

# Inter Alia

*Among Other Things*

Fall 2016

[www.michiganyounglawyers.com](http://www.michiganyounglawyers.com)

## Council Officers

### *Chairperson*

Shenique A. Moss

### *Chairperson-Elect*

Syeda F. Davidson

### *Secretary*

Kara R. Hart-Negrich

### *Treasurer*

Ryan Zemke

## Council

Elizabeth K. Abdnour  
Katherine J. Bennett  
Kristina A. Bilowus  
Matthew P. Breuer  
Jerome Crawford  
Tanya N. Cripps  
Rabih Hamawi  
Amy S. Krieg  
Laura M. Kubit  
Samantha J. Orvis  
Ryan C. Plecha  
Choi T. Portis  
Erica N. Payne Roell  
Colemon L. Potts  
Roberta L. Sacharski  
Aaron Sohaski  
Brande N. Smith

### *Ex Officio*

Mark W. Jane

## Letter from the Chair



Shenique A. Moss

Wayne County Commission  
500 Griswold St Ste 810  
Detroit MI 48226-3480  
P: (313) 224-0909  
F: (313) 224-7484  
E: [ssmoss@waynecounty.com](mailto:ssmoss@waynecounty.com)

Greetings, Fellow Young Lawyers!

It is such a tremendous honor to serve you as the chair of the State Bar of Michigan Young Lawyers Section (SBM YLS) for 2016-2017.

The Young Lawyers Section is a dynamic section of the State Bar of Michigan, which offers members an opportunity to participate in various continuing education and professional development seminars, community service projects, and networking events. These activities help new and young lawyers adapt to their demanding profession, encourage early involvement in the legal community, and build camaraderie with fellow lawyers. All Michigan lawyers who are under 36 years of age, or have been practicing for five years or less are automatically members of the SBM YLS.

My primary focus during this bar year is to engage our membership, offer activities and initiatives that are more reflective of the needs and desire of our membership, and expand collaborative efforts with other SBM sections. The YLS Executive Council will continue to expand our member outreach, increase our visibility in the community, and encourage greater participation.

I welcome and encourage all members to become active participants in one or more of the section's 12 committees. Your insights and enthusiasm will truly make a profound difference in what we can accomplish. Participation in a committee will enable you to contribute to the legal profession, develop lasting relationships with other young lawyers, gain practice knowledge, and hone your leadership skills.

Please don't hesitate to contact me via e-mail ([sbeniquemoss@gmail.com](mailto:sbeniquemoss@gmail.com)) if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,  
Shenique

## Meet Your 2016-2017 Young Lawyer's Section Executive Council



Shenique A. Moss

### **Chair: Shenique A. Moss (Lansing)**

Shenique A. Moss is an attorney for the Wayne County Commission. In her current position, she focuses on municipal law, contract law, and real estate law. Prior to this role, she served as an assistant attorney general at the Michigan Department of Attorney General for 8 ½ years.

In addition to serving as the chair of the State Bar of Michigan (SBM) Young Lawyers Section, Shenique is a member of the SBM Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee. She is also involved in the American Bar Association (ABA), where she serves as the ABA Young Lawyers Division (ABA YLD) speaker, the House of Delegates young lawyer representative for Michigan, and chair of the ABA YLD Fall 2016 Conference (Detroit). Locally, she served as the 2012-2013 president of the Ingham County Bar Association Young Lawyers Section and is a board member of the Ingham County Bar Foundation.

Shenique is admitted to practice law in Michigan, the United States Supreme Court, the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan, the United States District Court for the Western District of Michigan, and the United States Tax Court.

Shenique attended Wayne State University for her undergraduate studies and graduated from Thomas M. Cooley Law School with her juris doctor and LL.M. She is also an American Bar Foundation Fellow, an Ingham County Bar Foundation Fellow, an ABA Business Law Section Fellow (2014-2016 class), a 2014 Collaborative Bar Leadership Academy Fellow, and a 2010 Michigan Political Leadership Program Fellow. Shenique was named as one of the Ingham County Bar Association's Top 5 Under 35 (years of age) attorneys and is a Leadership Macomb XVII graduate.

Shenique was also recently elected to serve on Clintondale Community Schools Board of Education and will begin her term in January 2017.



Syeda F. Davidson

### **Chair-Elect: Syeda F. Davidson (Clinton Township)**

Syeda Davidson is an associate attorney at Burgess Sharp & Golden, PLLC, where her practice is concentrated on employment and civil rights matters. Prior to that, she was a staff attorney at Lakeshore Legal Aid, where she represented low-income survivors of domestic violence in civil proceedings. Syeda received her juris doctor, cum laude, from Thomas M. Cooley Law School in 2008. She has since held numerous leadership positions with the Oakland County Bar Association, where she has chaired the Law-Related Education Committee and the P.A.L.S. (Providing Access to Legal Services) Committee. Nationally, Syeda just completed a term as managing editor for the American Bar Association's publication, *TYL*. Syeda is active with organizations outside of the practice of law as well. She serves on the Board of Directors for Affirmations, a community center focused on LGBT education and advocacy in Ferndale, Michigan, and Detroit Together Men's Chorus. She is also active with the American Civil Liberties Union. Syeda's hobbies include aerial acrobatics and playing the bass guitar. She resides in Berkley, Michigan, with her husband, Mark, their son, Linus, and their cat, Kitty Cat.



Kara R. Hart-Negrich

### **Secretary: Kara R. Hart-Negrich (Lansing)**

Kara Hart-Negrich took over as deputy director and general counsel to the Michigan State Land Bank Fast Track Authority in early 2014.

She attended the University of Michigan-Dearborn and Wayne State University Law School. She passed the bar in 2010 and joined the YLS Council in 2011.

Kara lives and works in Lansing.



Ryan Zemke

### **Treasurer: Ryan Zemke (Utica)**

Ryan Zemke is a solo practitioner in Macomb County focusing primarily on criminal defense. He currently serves as defense counsel for the 41B Drug & Sobriety Court in Clinton Township. He is also the president of H.E.A.L—a non-profit charity which provides support to drug/sobriety courts. Ryan



Mark W. Jane

is on the Board of Directors of Families Against Narcotics (FAN) and was also appointed to a three-year term on the Macomb County Substance Use Disorder (SUD) Board. He was recently elected as a council member for the State Bar of Michigan Criminal Law Section. Ryan is serving his second year on the State Bar of Michigan Young Lawyers Section Executive Council, and he has been involved with the Macomb County Bar Association Young Lawyers Section and currently serves as the chair-elect of the MCBA YLS Board of Directors.

Ryan completed his undergraduate studies at Michigan State University where he received a degree in political theory and constitutional democracy. He continued his studies at Thomas M. Cooley Law School where he graduated as part of the Clark J. Adams Class of 2008.

**Immediate Past Chair: Mark W. Jane (Ann Arbor)**

Mark W. Jane is a senior attorney in the Ann Arbor office of Butzel Long. He practices employee benefits and executive compensation, primarily counseling businesses regarding legal compliance issues underlying the creation and ongoing maintenance of retirement and welfare plans.

Mark is the immediate past chair of the State Bar of Michigan Young Lawyers Section and is the YLS rep on the State Bar of Michigan Board of Commissioners. He is also the secretary of the Washtenaw County Bar Association.

Mr. Jane received his B.A. from the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, and his J.D. from Loyola University Chicago School of Law. He is admitted to the State Bar of Michigan, the State Bar of California, and the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan.



Choi T. Portis

**District 1 (Macomb and Wayne Counties)**

**Choi T. Portis (Detroit)**

Choi T. Portis is an attorney at the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department. In addition to serving as an executive council member for the Young Lawyers Section, Choi serves as the American Bar Association Young Lawyers Division district representative for District 20 (Michigan).

Choi is admitted to practice law in Michigan and the United States Eastern District of Michigan. Choi attended Eastern Michigan University for her undergraduate studies and graduated from Thomas M. Cooley Law School with her juris doctor degree.



Coleman L. Potts

**Coleman L. Potts (Detroit)**

Coleman Potts is an associate attorney at the Detroit Law Group, PLLC where he has a litigation practice. Coleman received his bachelor's degree in criminal justice from Georgia State University and his juris doctor from Thomas M. Cooley Law School. While in law school, Coleman interned with the Michigan Unemployment Insurance Project (M.I.U.I.), and clerked for a state court judge in Atlanta, Georgia.



Aaron Sohaski

**Aaron Sohaski (Detroit)**

Aaron Sohaski is a contract compliance specialist at Henry Ford Health System. He focuses on Medicare, Medicaid, and commercial payer contracts. A Michigan native, Aaron attended Grand Valley State for his bachelor's, The Johns Hopkins University for his master's, and Western Michigan University Cooley Law School for his juris doctor. He was admitted to the State Bar of Michigan in June 2016, and he is a member of American Bar Association and the Oakland County Bar Association.

Throughout law school, he served in leadership roles both on a statewide and a national level. Aaron served within the American Bar Association Law Student Division as 6<sup>th</sup> Circuit governor and then as chair. Aaron served in the State Bar of Michigan Law Student Section as secretary and then as chair. Currently, Aaron represents Division 1 on the Young Lawyers Section Council.

**District 2 (Oakland County)**

**Ryan C. Plecha (Birmingham)**

Ryan is a partner at Lippitt O'Keefe Gornbein, PLLC where his practice focuses on both civil and commercial litigation. Based on the boutique nature of Lippitt O'Keefe Gornbein, most cases Ryan works on are complex and unique. Throughout Ryan's career he has been involved in many high-stake



Ryan C. Plecha



Matthew P. Breuer

and complex matters. A few of the most interesting cases include representation of two major retiree associations in the Detroit bankruptcy case; representation of a Michigan corporation in a multimillion dollar federal antitrust class action suit; representation of a big three automotive company in supplier disputes; representation of two hedge funds in a class action shareholder oppression case; and participation in prosecution of FLSA class action on behalf of employees of Michigan Department of Corrections.

Through being a part of such exciting cases, Ryan has participated in a mock trial, been part of a team that drafted a request for a writ of certiorari to the Supreme Court of the United States, and was recently interviewed by the press for print, radio and television.

Ryan has recently been recognized as a “Rising Star” by *Michigan Super Lawyers* (2013-15), an “Up and Coming Lawyer” by *Michigan Lawyers Weekly* (2014), a “Top Young Lawyer” by *dbusiness Magazine* (2015), winner of the Barristers President’s Award by the Detroit Metropolitan Bar Association (2015) and as a one of the “40 Under 40” by *Crain’s Business Detroit* (2015). Ryan has been on the YLS council since 2013.

**Matthew P. Breuer (Farmington Hills)**

Matthew Breuer is an associate at Schwartz Law Firm, in Farmington Hills, Michigan. Matthew received his bachelor’s degree from Michigan State University in East Lansing, Michigan and his law degree from Wayne State University Law School in Detroit, Michigan. Admitted to the State Bar of Michigan in November 2012, Matthews also holds memberships to the Oakland County Bar Association and the American Bar Association Business Law Section.

He has been an active member of the Young Lawyers Section Executive Council since 2013 serving as a District 2 representative. Matthew has authored articles appearing in the *Michigan Defense Quarterly*, *Chicago Law Bulletin*, *Smart Business Chicago*, *The Value Examiner*, and other publications. In addition, he was a contributor to several prior Wiley publications, including *Cloud Computing and Electronic Discovery*; *Private Equity: History, Governance and Operations*; and *The Handbook of Fraud Deterrence*.

**Jerome Crawford (Troy)**

Jerome Crawford is the associate legal director of a publicly traded company, Horizon Global Corporation—a world leader in custom towing, trailering, and cargo management products. In his corporate counsel position, he handles an array of issues spanning the areas of compliance, intellectual property, product liability, employment, and corporate law. A native Detroiter, Jerome spent his entire educational tenure in the state of Michigan, attending Michigan State University for both undergrad and law school. During law school, he served in numerous roles including vice president of the Black Law Students Association for two years, director of entertainment for the Sports and Entertainment Law Society, and executive director of the trial side of Moot Court and Trial Advocacy Board.

**Tanya N. Cripps (Auburn Hills)**

Tanya Cripps is the operations manager of corporate real estate for Fiat Chrysler Automobiles in Auburn Hills, Michigan. Tanya works on lease transactions, dispositions, acquisitions, and condemnations; aid in the strategic development of corporate real estate; and manages the work flow of corporate real estate transactions.

Tanya has served on the executive council for the State Bar of Michigan Young Lawyers Section since 2013. She is also a member of the Real Property Law Section, the American Bar Association, and the Oakland County Bar Association, where she serves on the board of directors for New Lawyers Committee.

Tanya received her law degree from Western Michigan University Law School with a concentration in business transactions. Her undergraduate degree is from Grand Valley State University, with a major in finance and economics.

In her spare time, Tanya enjoys traveling and running.



Jerome Crawford



Tanya N. Cripps





Brande Smith

**Brande Smith (Farmington Hills)**

Brande Smith is a trial attorney with Allstate, Ensurance , and Encompass Staff Counsel. She focuses her practice on defense litigation in the areas of premises liability, first- and third-party automobile negligence, personal injury, and general negligence.

She graduated with a B.A. from Howard University and graduated from the University of Akron with her juris doctor and master of public administration.

**Kristina A. Bilowus (Royal Oak)**

Kristina Bilowus is a family law practitioner with Findling Law, P.L.C. in Royal Oak. Her practice focuses on all aspects of domestic relations including divorce, custody, paternity, support, benefits, and an assortment of post-judgment issues. Prior to her current practice, Kristina had significant work experience with the Michigan judicial system where she held positions in Oakland, Washtenaw, and Wayne counties.

She received her J.D. from Western Michigan University Thomas M. Cooley Law School as well an LL.M. in criminal law and advocacy.

Kristina greatly enjoys teaching and has co-taught several law school classes, tutored law and undergraduate students, and serves as a guest lecturer.

Currently, Kristina is an Oakland County Bar Association member, serves on the OCBA Inns of Court, Women’s Bar Association, Women Lawyers Association of Michigan, and Michigan Center for Civic Education (MCCE).



Kristina A. Bilowus

**Rabih Hamawi (Farmington Hills)**

Rabih Hamawi is an associate attorney at Fabian, Sklar and King and focuses his practice on representing policyholders in property-damage disputes with insurers and in errors-and-omissions cases against insurance agents. He has extensive expertise in insurance coverage. Mr. Hamawi is a licensed multiple lines property and casualty, life, accident, and health insurance counselor (LIC). He earned the chartered property and casualty underwriter (CPCU), certified insurance counselor (CIC), and certified risk manager (CRM) designations. Mr. Hamawi previously served as managing principal for an insurance and financial services agency, where he built a multi-million-dollar book of business. Mr. Hamawi interned for the Honorable John Corbett O’Meara, judge of the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan, and the U.S. Department of Justice in the U.S. Attorney’s Office in Detroit. Before attending law school, he earned a master’s degree in finance with a concentration in financial planning. Mr. Hamawi is an adjunct professor teaching graduate and undergraduate courses in personal and corporate finance, risk management, and insurance and financial planning at the University of Phoenix, Davenport University, and Southern New Hampshire University. While in law school, he served on the *Cooley Law Review* Board of Editors as a symposium editor, where he received the Law Review Board Award for the most significant contributions to the *Law Review* during his tenure. Mr. Hamawi also served on the moot court and mock trial executive boards and was a member of Cooley’s national trial team. He graduated magna cum laude and received the Student Leadership Achievement Award for his outstanding participation in a leadership role during law school. Mr. Hamawi is an active member of the Michigan Association of Justice and serves as a council member of the Insurance and Indemnity Law Section of the State Bar of Michigan. He is also a board member of the ICLE New Lawyers Advisory Board. He is bilingual and fluent in Arabic.



Rabih Hamawi



Katherine Jean Bennett

**District 3 (All Other Counties)**

**Katherine Jean Bennett (Lansing)**

Katherine Bennett is an attorney at the Department of the Attorney General.

**Samantha J. Orvis (Grand Blanc)**

Samantha Orvis has served on the YLS Executive Council for three years. She is an associate attorney in Garan Lucow Miller P.C.’s Grand Blanc office.



Samantha J. Orvis



Liz Abdnour

Samantha is also actively involved with the Women’s Bar Association and is serving her fourth year on the executive board. She serves as a director at large for the Women Lawyers Association of Michigan. Most recently, she was appointed to serve on the Board of Directors for the Genesee County Bar Association as representative of women lawyers.

Samantha further serves the community as a member of the Board of Directors for New Gateways, Inc., a non-profit organization that enriches life for adults with mild to severe multiple developmental disabilities by offering choices and community involvement. She also sits on the Board of Directors for the Great Lakes Environmental Law Center, which was founded to protect the world’s greatest freshwater resource and the communities that depend upon it.

In 2011 Samantha earned her law degree cum laude from Wayne State University Law School, where she served as a member of the school’s Student Board of Governors as well as on the Student Trial Advocacy team. She earned her bachelor of arts (which high honors) from the University of Michigan—Flint in 2008. Samantha annually volunteers to serve as a judge for the Michigan Center for Civic Education’s high school Mock Trial competition and recently served as co-director of the National Trial Advocacy Competition hosted by SBM YLS.

**Liz Abdnour (East Lansing)**

Liz Abdnour is an institutional equity coordinator at Michigan State University, where she investigates allegations of Title IX violations, discrimination, and harassment within the MSU community and provides training and policy guidance on sexual misconduct, relationship violence, and civil rights issues. She previously worked as a legal aid attorney in Lansing and Cincinnati providing representation to low-income individuals in civil matters.

Liz serves on the SBM Standing Committee on Domestic Violence and the board of the Firecracker Foundation, a Lansing area nonprofit organization which provides therapy and services to child survivors of sexual trauma. She also volunteers her time as a pro bono attorney.

Liz earned her bachelor’s degree from James Madison College at Michigan State University and her law degree from New York University.

**Erica N. Payne Roell (Marquette)**



Erica N. Payne Roell

Erica N. Payne Roell is an attorney at Kendricks Bordeau Adamini Greenlee Keefe, PC. She is a native of Crystal Falls. She graduated summa cum laude from Finlandia University and earned her law degree from Thomas M. Cooley Law School. She has a general practice with a diverse background in the law that includes real estate, probate work, and civil litigation in these areas as well as estate planning. She is also trained as a general civil mediator and domestic relations mediator.

**Amy Krieg (East Lansing)**



Amy Krieg

Amy Krieg grew up in Michigan and obtained her BA from Albion College, where she studied abroad in Cape Town, South Africa. She attended law school at California Western School of Law in San Diego and then practiced for a short time in Las Vegas, Nevada doing insurance defense. She then returned to her hometown in Brighton to serve the local community as a general practice attorney at Burchfield, Park & Pollesch, P.C. Now, Amy works at Michigan State University College of Law advising students and alumni in pursuit of their dream jobs, which often include intellectual property, in-house, and non-traditional positions, as well as careers in Canada. In her spare time, Amy does home renovation projects with her husband, entertains her miniature schnauzer, practices yoga, dabbles in photography and social media, and is always planning her next international trip.

**Laura Kubit (Caro)**



Laura Kubit

Based in Caro, Laura Kubit serves the low-income and senior populations of 11 counties in mid-Michigan as a civil legal aid attorney at Lakeshore Legal Aid. Laura handles elder, family, consumer, housing, and public benefits law matters. Though on the road a lot, Laura loves her job and is grateful to make a difference in people’s lives every day.

Laura’s prior legal experience includes an internship with Chief Judge Gerald Rosen in the Federal District Court in Detroit and consumer arbitration work at The Googasian Firm in Bloomfield Hills.



Roberta Sacharski

Laura attended the University of Michigan (Ann Arbor) for her undergrad studies majoring in classical archaeology. She graduated from Wayne State University Law School with her juris doctor.

Prior to law school, Laura worked as a teacher trainer and community outreach volunteer with the Peace Corps in Ranong, Thailand. In this role, Laura co-taught participatory English lessons with her Thai teacher counterparts, as well as facilitated teacher trainings and student camps throughout the region, and helped to organize a national conference on migratory labor and human trafficking.

Laura is also a member of the State Bar of Michigan's Access and Affordability Task Force, Oakland County Bar Association's New Lawyers Committee, and Inns of Court, and she regularly volunteers with the Michigan High School Mock Trial Tournament.

### **Roberta Sacharski (Howell)**

Roberta is currently serving her second term on the Executive Council of SBM's Young Lawyers Section, representing the young lawyers of district 3. In addition to serving on the council, Roberta is also a member of the Probate & Estate Planning Section of the SBM as well as a member of the American Bar Association. Roberta is a lifetime member of the Ladies Auxiliary of the VFW and a member of the Michigan Association of Probate and Juvenile Registers Association.

Roberta is a magna cum laude graduate of the Thomas M. Cooley Law School where she focused her education on litigation, receiving trial court practice and moot court recognition both at the local and national level. Roberta also received various academic accolades during law school such as earning the Certificate of Merit in several classes including Worker's Compensation and Trial Skills. Roberta also served on the Board of *Law Review* as the scholarly writing editor, where she supervised the research and writing of over 100 students. Perhaps the greatest testament to her own research and writing skills was being selected to serve as an intern to the Hon. David W. McKeague at the United States Court of Appeals for the 6th Circuit and observe oral arguments in Cincinnati.

Roberta recently moved to Howell, MI and was appointed probate register and hearing officer for Livingston County by Hon. Miriam A. Cavanaugh, chief probate judge. Previously, Roberta served as chief deputy register of deeds for Genesee County.

Roberta is an avid practitioner of yoga and owns a small cake decorating business. Roberta is a loyal University of Michigan fan, as she earned both her bachelor's and master's degrees at the esteemed institution. Roberta is honored and excited to represent the young lawyers of district 3 on the executive council.

## **2016- 2017 State Bar of Michigan Young Lawyers Section Committees**

The State Bar of Michigan Young Lawyers Section (the "YLS") is comprised of over 8,600 members. Membership in the YLS is automatic for every member in good standing of the State Bar of Michigan who is under the age of 36 or who has been admitted to practice for five years or less, whichever period is greater.

The purpose of the State Bar of Michigan Young Lawyers Section is "to sponsor and carry on activities of particular interest and value to young lawyers in Michigan; to coordinate activities of the various local young lawyer groups in Michigan; to cooperate fully with, and as an integral part of, the State Bar of Michigan; and to cooperate with the various local bar associations in the State of Michigan, and the American Bar Association, including its Young Lawyers Division, in the promotion of their programs."

One of the most important ways that a young lawyer can get involved in the YLS is through one of its 12 committees. Through the Section's committees, opportunities for leadership are many and limited only by a member's imagination.

The Section's committees are charged with organizing and spearheading YLS' activities and events throughout the state, consistent with the agenda set each year by the YLS's Executive Council.

A description of the 2016-2017 YLS committees can be found below. Please complete the attached form indicating the committee or committees you are interested in and return it to [sbmyscommittees@gmail.com](mailto:sbmyscommittees@gmail.com).

From there, the YLS committee chair(s) will contact you with further information. Our goal is to involve as many young lawyers in Section activities as possible, and to match them with activities and events, consistent with their level of interest and time constraints.

### Time Commitment

The time commitment for YLS committee members varies based on the committee and level of involvement. Committee work can range from one to ten hours per month (inclusive of any meetings or programs). Committee meetings are typically held by teleconference and are generally held during the work week and last up to two hours.

### YLS Committees

#### *Community Outreach Committee*

- The Community Outreach Committee is responsible for planning and implementing various service projects and initiatives to serve the public. The Committee's work also helps create a more positive image of the YLS and the legal profession in the community.
- Committee projects include: "Know Your Rights" events, Law Day and Justice League 5K: Heroes v Villains.
- Co-Chairs: Roberta Sacharski ([robertasacharski@gmail.com](mailto:robertasacharski@gmail.com)) and Brande Smith ([brandesmith02@gmail.com](mailto:brandesmith02@gmail.com))

#### *Disaster Legal Services Committee*

- The Disaster Legal Services Committee is responsible for organizing the Section's disaster legal assistance efforts. Disasters, both natural and manmade, can result in large populations in immediate need of legal assistance on a number of topics. The Committee, in conjunction with the American Bar Association Young Lawyers Division and the Federal Emergency Management Agency Office of Disaster Assistance Programs, works to develop a disaster relief plan for providing a network of volunteer attorneys to provide free legal services to victims of federally declared disasters throughout the state of Michigan.
- The Committee is also tasked with creating and maintaining the disaster relief handbook covering common legal situations and available resources for survivors of Michigan disasters.
- Co-Chairs: Choi Portis ([choi.portis@gmail.com](mailto:choi.portis@gmail.com)) and Liz Abdnour ([liz.abdnour@gmail.com](mailto:liz.abdnour@gmail.com))

#### *Diversity Committee*

- The Diversity Committee is responsible for promoting diversity in the legal profession.
- The Committee is tasked with organizing diversity related seminars, projects, and initiatives for section members and the public.
- Committee projects include: the YLS Mock Trial Competition, "What Do Lawyers Do?" seminars, and the 7-12 grade Instagram Competition.
- Co-Chairs: Kristina Bilowus ([kristinabilowus@yahoo.com](mailto:kristinabilowus@yahoo.com)), Matt Breuer ([m.paul.breuer@gmail.com](mailto:m.paul.breuer@gmail.com)), and Jerome Crawford ([jcrawf@gmail.com](mailto:jcrawf@gmail.com))



#### *Education Committee*

- The Education Committee is responsible for planning and coordinating educational and professional development seminars that are specifically designed to meet the needs of young lawyers. When possible, the Committee tries to include experienced young lawyers in the program faculty to provide them with the opportunity to gain exposure and experience in an educational forum.
- Committee projects include: Breakfast Basics (in conjunction with ICLE), “Lunch and Learn” seminars, “Navigating the Courts” seminars, New Lawyer Orientation, and 101 Seminars.
- Co-Chairs: Colemon Potts ([clpottslaw@gmail.com](mailto:clpottslaw@gmail.com)) and Ryan Plecha ([ryanplecha@gmail.com](mailto:ryanplecha@gmail.com))

#### *Health and Wellness Committee*

- The Health and Wellness Committee is responsible for promoting the overall health and well-being of young lawyers. The Committee is tasked with organizing seminars and activities focused on mental health and wellness, fitness and exercise, healthy living, and stress management.
- Committee projects include: “Fit 2 Practice” series and mental health wellness programs
- Co-Chairs: Tanya Cripps ([cripps.tanya@gmail.com](mailto:cripps.tanya@gmail.com)) and Amy Krieg ([akrieg15@gmail.com](mailto:akrieg15@gmail.com))

#### *Inter Alia Committee*

- The Inter Alia Committee is responsible for collecting content for and publishing the YLS newsletter, *Inter Alia*. *Inter Alia* is published at least four times a year, and provides the YLS membership with articles on substantive issues, practice tips, and notice of upcoming Section events and news. Annually, the *Inter Alia* Committee recognizes contributors to the *Inter Alia* for that bar year. If you are interested in writing an article, please contact Syeda Davidson at the e-mail address shown below.
- Chair: Syeda Davidson ([sfhdavidson@gmail.com](mailto:sfh davidson@gmail.com))
- Vice Chair: Kara Hart-Negrich ([khartnegrich@gmail.com](mailto:khartnegrich@gmail.com))

#### *Media/Marketing Relations Committee*

- The Media/Marketing Relations Committee is responsible for maintaining the YLS webpage, marketing and promotional materials, protocol regarding the YLS listserv, and initiating and maintaining any other media and/or marketing relations items.
- Co-Chairs: Aaron Sohaski ([sohaskia@gmail.com](mailto:sohaskia@gmail.com)) and Ryan Zemke ([zemker@gmail.com](mailto:zemker@gmail.com))

#### *Membership Committee*

- The Membership Committee is responsible for promoting greater participation of Section members in the YLS and bar association as a whole. The Committee is tasked with ensuring the Section adequately engages its membership through planning social and networking events, looking for partnerships with other professional organizations, and suggesting ways to increase the Section’s value to its members. The Committee also works with liaisons to and from various SBM sections.
- Committee projects include: “I am YLS” bar exam outreach, bar admission ceremony outreach, and networking power hour events.
- Co-Chairs: Kara Hart-Negrich ([khartnegrich@gmail.com](mailto:khartnegrich@gmail.com)) and Katherine Bennett ([katherinej-montgomery@gmail.com](mailto:katherinej-montgomery@gmail.com))

#### *National Trial Advocacy Competition Committee*

- The National Trial Advocacy Competition Committee is responsible for coordinating the Annual National Trial Advocacy Competition for law schools across the country. Please note that the 2016 NTAC was held November 4-6, 2016. The next NTAC will be in the Fall 2017.
- Co-Chairs: Laura Kubit ([lkubit@gmail.com](mailto:lkubit@gmail.com)) and Samantha Orvis ([samantha.orvis@gmail.com](mailto:samantha.orvis@gmail.com))

#### *Pro Bono Committee*

- The Pro Bono Committee is responsible for promoting pro bono legal service throughout Michigan. The Committee is tasked with sponsoring pro bono projects and events, and partnering with providers of pro bono opportunities to provide young lawyers with the training and support they need to become successful advocates. Annually, the Committee will recognize young lawyers who provide pro bono service. This Committee works with YLS affiliate organizations and programs to provide pro bono opportunities to young lawyers and to promote the public's access to justice.
- Committee projects include: Legal Clinics, Wills for Heroes, and the #SBMYLSProbonoChallenge
- Co-Chairs: Rabih Hamawi ([RHamawi@fabiansklar.com](mailto:RHamawi@fabiansklar.com)) and Shenique A. Moss ([sheniquemoss@gmail.com](mailto:sheniquemoss@gmail.com))

#### *Upper Peninsula Engagement Committee*

- The Upper Peninsula Engagement Committee is responsible for organizing programs and activities specifically for young lawyers in the Upper Peninsula. The Committee is also tasked with examining the unique issues UP young lawyers face in getting more involved in the Section and exploring ways to further engage them.
- Co-Chairs: Erica Payne Roell ([ericanpayne2322@gmail.com](mailto:ericanpayne2322@gmail.com)) and Mark Jane ([mujane1980@yahoo.com](mailto:mujane1980@yahoo.com))

#### *Young Lawyer Summit Committee*

- The Young Lawyer Summit Committee is responsible for organizing the Summit which provides young lawyers the opportunity to participate in various educational seminars and networking events during the course of a weekend. The next Summit will be held in the spring of 2017.
- Chair: Shenique A. Moss ([sheniquemoss@gmail.com](mailto:sheniquemoss@gmail.com))

#### *Entertainment Committee*

- Co-Chairs: Jerome Crawford ([jcrawf@gmail.com](mailto:jcrawf@gmail.com)) and Ryan Plecha ([ryanplecha@gmail.com](mailto:ryanplecha@gmail.com))

#### *Keynote Speaker Committee*

- Co-Chairs: Rabih Hamawi ([RHamawi@fabiansklar.com](mailto:RHamawi@fabiansklar.com)) and Tanya Cripps ([cripps.tanya@gmail.com](mailto:cripps.tanya@gmail.com))

#### *Logistics Committee*

- Co-Chairs: Choi Portis ([choi.portis@gmail.com](mailto:choi.portis@gmail.com)) and Brandi Smith ([brandesmith02@gmail.com](mailto:brandesmith02@gmail.com))

#### *Outstanding Young Lawyer Award Selection Committee*

- Chair: Syeda Davidson ([sfhdavidson@gmail.com](mailto:sfhdavidson@gmail.com))

#### *Programs Committee*

- Chair: Roberta Sacharski ([robertasacharski@gmail.com](mailto:robertasacharski@gmail.com))

#### *Publicity Committee*

- Co-Chairs: Aaron Sohaski ([sohaskia@gmail.com](mailto:sohaskia@gmail.com)) and Liz Abnour ([liz.abdnour@gmail.com](mailto:liz.abdnour@gmail.com))

*Sponsor/Vendors Committee*

- Co-Chairs: Kara Hart-Negrich ([khartnegrich@gmail.com](mailto:khartnegrich@gmail.com)) and Ryan Zemke ([zemker@gmail.com](mailto:zemker@gmail.com))

*Venue Committee*

- Co-Chairs: Erica Payne Roell ([ericanpayne2322@gmail.com](mailto:ericanpayne2322@gmail.com)) and Laura Kubit ([lkubit@gmail.com](mailto:lkubit@gmail.com))

I want to be

# Involved



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Bar Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Law Firm/Employer: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

I'm interested in the following 2016-2017 YLS Committee(s):

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Please assign me to any Committee where my assistance is needed. (This box may be checked in addition to or in lieu of specific committee selections.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Upper Peninsula Engagement Committee               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community Outreach Committee   | <input type="checkbox"/> Young Lawyer Summit Committee (and Subcommittees)  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Disaster Legal Services Committee  | <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment Committee                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diversity Committee  | <input type="checkbox"/> Keynote Speaker Committee                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education Committee  | <input type="checkbox"/> Logistics Committee                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Health and Wellness Committee  | <input type="checkbox"/> Outstanding Young Lawyer Award Selection Committee |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Inter Alia Committee   | <input type="checkbox"/> Programs Committee                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Media/ Marketing Relations Committee   | <input type="checkbox"/> Publicity Committee                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Membership Committee   | <input type="checkbox"/> Sponsor/Vendors Committee                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> National Trial Advocacy Competition Committee  | <input type="checkbox"/> Venue Committee                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pro Bono Committee Committee   |   |

To sign up, please complete the form indicating the committee or committees you are interested in and return it to Shenique A. Moss, YLS Chair at [sbmyslcommittees@gmail.com](mailto:sbmyslcommittees@gmail.com).

## Fall Stars of the Quarter

(New this bar year)

Each quarter the State Bar of Michigan Young Lawyers Section acknowledges outstanding leadership in executive council and committee members as a “Star of the Quarter” for a recent project or service achievement toward the work of the section.

The State Bar of Michigan Young Lawyers Section is pleased to announce its fall Stars of the Quarter:

- Kristina A. Bilowus, Findling Law, PLC, Royal Oak, MI
- Jerome Crawford, Horizon Global, Troy, MI
- Jade J. Edwards, The Law Office of J.J. Edwards PLLC, Burton, MI
- Laura M. Kubit, Lakeshore Legal Aid, Caro, MI
- Ryan C. Plecha, Lippitt O’Keefe PLLC, Birmingham, MI
- Samantha Orvis, Garan Lucow Miller PC
- Choi Portis, Detroit Water and Sewerage Department, Detroit, MI
- Colemon L. Potts, Detroit Legal Group PLLC, Detroit, MI
- Tiffany L. Moss, Detroit, MI
- Hope V. Shovein, Brooks Kushman PC, Southfield, MI
- Mwanaisha A. Sims, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI
- Roberta Sacharski, Livingston County Probate Court, Howell, MI
- Brande Smith, Allstate, Farmington Hills, MI





## ABA Annual Meeting

By Jade Edwards

**M**y last official year as a young lawyer also happened to be my first time attending an annual meeting of the American Bar Association, held in San Francisco this year. Though it hopefully won't be my last, I spent extra time taking in all that the meeting had to offer just in case.

This year, as you may be aware, there were a number of contested resolutions in the House of Delegates. Perhaps one of the most contested was the one I found provoked the most intriguing discussions: Resolution 109 passed, amending Rule 8.4 of the ABA Model Rules of Professional Conduct to add an anti-discrimination and anti-harassment provision. The exact language added makes it professional misconduct to “(g) engage in conduct that the lawyer knows or reasonably should know is harassment or discrimination on the basis of race, sex, religion, national origin, ethnicity, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status or socioeconomic status in conduct related to the practice of law.” This section does not limit the ability of a lawyer to accept, decline or withdraw from a representation in accordance with Rule 1.16, nor does it preclude legitimate advice or advocacy consistent with these Rules.

Granted, making it professional misconduct or generally forbidding attorneys from engaging in harassment and discrimination in its services seems like a no brainer, but after listening to debates at YLD assembly as well as unofficial water cooler discussions, the topic is not as straightforward as one would think. I heard everything from stories about male attorneys telling female attorneys to “take a seat and let the men handle this” (in 2016), to comments about women and others needing to develop a thicker skin on our “overly PC society,” to general concerns about defining harassment and discrimination and when and if it would apply outside of the workplace (happy hour, company softball games, etc.) Everyone seemed concerned that this provision would be a need, though the concerns were based on different perspectives and reasoning. Of course states can choose not to adopt similar provisions, but whether they do or not this topic certainly presents an opportunity for some thought-provoking discussions.

Not all of the meeting was completely serious. As always, the Tort, Trial and Insurance Practice Section (TIPS) had some very interesting events, including “Defending the Indefensible: Navigating the Strategic and Ethical Landscape of Defending Clients Who Have Engaged in Indefensible Conduct.” I find I can always use a reminder of why we are in this profession when I sometimes start to question a client's behaviors. I recommend looking for TIPS presentations whenever you're at an ABA event. Also,



as a solo practitioner, I attended and benefited from a number of events sponsored by the Solo, Small Firm and General Practice Division. I had the pleasure of attending the Phantom of the Opera themed Young Lawyers Division Fellows Gala honoring retired US Senator Tom Harkin who had an incredibly fascinating career over the past 41 years.

Though the options are overwhelming, there is never a shortage of educational and networking opportunities at any ABA event, with the annual meeting having an especially large selection. I would recommend, especially for young attorneys, but truly for all ages, that you attend at least one ABA meeting and see for yourself. I can almost guarantee you will return.



# Rainmaking for New Attorneys

By Aaron Sohaski

## Who is a Rainmaker?

A rainmaker is a lawyer who, through wide contacts in the community, generates a great deal of business for himself and his law firm.

He generates referrals and works from his contacts by the relationships he builds with his contacts.

## Rainmaking Skills for New Attorneys

Rainmakers are able to walk into a room, and engage the entire room. This is a skillset that is not a natural attribute of the introverts who are attracted to the legal profession. Yet when mastered, often through trial and error, it creates an upward trajectory on a career path and earning potential that cannot be overlooked. Here are some rainmaking skills that a new attorney should possess:

- Rainmakers have a high ego drive, meaning they get great satisfaction from convincing the client to hire him or her.
- Rainmakers are very empathetic, meaning they are able to see the world from the clients' point of view. Most lawyers are logical thinkers and less able to see from the clients' point of view.
- Rainmakers are eternal optimists. Most lawyers are pessimists and say: "yes, but..." rather than "sure, how?"
- Rainmakers handle defeat or criticism well. Most lawyers do not.
- Rainmakers exude a passion for their work and their clients. It is hard to see passion in most lawyers.
- Rainmakers focus on developing relationships more than developing business. Some lawyers
- are more focused on getting the business.
- Rainmakers have confidence-inspiring personalities and genuinely care about the people they are serving.



## Rainmaking Tips for New Attorneys

*Tip 1. Confidence in your abilities and personality strengths are what matters*

Be true to your personality strengths. There are many different ways to connect with people and develop client relationships. The most important personality trait that rainmakers share is confidence. They are confident in their ability as lawyers even as new attorneys, and they are confident in their ability to serve their clients. Confidence conveys value to your potential clients.

*Tip 2. Ask good questions*

Rainmaking is about connecting with individuals and solving their problems. The best way to uncover the needs of an organization is to connect with the buyers of legal services on an individual basis. This is accomplished by asking potential clients good questions about their legal issues and discovering their reasons for hiring lawyers.

Clients don't want to hear about where you went to law school and how great your law firm is. They are interested in how your firm has solved problems for clients who share similar problems. You can't convey that information without first identifying the legal challenges your potential client is currently facing.

*Tip 3. Approach your business strategically*

In order to become a successful rainmaker, you need to develop a focused and strategic plan. A lot of time spent flailing in the wrong direction will not allow you to reach your goals. Survey your existing clients and research legal and industry trends to find the type of organizations that you are best positioned to serve. Develop a focused plan to connect with individuals in those organizations. For example, if you are a labor and employment attorney and you find that many of your clients are in the transportation industry, join transportation industry associations, speak at industry conferences. Once you meet potential clients, demonstrate that you understand their legal issues and their business challenges.

*Tip 4. By letting clients, potential clients and referral sources know how you solve your clients' issues better and differently from other lawyers you will be a successful rainmaker.*

I can't help but think of the old conundrum, if a tree falls in the forest and nobody sees it fall, did it really happen. If nobody knows what you do better and differently from other lawyers, you will be just another great lawyer. Promote your successes within your law firm, to clients and potential clients. Become comfortable tooting your own horn.

*Tip 5. Be more than just a lawyer*

Unless the buyers of your legal services are corporate counsel, most individuals cannot distinguish a good lawyer from a great lawyer. What they can distinguish is the service that they receive from their lawyers.

Don't assume you know how your client wants to conduct business. Go the extra mile at the outset. Discuss early case assessment, billing procedures, pricing, frequency and type of communication. Clients don't like to be surprised. They are wowed by lawyers who take personal responsibility for their success, and go the extra mile to solve legal problems, not lawyers who don't return phone calls.



**Join the State Bar of Michigan Young Lawyers Facebook page for information on upcoming events!**