



The YLD Review

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

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Young Lawyers Division

Summer 2008

Model Juvenile Code Released to Public

by *Arianne Ellerbe Mathé and Lea Thompson*

After four years of hard work by the Juvenile Law Committee (JLC) and others, the model juvenile code was recently released to the public for comment. In early 2004, the JLC began a project to revise the Georgia Juvenile Code. The revisions were an effort to make the code better organized, more internally consistent and reflective of research-based best practices. Initiated by a request from then president of the Council of Juvenile Court Judges, the **Hon. Robin Nash**, the JLC was in a unique position to undertake this work.

Extensive research began in November 2004 with a focus on investigating the strengths and weaknesses of the current code and surveying the best practices in juvenile law through a review of national resources and juvenile codes from other states. In addition, in early 2005, the JLC held focus groups to identify specific areas of concern among practitioners. The JLC also participated in the legislative study committee on the juvenile code created by SR 161 and signed into law by **Gov. Sonny Perdue**.

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The Juvenile Law Committee recently held a CLE at the Bar Center to present the model code and recognize contributors for their effort. (L-R) Professor Lucy McGough, Judge Velma Tilley, YLD President Elena Kaplan, Juvenile Law Committee Co-Chair Ari Mathé and Soledad McGrath.

Leadership Academy Visits State Legislature



by *Sharri Edenfield*

This year's third annual YLD Leadership Academy was a great success. The program was larger than ever, with nearly 60 YLD members from around the state and across a diverse group of practice areas selected for participation. One of the Academy's six programs was "Lawyers in the Legislature," and included a visit to the State Capitol where the Leadership Academy class met **Gov. Sonny Perdue** (front row, center). The class also enjoyed a luncheon with lawyers serving in the Legislature and hearing House Judiciary Committee Chair **Wendell Willard** (front row, left) speak on what it is like to serve as a lawyer in the General Assembly.

The Leadership Academy class also benefited from hearing **Tom Boller**, a member of the State Bar's legislative team, speak about the State Bar's legislative agenda. Special thanks to Chairman Willard and his staff for their assistance in coordinating this exciting program.

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From the
President

Oh, The Places I Have Been

by Elena Kaplan

This past weekend, I spent a few lovely days relaxing with my family at Lake Chatuge. The mountains were gorgeous and the water refreshing. I am so looking forward to the next few months of weekends at the lake and the next year serving in the mainly ceremonial role of immediate past president and returning to my practice. However, I will miss greatly the amazing experiences I have enjoyed over the past year serving the YLD as president.

You will not be surprised that serving as YLD president is a mixture of lots of work and lots of fun opportunities. Bar trips have brought me to such far flung locales as Bermuda, Los Angeles, Puerto Rico and Montreal representing the Georgia YLD. I have also had the pleasure of crisscrossing the state, meeting lawyers in a myriad of towns and practices. I have been on YLD and Board of Governors' trips to Valdosta, Athens, St. Simons, Greensboro, Atlanta and Pine Mountain. Thanks to State Bar President **Gerald Edenfield's** initiative to hold Executive Committee meetings in various Georgia communities, I have also been to Rome, Americus, Savannah, Statesboro, Hiawassee and Macon.

President Edenfield's initiative was a great opportunity for the Executive Committee (and for me) to meet with and hear the concerns of Bar members statewide. It also was a great opportunity for Bar members to attend an Executive Committee meeting. As incoming President **Jeff Bramlett** plans to continue this initiative, I highly encourage you to attend a meeting when it is nearby.

I must admit, however, that the downside of President Edenfield's initiative is that it forced me to break my long held record. You see, I am an employee benefits lawyer. My day consists of drafting plans, researching code and advising clients. It does not include going to court. So, before this year, I could tell you that I had been in a courtroom less times than I could count on one hand—and that was for jury duty. But, with the statewide Executive Committee tour, we met most times in the local courthouse. In the actual courtroom! Now, I have more than doubled my courtroom "appearances" in a single year!



YLD Past President Chuck Driebe and YLD President Elena Kaplan at the YLD Holiday Party.



YLD Newsletter Co-Editor Stephanie Kirijan and YLD President Elena Kaplan at the Signature Fundraiser.

Kirijan, and Curtis Romig) have been there to pitch in at every turn. The directors, representatives and committee chairs who do the actual work of the YLD have gone above and beyond. They have provided me with a myriad of fabulous projects with which to fill my reports to the Board of Governors and the Supreme Court. The State Bar staff have been stupendous. I am so thrilled that **Mary McAfee** agreed to join us as YLD Director earlier this year. She has hit the ground running and I know will continue to be a great asset to the organization.

In addition, there is no way I could have done all this without the unwavering support of the lawyers of Parker, Hudson, Rainer & Dobbs—in particular, managing partner, **Wayne Hillis**; past Chair of the ABA/YLD, **Ed Dobbs**; and the lawyers with whom I worked: **Charlie Elrod, Tommy Thompson, Travis Carter, Paul Hudson** and **Kasel Knight**.

Finally, I want to thank each and every one of you for entrusting me with this office and providing me with this wonderful experience. As I begin my service as immediate past president, I look forward to helping the YLD continue its good works in both the near and distant future.



(L-R) YLD President Elena Kaplan, YLD Past President Damon Elmore and Whitney Mauk at the Midyear Meeting Kick Off Happy Hour.

The fact that the past year has been such a fabulous experience is due in no small part to the contributions of a variety of people. I want to thank them all for their hard work and sacrifice over this year. My fellow officers (**Jon Pope, Joshua C. Bell, Amy Howell, Michael Geoffroy, Stephanie**

Albany YLD Off to a Great Start

by Thomas V. Duck III



A number of prominent local bar members attended the Albany YLD's first social event, hosted by the Albany YLD board. Front row, (L-R) Sarah Kjellin, Lauren Mock, Alfreda Sheppard, Kimberly Westley, Greg Edwards (Dougherty Circuit Bar Association President) and Tommy Duck. Back row, (L-R) Jeffrey Williamson, Hon. Willie E. Lockette, Trey Underwood and YLD President-Elect Joshua C. Bell.

the Silver Leaf Restaurant and was sponsored by Wachovia Securities. Dougherty Superior Court **Judge Willie E. Lockette** was the keynote speaker and encouraged those in attendance to become involved in bar activities, both at the state and local levels. State Bar of Georgia YLD President-Elect **Joshua C. Bell**, Dougherty Circuit Bar Association President **Greg Edwards** and Dougherty Judicial Circuit District Attorney **Ken Hodges** were also in attendance and encouraged participation in bar activities.

Since its formation, the Albany YLD has sent representatives to State Bar of Georgia YLD meetings and events. The Albany YLD is currently in the process of becoming an ABA affiliate and plans to send representatives to ABA YLD events. The Albany YLD is also focused on local community service. Members participated in Law Day activities and implemented Wills For Heroes, the ABA YLD 2008 public service project.

The Albany YLD encourages lawyers under the age of 40 to become involved by providing avenues for networking, social interaction and public service. For more information about these events or about how to become involved in the Albany YLD, please e-mail Tommy Duck at tduck@dougherty.ga.us or **Sarah Kjellin** at skjellin@wslc-attorneys.com.

The Dougherty Circuit Bar Association recently established the Young Lawyers Committee and selected **Tommy Duck** as the inaugural chairperson. The Albany YLD hosted its first social event and introduced the organization to the community in March. This successful event took place at

Savannah YLD Members Stage Historic Mock Trial

by Stephanie Kirijan

Members of the Savannah YLD, in conjunction with the Black Heritage Festival, the Telfair Museum of Art and the Owens-Thomas House, recently staged a mock trial presentation at the Jepson Center for the Arts. The presentation commemorated the anniversary of the landmark trial involving the historic slave ship, the "Wanderer." Savannah YLD members **Colin McRae** and **Chris Smith** adapted and directed the mock trial based on the book *The Wanderer* and original court transcripts from the case.

The *Wanderer*, originally outfitted as a racing yacht, was converted into a slave ship and delivered more than 400 slaves to the coast of Georgia in 1858. The crew was arrested and tried in Savannah before Supreme Court **Justice James Moore Wayne**.

In addition to the well-received and well-attended mock trial, Savannah-based law firm Hunter Maclean sponsored an essay contest for Southwest Middle School students who attended the program. Colin McRae and Chris Smith visited the school to deliver a \$100 check to winner **Nikki Iwule**, an eighth grade student. Her winning essay told the story of the trial from the perspective of a young female slave and was praised for its originality.

Get Involved in the YLD!

You will be receiving a brochure in the mail about the many ways you can become involved in the YLD. Please consider joining one or more of the many great committees the YLD has to offer!



Compassion in Mediation

by Chadwick H. Greer

In the world of litigation, success is based all too often on whether we win the case for our client. I recently saw first hand the role that compassion can play in the mediation of a very emotionally charged suit and came to understand that its not about winning and losing, but rather getting the best result for your client.

I began preparing for the mediation in the case early, outlining my points to show that the plaintiffs' case had no merit. I could smell blood, and I had to show the plaintiffs that their claims were frivolous. But somewhere along the line, something struck me. I had spent more than a year on the case, ridiculing the plaintiffs. As I prepared, I began to see the plaintiffs, and particularly the wife, not just as a party to a lawsuit, but as a human being. I began to try to look at the case from her point of view, or rather my wife's point of view. I began to understand how emotionally invested she was in the case. Then and there, I began to recast my opening argument.

The point was no longer to tell her how wrong she was. The point now was to let her know that we sympathized with her plight. I still kept my points of law, but they became secondary. The focus became one human being speaking to another human being and showing compassion.

The mediation day arrived and we gathered in a local office building. I met with the mediator just before the start of the session. He had read our mediation statement, independently researched the issue, and just spoke with the plaintiffs. He had an odd suggestion for me—don't attack her. He told me that the plaintiffs were emotional and that if I tried to tell them how wrong they were, we might as well go home right then.

Instead, the mediator asked that my client and I show some compassion, and then he asked us to do something strange. He asked us to apologize—not for doing anything wrong, but for the outcome and the plaintiffs' pain. At this point, I have to admit, I was blessed with a wonderful client representative, who understood what the plaintiffs were going through, and she agreed.

After their counsel spoke, the plaintiffs told us about what they went through and why their suit was so important to them. There was pain and frustration in their eyes. Then my client and I spoke. We apologized for that pain and frustration, never once admitting to any wrongdoing, but our words had an effect. The clouds broke, the plaintiffs smiled, and suddenly there was open communication. We were no longer parties to a lawsuit. Instead we were people near the end of a long, weary trip, and at the end of the day, we reached an agreement.

Litigation Committee Hosts CLE Series

by Chris Abrego



Leaders of the Litigation Committee present War Stories speakers with Awards of Appreciation. (L-R) Edward McAfee, Dennis Cathey, Gov. Roy Barnes, Chris Abrego, Jay Sadd and Shane Mayes (not pictured Wade Malone).

The YLD Litigation Committee recently held the third installment of its first annual War Stories in Litigation Speaker's Series at the law offices of Carlock, Copeland & Stair. The event featured trial lawyers **Dennis Cathey** and former **Gov. Roy Barnes**. A packed house heard Cathey and Barnes speak about the interesting stories and lessons learned from their long and illustrious legal careers.

The War Stories in Litigation series is a signature event of the Litigation Committee. In addition to the event involving Cathey and Barnes, the committee also had great success in securing a number of prominent trial attorneys to speak for the inaugural series, including **Wade Malone**, Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough LLP (past president of the Atlanta Bar Association) and **Jay Sadd**, Slappy & Sadd, LLC. The committee also coordinated with ICLE of Georgia to obtain CLE credit for attendees.

Community Service Committee Volunteers are Making a Difference

by Terri Gordon



Members of the Community Service Committee at Phillips Arena for an Atlanta Hawks game. (L-R) Richard Reid, Garland Reid, Lamont Belk, Terri Gordon, Tammi Long, Jay Davis, Betty Nguyen Davis, April Williams, Kirsten Widner, Michelle Thomas, Shiriki Cavitt and Jonathan Smith.

more than 9,800 meals for individuals in need throughout the state. These are some of the many service projects the Community Service Committee has sponsored since its inception. The committee provides a fun and easy way for YLD members to give back to their community. Please consider joining the committee and volunteering at upcoming events.

The Community Service Committee has hosted various service projects in the last few months. Committee members brought a group of foster children to an Atlanta Hawks game at Phillips Arena. Both children and volunteers had a rousing good time watching the Hawks clinch a victory over the L.A. Clippers on their home court. Volunteers also participated in food sorting and packing at the Atlanta Community Food Bank. With a little hard work and a lot of fun, the group managed to sort and pack nearly 15,000 pounds of food, which will provide

20th Annual Legislative Affairs Event a Success

by Ashley Harris

The YLD Legislative Affairs Committee held its 20th Annual Legislative Event at the Georgia Freight Depot in February. The committee's legislative luncheon provided lawyers an opportunity to interact with lawmakers regarding current issues in the General Assembly.

This year, the YLD was fortunate to have a panel of legislators address nearly 70 attorneys on topics ranging from transportation and taxes to health care reform. The panel included **Sen. David Adelman**, **Sen. Preston Smith** and **Rep. Stacey Abrams**.

In addition to discussing the issues confronting the Legislature during the 2008 term, the panel members all stressed the importance of attorney involvement in the legislative process. Also in attendance were **Sen. Doug Stoner**, **Rep. Barry Fleming**, **Rep. Mike Jacobs** and **Rep. Wendell Willard**.

Other distinguished guests included **Judge John Ellington** and **Judge Alan Blackburn** of the Court of Appeals of Georgia.



Sen. Preston Smith speaks to YLD members about issues facing the 2008 General Assembly.

LRE Committee Gets a Jump Start

by Melissa Carter

Over the past year, the highly successful Law Related Education (LRE) Committee has strengthened its support of the State Bar's civic and law-related assistance to educators and students. New members have been signing up for the committee due largely to the strong reputation of this committee as a service-oriented YLD group that, among its other projects, traditionally hosts an annual golf tournament with proceeds donated to support the LRE Consortium at the University of Georgia. The committee is strongly supported by more than 50 young lawyers and has undertaken three signature service projects this year.

The LRE Committee supports the Bar's Journey Through Justice program by providing volunteer docents to guide student tours through the museum and assist with related educational activities including lesson plans and mock trials. LRE committee members also created teachable case stories from research on significant cases and legal events to facilitate student learning.

Additionally, in partnership with Emory Law School, the LRE Committee is developing a street law project designed to educate high school students about their legal rights and the social implications of laws relevant to them. The project will be offered in select schools starting fall 2008.

Lastly, the LRE Committee has taken on the responsibility of revising the *Introduction to Law* textbook used by Georgia high school teachers. This textbook is the only one of its kind in the nation and is a helpful tool for educators across the state. Every year, members volunteer to review, edit and update three to five chapters of the book. This cycle takes five years to review all the chapters.

If you are interested in contributing time and talent to these meaningful service projects, please consider joining the LRE Committee.

JMLS Alumni Event



Above left: President-Elect Joshua C. Bell encourages members of the John Marshall Law School Alumni Association to be actively involved in the YLD. **Above right:** John Marshall Law School alumnus Tommy Duck shares his positive experience in the YLD with other alumni. **Above:** Judge Herbert Phipps (standing) and Judge John Ellington (seated) of the Court of Appeals of Georgia each spoke to John Marshall Law School alumni at the event.

On Feb. 27, Atlanta's John Marshall Law School (JMLS) hosted a reception to introduce alumni to the Young Lawyers Division of the State Bar of Georgia. Led by 2005 JMLS graduate **Tommy Duck**, YLD officers **Elena Kaplan**, **Joshua C. Bell** and **Stephanie Kirijan** encouraged alumni in attendance to become active in the YLD and the legal community. Special guests included **Judge Herbert Phipps** and **Judge John Ellington** of the Court of Appeals of Georgia, and past president of the State Bar of Georgia and the YLD **Bill Barwick** (2003-04, 1984-85 respectively). Many thanks to JMLS **Dean Richardson Lynn** and Alumni Association President **Adam Malone** for hosting the event.



The Appellate Admissions Ceremony was held on April 22, at the Georgia Freight Depot. YLD Appellate Admissions Chair Elizabeth Fite coordinated the ceremony in which approximately 250 attorneys participated. YLD President Elena Kaplan attended the event and encouraged attorneys to participate in bar activities. Several justices from the Supreme Court of Georgia, as well as judges from the Court of Appeals of Georgia and the U.S. District Court, Northern District of Georgia attended the event. Justice Robert Benham of the Supreme Court of Georgia and U.S. District Judge William S. Duffey Jr. spoke at the event.

Congratulations!

Jonesboro High School earned Georgia's fourth national mock trial title and their first back-to-back win at the National High School Mock Trial Championship in Wilmington, Delaware. A special thanks to all those financial donors for the 2008 season.

2009 National High School Mock Trial Championship

Georgia will host the 2009 National High School Mock Trial Championship on May 8-9 at the Fulton County Courthouse in Atlanta.

We need over 300 judge and attorney volunteers to serve on judging panels during the national competition rounds.

VOLUNTEER TODAY! Sign-up forms may be found on our website (www.georgiamocktrial.org) under the Attorney Volunteer tab.

If you've never served on a high school mock trial judging panel before, be sure to volunteer to serve during rounds at one of our regional competitions in February!

We are still very much in need of donations to the Barnes Endowment Fund for Mock Trial at the Lawyers Foundation of Georgia. Contact the Mock Trial office or Lauren Barrett (404-659-6867) at the Lawyers Foundation to make a donation.

Visit our website at www.georgiamocktrial.org or contact the mock trial office for more information at 404-527-8779 or toll free 800-334-6865 ext. 779 or e-mail mocktrial@gabar.org



YLD Year in Review



Gerry and Kristie Edenfield at the YLD Signature Fundraiser, Soiree de la Chance, which benefited HERO for Children.



Kelly Campanella, Jennifer Blackburn, Bennett Hollberg, Kimberly and Jon Pannell at the Spring Meeting in Destin, Fla.



Terri Gordon, Shiriki Cavitt, YLD Past President Damon Elmore, and YLD Secretary Michael Geoffroy at the group dinner at Trader Vic's during the Midyear Meeting.



Elizabeth Garvish and Maria Mucha partied for a purpose at the YLD Signature Fundraiser.



Russ Henry, Superior Court Judge Richard Cowart, Bill Holland and Tim Tanner at the Valdosta YLD Holiday Social.



Scott Masterson and Edward McAfee at the YLD Holiday Party at the Four Seasons.



YLD Past President Joe Dent and YLD Newsletter Co-Editor Curtis Romig at the Wildhorse Saloon at the Fall Meeting in Nashville, Tenn.



Ansley Campbell and Ben Vinson at the YLD Holiday Party.



YLD Past President Damon Elmore and Sharri Edenfield at the Leadership Academy Social.



DeKalb Bar YLD Immediate Past President Stephanie Kirijan, President Jennifer Little, Vice President Jessica Harris at the organization's kick off event.



Judge John Ellington of the Court of Appeals of Georgia and YLD Immediate Past President Jon Pope at the YLD/LFG 60th Anniversary Gala at the Annual Meeting in Ponte Vedra, Fla.



Ben and Sally Perkins, Will Claiborne, and Patrick Connell dressed for the Tackiest Sweater Contest at the Savannah YLD Holiday Party.



Emily Hogue, Rebecca Crawford and Julie Tennyson enjoy the silent auction at the YLD Signature Fundraiser.

Model Juvenile Code ...

Continued from page 1

Following its participation in the study committee, the code project welcomed the volunteer assistance of Bartow County Juvenile Court **Judge Velma Tilley**. Tilley's first-hand knowledge of and expertise in Georgia juvenile law made her an invaluable addition as a secondary code reporter. A third reporter, Professor **Lucy McGough** of Louisiana State University's Paul M. Hebert Law Center joined the project as well. Her participation was made possible through continued funding from the Georgia Bar Foundation and a Sapelo Foundation grant from the Georgia Appleseed Center for Law and Justice. McGough assisted in drafting the current Georgia Juvenile Code and directed revisions of the current Louisiana Juvenile Code, which has received nationwide recognition for its organization and content.

The process of making the code available to the public for comment, and of incorporating public comment into a legislative package for introduction during the 2009 legislative session, is now being led by JUSTGeorgia, a coalition established by Georgia Appleseed, as well as Emory University Law School's Barton Child Law & Policy Clinic and Voices for Georgia's Children. The model code is available online at www.justgeorgia.org.

The goal of the juvenile code revision project is to create a comprehensive, research-based and well-organized model juvenile code for Georgia that reflects best practices in child welfare and juvenile law. The revised and restructured juvenile code will ultimately provide judges and practitioners the legal tools to better meet the overarching goals of the juvenile code: to protect and restore the well-being of Georgia's at-risk children.

Local Affiliates Join YLD in Destin

by Curtis Romig

More than 70 YLD members and guests gathered in Destin, Fla., at the Sandestin Resort from April 11 - 13 for the YLD Spring Meeting. It was one of the largest and most successful YLD meetings in recent years due to increased participation by both members of local YLD organizations and the YLD Leadership Academy Class of 2008.

The meeting was, in large part, a celebration of the growth and success of the local YLD affiliates throughout the state. On Friday evening, YLD members gathered for a local YLD update and networking event. The event began with the members in attendance standing on a map of the state of Georgia that had been created on the floor of the room to represent where participants lived and practiced. Each of the members then introduced him or herself and told the group where they practiced, how they were involved in their local YLD affiliates and what projects their local YLD affiliates had recently undertaken. After the update, the YLD members spent time networking and getting to know each other.

This was an important event at the spring meeting because several years ago the YLD of the State Bar of Georgia undertook a mission to reach out and reconnect with existing local YLD affiliates and to work with local bar associations and young lawyers to enhance participation in local YLD affiliates. Through these efforts, local YLD affiliates in Macon, Columbus, Albany, Valdosta, Savannah and the metro Atlanta area have reconnected the Georgia YLD and are working together on numerous projects across the state.



Meredith Wilson, Amy Lin Hadra, Shiriki Cavitt, Elizabeth Fite, Kelli Lott and Joshua Bosin enjoy the festivities at the Destin meeting.

A group dinner was held Friday evening on the back lawn of the Sandestin Resort Hotel where **Robert Ingram**, 2005-06 past president of the State Bar of Georgia, and his wife, Kelly, joined

YLD members for dinner. The evening ended with a limbo contest, prompting several members to comment about their sore backs for the rest of the weekend.

Saturday morning, YLD members gathered for the general session, where the officers, directors and committee chairs gave updates on the good work of the YLD. Later that morning, the YLD Leadership Academy Class of 2008 held a program session with **Doug Ashworth**, director of the Transition into Law Practice Program, where participants obtained CLE credit for ethics and professionalism. Other CLE programming offered benefited local affiliate YLD members through a program entitled "Increasing Community Involvement and Legal Education Through Local YLDs."

The spring meeting provided a great opportunity for YLD members to share their successes with each other, to collaborate on new and exciting projects and to meet and network with each other and members of the local YLD affiliates and the YLD Leadership Academy Class of 2008.

Young Lawyers Division 2008 Summer Meeting



The Driskill Hotel
Austin, Texas
August 14-17, 2008

Hotel Cut-off: July 22
Early Bird Registration Cut off: July 31

YLD Rate at the Driskill: \$199/night

Events include: welcome reception and group dinner, joint service project with the Texas Young Lawyers Association, tour of the Capitol, poker tournament, YLD general session meeting and a CLE.

Please visit the State Bar's website for a full meeting brochure and registration form or contact YLD Director Mary McAfee at 404-527-8778 for more information.





Editor's Block

An Inspiring Time To Be Had By All

by *Curtis Romig*

It is time to face the facts. After four inspiring, rewarding and fun years, I am aging out of the YLD. It is with much sadness (and a little relief at the expected increase in "free time") that I recently attended my last YLD meeting as a member. The funny thing is, this year, my last year, is the first time that I felt I had earned my place among the young lawyers that work so hard for the YLD. And having learned the importance and value of serving the bar and the public, I am ready to take the lessons I have learned in the YLD and apply them to the next phase of my civic and professional life. In short, I have been inspired by my experience in the YLD and I am not alone in that feeling.

Truth be told, I had two YLD careers. The first was brief and undistinguished. When I first began practicing in Georgia, I joined two committees, the Judicial Liaison Committee and the Ethics & Professionalism Committee. I attended meetings and did a little bit of work, but I never really found my place. And, I never really understood what the YLD did. What was its purpose? How did my work help the YLD accomplish that purpose? Why was I going to these meetings and what did I hope to accomplish? What was my inspiration? During my first YLD career, I never satisfactorily answered these questions. As a result, I (and one of my committees) faded from the YLD scene. That first YLD career ended before it ever really started. I would say I probably got out of it what I put in, which was not enough.

A year or two later, the then current president of the YLD, **Laurel Landon**, and the immediate past president of the YLD, **Andrew Jones**, visited my firm to promote YLD participation among "big firm" lawyers. I listened to them describe the work of the YLD: the Truancy Intervention Project; the Community Service Committee; the High School Mock Trial Committee; the Celebration of Excellence; the Juvenile Law Committee; the practice area related committees; and the way by which the YLD, the service arm of the State Bar of Georgia, served the public and the Bar through its 25 committees. I remember thinking to myself, "I want back in the YLD."

I realized that the work Laurel and Andrew described was important to the Bar and the communities it served. More importantly, they gave me a glimpse of how the whole YLD picture fit together and how the officers and directors supported the work of the YLD committees performing this work. At the end of the meeting, I decided to become involved in the YLD again. I introduced myself to Laurel and Andrew, explained that I had previously been involved, that my experience had been at best uneven, but that I would like to be involved again. Laurel took my card and said she would be back in touch with me.

Thankfully, Laurel gave me a mulligan. She called me several weeks later and asked me if I would co-chair the Ethics & Professionalism Committee with **Michael Geoffroy**. I was

excited and ready to get to work. In August, I attended my first YLD meeting at Barnsley Gardens in Adairsville. There, I began to learn more about the large number of incredible community service projects and work performed by the YLD committees. I also met and learned from the young lawyers who were responsible for making those projects happen. I vowed to work harder with my committee.

Over the next year, I worked with Michael on the Ethics & Professionalism Committee. With Michael's creativity, and the help of his seemingly endless supply of law school friends he convinced to participate in the committee, we had a great year. For the first time, the Ethics & Professionalism Committee presented an award, the YLD Ethics & Professionalism Award, to a YLD member embodying the ethical and professional attributes to which all lawyers should aspire. The award has grown bigger every year; the committee recently received the most applications. The significance of this award was brought home to me in June 2006 at the State Bar's Annual Meeting in Hilton Head, S.C. Prior to the presentation of the award, I met the award winner, **Chris Cohilas**, and his family, who had all made the trip to Hilton Head to see Chris accept the award. Looking at Chris's family and listening to his father talk with so much pride about his son being recognized by his peers in the Bar for his ethical and professional behavior inspired me to be more professional.

This year, I was fortunate enough to become involved in two projects that could not have been more rewarding. First, I was appointed newsletter co-editor with **Stephanie Kirijan**. Second, I was able to work on the YLD's Signature Fundraiser Committee, raising funds for HERO for Children, a fantastic organization. Both of these experiences have been incredible. The YLD newsletter because it was something I had wanted to be involved with since my first YLD meeting, and the signature fundraiser because through the outstanding efforts of a number of younger lawyers, we were able to raise more than \$45,000 and donate \$35,000, doubling our fundraising efforts from the year before and more than tripling our charitable donation. At the signature fundraiser, we announced these totals just after the founders of HERO for Children, **Ryan Gemabala** and **Garrett Gravesen**, had thanked the YLD for its support. We had been very conservative in our earlier estimates to Ryan and Garrett, so when we announced an estimated total 75 percent higher than what they were expecting, they were stunned. I talked with them briefly after the announcement and their gratitude for the YLD's fundraising work was something that will inspire me for years to come.

As I leave the YLD, I am thankful for the opportunity to have been a small part of the work its young lawyers do, thankful to have been inspired by the many young lawyers who work so hard for the public and the Bar and thankful for the friendships I have made along the way. I look forward to being inspired by the work of YLD members for years to come.



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