Young Lawyers Gather on Jekyll Island for 2005 Spring Meeting

The YLD held its 2005 Spring Meeting at the Jekyll Island Club Hotel in Jekyll Island the weekend of March 18-20. Young lawyers from around the state gathered on Friday evening for a welcome cocktail reception sponsored by Legalink. Guests then enjoyed dinner in the hotel’s Grand Dining Room before moving on to the hospitality suite, which was sponsored by Mass Mutual/Moore Financial Group.

Saturday morning began with a business meeting followed by a cookout lunch on the croquet lawn. Afternoon activities enjoyed by YLD members included golf at Jekyll Island’s Pine Lakes course, bicycling throughout the island, and spa activities for those who just wanted to relax. Saturday evening, the group dinner featured an oyster roast held on the riverfront lawn of the hotel. Two members of the band Strawberry Nixon played acoustic guitar and sang songs, which had the group singing along in no time. The hospitality suite remained the gathering spot for the remainder of the evening.

The Community Service Projects Committee wrapped up the toiletries drive at the meeting, accumulating a massive amount of travel-sized toiletries that were donated to Atlanta-area shelters for women and children.
Georgia State University Wins Georgia Intrastate Moot Court Competition

by Laurie Speed-Dalton

The Georgia Intrastate Moot Court Competition sponsored by the Young Lawyers Division of the State Bar of Georgia was completed on April 1 and April 2 at Emory University School of Law. Students from Georgia State University Team B won the competition, having the overall best combined brief and oral argument scores. The winning team was comprised of Stephen Graham, Blake Eno and Deborah Hunter. Also advancing to the final round was Mercer University Team A comprised of Ann-Patton Nelson, Zach McEntyre and John Weeks.

The University of Georgia took home the best brief and best oralist honors.

GSU Intrastate Team 2005 competitors and their coaches. L-R: Adwoa Gharney-Tagoe (coach), Blake Eno, Brandee Kowalzyk (coach), Stephen Graham, and Deborah Hunter.

by Laurie Speed-Dalton

The competition was organized and planned by the Georgia Intrastate Moot Court Competition committee chaired by Laurie Speed-Dalton of Chambers, Aholt & Rickard, LLP. The problem, written by Chris Kellner, involved issues of national security, terrorism, privacy, and freedom of association. The first issue the competitors involved whether a defendant's conviction for providing money and support to a known terrorist organization violated the First Amendment's protection for freedom of association and the Fifth Amendment's requirement that criminal guilt be "personal" in the absence of a specific intent to further illegal activity.

Intrastate Moot Court Competition

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Charity Happy Hour at Dantanna’s

The Community Service Committee recently continued its tradition of hosting a quarterly happy hour to raise funds for charity. On April 13, dozens of young attorneys from around Atlanta gathered on the patio at Dantanna’s in Buckhead to enjoy the beautiful spring weather while munching on tasty appetizers, sipping on delicious libations, and enjoying the company of friends and colleagues. Thanks to the generous sponsorship of Ernst & Young’s Investigative and Dispute Services practice group, all proceeds raised from the event will go to the Emergency Food Bank of the Fulton County DFACS.

If you missed out on the fun this time, don’t worry because the next Charity Happy Hour is just around the corner and the summer event is always the biggest and best of the year! Please join the committee on June 22 at 6 p.m. at Cherry (1051 W. Peachtree St., at the corner of 11th Street) for the final Charity Happy Hour of the Bar year. In return for a small donation, you’ll receive free appetizers, a free drink, and a discount if you stay for dinner that evening. Summer Associates are welcome!

Above Right: Brian Held, Curtis Mann II, Elizabeth Garvish, Mike Krause and Christian Fichter at the Community Service Project Committee’s Charity Happy Hour on April 13.

Right: Paulette Elmore and YLD President-elect Damon Elmore.
Lori Brennan and Alaina Howard each brought their children to the 2005 Spring Meeting.

President Laurel Payne Landon and James Freeman on Jekyll Island.

Karen Cross and Angela Spivey at the 2004 LRE Golf Tournament on Oct. 2.

Sherry Neal at the 2005 Spring Meeting on Barnsley Gardens in August.

Above left: YLD President Laurel Payne Landon and YLD Director Deidra Sanderson at the Summer Meeting at Barnsley Gardens in August.

Above: Charlene Swartz, YLD President-elect Damon Elmore and Katie Lahnstein at the Fall Meeting in Athens.

Above left: Shaun Daughtery at the LRE Golf Tournament.

Below Left: Melissa and Mark Williamson at the Summer Meeting at Barnsley Gardens in August 2004.

Below: Lew Landon and YLD President Laurel Payne Landon.

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YLD Creates IP Law Committee

by Michael Krause

There exists a myth that intellectual property lawyers are a little on the geeky side. Any lawyer with an unhealthy obsession with Star Wars probably drafts patents for a living. Many firms relegate their IP attorneys to the floor furthest away from the main lobby where clients are received. No "upstanding" attorney wants their clients subjected to the sloppily dressed, pocket protector wearing employees of their firm. They might mistake the 400-attorney law firm for a dot-com company about to file for bankruptcy. In my case, my firm initially offered me an office located underground to prevent any potential clients who happen to be looking in the windows from seeing me. Obviously, anyone who has ever worked with an IP attorney, or God forbid, actually works as an IP attorney, knows that these perceptions are untrue and outdated. This mental picture that potential clients and non-IP attorneys have must be changed. But how?

The time has arrived for the inception of the YLD Intellectual Property Law Committee. The community of IP attorneys in Atlanta specifically, and Georgia as a whole, has grown exponentially over the last five years. The reason for this boost is two-fold. First, there has been a recent influx of people with technical backgrounds going to law school for a variety of reasons. I left my job as a computer programmer when the shares of stock I was getting paid started trading at two cents a share. Second, many times overlooked in the common perception of IP attorneys, is that IP litigation is a growing field, with exciting cases that require more than just legal proficiency.

IP litigation no longer requires an engineering background. It now attracts many of the best and brightest young attorneys to a place that they felt fenced from because they didn't get their PhD in nuclear physics. This transition has significantly diversified the Georgia IP community. It has become more important than ever for young IP lawyers to establish a presence in their field and make non-IP attorneys aware of their capabilities. Nothing is more frustrating than when a fellow associate turns away a potential client that needed advice that you could have provided, but no connection was ever made as the associate does not understand your capabilities.

The YLD Intellectual Property Law Committee is being created to help assist younger IP attorneys find ways to build their practice, to have specialized CLE opportunities concerning the various facets of IP law, and to promote networking between IP and non-IP attorneys to help educate the entire legal community about what we do and what we are about. Not to mention the social opportunities such a committee can provide to the ever-growing mass of young IP attorneys in town.

The committee is now organizing, and is looking for potential members and officers. If you are interested in participating or would like to know about new opportunities, please contact Mike Krause at michael.krause@sablaw.com and help defy the myths about intellectual property practitioners.

Litigation Committee Update

The YLD Litigation Committee has had a very busy Spring. We have had monthly business meetings, three social events, our all-day litigation CLE, a tort reform as well as an e-discovery lunch-n-learn CLE. We also recently helped out with the Legal Run Around as our Great Day of Service project.

We also have a number of events just around the corner. We are a co-sponsor of the Meet the Candidates Pool Party at the Annual Meeting in Savannah in June. Our Macon contingent is planning a "Cocktail Law" CLE Social, and similar CLE socials are in the works for Savannah and Augusta. Lastly, we are finishing up with a sponsor paid membership directory to be used as a networking tool for all committee members.

Whether you are a member of our committee or not, if these events are of interest to you, please let us know and plan on attending. For more information, contact committee chair Jeff Daxe at 770.429.1499 or jad@mijns.com.

YLD Celebrates Great Day of Service in Two Cities

Augusta

In conjunction with the Augusta Bar Association’s Law Day events, lawyers in Augusta helped with Derby Day, an annual fundraiser for the Augusta Training Shop for the Handicapped. The Augusta Training Shop is a non-profit agency that provides a structured workshop where physically and mentally challenged persons can earn income and self-fulfillment through learning marketable skills such as refinishing furniture and product assembly. Derby Day is an annual fundraiser held on the day of the Kentucky Derby at the Augusta Riding Center and features food and beverages, a live band, a hat contest and two large screen televisions so patrons can watch the derby. Lawyer volunteers helped set up for the event and worked at the event as well.

Atlanta

The Ethics and Professionalism Committee celebrated the Georgia Bar Association’s Great Day of Service on April 30 by pitching in at the Atlanta Community Food Bank. Committee co-chairs Michael Geoffroy and Curtis Romig were joined by Stephen Kinney and Sean Park at the Atlanta Community Food Bank’s Product Rescue Center. The group sorted and packaged donated food and other items for distribution to shelters, churches and other programs that provide food for the needy. The efforts of the group and Atlanta Community Food Bank help serve not only Atlanta but also 38 counties around North Georgia. The Atlanta Community Food Bank relies on over 15,000 volunteers a year and is a great place for your firm, church, or other group to give back while working together. For information on volunteering at the Atlanta Community Food Bank call Sarah Fonder-Kristy at 404-892-3333 x1230 or go to their Web site at www.acfb.org.

YLD Summer Meeting 2005

Aug. 26-28

Charleston Place Hotel — Charleston, S.C.

CLE, group dinner at the Riviera Theatre, and Saturday evening pub crawl will be offered!

Reserve your room today! Hotel cut-off deadline: July 27

Room Rate $179

Call hotel directly to reserve: 1-800-831-3490 or E-mail: groupres@charlestonplace.com

When making reservations, reference the State Bar of Georgia Young Lawyers Division to get the discounted rate.

Questions?

Contact YLD Director Deidra Sanderson at 404-527-8778 or deidra@gabar.org
Savannah Young Lawyers Participate in Great Day of Service

For this year’s Great Day of Service event, the Savannah Bar’s Younger Lawyers Division conducted a Living Will Clinic on April 30. On the heels of the Terry Schiavo situation, which highlighted the importance of having in place “advance directive” documents, the Savannah YLD decided to assist seniors and low-income individuals with the drafting of living wills, healthcare powers of attorney, and financial powers of attorney.

The morning began with an hour-long training session to familiarize the participating YLD members with the documents themselves, and with the counseling that such documents require. The YLD attorneys were then paired up with clients to discuss the various issues that these “advance directives” entail. With the clients’ input, the YLD lawyers then assisted with the drafting and execution of the documents.

Our clinic was conducted in partnership with the Pro Bono Project of the Georgia Legal Services Program, which was gracious enough to provide office space, training and overall guidance to the YLD lawyers.

Participating lawyers included Colin McRae, Andy Loveland, Robert Long, Jennifer Dickinson, Bates Lovett, Shonah Jefferson and Tiffany Bloom from Hunter, Maclean, Exley & Dunn; Rhett Zeigler and Charla Hall from Oliver Maner & Gray; Brian Dennison from Bouhan Williams & Levy; Monica Patel from the Middleton Law Firm; and Mat McCoy from McCormick, Pedigo & Johnson.

Many thanks go out to Bill Broker, Robert Bush, and Wanda Andrews from the Savannah office of the GLSP for giving up their Saturday mornings to help out with the event.

Young Lawyers From Macon Help Out for Great Day of Service

The Macon area project of the 2005 Great Day of Service was held on April 30. Attorneys in Macon painted the interior of a house which will eventually house adolescent girls who are in foster care and have substance abuse problems. The house and the program are a joint effort of River Edge Behavioral Health Center and Bibb County DFCS.

The following people gave volunteered their time and hard work on Saturday:

- Myra Kline
- Nick Kline
- Kice Stone
- Bryan Scott
- Carl Varnedoe
- Ed Love
- Jessica Hunts
- James Freeman
- Cristen Freeman
- William Noland

The law firm of Boston Passante donated breakfast and River Edge Behavioral Health Center provided lunch and T-shirts. The project was organized by the newly formed Macon Young Lawyers Division.

Special thanks to William Noland of Groover & Childs in Macon, who assisted in making the project a successful event. Everyone worked hard, had a good time and enjoyed some great company and fellowship.
Your Word is Your Bond

By Bryan D. Scott

Recently, the Younger Lawyers in Macon did a service project for the Great Day of Service. I listened in on a meaningful conversation between an older, experienced attorney and another fellow younger attorney as we painted the walls of a building that will be used to house and help at-risk youth. During the conversation, the seasoned attorney spoke highly of certain other attorneys. The essence of the compliments was that when these attorneys told him something, he knew he could trust what they said and never had to question their going back on their word.

Have you ever committed to something for a client, fellow attorney or anyone else and not followed through with the commitment you made? I think every attorney has experienced that at some point in time. If you are like me, I tend to downplay the importance of that particular matter in my mind and address the more "pressing" concerns (or sometimes, admittedly, the concerns of my "better" cases and clients). What we fail to realize is the damage we do to our credibility when we do not follow through with what we say we will do. When we commit to something, and it does not happen, our failure to keep our word erodes others' confidence and trust in us.

To ensure clients, fellow attorneys and others feel as though we are dependable and trustworthy, we need to remind ourselves of certain fundamental things. Clients and others probably do not actualize that we have fifty other cases biding for our time. Our client's case may not be the most important case on our agenda, but it is the most important case on their agenda. When we remind ourselves of these things, we have more of an incentive to meet their expectations by following through with the oath we gave them.

We should also be careful not to make commitments that we are unsure we will be able to keep. For instance, if I tell a fellow attorney or client, “I'll get that to you today,” but I know I have two hearings later in the afternoon and a complaint or answer that needs to be filed by tomorrow, I am setting myself up to break my word. It would have been better to shoot straight with the person, set a reasonable deadline, and then, most importantly, follow through with the deadline to which I have committed.

If we fail to keep our word, it could lead to unmerited excuses, relational distrust, conflict between parties, termination of representation by the client, or, worse, a malpractice action. When we keep our word, the seeds of dependability, trustworthiness and reliability are planted and grown.

We should be attorneys of character, which means that we keep our oath, even when it hurts. We follow through with what we said even when we know it may mean not working that higher paying client’s case. We get out of bed an hour early to make sure our actions meet with the commitment we gave. We may need to address that task on our not-so-interesting case as opposed to another more delightful matter in order that we might be dependable and trustworthy to others.

When we let others down by not being true to what we say, we undermine the credibility among our clients, colleagues and others that we so desperately need in our practice. However, when we follow through with the commitments we make to others, we gain a reputation for honesty, dependability, forthrightness and trustworthiness. Our goal as attorneys should be to have such character that no one would have a reason to question our dependability and trustworthiness. Purpose in your heart to be more careful about the commitments you make, and then, having considered the costs, commit to following through with the commitments you give others.