

# Inter Alia

*Among Other Things*

Late Spring 2012

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## Letter from the Chair



Brandy Y. Robinson

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**G**reetings! With winter behind us and the promise of summer on the horizon, it is a time for transitions. Toward that end, the State Bar of Michigan is conducting its annual elections. The process gives members of the profession a chance to have a say in who will represent their interests. Please watch for the election notices and be sure to cast your vote, as the Young Lawyers Section will also be selecting members for its Executive Council. As your voice within the State Bar, the YLS Council is responsible for, among other things, hosting many of the great programs you will read about in this edition of *Inter Alia*, including the Young Lawyers Section's 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Summit.

The Summit will be held for the first time ever in southeast Michigan, at the Westin Book Cadillac Hotel in downtown Detroit on June 15-16. We encourage you to join us for a blockbuster day of programming. This year's line-up includes a public speaking presentation from the Dale Carnegie Group, a session on business development strategies for solos and aspiring partners, tips for becoming a judge, a persuasive writing seminar, and a keynote address by State Bar president and former Young Lawyers Section Chair Julie Fershstman. We will also honor Michelle A. Carter as the winner of this year's Regeana Myrick Outstanding Young Lawyer Award, in recognition of Ms. Carter's distinguished service to the bar and the public. And of course, the Summit wouldn't be the Summit without its awesome opportunities for networking, which will include an exciting Friday-night reception and dinner on Saturday followed by a good old-fashioned in-house party. You won't want to miss it! We look forward to seeing you soon.

*Ms. Robinson is a staff attorney at the State Appellate Defender Office in Detroit.*

## Jump Start Your Career

By Jennifer Harvey

The Young Lawyers Section presented a “Jump Start Your Career” seminar in April at the Skyline Club in Southfield.

The seminar featured experienced attorneys and professionals who spoke about practical actions to assist young lawyers in making the most of their careers. Speakers included Tim Dinan (solo practitioner/coach to young lawyers/law professor); Lori Williams (worked as a lawyer for 14 years before starting a lawyer’s consulting business); Audrey Mistor and Dan Amos of Monroe Bank and Trust (discussing what banks look for to make small business loans for those lawyers wanting to start their own law practice); Chris Johnson (Cooley Law School professor of law/former General Motors VP and general counsel of GM North America); and Dan Dalton (small law firm owner). Jennifer Harvey, Young Lawyers Section Executive Council member, was the moderator.

Topics covered included resume and cover letters that capture attention, interview skills beyond the basics, alternative careers with a JD, and starting your own law practice. There were 28 young lawyers in attendance, and they were provided with information that they were able to use immediately to further their careers. Lawyers learned what to do to excel at present employment, find the right job and area of practice for them, and also how to start their own law firm from bank financing and renting office space to networking to grow their practice.



(Left to Right) Chris Johnson, Jennifer Harvey and Tim Dinan

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## 2012 State Bar Elections

Supreme Court rules require the State Bar election to begin no later than June 2, 2012, and ballots be returned no later than June 15, 2012. To increase member convenience, encourage wider participation, and save money, the State Bar has conducted the election electronically for the past two years. On May 29, the State Bar’s election services provider will send an e-mail to all active SBM members with an e-mail address on file. This e-mail will contain an embedded link that will take you to a secure website to cast your ballot. To ensure that this e-mail is not blocked by your spam filter, please take any necessary steps to allow the following address to be accepted by your Internet provider: [SBM\\_Election\\_Admin@vres.us](mailto:SBM_Election_Admin@vres.us). Members who have not provided an e-mail address to the State Bar will receive a paper ballot in the mail. For questions, contact Marge Bossenbery at (517) 346-6327 or [mbossenbery@mail.michbar.org](mailto:mbossenbery@mail.michbar.org).

# Three Misconceptions About Networking

By Lori T. Williams, Owner/Managing Attorney of Your Legal Resource,

In working with lawyers and other professional service providers the last few years, I've noticed three common misconceptions that keep popping up around the topic of networking:

## 1. Networking doesn't work

Usually what they really mean is that they aren't getting the results they want from their networking efforts. When I ask what their networking strategy is before and after the event, they often admit to not having one.

Merely showing up at an event, giving someone your business card, and waiting for the phone to ring is not networking. However, showing up and exchanging contact information is step 1 in the relationship-building process. You first have to meet someone before you can begin a relationship with him and receive a referral or business from him.

I often tell my professional clients that networking is like dating. You wouldn't expect to marry someone after the first date, so why expect a referral the next day after meeting someone? If you enjoyed talking with someone at an event, and felt he had credibility and potential business synergy with you, then follow up with him for a phone call or meeting and continue the conversation. Or connect with him on LinkedIn, Facebook, or Twitter. There are many follow-up techniques that work effectively, if you simply use them consistently. Even if you made a great first impression, you need to stay on that person's mind for him to remember you if and when he or someone he knows needs your service. Staying in touch and building the relationship through proper follow-up will allow you to stay on his mind.

## 2. I don't get business from networking events

The opposite of the passive person who waits for the phone to ring after an event

is "the closer." He views the event as his opportunity to sell you on himself and his business and "close the sale" when all you said was "Hi, Fred, what do you do?"

We've all met, and probably run away from, this type of person at a networking event. He spews as much information as he can, at "hello." Who said we were a prospect or remotely interested in him or his product or service? Even if we might have been interested at some point down the road, he probably killed any chance of our being a client/customer or referral source by trying to sell to us too soon.

Generally these types of people crash and burn. They try this technique until they give up, probably thinking "networking doesn't work." In reality, they didn't understand the process and that networking is about giving before getting, and building a relationship before trying to close a sale. Sure, we all want others to seek our help when they need legal advice or representation, but no one deserves to be hammered with too much information at "hello."

Again, think of the event as date #1 and plan on more dates if you really plan on marrying this person (i.e., he retains your services or refers you to others). And realize he has the right to say no at any point. Just because you pursue a relationship doesn't mean he has to go along with it. If he doesn't see the mutual benefit, he may not want to continue the relationship. People naturally do business with those they know, like, and trust, but it takes time to get to know and trust someone. We can all determine pretty quickly if we like someone, so don't blow it by pushing too hard when you first meet.

The other problem with viewing the event as a means to an end (i.e., to get a client or referral) is that you expect the event to generate a sale for you. Just because you showed up and exchanged con-



tact information doesn't mean your phone is going to ring. Those who expect otherwise will be disappointed and view the event as a failure. The event is only the meeting place. There is still an opportunity to develop a relationship if both parties are willing to pursue it.

### 3. There's not enough time to network

This objection is either a cover-up for the first two misconceptions noted above, or it is really a time management problem. Most of the people I work with fall into the second category. They couldn't find time to network because they didn't plan for it. It's interesting how professionals are great at making appointments with others (clients who need their services and want to meet), but fail to make time for themselves. It also shows up in other areas. They don't have time to work out, or read (aside from industry information), or take a vacation, or get to their kid's soccer game. The list is endless. The only people they do have time for is their clients, and even some of them are kept waiting if there isn't the proper margin built into the schedule between appointments.

I understand why making appointments with clients is so critical for those professionals who bill by the hour. If they aren't seeing clients, they aren't making money. This is true for lawyers, doctors, fee-based financial advisors, and other professionals who charge for their time. However, if you don't also make time to grow your practice, you won't have more clients after the ones you are currently serving complete their transaction with you.

Making appointments with yourself means realizing that you are as important (and probably more so) than your clients. Remember what they tell you on the airplane: "put the oxygen mask on yourself first, and then tend to your child next to you." If you don't take care of yourself first, you won't be able to take care of anyone else. I suggest the following time-blocking activities to my professional service provider clients, as needed:

- Block out time for family events. Your child will only be in the kindergarten play once.
- Block out time for networking events and follow-up meetings.
- Block out time to do marketing, if you don't have a marketing department or outside agency that does this for you.

These business development processes are as important as your current clients. Networking and marketing are not optional if you want to stay in business.

However, be wise about how and where you spend your time and money. You can exhaust a lot of time and money networking in the wrong places. There are times you'll test out a group to see if it is a good fit for you. That's smart. Better to spend an evening and \$10 or \$20 to determine you don't have the right synergy with that group, than to commit hundreds or thousands of dollars in membership dues and hours of time every week or month. Know who your target clients are and who your target referral partners are and see if the event draws those types of people. If not, examine if there's other value you can gain from being part of the group (education, socialization, charitable cause, etc.), or if there's something you can contribute to the group and which enriches you by doing so (i.e., volunteering time or expertise to a worthy cause, or helping an organization get off the ground). If not, this is probably not a group you want to invest time or money in if your goal is to grow your business. This is not to say you can't go out and have a glass of wine and enjoy yourself for the evening. We all need down time. However, don't confuse this with networking.

Networking occurs wherever you are with other people. It can happen in the line at the post office, or at a networking meeting, or online, or at church, or your child's soccer game. If you are genuinely interested in the people around you and you talk to them and get to know them, you are networking. Some spend too much time "working" the room trying to

sell to the right people, while others spend too much time “socializing” at the event and fail to follow up. Getting the right balance of time spent where your target clients and referral partners are, and building a relationship while having fun with those people, will grow your business.

#### Points to ponder and share:

- Do you relate to one or more of the common misconceptions above? If so, what will you do differently now?
- Do you have other concerns about networking that keep you from doing it?
- What about networking comes easily to you?

#### About the Author

*Lori T. Williams is a 23-year attorney based in Birmingham, MI. She owns a legal referral and legal consulting business called Your Legal Resource, PLLC. She assists individuals and small businesses in need of legal advice or representation by connecting them with the right legal specialist for their situation. She also provides consulting services for attorneys and other professional service providers on how to generate more business through effective branding, marketing, networking, and by creating strategic partnerships. For more information, visit [www.bestlegalresource.com](http://www.bestlegalresource.com).*

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## ThinkFast! Improvisation Boot Camp for New Lawyers

The State Bar of Michigan Young Lawyers Section (“SBM YLS”), along with Go Comedy! Improv Theater in Ferndale, MI, hosted the “ThinkFast! Improvisation Boot Camp for New Lawyers” program for the second year in a row. This event is designed to assist new lawyers who are extremely nervous their first few times in court, and as a result, tend to over-prepare. The downfall of over-preparation is that new lawyers are not prepared for unexpected answers or statements from clients and witnesses. Rather, they are completely thrown off if things don’t go exactly as anticipated, which visibly shakes confidence. Pj Jacokes, co-owner of Go Comedy!, taught a three-hour workshop in two parts. The first half focused on teamwork, trust, and learning to “fail” (i.e., not getting the anticipated ruling). The second half focused on a concept that improv actors call “yes, and....” This is an idea based on handling any response as though it is workable, even if it seems impossible.

The generous owners of Go Comedy! also offered a discounted rate on the first show of the evening for those who wanted to stay, socialize, and see some improv skills in action.

## Serving All Survivors

The Young Lawyers Section provided refreshments for a two-day “Serving All Survivors” training program held in Ferndale, MI. This training focused on encouraging cultural sensitivity and understanding in representing LGBT survivors of domestic violence, which is absolutely necessary when helping them handle their legal and social problems. Many people wonder why survivors of domestic violence do not make a police report, or why they stay. In addition, there are issues particular to an LGBT survivor, such as threatening to “out” the victim as a further form of abuse, or being rejected from domestic violence shelters due to their orientation. Though mostly geared toward LGBT survivors, the training increased cultural competency when helping all survivors of domestic violence.

The training was hosted by a collaborative including: Affirmations, GLSEN of Southeastern Michigan, Whosoever Ministries, SAFE@Macomb, Equality Michigan, Lakeshore Legal Aid, Turning Point, and the Macomb Community Domestic Violence Council.

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## State Bar of Michigan's Young Lawyers Section to Host 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Summit

The Young Lawyers Section (“YLS”) of the State Bar of Michigan (“SBM”) will host its 5th Annual Summit at the Westin Book Cadillac Hotel in Detroit, MI, from June 15–16, 2012.

The YLS is pleased to announce that SBM President Julie Fershtman will serve as the 2012 Summit keynote speaker. The YLS plans to continue the Summit tradition for providing excellent networking and educational opportunities to young lawyers. In addition to speed networking, a luncheon, cocktail reception, and presentation of the Regeana Myrick Outstanding Young Lawyer Award during the Saturday dinner event, programming will include a presentation by a panel of judges on “Divergent Paths to the Bench,” a session on public speaking presented by Dale Carnegie, and many other informative programs. Visit <http://michbar.org/younglawyers/news.cfm> and <http://www.facebook.com/sbmys> for more information. Register online, or the mail/fax form can be found at <http://michbar.org/younglawyers/pdfs/summitreg.pdf>.

**Early registration ends June 1. After June 1, the registration fee increases from \$40 to \$55 for section members and from \$25 to \$40 for member guests.**

A block of rooms has been reserved at the Westin Book Cadillac Hotel at a special rate of \$129/night for Summit attendees. Reservations at the special rate can be made via the following website: <https://www.starwoodmeeting.com/Book/sbmys>. **Hotel reservations must be made by June 4 to receive the discount rate.**

Thank you to our sponsors, including the State Bar of Michigan Real Property Law Section, Thomas M. Cooley Law School, and Brooks Kushman PC.

The YLS looks forward to seeing you at its 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Summit!

# **SBM** | Young Lawyers Section State Bar of Michigan

**Early-Bird Registration Ends June 1**

## **5th Annual Summit**

**Date:** June 15-16, 2012

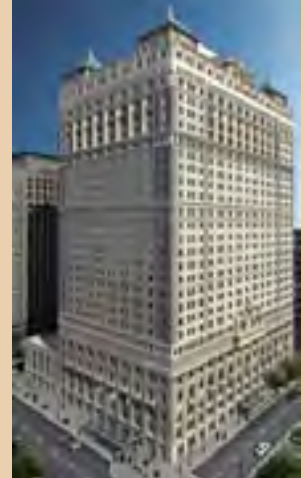
**Location:** Westin Book Cadillac Hotel, Detroit

**Cost:** \$40 members, \$25 guest. After June 1: \$55 members, \$40 guest

**Register:** [online](#) or [mail/fax form](#)

**Keynote Speaker:** SBM President Julie Fershtman

The Summit presents a great opportunity to join fellow young lawyers at a wide variety of educational and networking events.



The event kicks off on Friday evening, June 15, with a networking reception, followed by a full day of exceptional programming on Saturday, June 16.

Saturday's programming includes the following presentations:

- Divergent Paths to the Bench: You Can Get There—Here's How!
- Stand and Deliver: Becoming a Better Public Speaker
- Meet the Rainmakers: Business Development Tips for Solos & Aspiring Partners
- Slaying Goliath: Ways to Tackle Your Student Loans AND Save Money
- Alternative Careers for Young Lawyers
- Counsel for the Counselor: Negotiating the Work-Life Balance and Avoiding Burnout
- Knowing Your Evidence Objections
- Starting Your Own Practice on a Limited Budget
- Persuasive Writing Seminar

Programming will be followed by a cocktail reception and dinner on Saturday evening at the Westin Book Cadillac, and presentation of the **Regeana Myrick Outstanding Young Lawyer Award**.

**Accommodations:** A block of rooms has been reserved at the Westin Book Cadillac Hotel at a special rate of \$129/night for Summit attendees. Reservations at the special rate can be made via the following website: <https://www.starwoodmeeting.com/Book/sbmys>.

Thank you to our sponsors, including the State Bar of Michigan Real Property Law Section, Thomas M. Cooley Law School, and Brooks Kushman PC.

Stay connected with the Section through its [Facebook page](#).