



# The YLD Review

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

Volume 48, Issue 2

Young Lawyers Division

Winter 2006

## YLD Visits the Big Apple for 2006 Summer Meeting

The Young Lawyers Division held its 2006 Summer Meeting the weekend of Aug. 24-27 at the Waldorf=Astoria Hotel in Midtown Manhattan. A welcome cocktail reception on Thursday night kicked off the meeting, where members of the New York City Bar Association joined the group. Friday night's event was a Mets baseball game—the YLD took a bus to Shea Stadium and back to the Waldorf. Saturday morning began with a CLE titled "Lawyers and Politics," featuring former Congressman George "Buddy" Darden, Georgia Court of Appeals Judge John J. Ellington, and a panel of five YLD members: Ashley Harris, Elena Kaplan, Stephanie Kirijan, Ryan Teague and Ben Vinson.

Special thanks go to Stephanie Kirijan for organizing the successful CLE. A business meeting followed the CLE, updating members on recent YLD developments. Saturday evening included a group dinner at the Waldorf's restaurant, Peacock Alley, followed by a Broadway show, *Rent*. Thanks to the Summer Meeting sponsors: Brown Reporting, Inc.; Forge Consulting; Rogers & Goldberg, LLC; Hasty, Pope & Ball, LLP; Josh Bell: Candidate for YLD President-Elect; Cristen Freeman: Candidate for YLD Secretary; and Michael Geoffroy: Candidate for YLD Secretary. 🍷

**Left:** Jennifer Romig, Secretary Amy Howell, Curtis Romig and President-Elect Elena Kaplan  
**Right:** Former Congressman George "Buddy" Darden speaks at the Lawyers and Politics CLE



Georgia Court of Appeals Judge John Ellington and YLD President Jon Pope at the YLD Summer Meeting welcome cocktail reception hosted at the Waldorf=Astoria Hotel in New York City in August 2006.



Want more photos? Check out:  
[www.flickr.com/photos/yld](http://www.flickr.com/photos/yld)

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from the  
President

## YLD Partners With Tipitina's Foundation

By Jon Pope

**O**n Aug. 29, we remembered the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina one year ago. FEMA labeled Hurricane Katrina the worst natural disaster in U.S. history. We saw images of complete destruction balanced by images of people across the country extending a helping hand to provide food and shelter for residents of the Gulf Coast.

As individuals, many of us donated time, money and clothing to help those in need. As members of the State Bar, we coordinated a response to assist displaced Gulf Coast attorneys with office space, computer equipment and other supplies.

The YLD functions as the service arm of the Bar and we should all be proud of the assistance our organization provided to those impacted by this disaster. Last October, the YLD Disaster Legal Assistance Committee organized our response to Katrina. The YLD activated a legal hotline in partnership with the ABA YLD hotline and other YLD hotlines in Louisiana and Mississippi. In addition, YLD volunteers handed out more than 1,000 copies of the YLD disaster manual, "Legal Assistance for Victims of Natural Disasters," in 17 area shelters. While these were important projects, with devastation of this magnitude, there is always more we can do.

This year the YLD, in partnership with the State Bar of Louisiana's YLD, is dedicating our annual service project to raise funds to purchase musical instruments for public schools affected by Hurricane Katrina. The YLD will hold instrument drives and a number of fundraisers to benefit Tipitina's Foundation, a New Orleans non-profit organization dedicated to providing area schools with musical instruments. The YLD will present our fundraising check to the foundation during the Spring Meeting in New Orleans, April 26-29. This year-long initiative will culminate with a clean-up project to help remove debris left from Hurricane Katrina scheduled during the Spring Meeting.

Our largest scale fundraising initiative will be the "Mardi Gras Casino Night" held on Fat Tuesday, Feb. 20. This black tie event will be open to all lawyers in the State Bar as well as friends and guests. We will host six casino tables, including blackjack, craps, Texas Hold 'em and roulette. Tickets are \$75 per person until Jan. 31, then \$100 until the benefit. Funds will also be raised through a

raffle for a trip to the New Orleans meeting and a silent auction.

New Orleans is rich in tradition, and music has a strong influence on the Crescent City. Tipitina's Foundation is working to lift up the music community of New Orleans and rebuild the music culture after Katrina devastated the city. The Foundation is using the legendary music club, Tipitina's Uptown, as the center of its relief efforts by hosting a newly opened Music Co-op Office. Here, musicians can conduct business, obtain free legal and accounting seminars, and get help with housing information.

So far, the Foundation has given away more than \$500,000 in new instruments to professional musicians and students. This project supports a very worthy cause and will help bring joy to the students in New Orleans who are facing many challenges this school year, including being displaced from their homes and schools.

In addition to our efforts to assist the victims of Hurricane Katrina, I can assure you that many of the 27 YLD committees are working diligently on numerous projects aimed at providing service to the public and the Bar. I wish I could mention each and every one of them individually but am limited by space.

However, I would be remiss if I did not update you on the Georgia High School Mock Trial Competition, a program held by one of the oldest and most successful YLD committees, the YLD High School Mock Trial Committee. The committee, headed by High School Mock Trial Coordinator Stacy Rieke and Committee Co-Chairs Tania Trumble and Sally Evans, has worked tirelessly in preparing for this year's competition. High school mock trial teams across Georgia have just received the 2007 civil case materials that will form the basis of the 19th mock trial season in Georgia. Teams will work for more than 10 weeks preparing the case for trial and regional competitions will be held in 16 cities around the state at the end of February, with the state finals competition being held in Lawrenceville, Ga., March 10-11.

Some teams still need coaches and the committee always needs judging panel volunteers for both the regional and state levels of competition. I urge you to give just a few hours out of one day by volunteering for this wonderful event. To volunteer, please contact Stacy Rieke at [stacyr@gabar.org](mailto:stacyr@gabar.org). ☛

### 2007 Legislative Affairs Luncheon Meeting

**T**he YLD Legislative Affairs Committee announces its 19th annual gathering with judges and legislators on a date in January to be determined. The event will take place in the Sloppy Floyd Building, across the street from the Capitol. Come rub shoulders with legislators, appellate judges and fellow YLD members. The committee will soon announce the time and the speakers. Last year's speakers included Sen. Preston Smith (R-Rome), Sen. Kasim Reed (D-Atlanta), Sen. David Adelman (D-Decatur), Rep. Rob Teilhet (D-Smyrna), Supreme Court Justice Carol Hunstein and Randy Evans of McKenna, Long & Aldridge, LLP. This year's speakers will be equally as impressive. Get the inside scoop on issues of interest for the 2007 legislative session. Tickets are \$25 per person. Your firm can be a sponsor and purchase a table of 8 seats for \$150. If you are interested in tickets, or in being a sponsor, please call the YLD office at 404-527-8778, Ben Vinson at 404-527-4173 or John Rogers at 404-522-8220. ☛

### 2007 Midyear Meeting

The State Bar of Georgia will hold its Midyear Meeting in Savannah, Ga., Jan. 18-20, at the Hyatt Regency. YLD events include a service project of collecting used business suits for men and women and used cell phones, which will be donated to shelters across the state. A YLD-sponsored CLE will be offered Jan. 19. "Hanging Out A Shingle," Part I (Practical Tips for the New Lawyer on How to Get Started and Successfully Keep Going – 3 CLE credit hours) will run from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m., and Part II (Professionalism Issues a Solo or Small Firm Must Handle in Order to Stay Successful – 3 CLE credit hours with one hour of professionalism credit, and one hour of ethics credit) will run from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. From 5 to 6 p.m. on Jan. 19, the YLD will hold its business meeting. On Jan. 20, the YLD will host its annual group dinner along with a Haunted Pub Crawl through some of Savannah's most revered pubs. Please visit [www.gabar.org](http://www.gabar.org) to register or to find more information about the 2007 Midyear Meeting. ☛

# Lessons I've Learned at the DA's Office

- When organizing a project, surround yourself with a diverse group of people. Think not only in terms of gender, race and age, but also of work style. Collaborating on a project will generate more brainstorming ideas and help to develop a clear plan of action.
- Remember that you work in a service profession. Being an attorney is about helping others, not about you as an individual.
- Find a way to weave your passion into your law practice. It will make for a more enjoyable ride and will make your life more balanced.
- Trust your gut. Do not rationalize doing things that in your gut you know are wrong.
- Always operate with integrity—be honest, fair and consistent. People may not like your honesty, but they will respect you for it.
- Do your homework. Preparation is the key to success.
- Do not let others talk you out of achieving your dreams.
- Believe in yourself. If you don't, why should anyone else?
- Do not procrastinate when having to make a tough decision. Delaying bad news does not make delivering it easier.
- Utilize the Mom/Media Test. If your Mom knew the whole story behind your actions and/or business dealings, and it appeared on the front page of the paper, would she still be proud of you for how you handled things? 📧



Gwen Keyes Fleming is the first African-American and first female elected as DeKalb County District Attorney. Gwen previously served as Solicitor-General for DeKalb County. She was the first African-American, first female, and youngest person elected to that position.

Gwen was one of Georgia Trend Magazine's "Top 40 Under 40" and an "Outstanding Atlanta" Awardee. *Ebony Magazine* recognized her as a "Woman to Watch in the 21st Century." The Supreme Court of Georgia's Commission on Professionalism recognized Gwen for community service in 2001. The DeKalb Rotary Council honored her in 2003 for distinguished service and leadership. Gwen is the past president of the Emory Law School Alumni Association. She is a member of the DeKalb Lawyers Association, the DeKalb Bar Association, the Georgia Association of Black Women Attorneys, the National Council of Negro Women, the NAACP, the 1999 Leadership DeKalb class, the 2000 Leadership Georgia class, and the 2007 Leadership Atlanta class.

Gwen received a B.S. in Finance from Douglass College and graduated from the Emory University School of Law.

A native of New Jersey, Gwen is married to Randal Fleming. They have one child.

## Young Lawyers Around the State

### DeKalb Bar YLD

The DeKalb Bar Association recently created a Young Lawyers Division for its members less than 40 years of age. The DeKalb YLD invited all members of the DeKalb Bar to its inaugural event on Sept. 14 at SAGE in Decatur. Many of the DeKalb County judges came out to encourage younger attorneys to participate in the bar community and seasoned attorneys brought new attorneys from their firms to introduce them to other bar members.

Members of the State Bar YLD, President-Elect Elena Kaplan, candidate for Secretary Michael Geoffroy, and Litigation Committee Chair Scott Masterson, also attended to show support for this newly-created local YLD.

*The YLD Review* Editor Stephanie Kirijan and DeKalb ADA Jennifer

Little created the section with the help of DeKalb Superior Court Judge Mark Scott and DeKalb Bar President Michael Hawkins.

### Savannah YLD

The Savannah YLD kicked off its year on Sept. 21 with a happy hour social at the Wild Wing Café in City Market. Brown Reporting, Inc., and Pro Legal Copies sponsored the event and served up generous helpings of wings, chips and cold drinks. Approximately 35 young lawyers attended and many stayed late to watch the Georgia Tech Yellow Jackets take on the Virginia Cavaliers.

The Savannah YLD has an exciting year planned and invites all young attorneys in the area to get involved. Each month there will be a special event that will give members an opportunity to network and have fun

at the same time. The annual Holiday Party takes place on Dec. 15 at 7 p.m. at the home of Jon and Kimberly Pannell. The Savannah YLD also hopes to see many YLD members from across the state at the State Bar's Midyear Meeting in January, since it will convene in Georgia's First City.

### Macon YLD

In September, the Macon YLD had its fall social at the Macon Arts Gallery. Third year law students from Mercer were invited to the event as part of the Macon YLD's efforts to include soon-to-be lawyers in local bar activities. Macon YLD President William Noland presented Immediate Past President Cristen Freeman with a plaque recognizing her for her service as a founding officer and president the last two years. The Macon YLD also made announcements and

encouraged support for upcoming events such as the Georgia Literary Festival sponsored in part by the Macon YLD and held the first weekend in November, the Holiday Gift Drive that provides gifts to Bibb County foster children, a Winter Social in January to be sponsored by Brown Reporting, the Great Day of Service in April and the Macon YLD's participation in the State Bar YLD's service projects to benefit Tipitina's Foundation, an organization in New Orleans raising money to purchase instruments for New Orleans public schools devastated by Katrina.

Officers William Noland, Carl Varnedoe (president-elect), Kelli Pushman (treasurer) and Cristen Freeman also welcomed the new Macon YLD Secretary Jed Hill.



**DeKalb:** DeKalb State Court Judge Johnny Panos, DeKalb Bar President Michael Hawkins and Justin Hayes



**Savannah:** Matt McCoy, Susannah Pedigo and Chris Smith



**Macon:** Cristen Freeman, William Noland, Jed Hill and Kelli Pushman





# A Tribute to Our Friend, Karen Marie Cross

By Brandy James Daswani and Dayna Friduss

Many of you knew our friend Karen Marie Cross. She was born June 14, 1972, in Ft. Wayne, Ind., and was the third of five sisters. She received her B.S. in Biology in 1994 and her joint M.B.A. and J.D. from Georgia State in 2002. Karen was a strong advocate for community service and participated in several organizations, including the Cancer Society, Big Brothers and Big Sisters Club, the Atlanta Women's Foundation, Lawyers for Literacy, and our very own Young Lawyers Division.

The three of us met at Georgia State College of Law's part-time program in Fall 1999. Actually, Dayna and Karen met the summer prior to the beginning of the first semester, at Georgia State's class for those the law school was concerned needed a little extra help. (We graduated with honors—so there!)

The two person study group became a perfected trio with the addition of Brandy in our first spring semester, once Karen and Dayna discovered that Brandy had a knack for taking incredibly accurate notes, or rather, dictation, during classes. Those notes came in handy plenty of nights when we were debating over exactly what the professor had said about a case or a point of law. For the next three and a half years, we studied, laughed, and loved our way through one of the most grueling and challenging periods of our lives. Why did it work so well? Who knows, but we realized that we all depended on one another and couldn't imagine surviving law school without each other.

Despite not being related, just about everyone at law school thought Karen and Dayna were the same person, and once they figured out they weren't, then they were convinced they were just sisters. There were benefits to the confusion at times. Karen was so incredibly outgoing that we ended up meeting people we are sure we never would have met—only because Karen took the time to talk to just about everyone, about pretty much anything. She crossed racial, cultural and gender barriers and actually sought out as many different perspectives as she could find on any given topic. She was a big believer in networking and loved lecturing us on this topic (lecturing was a trait she

inherited from her father, Perry). Plus, she was smart too, and being associated with smart is never a bad thing.

Karen's personality was infectious. One of our favorite memories is from Contracts I, fall semester, 1999. Karen succeeded in getting the most stoic, hard-core, Socratic-method professor (Judge Corneil Stephens) to burst out in laughter after she answered a question that had so far stumped three-fourths of the class. Her response to the question "What does the word acquiescence mean" was something along the lines of, "Professor, I have never pondered the subtle nuances of that particular word before." There were definitely benefits to sitting next to her in that class—after that particular episode, Prof. Stephens rarely called on her again.

Did we mention courageous? Because that was her response when she was diagnosed with breast cancer in the Spring 2002. She was determined not to let it beat her. She loved life too much and had so much more to do while already having come so far. So fight she did, and successfully. This only brought us closer together—the discussions and debates about life and death and what really matters at the end of the day; picking out the perfect wig; and ensuring that everyone else was comfortable during her chemotherapy sessions. There were times during those sessions that we wondered who was supporting whom. Karen seemed to be doing a great job of entertaining and comforting the other patients, staff, and us, all on her own.

Karen went into remission after she finished her treatment in Spring 2003. But that was so like her—she was used to fighting successfully—she was the first person in her family to graduate from college, let alone attend any type of graduate school. And she was determined to become a litigator to be reckoned with. By first landing a job at Alston & Bird, LLP, and then at the U.S. Attorney's office in Miami, Fla., she was well on her way.

Karen's lively personality didn't shine just in law school. On our post bar exam/ post chemo trip to Europe, she made a point of making friends with just about everyone—starting with meeting practically every pas-



**Above:** Brandy, Karen and Dayna in Barcelona, Spain during their bar exam trip.



**Left:** Karen Marie Cross. June 1972 - October 2006

senger on our plane headed to Barcelona, Spain. Despite the fact that we had just taken the February bar exam (and were in desperate need of sleep), Karen, having already passed the bar the previous July, headed straight for the streets of Spain, and let the world know she was there. At the time it seemed strange that she seemed so eager to meet as many people as she could and to see every single solitary site the city had to offer.

But looking back, it's possible that she knew, even subconsciously, something that most of us take for granted. That every single moment of your life is precious, and should be spent doing the things you really want to be

doing. In short, life is for living, not just existing, by getting the most out of every single day, and every single moment.

So how do you pay tribute to a lost friend? By reminding everyone about her incredible spirit, her incredibly outgoing personality, her thirst for life, her refusal to accept the first answer she was ever given, and most importantly, her determination to get the most out of every single moment.

We are truly blessed that we were fortunate enough that Karen was a part of our lives, even if for just a short period of time. She was loved by us and by many of our fellow members of the Bar, and will truly never be forgotten. 🙏



# Young Lawyers Division Convenes in Athens for 2006 Fall Meeting

The YLD Fall Meeting was held as usual in Athens, Ga., at the Hilton Garden Inn Oct. 6-8 for the UGA vs. Tennessee game. Friday afternoon began with a YLD business meeting and concluded with the evening's Welcome Cocktail Reception and Group Dinner at East West Bistro in downtown Athens. A tailgate party (arranged by Chuck Auslander and Rich Connelly) began at noon, and continued right up until kickoff at 7:45 p.m. Matt Donelson and his band played at the tailgate, which was catered by the Foundry Park Inn and Spa.

Thank you to all of our Fall Meeting sponsors:

- Capstone Financial Partners- Blair Enfield
- Donovan Court Reporting
- Forge Consulting
- Fuller & Company
- Legal Technology Services
- Metro Atlanta Court Reporting
- Optimum Investigative Services, Inc.
- Regional Litigation Support Services
- Taylor Consulting Group, Inc.
- Visual Litigation Services, Inc.

Josh Bell, Candidate for YLD President-Elect 2007-2008  
Michael Geoffroy, Candidate for YLD Secretary 2007-2008

**Top:** John and Mandy Jackson, Christina and Carl Varnedoe, and Kimberly and Jon Pannell at the group dinner at East West Bistro in Athens.

**Bottom Left:** YLD Immediate Past President Damon Elmore, YLD Past President Joe Dent and YLD Review Editor Stephanie Kirijan.

**Bottom Right:** Melissa and Andrew Bowen at East West Bistro.



## Mardi Gras Casino Night

February 20, 2007  
7 p.m. - 10 p.m.

Paris on Ponce's "Le Moulin Rouge"  
716 Ponce de Leon Place, NE  
Atlanta, Georgia 30306

Tickets: \$75 per person till Jan. 31 / \$100 after  
Includes food, beverages, initial buy-in for "fake" gambling

Casino tables will include blackjack, Texas Hold 'em poker,  
craps and roulette.

Black tie

Silent Auction and Raffle

All proceeds go to Tipitina's Foundation, a non-profit organization working to lift up the New Orleans' music community and rebuild the music culture after the devastation of Hurricane Katrina. The YLD donation will go to the Instruments A Comin' program, replacing schools' lost musical instruments.

For tickets or table sponsorship, please contact Deidra Sanderson, YLD Director, at 404-527-8778 or [deidra@gabar.org](mailto:deidra@gabar.org). No credit cards are accepted at this time. Please make checks payable to State Bar of Georgia and mail to:

Deidra Sanderson, YLD Director  
State Bar of Georgia  
104 Marietta Street, Suite 100  
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

## HIGH SCHOOL MOCK TRIAL NIGHT WITH YOUR ATLANTA THRASHERS



Saturday, February 3, 2007  
7:00pm

Seats originally priced at \$70, \$38 & \$28  
are discounted to \$63, \$31 & \$21.

A portion of the proceeds benefits the  
Judge Rowland Barnes Endowment at the Lawyers  
Foundation of Georgia (a 501c3 nonprofit)  
for the 2009 National High School Mock Trial  
Championship in Atlanta

No. of Seats	Price (Circle One)	Total
	\$63 \$31 \$21	

**GEORGIA  
MOCK TRIAL  
COMPETITION**

Plus Processing Fee: \$5  
Grand Total: \_\_\_\_\_

For Information Contact Justin Gurney at 404-878-3953;  
[justin.gurney@atlantaspirit.com](mailto:justin.gurney@atlantaspirit.com) or  
Stacy Rieke at 404-527-8779; [mocktrial@gabar.org](mailto:mocktrial@gabar.org).

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# Treacherous Waters?

## Communicating With Clients When Switching Firms

By Dustin T. Brown  
dustin@dcfblaw.com


If you intend to stay at the law firm that first hired you, stop reading. The reality is, however, that many of you will switch firms during the first few years of practice.<sup>1</sup> For those who do, it is important to have a general understanding of what is, and is not, appropriate communication with someone you represented while at your former firm. Is it appropriate to advise a client of your departure? Do you have an affirmative obligation to contact and advise a client of your departure? And most importantly, if you do contact such a client, what can you say?

Fortunately, the Supreme Court of Georgia has tackled this issue already and provided guidance for departing attorneys. In Formal Advisory Opinion No. 97-3 (Sept. 4, 1998), the Court emphatically stated that, “No Standard prohibits a departing attorney from contacting those clients with whom the attorney personally worked while at the firm. A client is not the property of a certain attorney.”<sup>2</sup> After mentioning the guiding ethical principle that attorneys should act in the best interest and protection of the client, the Court stated “[a]n attorney has a duty to keep a client informed” and that, “to the extent that a lawyer’s departure from the firm affects the client’s legal matters, this client should be informed of the attorney’s departure.”<sup>3</sup> Thus, generally speaking, it is always permissible to advise clients of your departure and, in certain circumstances, you should inform the client of your departure.

As for the method and substance of an appropriate communication, so long as the “departing attorney either had significant contact with or actively represented a client on the client’s legal matters, the attorney may communicate with the client, in either written or oral form, to advise the client of the attorney’s departure from the firm.”<sup>4</sup> In so doing, the lawyer must be truthful and “may advise the client of the fact of the attorney’s departure, the attorney’s new location, the attorney’s willingness to provide legal services to the client, and the client’s right to select who handles the client’s future legal representation.”<sup>5</sup>

In short, just be truthful in your communications to the client and feel free to let the client know that, as always, the client has a right to select who handles his or her future representation. Although the appropriate timing of the notification should be determined on a case by case basis, the advisory opinion acknowledged that “[d]epending on the nature of the departing attorney’s work for the client, the client may need advance notification of the departure.”<sup>6</sup>

The Court further noted that “[t]o the extent practical, a joint notification by the law firm and the departing attorney . . . is the preferred course of action for safeguarding the client’s best interests.”<sup>7</sup> In a perfect world, this joint notification is undoubtedly the best method of advising a client of the fact of departure, the circumstances of the departure, and of the client’s right to select who handles the representation.<sup>8</sup> But as a practical matter, such an agreed-upon joint notification may not always be possible. Some departures can be contentious, and even a seemingly amicable departure can turn ugly when the continuing representation of clients may be at issue. Thus, the departing attorney and the attorneys who remain at the firm should be cautious in any and all communications with clients. To safely navigate these treacherous waters, the young attorney should of course be truthful (a good rule to live by in ALL dealings as an attorney!) and would be well advised to adhere to discussion of only the specific subjects outlined as appropriate in the advisory opinion – the fact of departure, the attorney’s new location, the attorney’s willingness to provide legal services, and the client’s right to select who handles future legal representation.

In addition to the written guidance provided by Opinion No. 97-3, any Georgia attorney can always contact the Office of the General Counsel (OGC) for guidance about ethical issues. Simply call the Lawyer Helpline at 404-527-8741. OGC will help direct the caller (whose name the OGC must keep confidential) to the applicable ethics rules, discuss the pros and cons of various courses of action, and offer a nonbinding informal advisory opinion based on the factual information provided. 

Dustin Brown practices in Columbus, Ga., and is a member of the YLD Ethics & Professionalism Committee.

### Endnotes

- 1 See, e.g., Elizabeth Goldberg, Midlevel Associates Survey: Firms Improve, but Complaints Continue, *The American Lawyer* (Aug. 1, 2006), available at [www.law.com/jsp/article.jsp?id=1154349329897](http://www.law.com/jsp/article.jsp?id=1154349329897) (stating 55 percent of those surveyed don’t necessarily expect to be working in a law firm in five years); Ashby Jones, The Third-Year Dilemma – Why Firms Lose Associates, *Career Journal* (Jan. 9, 2006), available at [www.careerjournal.com/salaryhiring/industries/law/20060106-jones.html](http://www.careerjournal.com/salaryhiring/industries/law/20060106-jones.html) (noting 37 percent of associates at big firms quit by the end of their third years of practice).

2-7 *Id.*

- 8 See ABA Formal Op. 99-414 (Sept. 8, 1999)


## Litigation Committee Update

The Litigation Committee hit the ground running this year with several projects to be completed before 2007. First, the committee worked with GAWL to organize volunteers for the Nov. 4 PGA Tour Championship at East Lake, which was filled to capacity and raised money for the Georgia Center for Children. The committee also held its first networking/social event on Oct. 5 at Loca Luna. The event was a success thanks, in large part, to sponsors RGP Attorney Services and Metro Atlanta Reporters, as well as the new and existing members who attended. The committee also participated in Run for Justice, which was held in the Virginia-Highlands on Nov. 10.

There are several events planned for the holiday season. For the second year, the committee will host a luncheon at Maggiano’s in Buckhead on Dec. 19, to honor staff and metro area court clerks. This year, the lunch is being expanded to include clerks from Cherokee, Henry, Bartow and Rockdale counties, in addition to the Metro Atlanta clerks who participated last year. The committee is also organizing what it hopes to be an annual “adopt-a-family” program for the holiday season. Details regarding this program will be available soon.

The committee held its first Lunch ‘n Learn on Oct. 25 where participants received information about personal finances. The next Lunch ‘n Learn will include CLE credit and the

topic will be e-discovery. The date for this event is still being finalized. Contact David Sirna, [sirna@krevolin-horst.com](mailto:sirna@krevolin-horst.com), or Shiriki Cavitt, [shiriki.cavitt@troutmansanders.com](mailto:shiriki.cavitt@troutmansanders.com), for more information.

Finally, the committee is beginning plans for its annual spring CLE, and will also host more networking/social events and community service projects throughout the year. If you would like to join the YLD Litigation Committee, please contact Scott Masterson, [smaster-son@hplegal.com](mailto:smaster-son@hplegal.com) or Shane Mayes, [tsmayes@mijs.com](mailto:tsmayes@mijs.com). 



**Top:** Richard Poncinie (RGP Attorney Services), Tanya Donnelly (Metro Atlanta Reporters), and Committee Co-Chair Shane Mayes



**Left:** Committee Co-Chair Scott Masterson and Michael Geoffroy

# Aspiring Youth Program Launches in 2007

By Mark V. Lindsay  
Aspiring Youth Committee Chair

The YLD Aspiring Youth Program will begin at Crawford W. Long Middle School in Spring 2007. The program brings lawyers into the school twice a week from 4 to 6 p.m. to work with 20 at-risk students during what is known as the “latch key hours” when students risk being without parental supervision. This year the program lines up with American Bar Association President Karen J. Mathis’s goal of making the situation of at-risk youth an ABA focus.

“Aspiring Youth provides mentoring and academic help as well as emotional support for students who are at risk of losing interest in school,” said Brandy Daswani, immediate past chair of the Atlanta-based program. “These students are a joy to work with—they’re energetic, exciting and they have ambition in them that lawyers can help unlock.”

The Aspiring Youth Program started in Houston, Texas, and now takes on renewed significance because the ABA’s Youth at Risk Initiative seeks to “raise awareness among the ABA’s 413,000 members regarding programs and policy issues surrounding at-risk youth,” and the Aspiring Youth Program is that program in the Atlanta community that responds to these concerns. The youth of America, according to the initiative’s website, face increasingly troublesome conditions that place their lives at risk — domestic violence, abuse, neglect, mental health needs, and emotional or behavioral problems are a few.

“As lawyers, we can use our unique vantage point on both the criminal system and the academic community to play a new, vibrant role in the lives of America’s youth,” said Doug Kertscher, an Atlanta attorney who served as the national coordinator of the Aspiring Youth Program from 1997-98. “There’s

good research out there establishing at-risk youth as a national problem and after school programs as a great solution, to keep our students off the street and to keep them and us focused on education.”

Lawyers volunteering with the program serve as positive role models for the students, assist the students with homework, and bring energy and experience to the field trips, recreational activities and arts activities. Last year the students and volunteer lawyers visited Zoo Atlanta, listened to guest speakers, like a former circus-hand-turned-author, and partied at an end-of-the-year celebration, where awards like Best Sportsmanship, Best Student, Most-Improved Sport and Most-Improved Student were given.

The Atlanta program is a small part of larger national network of programs. The Houston Young Lawyers Division started Aspiring Youth in 1992 and the ABA selected the program in 1996 to expand it nationwide. Ten years later the Aspiring Youth Program is in California, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Massachusetts, Mississippi, Oklahoma, Oregon, Texas, Utah and Washington. More than 8,500 students have participated in 33 cities across the country.

In the 14 years since the program started, technology has revolutionized the way educators teach in the classroom, but not all schools are on the same playing field, and the Aspiring Youth Program at Crawford W. Long will use technology to help raise that bar and make technology an attraction for both students and lawyers. To listen to the ABA’s podcast on youth at risk, visit [www.abavideonews.org/ABA372/podcasts.php](http://www.abavideonews.org/ABA372/podcasts.php). For more information about the Crawford W. Long Middle School Aspiring Youth Program, contact Mark Lindsay at 404-815-6308/ [malindsay@kilpatrickstockton.com](mailto:malindsay@kilpatrickstockton.com). ☎

## Community Service Committee Update

By Terri Gordon  
Community Service Committee Chair

### Habitat For Humanity

On Sept. 23, about 10 members of the Young Lawyers Division gave a full Saturday to help make adequate, affordable shelter a matter of conscience and action. The mission of Habitat for Humanity is to eliminate substandard housing and to provide the opportunity of homeownership to low-income families.

Our attorneys spent a day painting, installing fixtures, laying sod, planting trees and shrubs and washing windows to help a needy family prepare their home for move-in. At the end of the day, there was a large pile of dirt, leaves and trash stacked at least five feet high and it was agreed that all had a great time and enjoyed meeting and working with the family, other volunteers and Habitat employees.

### Community Service Happy Hour

Come out for an evening of networking, great drinks and food, and a wonderful cause. Join the YLD

Community Service Committee at their winter Happy Hour on Jan. 25 at Globe restaurant, located at 5th and Spring St. in Atlanta. All proceeds from this Happy Hour will benefit Tipitina’s Foundation and Fulton County Court Appointed Special Advocates. A flyer with the specifics of this event will be e-mailed to all committees in January. We hope you are able to make it and support these wonderful charities!

### Suit and Cell Phone Drive

Clean out your closets and attics! Put your old suits and cell phones aside so you can donate them to the Community Service Suit and Cell Phone Drive in January. In conjunction with the YLD Midyear Meeting in Savannah, the Community Service Committee is sponsoring a suit and cell phone drive, where we will donate all the suits and cell phones we collect to local charities in both Savannah and Atlanta.

Location of the suit and cell phone drop boxes will be announced in an upcoming flyer. ☎

## Take Your Adversary To Lunch

The State Bar’s Professionalism Committee and the YLD Ethics and Professionalism Committee are promoting the “Take Your Adversary to Lunch” Program, which Atlanta Bar Association Litigation Committee implemented almost 10 years ago. The program simply encourages litigators, contract negotiators or otherwise adversarial attorneys, to improve civility within the bar by dining with their adversary at lunch (or what some rural Georgians may know as “dinner,” reserving the term “supper” for the evening meal). The Atlanta Bar has even given out prizes to attorneys for dining with their adversaries every February. But you don’t need a prize to go to lunch! Give your adversary a call, whether you are making discovery motions or awaiting a verdict. It’s always a good time to meet your adversary for lunch and improve relations.

There are numerous accounts of how this simple gesture of going to lunch with an adversary has settled cases “that will never settle,” sealed a deal “that would never go through,” and created lasting relationships that have benefited both attorneys and clients. We challenge you to invite your adversary to lunch in February and throughout the year. For more information, contact Michael Geoffroy at 678-202-1292. ☎

## Congratulations to the YLD Family Law Committee!

The committee was recently honored by The Bridge\* at its 12th Annual Ray of Hope Celebration on Nov. 4. In only its second year, the Family Law Committee, through its “Supreme Cork” Wine Tasting and Reception, raised more than \$14,000 for The Bridge. Congratulations to Jonathan Tuggle, past Family Law Committee chair and Pilar Prinz, Family Law Committee chair, as well as the rest of the committee for its hard work.

*\*The Bridge is a residential treatment center dedicated to helping severely abused adolescents achieve independence by providing solution-oriented therapy, family counseling, and an on-campus school that emphasizes vocational readiness and community based activities.*







from the  
Editor

## Do What You Love

By Stacy Silverstone

This past weekend, I was speaking with a former colleague of mine who recently made partner at his law firm and I discovered he hates practicing law. Why does he continue to do it, you might ask? Of course part of the answer is the famous “golden handcuffs,” but I think part of it also is a failure of imagination. I truly believe that there is no reason to hate your job. It is possible to transition a traditional legal career into anything you want to do.

I have to admit, during my first few years of practice, I was a victim of the same failure of imagination. I felt utterly trapped. Instead of viewing my J.D. as something to be proud of, I viewed it as a ball-and-chain—tying me to endless hours alone in my office staring at the mounds of Westlaw and Lexis research in front of me. In all honesty, off and on, I spent the better part of four years wondering how I was going to escape.

After many a discarded business idea and some mild depression, a friend recommended a career coach to me. Initially I was incredibly skeptical, but I was desperate and willing to try anything.

As it turns out, the career coach helped. One thing she did was to help give some structure to my soul-searching. She guided me to think about what I actually liked about my job (it was all too easy to think about what I didn't like) and about the kind of environment in which I wanted to work. Another, potentially more important thing she did was she told me stories about lawyers who had successfully parlayed their careers as practicing lawyers into something else. She told me a story about a lawyer whose dream it was to work in entertainment. He had absolutely no experience in the field, but he knew that entertainment was what he wanted to do. The career coach helped him devise a plan to get there—one step at a time.

Through this process and stories like this, I began to see the world as a more exciting place. Rather than feeling trapped, I started to feel overwhelmed with interesting possibilities. Eventually, this process led me to a job I now adore and to my great surprise it is back in a law firm—only this time as a recruiting manager.

I know that a career coach may not be for everyone, so here are some practical tips that might help:

- Seek out people who have left the traditional practice of law. Offer to take them to lunch and listen to their stories of how they discovered their career paths.
- Seek out volunteer opportunities that combine an industry you are passionate about (i.e. entertainment) and the law.
- Explore print and Internet resources. There are several good books that aim to help people discover the perfect career for them. One that I like is *Do What You Are* by Paul Tieger and Barbara Barron-Tieger. Another great resource is Idealist.Org. It is a website that, among many things, lists job postings for public sector and non-profit work.

I recently reflected on all the lawyers I know. Some of them are public defenders, some are general counsels, some are entrepreneurs, some are venture capitalists, some have traditional practices in big firms and some have not-so-traditional practices in big firms, i.e. lawyers who devote a substantial amount of their time to pro bono matters. What I realized is that those who love their careers pursued paths that took advantage of the best aspects of their personalities. So, for all of you lawyers out there struggling to find happiness in your careers—please don't lose hope! I feel absolutely certain that with a little persistence, your J.D. can lead you to a career you will love. ✎

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