Veronica Cox, Brittanie Browning and Betsy Hodges. (Back row, L-R) Ron Daniels, Kendall Butterworth and Bert Hummel.



(L-R) Alex Clark, Joy Bonner, Nathan Miles at the YLD Meet and Greet.



PHOTOS BY ENVISIONING FREEDOM PRODUCTIONS

(Back row, L-R) YLD Immediate Past President Kenneth Mitchell Jr, Secretary Caleb Ratliff, Treasurer Kindall Browning-Rickle, President-Elect Virginia Josey and President Veronica Cox. (Front row, L-R) Newsletter Co-Editors Alec Chappell and Carlos Fernández.

YLD President-Elect Virginia Josey.



(L-R) Cathy Hampton and Jonathan Smith at "Changing the Game: NIL, AI and Athletes—A Sports Law Update" CLE.

2026 YLD Leadership Academy Class at the 2026 Midyear meeting.



BOG Murder Mystery Dinner props.



State Bar of Georgia President Christopher P. Twyman at the BOG Murder Mystery Dinner.

# The Nuisance of Nuisances: A Call for Clarity in Georgia's Nuisance Law



**Benjamin D.  
Walker**

The doctrine of nuisance under Georgia law remains unsettled due to the competing interests between the plain meaning of the statute and current judicial interpretation. The current state of the law gives two mutually exclusive outcomes depending upon the interests *for* which a party wants to advocate. Accordingly, the Supreme Court of Georgia should clarify existing law to determine whether an activity otherwise lawful may be considered a nuisance if the activity interferes with the peace, comfort and quiet enjoyment of someone's property.

The Official Code of Georgia defines a nuisance as "anything that causes hurt, inconvenience, or damage to another and the fact that the act may otherwise be lawful shall not keep it from being a nuisance."<sup>1</sup> Under the plain meaning of the statute, whether an act can be a nuisance does not depend on its lawfulness. If the act causes harm to the peace, comfort and quiet enjoyment of another's property, then the act is a nuisance regardless of the legality of the act.

Despite the unambiguous language in the statute, there is a well-settled line of case law in Georgia that conflicts with the meaning of O.C.G.A. § 41-6-1. This line of Georgia case law suggests that a lawful activity cannot be deemed a nuisance unless the activity is being conducted in an illegal manner. In *Burrus v. City of Columbus*, the court said "[T]hat which the law authorizes to be done, if done as the law authorizes it to be done, cannot be a nuisance."<sup>2</sup> In other words, for an act to be a nuisance, it must be a nuisance *per se*, or an act done in an illegal manner. Since the decision in *Burrus*, many cases have relied on the concept that a lawful activity can never be a nuisance.<sup>3, 4, 5, 6</sup>

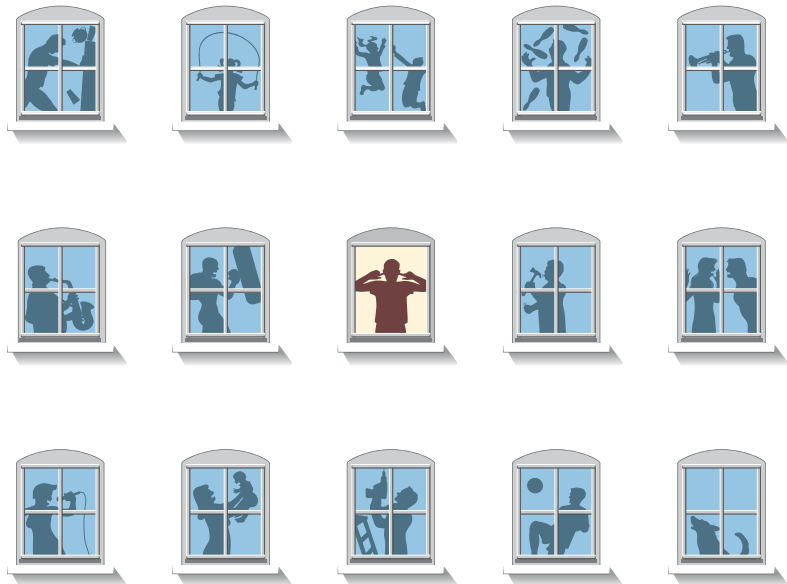
Georgia courts have attempted to rectify this apparent paradox between the statute and case law by distinguishing a nuisance *per accidens* from a nuisance *per se* as described above. A nuisance *per accidens*, or a nuisance in fact, exists when an otherwise lawful activity becomes a nuisance because of the specific circumstances in which the activity is conducted.<sup>7</sup> The concept of nuisance *per accidens* has evolved to stand for the proposition that a nuisance may consist merely of the right thing in the wrong place, regardless of other circumstances.<sup>8</sup> These cases primarily involve the placement of commercial businesses which are uncharacteristic with the residential community around them.<sup>9</sup>

However, the nuisance *per accidens* distinction does not go far enough to rectify the understanding of nuisance law. The distinction does not clarify the relationship between case law and the statute. Rather than apply the plain meaning of O.C.G.A. § 41-6-1 and examine whether one's act causes damage to another, the concept of a nuisance *per accidens* creates yet another category of nuisance that creates arguments amongst litigators in each nuisance case. The Georgia case law inherently creates a question of law for

courts to determine, which interferes with judicial economy and contributes to more litigation costs on behalf of clients.

The considerable confusion surrounding nuisance law should be addressed by the Georgia General Assembly or the Supreme Court of Georgia. There must be some clarification to ensure that courts apply the statute as written while respecting legitimate, lawfully conducted activities. Absent authoritative clarification, the existing tension between the statutory language of O.C.G.A. § 41-6-1 and the various lines of Georgia case law creates uncertainty as to whether nuisance claims are governed primarily by legislative intent or by a limitation in the common law that substantially contradicts the general rule. The current state of nuisance law in Georgia leaves litigants trapped to navigate an unsettled legal minefield in which outcomes depend of a court's application of a preferable line of law rather than the facts at issue. Clear guidance is necessary to reconcile these principles and restore uniformity amongst nuisance jurisprudence to ensure that courts apply the statutory language as written while respecting the concept of lawfulness in the case law.

This is not a discussion to argue for more emphasis on the case law, the statu-



tory language, or vice versa. Rather, it is merely a call for action by an appropriate authority to tackle the inconsistency directly and provide guidance so that Georgia courts can apply nuisance law, an area of the law that is already factually specific, more uniformly and more predictability. <sup>YLD</sup>

*Benjamin D. Walker is an associate at Husser & Husser P.C. in Rome. Walker co-chairs the YLD Estate and Elder Law Committee.*

## Endnotes

1. O.C.G.A. § 41-6-1.
2. 31 S.E. 124, 125 (Ga. 1898).
3. *See Douglasville v. Queen*, 514 S.E.2d 195, 199 (Ga. 1999) (finding that a city holding a parade next to a railroad track did not create a nuisance because the activity was legally permissible).
4. *Effingham Cnty. Bd. of Comm'rs v. Shuler Bros., Inc.*, 595 S.E.2d 526, 528 (Ga. App. 2004) (finding that since a wood chip mill was operating in a legal manner, the operations could not be considered a nuisance).
5. *McBrayer v. Governors Ridge Office Park Ass'n, Inc.*, 860 S.E.2d 58, 62 (finding that a clinic operating lawfully cannot be a nuisance only because he offered abortion services that were offensive to the community).
6. *Kempton v. Southern Flavor Real Estate, L.P.*, 86 S.E.2d 862, 863 (finding that since a greenhouse operated in accordance with all necessary licenses and permits, it could not be a nuisance).
7. *Galaxy Carpet Mills, Inc. v. Massengill*, 338 S.E.2d 428, 429 (Ga. 1986) (citing *Griffith v. Newman*, 123 S.E.2d 723, 726 (Ga. 1962)).
8. *May v. Brueshaber*, 433 S.E.2d 196, 196 (Ga. 1995).
9. *See McBrayer*, 860 S.E.2d at 63.

# What Is It Like to Be a Partner as a Young Attorney and Advice to Those Looking for a Similar Path



**Taylor Middleton**

**Being a partner as a young attorney** is rewarding, fun and often feels like a dream, but it's also a role that comes with real weight and responsibility. You get the privilege of helping shape outcomes, people and the future of the firm, while carrying the understanding that your seat at the table was earned.

I am often asked my age and how long I have been practicing by clients, colleagues and opposing counsel alike. I would be lying if I said I never feel nervous about my age or experience, especially when I find myself in rooms and seated at tables with attorneys who have been practicing longer than I have been alive. In those moments, I remind myself that longevity alone is not what earned me a seat. Competence, preparation and trust did. When pressure spikes in practice, I remind myself how hard I worked to earn my seat at the table. That perspective grounds me in the moment and keeps the pressure from overwhelming me. It's not about escaping the difficulty, but about anchoring myself in the knowledge that I belong here and that I chose this path. I remind myself "I'm prepared, I've overcome challenges in my practice before. This is why I'm here."

My advice to those that want to partner early is to first define the kind of leader you want to be. Once defined, make sure the leadership style is authentic to you and make sure that style aligns with your practice, not just your title.

My second recommendation is to understand how to turn your seat at your firm into a revenue generating one, rather than a costly one. The simple, timeless math of being an associate attorney at a firm is that you must generate and recover more in attorneys' fees than your salary and overhead costs the firm. Understanding that equation early on is a game changer. Don't be afraid to ask your firm what those expectations are if not already given; these conversations are refreshing and appreciated. Once you get an idea of the number, aim higher. Treat it as a baseline, not a ceiling, and let that mindset shape how you build your practice and your career.

Lastly and above all, be kind and professional to everyone. This profession is smaller than it seems, and reputations travel faster than résumés. You never know who is watching or who may one day be sitting across from you, or beside you. That person could hold the ticket to your future and your success, whether as a referral source, a collaborator or an advocate. In a profession built on reputation and relationships, how you treat people when nothing is at stake often matters more than when everything is. <sup>YLD</sup>

*Taylor Middleton is a partner at Bey & Associates in Atlanta and serves as treasurer of the Gate City Bar Association.*



## JOIN A YLD COMMITTEE

The YLD has 30 committees working to support our motto of service to the community and profession. Each committee works diligently to provide substantive programming in their respective focus areas.

# Reading Beyond the Record: Why Lawyers Should Read More



**Hannah  
Amanuel**

I have loved reading for as long as I can remember. In elementary school, it was the quiet thrill of Accelerated Reader quizzes and earning points for every book I finished. By middle and high school, reading became something closer to obsession. I would count down the days until the next major release, eager to find out what would happen to Katniss or whether Bella would finally become a vampire. In law school, amid outlines and cold calls and closed book final exams, reading for pleasure felt like a grounding force. It reminded me that there was a world beyond casebooks and that a well-told story is a powerful tool.

When I began practicing law, I didn't notice recreational reading slipping out of my life. It happened quietly, crowded out by deadlines and the constant sense that there was always something more urgent to read. Reading became synonymous with work. I was still reading constantly, but only in fragments, always scanning for relevance, jumping ahead to conclusions or racing against the clock. Over time, I felt the absence. I felt more mentally crowded, less patient and less connected to the parts of myself that once found joy in sitting with a story. When I eventually found my way back to reading for pleasure, I expected it to feel indulgent or inefficient. But instead, I found that it made me a better lawyer.

## Law Practice Trains Us to Read Quickly, Not Deeply

Legal training rewards speed and precision. We are taught to spot issues, extract rules and discard what is irrelevant. These are necessary skills, but they come with a cost. Over time, we become scanners rather than readers, trained to jump ahead to the hold-



GETTYIMAGES.COM/THOMAS-BETHAGE

ing or the point we are looking for, rather than engaging fully with the material.

Recreational reading asks something different of us. It requires sustained attention and focus on detail. It asks the reader to sit with ambiguity, pacing and context. Reading for pleasure retrains the ability to follow a story without immediately judging its utility. It improves issue spotting, reminds us to look for the breadcrumbs and sharpens our ability to stay on theme.

## Better Readers Become Better Writers

Clear writing is one of the most valuable skills a lawyer can possess. Strong legal writing is shaped, in large part, by what we read. Lawyers who read good prose internalize sentence rhythm, structure and clarity without consciously trying to do so. Recreational reading exposes us to writing that flows, that transitions naturally, and that communicates complex ideas without unnecessary jargon.

This influence shows up silently but unmistakably. Briefs become more readable. Arguments become tighter. Sentences grow shorter and more intentional. Legalese

loses its grip. The goal is not to write like a novelist, but to remember that legal writing is still writing.

## Storytelling Is Advocacy

At its core, advocacy is storytelling. Whether in a motion, at a hearing or in trial, lawyers are asking someone else to understand a sequence of events and reach a conclusion. The most persuasive advocates understand not only the law, but the narrative force of facts.

Recreational reading sharpens narrative instinct in a way no style guide can. It teaches pacing, character development and motivation. It reinforces that credibility matters, that details accumulate meaningfully and that how a story is told can be just as important as what is told.

This does not mean embellishing facts or appealing to emotion improperly. It means understanding how people process information. Judges and jurors are readers and listeners before they are decision-makers. Lawyers who read broadly tend to develop a stronger sense of how stories land and how to present facts in a way that is coherent, credible and compelling.

## Reading Improves Listening and Empathy

Lawyers spend a significant amount of time listening to clients, witnesses, experts and opposing counsel. But listening well is harder than it seems. It requires patience, attention and an ability to hear what is being said without immediately preparing a response.

Recreational reading reinforces those same skills. It asks the reader to inhabit perspectives other than their own, to follow reasoning that may be unfamiliar, and to stay present through uncertainty. Over time, this practice strengthens judgment and empathy, both of which are essential to effective lawyering.

That understanding shows up in client interactions, witness preparation and negotiations. It helps lawyers ask better questions, anticipate reactions and communicate more effectively with people whose experiences differ from their own.

## Perspective and Professional Longevity

A quieter benefit to reading for pleasure is perspective. Law can easily become all-consuming. The stakes are often real and significant, and the work rarely ends cleanly. Recreational reading reminds lawyers that the law is not the entire world.

That reminder matters. Lawyers who maintain intellectual curiosity outside the law tend to practice with more humility and resilience. Reading reconnects us to ideas, histories and stories that exist beyond our own dockets. It makes room for reflection and keeps the practice from narrowing into nothing but urgency.

Lawyers will always need to read quickly and critically. That is part of the job. But reading only in that mode comes at a cost. Recreational reading restores depth, clarity and perspective to a profession that too often prizes speed above all else. The best lawyers are not just efficient readers of legal text. They are thoughtful readers of the world. Making space for reading beyond the record is not a distraction from legal practice, it is an investment in better lawyering. <sup>YLD</sup>

*Hannah Amanuel practices law at Cannella Snyder in Decatur.*

# How Do I Reach These Clients?



**Kumi Rizvi**

**Connecting with your clients is a major key** to being successful as a personal injury attorney. Most of your clients are going through one of the worst experiences of their lives when they decide to give you a call. They are choosing you over hundreds of other lawyers. The least we can do is show some patience, understanding and empathy.

For me, it is important to find some personal way to relate to each of my clients. Sharing a birthday month, joint trauma reminiscing about the Falcons season or talking about the terrible gas mileage the car they were driving at the time of the incident had. There is always something that reminds your client they are not just another number. Being new to the practice of law is hard because there is a lot we do not know. But young lawyers should never forget that they know a lot about being a person, and they bring that to every table. Make that connection a priority and see how easy trust builds.

Early on, from the first phone call or in-person meeting, go the extra mile your client. Start communicating with them early

and do it often. Your clients know you are busy, and even a short call is worth making to gain trust and to show them you care to share your time. Even a text message saying there is no update is an update. The first few days and weeks are important to establish trust and build empathy. Our clients depend on us to understand what they are going through.

For young attorneys especially, remember that your clients are not judging you by your résumé or how long you've been practicing. They are paying attention to your tone, whether you return a call or text, and whether you remember their story. We are attorneys, but as people, it is also our job to make a chaotic moment feel a little more manageable. If a client ends a call feeling steadier than when they dialed, you are on the right track. That kind of trust does not come from experience, it comes from showing up as a real person first, and a lawyer second. <sup>YLD</sup>

*Kumi Rizvi is a litigation attorney at Kenneth S. Nugent PC in Duluth.*

## Ethics dilemma?

Lawyers who would like to discuss an ethics dilemma with a member of the Office of the General Counsel staff should log in to [www.gabar.org](http://www.gabar.org) and submit your question through the member portal under the "Submit an Ethics Question" link.

 State Bar  
of Georgia



# 19th Annual YLD Signature Fundraiser

The 19th Annual YLD Signature Fundraiser was held Saturday, Feb. 28, at The Overlook on First in Macon, Georgia. This year's fundraiser benefited Middle Georgia Justice, a nonprofit organization dedicated to expanding access to legal services for individuals in need across the state. The YLD presented the organization with a \$20,000 grant in support of its mission. The event also recognized Rebecca Grist with the YLD Lifetime Achievement Award and James Banter with the YLD Signature Service Award. YLD

1. (L-R) YLD Secretary Caleb Ratliff, President-Elect Virginia Josey, President Veronica Cox, Treasurer Kindall Browning-Rickle and Immediate Past President Kenneth Mitchell Jr.
2. (L-R) Middle Georgia Justice Board of Directors President Hon. Bill Adams, State Bar of Georgia President-Elect Bill Gentry, YLD President Veronica Cox and Middle Georgia Justice Executive Director Amy Dever.
3. (L-R) YLD Treasurer Kindall Browning-Rickle, Hon. Bill Adams and Nyonnohweah Seekie.
4. (L-R) YLD Immediate Past President Kenneth Mitchell Jr., Kelsie Mattox and Lina Khan.
5. (L-R) YLD Signature Service Award recipient James Banter, YLD President Veronica Cox and YLD Lifetime Achievement Award recipient Rebecca Grist.
6. (L-R) Hannah Hostetler, Chelsea Dease and Roslyn Grant Holcomb cut a rug on the dance floor.





# 2026 YLD SIGNATURE FUNDRAISER

*A special thank you to all sponsors whose generosity made the event possible.*

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Wetherington Law Firm

## Affiliate Spotlight

## Savannah Bar Association YLD



**Amber M.  
Robinson**

**The Young Lawyers Division (YLD)** of the Savannah Bar Association (SBA) strives to enrich the lives of its members, the Savannah Bar Association and the greater Savannah community, by offering numerous fellowship and community service opportunities throughout the year.

The YLD's social calendar traditionally includes the annual Kick-Off Party in the fall to welcome new and incoming attorneys, followed by monthly happy hours that include a trolley ride through the Historic District of downtown Savannah, a Christmas party at the president's home, a trivia night and more.

The 2025-26 SBA YLD board members include:

- President—Amber M. Robinson (Public Defender's Office)
- President-Elect—Amelia C. Stevens (Oliver Maner LLP)
- Treasurer—Ben T. Tuten (Oliver Maner LLP)
- Secretary—Laney I. Tuten (Ellis Painter)
- Membership Chair—Madison B. Voyles (Lueder Larkin & Hunter LLC)
- Social Chair—Madison E. "Madi" Perrie (Oliver Maner LLP)
- Sponsorship Chair—William Chase Arrington (Rahimi Hughes & Padgett LLC)
- Community Outreach Chair—Sophia E. Karnegis (Ellis Painter)
- Philanthropy Chair—William Kelvin Goodson (Oliver Maner LLP)
- Mock Trial Chair—Kate D. Cobb (Oliver Maner LLP)
- Logistics Chair—Frederick S. Bergen Jr. (Bergen and Bergen PC)
- Sergeant-at-Arms Chair—Thomas Powell Cobb (Brennan Wadsen & Painter LLC)

While the YLD offers a full array of social activities for its members, it is more than just social events and happy hours. Mindful of its members' talents and resources, and of the needs of many within the Savannah area, the YLD gives back to the community by organizing fundraisers and contributing to deserving causes. The YLD hosts an annual golf tournament in June for all members of the SBA, and the proceeds are donated to the Guardian Ad Litem Program through the Mediation Center.

The YLD also organizes the mass swearing-in for newly barred attorneys in the Savannah area. This event is a great way for new attorneys to meet other young attorneys and the local judiciary. This past year, the new attorneys had the pleasure of being sworn in by Hon. John E. Morse, the new chief judge of the Eastern Judicial Circuit. They were also the first group of attorneys to be sworn-in in the new Eugene H. Gadsden Courthouse.

The YLD also gives back to the community by participating in the Legal Food Frenzy every year, with all proceeds going to America's Second Harvest of Coastal Georgia. In past years we have partnered with our local United Way Coastal Empire with their Read United Campaign. Additionally, we participate in the ABA's annual Law Day

by speaking with students at Savannah Early College High School about law school and their career goals of becoming a lawyer.

The YLD also spearheads the annual Georgia High School Mock Trial competition, which was held in the new Eugene H. Gadsden Courthouse. There were more than 15 teams competing from across the area. We, as the YLD, are an invaluable resource for students to learn how the legal process works within our court system. As Court of Appeals of Georgia Judge Stephen Dillard has said, "Our mock trial program is one of the best things we do as a Bar, and you won't regret getting involved." The students who participate in the program are amazing. The Savannah YLD prides itself on our close-knit friendly environment. We have a very diverse background of attorneys in all areas of practice; from civil to criminal, litigation to transactional, you can always find someone to bounce ideas off of or refer clients to. You will undoubtedly find the YLD of the SBA offers unparalleled opportunities to get to know your fellow young lawyers while giving back to your community. YLD

*Amber M. Robinson works in the Eastern Judicial Circuit's Public Defender's Office and is the president of the Savannah Bar Association's Young Lawyers Division.*



YLD Christmas Party 2025 at President Amber Robinson's home.



(L-R) YLD Members Jake Saas, Law Day award recipient Jason Pedigo and Gary Tiller.



(L-R) Past President Gary Tiller, former Chief Justice Michael Boggs, keynote speaker, and then President-Elect Amber Robinson at the SBA Law Day Luncheon 2025.



Chief Judge John E. Morse with newly barred attorney from the mass swearing-in.



Group shot of newly barred attorney from the mass swearing-in.



SBA Board Members present check from the golf tournament to Amanda Love, director of the Guardian Ad Litem program.



SBA YLD President Amber Robinson with her daughter Amelia at mass swearing-in.

# History of the YLD and Its Leaders



**T. Alec  
Chappell**

**The Younger Lawyers Section (YLS)** was created on May 31, 1947, at the State Bar's Annual Meeting. The basic structure of the Section consisted of four officers, an Executive Committee and Executive Council. The YLS was created in order to further the original goals of the charter members of the State Bar of Georgia, 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.

When the YLS was first enacted, all members of the State Bar who had not reached their 36th birthday were automatically members of the YLS. It was later added that attorneys, regardless of age, who had been admitted to their first bar less than three years were also considered members of the YLS. The basic structure and purpose of the organization remain the same today, however, in June of 1998 the Section was renamed the Young Lawyers Division (YLD).

The Young Lawyers Division has been strengthened over the years through guidance by the State Bar of Georgia, its Executive Committee and Board of Governors, the Supreme Court and through dedicated service rendered by its members, and those that lead the Division at its highest level.

## YLS Presidents | 1947-1987

- 1948 *Harry S. Baxter, Atlanta*
- 1949 *B.C. Gardner Jr., Albany*
- 1950 *Hon. Griffin B. Bell, Atlanta<sup>†</sup>*
- 1951 *James D. Maddox, Rome*
- 1952 *Trammell Foster Shi, Macon*
- 1953 *Hon. Marcus B. Calhoun Jr., Thomasville*
- 1954 *Kirk M. McAlpin, Savannah\**
- 1955 *Robert R. Richardson, Atlanta*
- 1956 *Kenneth M. Henson, Columbus*
- 1957 *Frank C. Jones, Atlanta\**

- 1958 *Gould Barrett Hagler, Augusta*
- 1959 *Robert T. Thompson, Atlanta*
- 1960 *Willis J. Richardson Jr., Savannah*
- 1961 *Hon. James T. Pope Jr., Dalton*
- 1962 *Harry C. Howard, Atlanta*
- 1963 *Erwin A. Friedman, Savannah*
- 1964 *Charles J. Driebe, Jonesboro*
- 1965 *Hon. W. Gus Elliott, Valdosta*
- 1966 *Theodore G. Frankel, Atlanta*
- 1967 *Rev. B. Carl Buice Jr., Gainesville*
- 1968 *Robert L. Steed, Atlanta*
- 1969 *Lloyd T. Whitaker, Atlanta*
- 1970 *L. Martelle Layfield, Columbus*
- 1971 *Matthew H. Patton, Atlanta*
- 1972 *Thomas E. Dennard Jr., Brunswick*
- 1973 *A. Felton Jenkins Jr., Atlanta*
- 1974 *Robert M. Brinson, Rome\**
- 1975 *Roy William Ide III, Atlanta*
- 1976 *James A. Bishop, Brunswick*
- 1977 *A. James Elliott, Atlanta\**
- 1978 *Charles T. Lester Jr., Atlanta\**
- 1979 *Theodore M. Hester, Washington, D.C.*
- 1980 *James L. Pannell, Savannah*
- 1981 *W. Terence Walsh, Atlanta*
- 1982 *Richard A. Childs, Columbus*
- 1983 *Richard T. de Mayo, Atlanta*
- 1984 *Walter H. Bush Jr., Macon*
- 1985 *William D. Barwick, Atlanta\**
- 1986 *S. David Smith Jr., Rome*
- 1987 *James H. Cox, Atlanta*

## YLD Presidents | 1988-2025

- 1988 *John C. Sammon, Decatur\**
- 1989 *Donna G. Barwick, Atlanta*
- 1990 *Dana B. Miles, Decatur*
- 1991 *Stanley G. Brading Jr., Atlanta*
- 1992 *Leland M. Malchow, Augusta*
- 1993 *Elizabeth B. Hodges, Atlanta*
- 1994 *Rachel K. Iverson, Cumming*
- 1995 *Tina Shadix Roddenbery, Atlanta*
- 1996 *Nolie J. Motes, Gainesville*
- 1997 *J. Henry Walker IV, Atlanta*
- 1998 *James D. Hyder Jr., Augusta*
- 1999 *Hon. Ross J. Adams, Atlanta*
- 2000 *Hon. Joseph W. Dent, Albany*

- 2001 *S. Kendall Butterworth, Atlanta*
- 2002 *Peter J. Daugherty, Columbus*
- 2003 *Hon. Derek J. White, Savannah*
- 2004 *Andrew W. Jones, Marietta*
- 2005 *Laurel Payne Landon, Augusta*
- 2006 *Damon E. Elmore, Atlanta*
- 2007 *Jonathan A. Pope, Canton*
- 2008 *Elena Kaplan, Atlanta*
- 2009 *Hon. Joshua C. Bell, Bainbridge*
- 2010 *Amy V. Howell, Atlanta*
- 2011 *Michael G. Geoffroy, Covington*
- 2012 *Stephanie Kirijan Cooper, Atlanta*
- 2013 *Jonathan B. Pannell, Savannah*
- 2014 *Darrell L. Sutton, Marietta\**
- 2015 *V. Sharon Edenfield, Statesboro*
- 2016 *John R. B. "Jack" Long, Augusta*
- 2017 *Jennifer C. Mock, Statesboro*
- 2018 *Nicole C. Leet, Atlanta*
- 2019 *Hon. Rizza O'Connor, Lyons*
- 2020 *William T. Davis, Newnan*
- 2021 *Norbert D. "Bert" Hummel IV, Atlanta*
- 2022 *Elissa B. Haynes, Atlanta*
- 2023 *Ronald Edward "Ron" Daniels, Eastman*
- 2024 *Brittanie Browning, Atlanta*
- 2025 *Kenneth Mitchell Jr., Decatur*

The following YLS/YLD presidents also served as president of the State Bar of Georgia:

- William D. Barwick (2004)*
- Robert M. Brinson (1987)*
- A. James Elliott, Atlanta (1989)*
- Frank C. Jones, Atlanta\* (1969)*
- Charles T. Lester Jr., Atlanta (1992)*
- Kirk M. McAlpin, Savannah\* (1980)*
- John C. Sammon, Decatur (1994)*
- Darrell L. Sutton, Marietta (2020) <sup>YLD</sup>*

<sup>†</sup>Attorney General of the United States (1976-79)

\*State Bar of Georgia President  
*Italics denotes deceased.*

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T. Alec Chappell is career law clerk for Hon. Edward J. Coleman III, U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Southern District of Georgia.



asheville

# 2026 yld spring meeting

april 24-26 • asheville, north carolina

Hotel Reservation Cut-off: April 3 • Registration Cut-off: April 10



## schedule of events

### friday, april 24

#### 12:30 – 4:30 p.m. service project

ABCCM Downtown Crisis Ministry  
& ABCCM Hominy Valley Crisis Ministry\*

Each site could include the following tasks: cleaning and sorting the clothing room, organizing the food pantry, packing food boxes, etc. Additional project details will be provided closer to the date.

Lunch will be provided. Space is limited and will be on a first-come, first-served basis.

#### 6 – 8:30 p.m. welcome reception

Kimpton Hotel Arras

Kick off your time in the “Land of Sky” at our welcome reception. Enjoy an evening of games, karaoke and meaningful time to connect with new and familiar faces.

### saturday, april 25

#### 9:30 a.m. breakfast

All events through the CLE will be held at the Kimpton Hotel Arras.

#### 10:30 – 11:30 a.m. general session

Join the YLD Officers and Executive Council members for reports on projects and events sponsored by the YLD.

#### 12 – 12:30 p.m. networking lunch

The North Carolina YLD and the YLD Pro Bono Leadership Cohort will get to know each other at a networking lunch prior to the CLE.

#### 12:30 – 2 p.m. cle with asheville mayor esther e. manheimer

1 CLE Hour

Enjoy an engaging conversation with attorney and public servant Asheville Mayor Esther E. Manheimer, focusing on leadership and resilience, including her experience leading through Hurricane Helene.

#### 2 – 6 p.m. on your own

Take the afternoon to explore all that Asheville has to offer, from art to music and mountain views. First, check out [Explore Asheville](#) to help plan your time around town.

#### 6 – 8:30 p.m. brew and bbq

Burial Brewery at Visuals Rooftop Bar

Close out the weekend on the rooftop of Burial Brewery, an Asheville staple, for “Brew and BBQ” with our North Carolina YLD friends. Burial Brewery also offers mocktails and “brewless” beverages.



## kimpton hotel arras

Hotel Reservation Cut-off: April 3

7 Patton Ave. | Asheville, NC 28801  
828-255-0303

Room rate | \$249 per night + \$20 amenity fee\*

\*Amenity fee includes \$20 daily food and beverage credit at Bargello or District 42; 15% off Arras Escape 60-minute massage

Valet parking only | \$32 per night

Check-in | 3 p.m.

Check-out | 12 p.m.



## all-inclusive registration

Registration Cut-off: April 10

Register online at [www.georgiayld.org](http://www.georgiayld.org).

- Attorney | \$245
- Non-Attorney | \$125



## \*service project locations

ABCCM Downtown Crisis Ministry  
24 Cumberland Ave.  
Asheville, NC 28801

ABCCM Hominy Valley Crisis Ministry  
1914 Smokey Park Highway  
Candler, NC 28715

## ✕ ? ? ? ✕ questions?

- Jessica Oglesby, YLD Director | [jessicao@gabar.org](mailto:jessicao@gabar.org)
- Jamie Goss, YLD Coordinator | [jamiieg@gabar.org](mailto:jamiieg@gabar.org)



T. Alec Chappell, Editor  
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