



# The YLD Review

The State Bar of Georgia — Working for the Profession and the Public

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Young Lawyers Division

Fall 2004

## YLD makes splash at Annual Meeting

The 2004 State Bar Annual Meeting was held in Orlando, Fla., June 17-19 at the Portofino Bay in Universal Studios. The YLD held several events during the three-day meeting, such as the Meet the Candidates Pool Party and the annual awards brunch. The young lawyers also sponsored a golf tournament held off-site at the Hyatt Grand Cypress Resort, in addition to sponsoring a 5k Fun Run with the Lawyers Foundation of Georgia. The younger lawyers also hosted a cocktail and dessert party following the Opening Night Gala at CityWalk® Universal Studios.



Top: Joe Dent and Kevin Snyder attend the Opening Night Gala at CityWalk®.

Bottom: Sharon Edenfield, outgoing YLD President Andrew Jones, incoming YLD President Laurel Payne Landon, YLD Director Deidra Sanderson and Gerald Edenfield socialize during the Opening Night Gala.



### Swearing In

On June 19, the 2004-05 Young Lawyers Division leadership change took effect at the swearing in ceremony held at the YLD Awards Brunch at the State Bar of Georgia's Annual Meeting in Orlando, Fla. The new officers include Laurel Payne Landon, president; Damon Elmore, president-elect; Jon Pope, treasurer; and Elena Kaplan (not pictured), secretary. The Oath of Office was administered by Justice George H. Carley of the Georgia Supreme Court.

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from the  
**President**

# Get Plugged In!

by Laurel Payne Landon

**H**ow many times have you thought “I really need to get involved in the YLD” but just never got around to it? Don’t let another Bar year come and go without getting plugged in! This edition of the YLD newsletter is designed to help you do just that by providing the following information:

- A list of the 26 YLD committees and contact information for committee chairs;
- A list of YLD committee meeting times;
- Articles describing the work of different YLD committees;
- A list of Executive Council members in your city or geographic area; and

- A list of the YLD meetings for this year.

Should you need more information about the YLD, you can log on to the Bar’s Web site at [www.gabar.org](http://www.gabar.org), click on “Member Resources,” and then click on “Young Lawyers Div.” You can also contact YLD Director Deidra Sanderson at [deidra@gabar.org](mailto:deidra@gabar.org) or (404) 527-8778 or me at [llandon@kilpatrickstockton.com](mailto:llandon@kilpatrickstockton.com) or (706) 823-4270.

We will be starting a “Spotlight” column, highlighting young lawyers’ accomplishments, both professional and personal, in the next issue. Please submit your information to Deidra at [deidra@gabar.org](mailto:deidra@gabar.org).

I hope you decide that this is the year to become involved in the YLD. We have lots of exciting opportunities for service, fellowship and fun! I look forward to seeing you this year! 🍷

# 2004 YLD Awards

**T**he 2004 Young Lawyers Division awards were presented during the YLD’s annual awards brunch held on June 19 at Universal Studios’ Portofino Bay Hotel in Orlando, Fla., during the Bar’s Annual Meeting.

Award recipients are chosen based on their commitment to the Bar, their communities and to the Young Lawyers Division. Many of the recipients spent the preceding Bar year involved with committees such as Advocates for Students with Disabilities, Juvenile Law, Community Service Projects, Litigation, Law Related Education and Ethics and Professionalism.

Following is a list of the awards that were given out during the brunch, and the respective recipients:

### **Award of Achievement for Exemplary Service to the Bar, Community, and to the Georgia Young Lawyers Division**

- Chuck Auslander
- Rich Connelly
- Marc D’Antonio
- Melisa Ferris
- Michael Geoffroy
- Andrew Goldberger
- Joe Hession
- Chuck Hodges
- Andre Johnson
- Lexi Liner
- Leslie Lipson
- Leigh Martin May
- Beth Reimels



Andre Johnson and Beth Reimels receive the Award of Achievement from outgoing YLD President Andrew Jones.

### **Joe Dent Hospitality Award**

Josh Bell

### **Distinguished Judicial Service Award**

- Judge J. Stephen Schuster
- Judge A. Gregory Poole

### **Commitment to Justice Award,**

#### **Prosecution**

John Warr

### **Commitment to Justice Award,**

#### **Criminal Defense**

Holly Geerdes



Outgoing YLD President Andrew Jones presents Josh Bell with the inaugural Joe Dent Hospitality Award at the 2004 Awards Brunch on June 19. This award was created to recognize one member of the YLD who exhibited the hospitable, outgoing spirit the division is known for. Bell was selected as the premier recipient of the award for his ongoing hospitable service to the organization. The namesake of the award, Joseph W. Dent, was YLD president during the 1999-2000 Bar year and has been involved with the Young Lawyers Division since his admittance to the Bar in 1991.

# Truancy Intervention Conference a Success

By Caren Cloud  
Truancy Intervention Network

Summer is the season for great conferences and one of the best this summer was the Truancy Intervention Network's (TIN) Conference. For the first time in three years, the conference was held outside of Atlanta in the beautiful city of Savannah and was co-sponsored by the Savannah Truancy Intervention Project program.

A two-day conference, TIN welcomed 27 attendees to Savannah to network with truancy initiatives from communities near and far including Bryan, Camden, Gwinnett, Bibb, Rockdale, Hall, Paulding, Sumpter, Houston, Laurens and Floyd counties.

The conference began with a gracious welcome from Judge Louisa Abbott of the Chatham County Superior Court and incoming president of the Georgia Bar Foundation. Attendees were also greeted by Alderman Van Johnson on behalf of the mayor and city of Savannah.

Guest speakers addressed issues that TIN Conference attendees wanted to learn more about such as grant writing, developing community partnerships, programs and outreach for clients and, most importantly, developing a legislative advocacy group to advocate for the rights and needs of children who are already or at risk of becoming truant.

TIN would like to thank the conference co-sponsors, the Savannah-Chatham TIP program, and all of TIN's guest speakers: Renee Gresham-Crawford and Crystal Adkins of Savannah-Chatham TIP, Karen Baynes, Carl Vinson Institute of Government, Tara Jennings, Bryan County Family Connection, Mark Baggett, Coastal Non-Profit Resources, John Kendricks, United Way, John Parker, 100 Black Men of Savannah, and Jessica Pennington of KIND, Inc.



Pictured from left to right: TIP Export Coordinator Caren Cloud, Savannah TIP Board Member Lisa Colbert, KIND Board Member Karen Baynes, YLD Director Deidra Sanderson, Karen Puryear from the Family Connection of Georgia and KIND Executive Director Jessica Pennington.

TIP is always looking to recruit supporters and volunteers around the state. If you are interested in learning more about TIP or the YLD's Truancy Intervention Committee, please con-

tact Caren Cloud at (404) 224-4737.

Stay tuned for information about the 2005 Winter TIN Conference, which will focus on legislative advocacy. ☐

## Women in the Profession Committee to Host Pro Bono Fair

The Women in the Profession Committee will sponsor a Pro Bono Fair on Oct. 8 from 11:30 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. at the offices of Kilpatrick Stockton in Atlanta. The Fair is designed to introduce young lawyers to the wide and varied opportunities to provide pro bono legal services. Rule 6.1 of the Georgia Rules of Professional Conduct provides that each lawyer in Georgia should aspire to render at least 50 hours of pro bono legal services per year. However, many new lawyers do not perform any pro bono services because they simply do not know how to get started.

This will be the second year the Women in the Profession Committee has sponsored the Pro Bono Fair. Last year, Justice P. Harris Hines of the Supreme Court of Georgia gave the keynote address, discussing the importance of pro bono services in the legal profession. Justice Hines talked about how rewarding pro bono work can be and about the difference that it can make in the client's life. Although Justice Hines leads a busy life as a Supreme Court Justice, he still finds time to handle pro bono cases, setting an inspiring example for young lawyers.

One hour of CLE credit is available and lunch will be provided. The pro bono legal service organizations expected to attend the fair to provide information about their services and organizations include the American Civil Liberties Union of Georgia, Atlanta Volunteer Lawyers Foundation, Catholic Social Services, Georgia Association for Black Women Attorneys, Georgia Law Center for the Homeless, Georgia Lawyers for the Arts, Georgia Legal Services Program, the Pro Bono Project, Atlanta Legal Aid Society, the Grandparent/Relative Caregiver Project, TeamChild Atlanta, and the Truancy Intervention Project.

For more information about the event, contact the committee co-chairs, Janet Bozeman at (404) 688-2300, jl.Bozeman@att.net or Katrina Quicker at (404) 685-6765, kquicker@kilpatrickstockton.com. If you would like more information about performing pro bono work in general, please contact Mike Monahan with the Bar's Pro Bono Project at (404) 527-8762 or mike@gabar.org.

## Fall Moot Court and Mock Trial Competitions

By Cheryl B. Legare  
Director of Competitions

Two of the State Bar of Georgia Young Lawyers Division sponsored moot court/mock trial competitions will take place in November. The National Moot Court Region V Competition takes place in Atlanta the weekend of Nov. 12 and the William W. Daniel National Invitational Mock Trial Competition takes place in Atlanta the weekend of Nov. 19.

Both competitions require much hard work and rely upon the generosity of many. Volunteers for the National Moot Court Competition will grade briefs in mid-October and bench oral argument rounds the weekend of the competition. Volunteers for the William Daniel Competition will judge rounds the weekend of the competition.

Both competitions are open not only to local law schools, but are also open to law schools from both within

and outside the southeast region. The competitions are a great opportunity for law students to gain valuable skills that will serve them (and their future employers) well in their future careers. In addition, well run competitions improve the reputation of the State Bar outside of Georgia.

If you are available to grade briefs or bench oral argument rounds for the National Moot Court Competition, please contact Natalie Woodward at (404) 584-8002 or nwoodward@mcplawfirm.com. If you are available to judge rounds for the William W. Daniel Invitational, please contact Barbara Marschalk at (404) 885-6322 or bmarschalk@deflaw.com. You may also contact Natalie or Barbara if you are interested in volunteering to participate on the committees for either competition. Thanks in advance for all of your generous support. We could not run these competitions without your help.



# YLD Committees and Meeting Times

If you plan on attending a committee meeting, please RSVP to Deidra Sanderson, YLD Director, at 404-527-8778, [deidra@gabar.org](mailto:deidra@gabar.org) or fax to 404-527-8717, as meeting dates and times are subject to change. Most meetings are accessible by teleconference.

## Advocates for Special Needs Children

Meets second Monday of the month at the Bar Center from 12:15 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. (Lunch provided with RSVP.)

Craig Goodmark, Co-Chair 404-614-3995 or [clgoodmark@atlantalegalaid.org](mailto:clgoodmark@atlantalegalaid.org)

Leslie Lipson, Co-Chair 404-885-1234 or [leslie@thegao.org](mailto:leslie@thegao.org)

## Appellate Admissions

Meeting dates, times and locations TBD.

Cheralynn Gregoire, Chair 404-681-3450 or [cgregoire@swflfp.com](mailto:cgregoire@swflfp.com)

## Aspiring Youth Program

Meets third Tuesday of the month at the State Bar Center from 11:30 p.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Suzanne Deddish, Co-Chair 770-818-4300 or [sededdish@martensonlaw.com](mailto:sededdish@martensonlaw.com)

Antavious Weems, Co-Chair 404-224-4713 or [antavious1@aol.com](mailto:antavious1@aol.com)

## Business Law

Committee's first meeting will be held Wednesday, Sept. 8 at Gordon Biersch in Atlanta at 7 p.m. Meets regularly on the first Wednesday of the month, alternating with monthly conference calls.

Chuck Hodges, Co-Chair 404-658-5439 or [Charles.Hodges@chamberlainlaw.com](mailto:Charles.Hodges@chamberlainlaw.com)

Don Edwards, Co-Chair 404-255-0500 or [dedwards@fgdlaw.com](mailto:dedwards@fgdlaw.com)

## Community Service Projects

Meets third Thursday of the month from 12:30 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. at Hunton & Williams. (Lunch provided with RSVP.)

Lexi Liner, Co-Chair 678-742-4606 or [lexiliner@yahoo.com](mailto:lexiliner@yahoo.com)

Paul Greenspan, Co-Chair 404-817-4766 or [paul.greenspan@ey.com](mailto:paul.greenspan@ey.com)

## Criminal Law

Meets first Wednesday of the month 12 p.m. to 1 p.m. at the Bar Center. (Lunch provided with RSVP.)

Kazuma Sonoda, Jr., Co-Chair 404-614-0304 or [ksonoda@fccd.com](mailto:ksonoda@fccd.com)

## Disability Issues

Meets fourth Thursday of the month 12 p.m. to 1 p.m. at the Bar Center. (Lunch provided with RSVP.)

Tom Mazziotti, Co-Chair 404-881-4576 or [tmazziotti@alston.com](mailto:tmazziotti@alston.com)  
Josh Norris, Co-Chair 404-867-6188 or [jhnnorris@mindspring.com](mailto:jhnnorris@mindspring.com)

## Disaster Legal Assistance

Meeting dates, times and locations TBD.

Tonya Boga, Co-Chair 404-607-1600 or [tboga@stearns-law.com](mailto:tboga@stearns-law.com)

## Elder Law

Teleconference will be held every third Thursday of the month at 4:30 p.m.

Chris Ballar, Co-Chair 770-822-5635 or [ballar@mindspring.com](mailto:ballar@mindspring.com)  
Althea Caces, Co-Chair 770-424-9141 or [caceslaw@bellsouth.net](mailto:caceslaw@bellsouth.net)

## Employers' Duties and Problems

Meets the third Wednesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. Locations TBD.

Bill Pinto, Chair 404-659-6700 or [pinto@elarbeethompson.com](mailto:pinto@elarbeethompson.com)

## Ethics & Professionalism

Meets on the fourth Tuesday of the month from 12 p.m. to 1 p.m. at the Bar Center. (Lunch provided with RSVP.)

Michael Geoffroy, Co-Chair 770-483-4406 or [Michael@moulton-massey.com](mailto:Michael@moulton-massey.com)  
Curtis Romig, Co-Chair 404-572-6726 or [cmromig@pgfm.com](mailto:cmromig@pgfm.com)

## High School Mock Trial

Meeting dates, times and locations TBD.

Leah McEwen, Chair 229-431-3212 or [lmc6314438@aol.com](mailto:lmc6314438@aol.com)

Jason Thompson, 1st Vice-Chair 770-719-9106 or [jason.thompson@sladeandassociates.com](mailto:jason.thompson@sladeandassociates.com)

## Intrastate Moot Court Competition

Meeting dates, times and locations TBD.

Laura Speed-Dalton, Chair 404-253-7874 or [laura@carllp.com](mailto:laura@carllp.com)

## Judicial Liaison

Meets first Tuesday of the month at 8 a.m. at the Bar Center. (Breakfast provided with RSVP.)

Michael Goldberg, Co-Chair 404-264-9955 or [mlg@strawgold.com](mailto:mlg@strawgold.com)

Laurie Jablow, Co-Chair 404-335-6303 or [lj08@earthlink.net](mailto:lj08@earthlink.net)

Antavious Weems, Co-Chair 404-472-0197 or [antavious1@aol.com](mailto:antavious1@aol.com)

## Juvenile Law

Meets third Tuesday of the month 12:30 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Bar Center. (Lunch provided with RSVP.)

Melissa Dorris, Co-Chair 404-463-5227 or [dorrim@gaaoc.us](mailto:dorrim@gaaoc.us)

Amy Howell, Co-Chair 404-727-6235 or [ahowell@law.emory.edu](mailto:ahowell@law.emory.edu)

## Kids and Justice Program

Teleconference at 12 p.m. on the second Wednesday of the month.

Mike McCleary, Co-Chair 706-548-1151 [mjm@fbglaw.com](mailto:mjm@fbglaw.com)

Josh McKoon, Co-Chair 706-243-5607 or [JoshMcKoon@psstf.com](mailto:JoshMcKoon@psstf.com)

## Law-Related Education

Meets second Tuesday of the month 12 p.m. to 1 p.m. at the Bar Center. (Lunch provided with RSVP.)

Melissa Ferris, Co-Chair 404-221-2222 or [MFerris@carlockcopeland.com](mailto:MFerris@carlockcopeland.com)

Shaun Daugherty, Co-Chair 404-954-6965 or [sdaugherty@sbss.net](mailto:sdaugherty@sbss.net)

## Legislative Affairs

First meeting Sept. 30 at 5:30 p.m. at Hawkins and Parnell. Future meeting dates, times and locations TBD.

Jon Stewart, Co-Chair 404-614-7462 or [jstewart@hplegal.com](mailto:jstewart@hplegal.com)

John Rogers, Co-Chair 404-522-8220 or [jrogers@carlockcopeland.com](mailto:jrogers@carlockcopeland.com)

## Litigation

Meets fourth Wednesday of the month 12 p.m. to 1 p.m. location TBD. (Lunch provided with RSVP.)

Jeff Daxe, Chair 770-429-1499 or [JAD@mijls.com](mailto:JAD@mijls.com)

## Minorities in the Profession

Meets the first Tuesday of the month 12:30 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Bar Center. (Lunch provided with RSVP.)

Brad Gardner, Co-Chair 404-522-1400 or [b\\_gardner@bellsouth.net](mailto:b_gardner@bellsouth.net)

Elvin Sutton Jr., Co-Chair 770-723-1282 or [esutton@closingattorneys.com](mailto:esutton@closingattorneys.com)

## National Moot Court Competition

Meeting dates, times and locations TBD.

Natalie Woodward, Co-Chair 404-584-8002 or [nwoodward@mcplawfirm.com](mailto:nwoodward@mcplawfirm.com)

## Pro Bono

Meets second Thursday of the month 12 p.m. to 1 p.m. at the Bar Center. (Lunch provided with RSVP.)

Segeda Ranjeet, Co-Chair 404-885-3539 or [segeda.ranjeet@troutmansanders.com](mailto:segeda.ranjeet@troutmansanders.com)

## Truancy Intervention

Meets third Wednesday of the month 12:30 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Bar Center, every other month beginning in August. (Lunch provided with RSVP.)

Kevin Snyder, Co-Chair 404-523-5300 or [ksnyder@phrd.com](mailto:ksnyder@phrd.com)

Caren Cloud, Co-Chair 404-224-4737 or [carencloud@yahoo.com](mailto:carencloud@yahoo.com)

## William W. Daniel National Invitational Mock Trial

Meets first Friday of the month 12 p.m. to 1 p.m. at Drew, Eckl & Farnham. (Lunch provided with RSVP.)

Barbara Marschalk, Co-Chair 404-885-6322 or [bmarschalk@deflaw.com](mailto:bmarschalk@deflaw.com)  
Michelle Whitelaw, Co-Chair 404-885-6351 or [michelle.whitelaw.nt80@statefarm.com](mailto:michelle.whitelaw.nt80@statefarm.com)

## Women in the Profession

Meets first Thursday of the month 12 p.m. to 1 p.m. at the Bar Center. (Bring a lunch.)

Katrina Quicker, Co-Chair 404-685-6765 or [kquicker@kilpatrickstockton.com](mailto:kquicker@kilpatrickstockton.com)

Janet Bozeman, Co-Chair 404-688-2300 or [jl.bozeman@att.net](mailto:jl.bozeman@att.net)

## Youth Judicial Program

Meeting dates, times and locations TBD.

Leigh Jones, Chair 404-373-7069

# YLD Executive Council 2004 - 2005

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# YLD Committee Briefs

## Community Service Committee

The Community Service Committee organizes community service projects throughout the year. The committee's goal is to provide a variety of projects throughout the state that do not require large time commitments, enabling busy attorneys to participate in the community when their schedules allow. The committee is open to members of the State Bar of Georgia, but our projects are open to everyone! Our projects include:

- the annual business clothing and cell phone drive
- happy hours to raise money for the food bank
- volunteering for the Special Olympics
- the annual Zoo Day, where volunteers accompany foster children to the zoo
- various "clean and green" projects
- toiletries drive to benefit victims of domestic violence

We encourage YLD members from outside Atlanta to join our committee as there are many project opportunities throughout the state! The Committee maintains a Listserv to keep everyone informed of upcoming events and meetings. You may join the Listserv by sending a blank e-mail to: [yldcscsubscribe@yahoo.com](mailto:yldcscsubscribe@yahoo.com)

## Judicial Liaison Committee

The Judicial Liaison Committee provides an opportunity for younger lawyers to interact with members of the judiciary in a variety of settings. The co-chairs of the committee are Michael Goldberg, Antavious Weems and Laurie Jablow.

One of our main projects involves setting up a seminar called "Meet the Judges," where we will have speakers from the judiciary and a roundtable discussion with judges from the metro Atlanta area. This seminar has proven to be extremely popular and is scheduled for February 2005.

During our first meeting, we will discuss possible speakers for the seminar as well as the possibility of setting up a similar seminar outside Atlanta.

This year we are also trying to come up with new ways to organize social events with judges and provide

more informal meetings between younger lawyers and members of the judiciary.

## Employers' Duties and Problems Committee

Our committee develops CLE programs and materials for employers and attorneys concerning labor and employment matters, including, but not limited to, harassment and discrimination issues, wage and hour laws, workers' compensation concerns, non-compete agreements, collective bargaining, and other federal and state laws applicable to the employer-employee relationship. Specifically, the committee organizes two CLE programs each year – one in Atlanta in the fall, and one in another Georgia city in the spring. The spring CLE program allows committee members to present materials of their own on labor and employment topics. For 2005, we are considering holding the spring CLE in Savannah.

In addition to the CLE programs, the committee also publishes a pamphlet entitled "What Georgia Employers Need to Know," which is distributed by the Secretary of State to all newly incorporated entities. The pamphlet includes an overview of the federal and state law applicable to employers.

## Kids and Justice Committee

Looking for a fun way to get involved in your local community? Want to make a difference in a child's life and motivate them about learning? Want a good excuse to get out from behind the stacks of paperwork that are piling up on your desk? Try getting involved with a local Kids and Justice project!

Kids and Justice is a YLD sponsored program that gets practicing attorneys into local elementary school classrooms to teach fifth graders basics of Georgia law and what it means to be an attorney. The program uses lesson plans developed by the Law Related Education (LRE) Consortium that provide a great structure to your local project. However, you can work with your local school to develop a program that meets the needs of both the volunteers and the classes.

A past project in Athens had about a dozen attorneys who rotated teach-

ing two lessons per month during the school year. The lessons are coordinated with the 5th grade curriculum. For example, Constitutional Law topics are taught by attorneys at the same time the students are learning about the signing of the Constitution in American History. In the spring, the Athens project culminated with a simple Mock Trial. Students assumed the roles of judge(s), attorneys, witnesses, etc. while they were coached by local practicing attorneys.

The amount of time involved is determined by you and the sponsoring teacher. You could visit the class once a week or just a few times during the school year; whatever you are willing and able to commit to and your school is willing to support.

With the school year just starting, now is the time to contact your local elementary school and introduce yourself and the Kids and Justice program. The difference between sitting behind your desk while talking on the phone and standing in front of twenty-five 5th graders teaching them about Georgia's laws on robbery and forgery is amazing and a tremendous break during your work week. You also get the benefit of showing your face in the local community and gaining a real sense of service to your local schools.

## Legislative Affairs Committee

The Legislative Affairs Committee is made up of YLD members who take a keen interest in the state legislature, and it promotes awareness as to upcoming legislation that will impact Georgia's legal profession. The committee's highlight for the 2004-2005 year is its hosting of the 16th annual Legislative Affairs Breakfast, which will be held in January at the "Sloppy" Floyd building in Atlanta.

The purpose of the meeting is to not only raise awareness amongst YLD members of the need for lawyer-legislators, but to also inform the YLD membership as to pending legislation that, directly or indirectly, impacts Georgia's legal profession. The breakfast is an incredible opportunity to meet and visit with the speakers in a casual setting. In addition to the breakfast's featured speakers, younger lawyers also have the opportunity to meet other leaders of

the General Assembly, in addition to Supreme Court Justices, appellate judges, and trial judges. Last year's event was a huge success. Legislators Chuck Clay and Thomas Bordeaux were the featured speakers, in addition to Justice Robert Benham of the Georgia Supreme Court and Court of Appeals Judge John Ellington.

## Women in the Profession Committee

The Women in the Profession Committee, chaired this year by Janet L. Bozeman, Lipshutz, Greenblatt & King, LLP, and Katrina Quicker, Kilpatrick Stockton, LLP, has a commitment to serving its members and the Bar by providing opportunities for legal education, networking, and community service. The mission of the committee is to explore issues of interest to women lawyers in Georgia. Three lunch and learn programs are planned for the year on topics of interest to committee members. The committee will also again sponsor the Women of Distinction program in the spring to honor women members of the bar who have made a significant contribution to the practice of law and the advancement of women.

## Criminal Law Committee

The committee's focus will be to reach out to all interested attorneys in the criminal law field throughout the state and to provide an opportunity for networking with other young lawyers. The committee has already begun to work with members of the State Bar Criminal Law Section and hopes to organize events with both groups. The committee plans to hold meetings in Atlanta, Macon, and Gainesville in an effort to bring the committee to the areas where young lawyers are in practice. The planning for this year's CLE is also almost completed and there has been a significant focus on presenting speakers who may be a useful resource for younger lawyers. This year's CLE focus is on expert witness testimony. Tentatively there will be experts in a number of fields who will be presenting at this year's CLE on Oct. 21. Speakers are currently confirmed in the areas of eyewitness identification, mental health, firearms/ballistics, trace/fiber evidence, forensic document examination, fingerprint and crime scene experts.



## 2004 Celebration of Excellence Bigger and Better

The 2004 Celebration of Excellence was a huge success, due in part to the generous support of the State Bar and its members. The Celebration is an annual graduation ceremony and scholarship program that recognizes the academic achievements of youth in the Georgia foster care system who are graduating from high school, GED programs, vocational school, and college. These youth have overcome the significant barriers to academic achievement that come with instability of multiple foster care placements and changes in schools. Graduation itself is a remarkable testimony to their determination and hard work.

This year, the Celebration was at its biggest and best. On June 10, a record number of 280 graduates were honored at the Fox Theatre for their outstanding accomplishments, and more than \$66,000 in scholarships was awarded to qualified applicants who are continuing their educations! More than 600 people attended to share in the successes of the graduates, including judges, attorneys, legislators, foster parents, and child welfare professionals.

Gov. Sonny Perdue and the First Lady Mary Perdue made an appearance to welcome and congratulate the graduates. In their warm remarks, they spoke of how proud they are of the graduates' accomplishments. Frank Ski, host of the Frank Ski Morning Show on V-103 FM, emceed the event and assisted Division of Family and Children Services Director Dr. Janet Oliva in awarding each graduate a certificate of achievement. This year's keynote was magician and inspirational speaker Eric Anderson, who as a youth had personal experiences with the foster care system. He entertained and motivated the audience with his personal story and observations on life. Each graduate also received a gift bag full of donated graduation gifts including disposable cameras, long-distance phone cards,




Top: The Celebration of Excellence honors 2004 graduates at the Fox Theatre on June 10.

Above: Gov. Sonny Perdue congratulates the graduates at the Celebration of Excellence as First Lady Mary Perdue looks on.

sport watches, and a \$250 voucher toward future educational expenses.

The success of this event each year is a credit to the strong partnerships and collaborative efforts of the agencies, corporations, foundations, and individuals who generously support the spirit of the program. Special thanks are owed to the State Bar/YLD for its long tradition of supporting the Celebration of Excellence and the youth in foster care in Georgia. Without that support, we could not have hosted such a successful program and honored these extraordinary youth who have overcome so much on the road to success.

The Celebration of Excellence is an annual project of the Juvenile Law Committee of the Young Lawyers Division of the State Bar. If you are interested in supporting or planning the event, please contact Melissa Dorris, Co-Chair of the Juvenile Law Committee and Chair of the 2005 Celebration of Excellence Volunteer Committee. 



## 2004-2005 Meetings

**Summer Meeting**  
Aug. 20-22  
Barnsley Gardens  
Inn and Resort

**Fall Meeting**  
Oct. 1-3  
UGA vs. LSU in  
Athens  
Foundry Park Inn  
and Spa

**Midyear Meeting**  
Jan. 13-15  
Omni Hotel in CNN  
Center

**Spring Meeting**  
March 18-20  
Jekyll Island Club  
Hotel

**Annual Meeting**  
June 9-12  
Westin Savannah  
Harbor Resort





from the  
Editor

# The ABCs of Practicing Law

By Bryan D. Scott

Sometimes I have to remind myself to go back to the basics. For example, in sports, I have to remind myself to keep my eye on the ball. The minute I take my eye off the ball is the minute I strike out, or miss the catch, or send the golf ball 150 feet into the woods. In life, I have to remind myself of basic truths – what has lasting importance and what does not. When I get my basic priorities out of whack, my life follows suit. And in law, I have to remind myself of certain fundamental principals that I should never forsake. I have to remind myself of the ABCs of practicing law.

**A – Accessibility** As younger attorneys, we need to be accessible. The number one complaint to the State Bar of Georgia from clients is that their attorney would not return their phone calls. Do you return phone calls promptly? Our clients need to not only be able to reach us, but they need to know that we will in turn reach them as well. A prompt phone call back to your clients tells them that their issue, whatever it may be, is important to you. If you follow this fundamental policy of promptly returning phone calls, you will establish with your clients an essential foundation of appreciation and satisfaction. Remember, although their case may not be the most important case on your agenda, it is the most important case on their agenda.

**B – Believability** There is a significant difference in believing *in* someone, and believing someone. Believing in someone invokes the picture of a spectator, someone who stands on the sidelines and agrees that you can do what you say. Believing someone, however, involves the necessary element of trust. We must give our clients rea-

son to trust us. We do that by showing genuine concern for our clients' welfare, successes, pains or problems. We do not make promises that we cannot keep, such as assuring a victory, guaranteeing our clients of a certain monetary recovery or capping a bill when we are unsure whether fees will exceed it. We are honest and forthright, even if it means the client will be disappointed. What we say should match what we do. Anything less than this erodes the trust we seek.

**C – Creditability** Do you have "credit" with clients, judges, opposing counsel, etc.? Think of it like a bank account. For example, you make deposits in your clients' accounts by returning phone calls promptly, keeping your clients apprised of the status of their cases, and being candid in your handling and assessment of their cases. When things go south, for instance, when no settlement offer comes forth, or fees on the case have skyrocketed, or you make a mistake, do you have "credit" with your clients upon which to draw? If you have treated your clients with honesty, integrity, forthrightness, and true concern in your past dealings with them, then there is a good chance your clients will allow you to make a "withdrawal" when times get tough. But when no credit has been deposited over the course of your relationship with your clients, withdrawals on their accounts are a recipe for disaster.

Have you put in to place the ABCs of practicing law? If so, I commend you. If not, reverse the cycle and take whatever measures are needed to institute these fundamental principles into your practice. **T**

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