

Inter Alia

Among Other Things

Fall 2010

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Greetings from the Chair



Maureen M. McGinnis

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The State Bar of Michigan Young Lawyers Section was off to another exciting year as council and section members met in Grand Rapids for our annual meeting on September 30, 2010. I am very pleased to have the opportunity to serve as chair of the Young Lawyers Section this year and am looking forward to an active year of service to the public and to the bar association.

At the annual meeting, Brandy Robinson was elected to serve as chair-elect, Felicia Johnson as vice chair, and James Low as secretary/treasurer of the section. I was pleased to see many returning council members and welcome two new faces, Marisa Wiener from District 1 and Shenique Moss from District 3, who both recently joined the council.

The Young Lawyers Section is the largest section of the State Bar of Michigan; membership is automatic for any attorney under 36 years of age or with less than five years of practice. The YLS is also the oldest section of the State Bar of Michigan, founded in 1940. The YLS has a rich history of service to the public as well as a vested interest in providing service to our membership through education, networking opportunities, and publication of this award-winning newsletter.

Council members have already begun planning and implementing programming for the 2010–2011 bar year. Representatives from Districts 1, 2, and 3 spent the day at Soaring Eagle in Mt. Pleasant on October 22 to discuss their goals and objectives for the upcoming year. Some of our upcoming programs are featured in this issue of *Inter Alia*, and we are looking forward to working with members of the section that would like to attend or help coordinate events throughout the year.

If you have participated in a YLS event in the past that you really enjoyed or have an idea for a new public service or service to the bar project, I would love to hear from you. We are always striving to exceed our past successes, of which this section has had many over the years, and to do this, we need young lawyer participation, energy, *and* feedback. There are many great causes to contribute to across Michigan and many issues affecting us as young lawyers. I look forward to seeing and hearing from many of you as we dedicate our time and efforts to these causes throughout the coming year.

Sincerely yours, *Maureen M. McGinnis*

Young Lawyers Section 2010-2011 Executive Council



Front Row (from left to right): Syeda F. Davidson, Lisa C. Hagan, Brandy Y. Robinson, Chair-Elect; Maureen M. McGinnis, Chair; Danielle M. Anderson, Ex Officio; Alexandra Nassar; Hope V. Shovein; Dionnie S. Wynter; and Andrea Irons. **Back Row** (from left to right): Shenique A. Moss, Bonnie R. Shaw, Brent G. Seitz, Carlos A. Escurel; Nicholas G. Even, James W. Low, Secretary-Treasurer; Felicia O. Johnson, Vice-Chair; and Erika L. Anderson. **Not Pictured:** Jennifer M. Harvey, Mark W. Jane, Marisa E. Wiener, and Adam G. Zuwerink.

The Executive Council governs the Young Lawyers Section (“YLS”). It is comprised of a maximum 23 members from throughout the state. The YLS provides education and information about issues of concern through meetings, seminars, public service programs, and publication of this newsletter.

Most YLS activities consist of projects and programs on various areas of the law to bridge the gap between law school and law practice and programs to benefit the community and promote the profession. YLS provides an organized means for young lawyers to serve the Bar and society. Information about YLS activities can be found at www.michiganyounglawyers.com or www.facebook.com/sbmys

Officers

Maureen M. McGinnis, Chair

Law Offices of Donald E. McGinnis, Jr, PC, Troy, MI
Maureen received her Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from the University of Colorado in 2000. She returned to Michigan to attend law school in East Lansing and received her Juris Doctor from Michigan State University-Detroit College of Law in May of 2003. She specializes in family and criminal law. She handles cases primarily in Oakland, Macomb and Wayne counties.

Brandy Y. Robinson, Chair-Elect

United States District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan, Detroit, MI Brandy is a law clerk to the Honorable Julian Abele Cook Jr. Before clerking for Judge Cook, she worked as an Assistant Defender with the State Appellate Defender Office in Detroit. There, she successfully represented indigent criminal defendants at all stages of appeal, in both state and federal courts. She graduated from the University of Michigan Law School in 2003.

Felicia O. Johnson, Vice-Chair

Wayne County Commission, Detroit, MI
Felicia is the lead attorney for the Wayne County Commission where she advises the legislative body on ordinance, contract, personnel, litigation and other municipal matters and she is also the Parliamentary for the Commission. She graduated from Eastern Michigan University in 1999 and from Thomas M. Cooley Law School in May of 2003.

James W. Low, Secretary-Treasurer

Sullivan, Ward, Asher & Patton PC, Southfield, MI
James is a member of the specialty litigation division. He represents doctors and hospitals in medical malpractice cases and represents lawyers in legal malpractice cases. He graduated from Michigan State University in 1998 in Psychology and Health Studies. He then earned his law degree from Michigan State University College of Law in 2001.

Council Members

Erika L. Anderson

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Saint Johns, MI

Syeda F. Davidson

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Andrea Irons

Attorney at Law
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Dionnie S. Wynter

Thomas M. Cooley Law School
Auburn Hills, MI

SBM Members Urged to Sign Diversity Pledge

The State Bar of Michigan is urging its members to sign a Michigan Pledge to achieve diversity and inclusion in the legal profession.

The SBM Board of Commissioners unanimously adopted the pledge at its July 23 meeting in Lansing. It was the culmination of the efforts of attorneys across the state who participated in three colloquia held early this summer by the SBM Equal Access Initiative.

A recent American Bar Association study shows that the legal profession lags in diversity, with people of color making up only 10 percent of the population of the profession, compared to 25 percent of medical doctors, 21 percent of accountants, and 18 percent of college professors. In Michigan, attorneys of color make up approximately 15 percent of the attorney population.

“At its foundation, the legal profession is focused on problem solving,” said State Bar President W. Anthony Jenkins. “This is best achieved by including people from diverse backgrounds and experiences, and by valuing differences. Diversity brings with it broader rather than less citizen participation in governance, and in turn yields greater trust in how government works and in the rule of law.”

To sign the pledge, visit www.michbar.org/diversity/.

For more information, please contact SBM Diversity Director Greg Conyers at (517) 346-6358 or gconyers@mail.michbar.org.

Pledge

We believe that diversity and inclusion are core values of the legal profession, and that these values require a sustained commitment to strategies of inclusion.

Diversity is inclusive. It encompasses, among other things, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, religion, nationality, language, age, disability, marital and parental status, geographic origin, and socioeconomic background.

Diversity creates greater trust and confidence in the administration of justice and the rule of law, and enables us to better serve our clients and society. It makes us more effective and creative by bringing different perspectives, experiences, backgrounds, talents, and interests to the practice of law.

We believe that law schools, law firms, corporate counsel, solo and small firm lawyers, judges, government agencies, and bar associations must cooperatively work together to achieve diversity and inclusion, and that strategies designed to achieve diversity and inclusion will benefit from appropriate assessment and recognition.

Therefore, we pledge to continue working with others to achieve diversity and inclusion in the education, hiring, retention, and promotion of Michigan’s attorneys and in the elevation of attorneys to leadership positions within our organizations, the judiciary, and the profession.

Platinum in the Profession Conference a Resounding Success!

By Angelique Strong Marks and Brandy Y. Robinson



W. Anthony Jenkins, SBM President



On Friday, October 22, 2010, the Young Lawyers Section was proud to host more than 125 guests at “Platinum in the Profession: A Conference Highlighting African-American Leadership in the Law.” The all-day conference took place at the Doubletree Guest Suites Fort Shelby Hotel in the heart of downtown Detroit, and was designed to celebrate some of Michigan’s most outstanding African-American attorneys and judges. In the words of the *Oakland County Legal News*, the list of panelists for the event read like a “literal ‘Who’s Who’ among African-American attorneys in the state.”

The Platinum Conference was developed partially in response to the startling lack of diversity in the legal profession. Studies consistently show that fewer than 10% of all lawyers nationally are people of color, and in Michigan, African-Americans are one of the most underrepresented groups amongst lawyers and recent law graduates. The purpose of the event was to highlight the accomplishments of African-American attorneys and judges in Michigan and encourage the attendees to make a difference through a career in the law.

And the Platinum Conference delivered.

The event began with opening remarks from State Bar President W. Anthony Jenkins and Platinum Conference Co-Chairs Angelique Strong Marks and Brandy Robinson. It then featured panel discussions showcasing the legacy of some of the region’s most outstanding African-American attorneys working in government, politics, and public service, at law firms and in solo practice, in the judiciary, and in Corporate America.

The first panel discussion, “Legacy in Government, Politics and Public Service,” was moderated by Solon Phillips and included accomplished practitioners like Lorry Brown, Jeffrey Collins, Jenice Mitchell Ford, Saul Green and Terrance Keith.

The second panel discussion, “Legacy in Law Firms and Solo Practices,” was moderated by Michelle A. Carter and featured Jeffrey Edison, Sherrie Farrell, Shirley Kaigler, Bonnie Mayfield, William Mitchell, Harold Pope, and Reginald Turner, all trailblazers in their own right.

Guests then heard dynamic luncheon remarks from keynote speaker Michelle Alexander, who is a graduate of Stanford Law School, a former law clerk to U.S. Supreme Court Justice Harry Blackmun, and former director of the Racial Justice Project for the ACLU of Northern California. Professor Alexander holds a joint appointment at the Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity and the Mortiz College of Law at Ohio State University, and delivered an eye-opening presentation based on her book, “The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness.”

Following Professor Alexander’s compelling remarks, the panel discussions resumed with a focus on the “Legacy in the Judiciary” and featuring several distinguished jurists, including the Honorable Ulysses Boykin, the Honor-

Platinum in the Profession . . .

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able Edward Ewell, the Honorable Denise Page Hood and the Honorable Denise Langford-Morris.

The final panel was a lively discussion with an illustrious group of lawyers leaving a “Legacy in Corporate America.” It was moderated by Lionel Anderson and featured Vernon Baker, Roderick Gillum, Marcia Goffney, E. Christopher Johnson, Alex Parrish and LeRoy Richie.

The audience, which reflected a mix of law students, young lawyers, academics and seasoned practitioners, heard a consistent message about how to distinguish themselves by being prepared, focused, confident, prompt, and committed to excellence. Presenters also emphasized the need for civility, integrity and extraordinary work ethic, and underscored the importance of making a difference in the community.

The event concluded with a closing reception that allowed those in attendance to meet, talk, and continue building relationships. By all accounts, the event was a huge success!

Afterwards, two guests who attended offered the following feedback:



“I just wanted to thank you for putting on the Platinum in the Profession Conference (I love that name). This program was greatly needed. My fellow law students and I enjoyed and appreciated the forum and all of the speakers. It’s wonderful to have so many great people in one room and to be able to benefit from their experience, knowledge, insight and wisdom. . . . Conferences such as these help us law students gain greater understanding on the essentials of a successful career in law.”

I just wanted to take the time to thank you so much for allowing me to be a part of the seminar this past Friday. To describe it as amazing would be an understatement. It was very informative, motivational and inspirational! I feel privileged to have been apart of it and among so many OUTSTANDING professionals.

The Young Lawyers Section and the Platinum Committee extend a special thanks to the other partners and co-sponsors of this event, including the Barristers of the Detroit Metropolitan Bar Association, the D. Augustus Straker Bar Association, the Wolverine Bar Association, Arvin Meritor, Butzel Long, Honigman Miller Schwartz and Cohn, Thomas Cooley Law School, Behr America, Dickinson Wright PLLC, Michigan State University College of Law, Sommers Schwartz, Clark Hill PLC, Damon J. Keith Center for Civil Rights, Dykema, Jackson Lewis LLP, and Wayne State University Law School.



YLS Hosts Panel Discussion on Social Justice

By Angelique Strong Marks and Brandy Y. Robinson

Many know that the United States has the highest incarceration rate of any country in the world. Indeed, according to a 2008 *New York Times* article, while Americans account for less than 5 percent of the world's population, we represent nearly a quarter of the world's prisoners. Ohio State University Law Professor Michelle Alexander discusses the racial impact of this trend in her critically acclaimed¹ book, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*.

On the morning of Saturday, October 23rd, there was a packed house as lawyers and community members gathered at a Young Lawyers Section program designed to explore the relevance of this issue to poor communities of color. The conversation took place during a panel discussion at *Reclaiming Our Village: A Conference on Social Justice* at Hartford Church in Detroit. Panel members included Professor Alexander, former United States Attorney Jeffrey Collins, attorney and civil rights activist Jeffrey Edison, American Civil Liberties Union racial justice staff attorney Mark Fancher, Ron Scott of the Detroit Coalition Against Police Brutality, and Dr. Ronald Trent of the Detroit Department of Health & Wellness Promotion, with Wayne County Commissioner Keith Williams moderating.

The program was designed to engage community stakeholders (citizens, police, prosecution, defense, policy makers, and members of the judiciary) in an in-depth discussion about this issue, and to explore solutions to a problem that is ravaging communities like Detroit. The panelists spoke from diverse perspectives, and emphasized the need for continued engagement from leaders and community groups on the issue.



Michelle Alexander

After the panel discussion, Professor Alexander gave a keynote address urging guests to critically examine drug laws and policing trends which produce disproportionate incarceration rates for poor people of color. Professor Alexander also questioned the legitimacy of laws that allow former felons to continue to be deprived of basic rights and privileges of American citizenship (i.e., the right to vote, serve on juries, public housing and public benefits). This excerpt from her book illustrates the point:

[Jarvious Cotton's] great-great-grandfather could not vote as a slave. His great-grandfather was beaten to death by the Klu Klux Klan for attempting to vote.

His grandfather was prevented from voting by Klan intimidation. His father was barred from voting by poll taxes and literacy tests. Today,...Cotton cannot vote because he, like many black men in the United States, has been labeled a felon and is currently on parole.

Her thesis, though sobering, was timely and well-received. Copies of Alexander's book sold out after her presentation and are available online at www.amazon.com.

The Young Lawyers Section thanks the D. Augustus Straker Bar Association, the Wolverine Bar Association, the Social Justice Committee of Hartford Church, the Detroit Department of Health and Wellness Promotion, and the Partnership for a Drug Free Detroit for their support of this event.

Endnotes

- 1 Harvard Law School Professor Lani Guinier has this to say about Professor Alexander's book: "Michelle Alexander's brave and bold new book paints a haunting picture in which dreary felon garb, post-prison joblessness, and loss of voting rights now do the stigmatizing work once done by colored-only water fountains and legally segregated schools. With dazzling candor, Alexander argues that we all pay the cost of the new Jim Crow."



Back row (l to r): Reverend Christian Adams, Dr. Calvin Trent, Jeffrey Edison, Mark Fancher, and Commissioner Keith Williams. Front row (l to r): Brandy Robinson, Ron Scott, Professor Michelle Alexander, Jeffrey Collins, Angelique Strong Marks and Brandee Pruitt.

Wills for Heroes Program to Help Michigan First Responders



The Wills for Heroes program was started by Anthony Hayes, a South Carolina attorney, shortly after September 11, 2001. The Wills for Heroes programs are designed to protect our “heroes,” and their families, by providing them with a free, simple, and basic estate plan. Since

2001, the program has been presented in over 20 states, and has provided over 8,000 free estate planning documents to first responders. In 2008, the American Bar Association Young Lawyers Division (ABA YLD) adopted Wills for Heroes as its national public service project, and the SBM YLS is proud to bring this program to Michigan. According to the Wills for Heroes Foundation, an overwhelmingly large number of first responders—approximately 80–90 percent—do not even have simple wills, despite the inherently dangerous nature of their jobs.

On July 31, 2010, several members of the SBM YLS assisted 20 first responders from the West Bloomfield Fire

Department and their spouses by drafting basic wills and power of attorney documents. This was the first Wills for Heroes event in Michigan sponsored by the SBM YLS, and it was an extremely successful “kickoff” event. The SBM YLS members that volunteered for this event were Syeda Davidson, Carlos Escurel, Catrina Farrugia, Felicia Johnson, Christopher Mann, Brent Seitz, Ellen Tencer, and Marisa Wiener.

On November 13, 2010, the SBM YLS traveled to Big Rapids to assist the Mecosta County Sheriff’s Department with free basic wills and power of attorney documents. Approximately one dozen deputy sheriffs and their spouses were provided with a simple, basic estate plan, which almost none of the deputies had in place. The volunteers for this event included local Big Rapids attorneys Frederic Bryne and R. Todd Balkema, and SBM YLS members Carlos Escurel, Nicholas Even, and Wendy Hipsky.

The SBM YLS plans to continue planning Wills for Heroes events during the upcoming bar year. Please contact Carlos Escurel at carlos_escurel@hotmail.com if you are interested in volunteering for an upcoming event, or if you are interested in bringing this program to your community.

YLS Executive Council Member Elected ABA YLD Assembly Speaker

In August 2010, Carlos A. Escurel was elected to serve as assembly speaker for the American Bar Association Young Lawyers Division (ABA YLD) for the 2010-2011 bar year. The ABA YLD has over 150,000 members and is the largest young lawyer organization in the world.

Carlos is a 2001 graduate of Wayne State University Law school and an associate attorney at the law firm of Tanoury, Nauts, McKinney & Garbarino, PLLC, in Detroit. His primary practice area is medical malpractice defense, where he represents hospitals and health care professionals in professional liability cases.

Since 2004, Carlos has been a member of the Executive Council for the Young Lawyers Section of the State Bar of Michigan (SBM YLS), and he has been a member of the ABA YLD Council since 2005. He was also recently named a “Rising Star” by Michigan Super Lawyers for 2010.



Carlos A. Escurel

View from the Bench

By Jennifer Harvey



On Thursday, October 23, 2010, the Young Lawyers Section (YLS) presented program “A View from the Bench” featuring prominent Wayne County Judges Gershwin Drain (civil division), Maria Oxholm (family division), and Timothy Kenny (criminal division). The event took place at the University of Detroit Mercy School of Law to an audience of 50 including YLS members and U of D law students. The panel discussion was moderated by YLS executive council member Jennifer Harvey. The judges discussed practical tips to practicing in the courtroom which are not discussed in law school. Topics included strategies for when to file a motion, presentation styles, legal writing in pleadings and briefs, and choosing a jury. The audience members were also able to ask questions of the judges regarding practice in their specific areas of law. Those audience members received a wealth of knowledge and practical tips that they could apply immediately in the courtroom from a very knowledgeable and well-rounded panel.



Do You Run Away From Public Speaking?



By Donna Marie

www.DealWithStressToday.com

Physical exercise is one means to release stress from our lives. During exercise, the body releases chemical substances (endorphins) that are similar to opiates. These natural substances produced by our own bodies are free of side effects. They also make us feel good.

But how does one release stress and feel good about speaking in front of groups? Initially, it is best to understand some of the underlying causes of public speaking stress. They differ for everyone, yet there is a common denominator for many: that speaking in front of groups can trigger uncomfortable emotions from previous experiences.

For example, think about a time as a youth in school and raising your hand to speak or answer a question only to receive ridicule, laughter, or perhaps harsh feedback. These typical events cause reluctance to “speak up” and contribute later during classroom, life, and work environments.

This uncomfortable memory is filed away (usually into our subconscious) and the same *feeling state* associated with the event is also filed away with it. Then the anxiety rears its head at the very thought of speaking in front of groups. Panic and a crippling nervousness may also be felt. The stress can start at the very thought of having to speak, or when planning the talk, and when delivering the talk. Additionally, it can continue several minutes after the talk as the body is de-stressing from the actual *feeling state* experience.

It is usually the *feeling state*, that is, stress and anxiety, that is triggered that causes many people to avoid speaking situations at all costs. Some say they would rather “die” than speak in front of a group. Some careers have not flourished because of the fear of moving into positions that require presentations to clients, staff, or coworkers. Additionally, these fears can also surface when asked to deliver a toast at a wedding, a eulogy, or when asked to share a simple prayer at meal time. It is the “negative feeling state” that is immobilizing and the *state* that one wants to avoid.

So what can be done? Practice, of course, is always beneficial to assist with speaking fears. Yet to get emotional relief requires understanding the emotional intelligence associated with one’s *feeling state*. Once this is identified and “released,” the anxiety and fear dissipate. It is a skill that can be learned. The anxiety and nervousness lessen noticeably, and one’s speaking comfort and confidence increase *naturally*.

The fear of public speaking can be crippling for an attorney’s career. Whether it’s stopping a lawyer from pursuing certain areas of practice, preventing him or her from making presentations to peers or bosses, or forcing a settlement in lieu of trial, a career can be stunted if not damaged. In order to help young lawyers overcome this fear, the Young Lawyers Section presented “Speak EZ” by acclaimed speaking coach Donna Marie on October 23, 2010.

The event was presented at Cooley Law School of Auburn Hills to an audience of 35, consisting of Young Lawyers Section members and Cooley Law School students. The presentation helped audience members work on speaking by focusing not just on external things to do, but also on how to deal with speaking uneasiness from the inside out. Only when both areas are addressed can success in public speaking be achieved.

San Francisco

By Maureen McGinnis

The American Bar Association Young Lawyers Division held their 2010 Annual Meeting from August 5th through the 7th in San Francisco, California. Eight members of the State Bar of Michigan Young Lawyers Section were in attendance as voting delegates and participated in two days of Assembly meetings at the Palace Hotel.

During Assembly, representatives from each state as well as the military branches weighed in on current topics and issues facing the legal profession. Debate on both sides of each issue was taken up by members of the ABA YLD before each voting delegate cast their vote. This year, the Annual Meeting was a forum for discussion on many highly relevant issues, such as: mandatory diversity CLE, funding for criminal defense legal aid programs, exposing young girls to careers in the law through extracurricular programs at school, distinguishing “error” from “prosecutorial conduct”, same sex marriage and boycotting Arizona as a result of their immigration legislation.



Special recognition was bestowed on several notable young lawyers during presentations for Outstanding Young Military Service Awards and the YLD Child Advocacy Award. Additionally, affiliates throughout the country who had submitted applications to be considered in each of the five categories for the Awards of Achievement anxiously awaited the results that were announced at the Annual Meeting. The State Bar of Michigan Young Lawyers Section consistently brings national attention to its public service and service to the bar programming each year through Award of Achievement recognition. This year was no different with the SBM-YLS placing 2nd for its Comprehensive portfolio of projects in Division 1B.

The *Inter Alia* newsletter received Special Recognition, the Michigan Youth Leadership Summit placed 2nd in the Service to the Public category and the Washtenaw County Intro to Practice seminar received Special Recognition in the Service to the Bar category.

More information about the events and Assembly at the 2010 Annual Meeting can be found at: <http://www.abanet.org/yld/assembly/am10recap.html>

Young Lawyers Section Third Annual Summit

By Hope V. Shovein

The Young Lawyers Section (“YLS”) hosted its well-attended Third Annual Summit at the Grand Traverse Resort & Spa June 4-6, 2010. Highlights included Supreme Court Chief Justice Marilyn Kelly’s keynote address, and presentation of the Regeana Myrick Outstanding Young Lawyer Award to David Campbell of Bowman and Brooke LLP.

The 2010 Summit offered valuable networking and educational opportunities for young lawyers and law students in Michigan. Although this was only the third year for the YLS Summit, it is clearly improving every year in content and popularity. This year’s programming included educational sessions focusing on Preliminary Exams, Opening Statements/Closing Arguments, Juvenile Referees, and a very informative presentation by the State Bar of Michigan on Technology Tips and Business Formation, as well as a number of other timely topics.

The YLS would like to thank the 2010 Summit sponsors: WestlawNext, the Real Property Law Section of the State Bar of Michigan, Brooks Kushman PC, LexisNexis, and Miller, Canfield, Paddock and Stone, PLC.

Visit www.michbar.org/younglawyers/news.cfm for more information on YLS events and for announcements regarding the 2011 Summit.



(Left to right, top to bottom): Chief Justice Marilyn Kelly delivering the keynote address. Nicholas Even presenting the Regeana Myrick Outstanding Young Lawyer Award to his colleague, David Campbell. Rebie Myrick (mother of Regeana Myrick), David Campbell, Maureen McGinnis, Nicholas Even.

2010 International Weekend in London

By James W. Low



This fall, I was privileged to be invited as an American representative to the annual International Weekend conference in London, England. The event is hosted by the Junior Lawyers Division of the Law Society of London, the London Young Lawyers Group, the Young Barristers Committee, and the European Young Bar Association. The event coincides with the opening of the legal year in London, which is analogous to the State Bar of Michigan's Annual Meeting. The International Weekend conference is meant to equip young lawyers from around the world with practical career development skills while providing the opportunity to experience the best of legal London. In addition, it aims to facilitate the creation of lasting connections with peers from around the world.

I, along with the president of the American Bar Association Young Lawyers Division, and delegations from Norway, Germany, France, Spain, Italy, Serbia, Belgium, Ireland, and the Netherlands attended the events and enjoyed the hospitality of the English during our stay. Contrary to the American stereotype of the English being reserved, in addition to the serious business the English were also very fun hosts.

On the first night of the conference, the London Young Lawyers Group hosted a welcome reception at The Saint restaurant in Paternoster Square, where, the local and foreign lawyers were able to chat and network.

On the second day, after a formal welcome and introduction, we attended an educational session of press and media training for lawyers. After lunch, we took a tour of the brand new Supreme Court of the United Kingdom hosted by the Right Honorable Lord Rodger of Earlsferry, Justice of the Supreme Court. Lord Roger explained how historically, the highest court in the United Kingdom was comprised of members of the House of Lords, which is the United Kingdom's legislature. Although there had been no indication of an actual bias, it was thought that for the appearance of impartiality and independence, the Court should be a separate branch from the legislature. Accordingly, in 2009, the Supreme Court of the United Kingdom was formed as a separate and distinct entity.

After touring the Supreme Court, we visited the Inner Temple and Middle Temple of the Inns of Court, where the Barristers train. This tour included the Temple Church, which was featured in Dan Brown's novel *The DaVinci Code*. Thereafter, we attended a cocktail and canapés reception in the Middle Temple, which was attended by Lord Rodger himself. At the reception, I was fortunate enough to be introduced to Lord Rodger and chat with him for a few minutes. To close the day, we attended a traditional pub quiz and dinner at the Vintry where we answered trivia questions and enjoyed fish and chips.

On the third day of the conference, a number of the foreign attendees took the day to sightsee. That day, we toured the city and saw St. Paul's Cathedral, Big Ben, and the Tower Bridge, among other attractions. That evening, the Junior Lawyers Division hosted a black tie gala at the gorgeous Grange St. Paul's Hotel. The gala featured the very best of English cuisine along with a curious choice of pecan pie for dessert. While the English food was fantastic, the pecan pie was not quite up to the American standard. The party, dancing, and conversation went on into the early hours, when the attending guests said their goodbyes.

It was great to see my colleagues from overseas once again. After attending a number of foreign bar association conferences, it has become clear that our foreign colleagues are very similar to us. One striking difference, however, is that our foreign colleagues make a point of attending each other's annual meetings. In addition to the meetings in Europe, a number of the foreign lawyers make a point of attending the American Bar Association Young Lawyers Division meetings as well. As the world becomes smaller, we would be wise to follow their lead and gain a more global perspective.



Practice Pointer

Conflicts issues are very fact specific. It is for that reason that a blanket form is really not appropriate, particularly in the area of waiving future conflicts of interest. In order to consent to a conflict of interest, clients must discuss with the attorney the specific issues causing the conflict and potential adverse consequences of a waiver to the client. The same is true for a client's consent to disclosure of confidential information. A universal form simply cannot provide the kind of detailed information that would be required for a client to be adequately informed in making a waiver of conflict of interest. A client's signature on a blanket form should never be construed to constitute an adequate, informed waiver, without the full discussion with the client of the specific consequences of the specific waiver. If the attorney or law firm has questions about conflicts waivers, you should contact the ETHICS HOTLINE of The State Bar of Michigan.

Attributed to: The Florida Bar/LOMAS