

Inter Alia

Among Other Things

Spring 2011

www.michiganyounglawyers.com

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Greetings from the Chair



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Welcome back! It has been a terrific year for the Young Lawyers Section, but the last few months have exceeded even our own expectations as we wrapped up several successful programs across the state and throughout the country. Many of us just returned home from the 4th Annual Young Lawyers Summit in Grand Rapids, and the excitement of the event is still with us as we gear up for our next task!

Please take the opportunity to read this edition of *Inter Alia* to catch up on what has been happening. Many of you have joined us at some of the events highlighted in these pages—please stay tuned for upcoming programs and events as we are still hard at work rounding out the summer schedule with new ways for young lawyers to get involved.

Very shortly, the State Bar of Michigan will launch its election process so that members of the SBM will have a say in who represents their interests as attorneys. The Young Lawyers Section will also hold its elections. As members of the largest and oldest section of the State Bar of Michigan, I encourage you to get involved in the process. Each of the three districts that represent the geographical locations of young lawyers across the state of Michigan are assigned a certain number of seats that make up the YLS council. Each year, terms expire and elections take place to fill vacancies and allow incumbents to return to the council. While the responsibilities of a council member are varied and can be many, the opportunity to serve on the YLS council is truly unique and rewarding! Council members are responsible for creating and implementing the wide range of fantastic programs that you see throughout the year, they represent you within the American Bar Association Young Lawyers Division, and in many cases, they are the future leaders of the profession. The creativity and energy within this group of young professionals has created an impressive list of accomplishments over the years, and it is truly a benefit to the profession to see that the tradition of excellence continues within the YLS.

We encourage you to get more involved in the Young Lawyers Section by attending events, getting to know your council representatives, and making your vote count in the State Bar of Michigan elections that will take place June 1 through June 15. We look forward to seeing you soon!

Sincerely yours, *Maureen McGinnis*

Young Lawyers Learn, Network and Reflect at the 4th Annual Young Lawyers Summit

By Felicia Johnson and Maureen McGinnis



Elizabeth Jolliffe of “Your Benchmark Coach” speaks to Summit attendees.



Judge Joseph Farah with YLS Chair Maureen McGinnis



Michigan Supreme Court Justice Brian K. Zahra and YLS Secretary-Treasurer Jamie Low.



Attendees at the Welcome Reception



Having fun at the B.O.B.

On May 20 and 21, 2011, the State Bar of Michigan’s Young Lawyers Section (“YLS”) held its 4th Annual Young Lawyers Summit at the historic Amway Grand Plaza Hotel in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The Summit began with a terrific welcome reception Friday night sponsored by the Real Property Law Section of the State Bar of Michigan.

Saturday morning, Elizabeth Jolliffe of “Your Benchmark Coach” advised attendees to be strategic, prepared, persistent, and patient when it comes to business development and marketing. Ms. Jolliffe provided great tips and tools for developing a successful marketing plan for the young lawyer.

The three morning break-out sessions covered hot topics in criminal law, a business law panel, and Judge Joseph Farah presenting an overview of evidence objections. Attendees were treated to a wonderful lunch and a keynote address by Justice Brian K. Zahra. Justice Zahra was appointed to the Michigan Supreme Court on January 14, 2011. Justice Zahra gave an informative speech on proposed jury reforms and the process that was embarked upon to evaluate the jury system.

In the afternoon, there were sessions on the history of the Michigan business tax, title defects, techniques for managing a paperless practice, tips for winning with family law judges, writing with uncommon clarity, and criminal sentencing. The action-packed day of education was rounded off with a speed networking event and dinner in the prestigious Ford Ballroom.

Each year, the YLS Executive Council honors the legacy of an amazing young lawyer and former YLS board member, Regeana Myrick, by recognizing a truly outstanding young lawyer for the work he/she does in the community. During dinner, the Regeana Myrick Outstanding Young Lawyer Award was presented to Michael St. John of Kitch Drutchas Wagner Valitutti & Sherbrook in Detroit.

After a terrific day of learning, networking, and reflection on our profession, the Summit wrapped up with an afterglow at the B.O.B in downtown Grand Rapids.

The YLS Executive Council sincerely thanks each of the sponsors that graciously donated to the Summit: LexisNexis, the lunch sponsor; Brinks Hofer Gilson & Lione, Brooks Kushman PC, and Thomas M. Cooley Law School—Grand Rapids Campus, the breakfast sponsors; and Miller Canfield Paddock and Stone PLC, Paul Goebel Group Insurance, Records Deposition Service, and West, the supporting sponsors.

The YLS strives to continue the tradition of providing excellent educational, networking, and public service opportunities to young lawyers. Thank you to all the young lawyers that participated in the Summit. Please feel free to contact us with feedback about the event if you were able to attend so that we can continue to provide great programs to our members.

Past winners of the Regeana Myrick Outstanding Young Lawyer Award include the following individuals:

2010

David L. Campbell



2009

Jade Edwards



2008

Jonathan N. Jilek



2007

Bridgette Sparkman



2006

Marla A. Linderman



2005

Erika S. Julien



2004

Richard Bernstein



2003

Erika Butler-Akinyemi

The Regeana Myrick Outstanding Young Lawyer Award

By Brandy Robinson

In 1997, the State Bar of Michigan Young Lawyers Section (YLS) renamed their “Outstanding Young Lawyer Award” in honor of Regeana Myrick, an Executive Council member of the YLS, who passed away in August of that year.

A cum laude graduate of every prestigious school she attended, Regeana’s dedication to public service spanned many years. Regeana is remembered by her family, friends, and colleagues as a bright and charitable woman with many talents who was always mindful of those less fortunate than herself.

On May 21, 2011, the YLS Executive Council presented the 2011 Outstanding Young Lawyer Award to **MICHAEL ST. JOHN**, an outstanding young lawyer who truly embodies Regeana’s excellence and devotion to others.

Michael is a principal with the law firm of Kitch Drutchas Wagner Valitutti & Sherbrook in Detroit, where he focuses his practice on defending doctors and nurses involved in birth trauma cases. He is married to Sara St. John, a public high school math and science teacher. Mike received his J.D. from the University of Michigan Law School, and also holds a Bachelor of Arts in English and Psychology from the University of Michigan Residential College and a Master of Science in Education from Western Illinois University.

Like Regeana, Mike’s record demonstrates a deep commitment to the community. Devoted to helping youth reach their potential, Mike is very active with the Boy Scouts of America and has been since he was a law student and even before, having earned his own Eagle Scout in 1988, the highest rank attainable in the Boy Scouts.

Within the Scouts, Mike volunteers most of his time as an Assistant Scoutmaster for Troop #1629 and as a camp commissioner for Cole Canoe Base. Despite a demanding professional life, Mike spends at least one evening a week, one weekend a month and several weeks each summer volunteering with young people intent on becoming an Eagle Scout.



Michael St. John

Mike also works to ensure that camping opportunities are not limited solely to the wealthy or affluent. As the head of the Campership Committee of the Great Lakes Scout Council, Mike oversees the awarding of funds to needy scouts throughout Wayne, Oakland and Macomb counties. He helps to raise and disperse dollars to the most needy scouts, many of whom would otherwise never be able to attend camp or have positive experiences with the great outdoors.

Mike’s record of selflessness extends beyond his work with the Boy Scouts. He coordinated a charity poker event last year which raised more than \$3000 for the Redford VFW and Clarkston SCAMP, a charity that helps severely disabled children attend summer camp programs.

Mike performs pro bono work within his firm and with various legal service organizations and schools. He has volunteered with the Michigan High School Mock Trial Tournament since 2006, and has also served as a moot court and/or client counseling competition judge.

Such a spirit of generosity, selflessness, and dedication is worthy of great honor. His work and the legacy he is creating would make Regeana Myrick and her family quite proud. The State Bar of Michigan Young Lawyers section congratulates Mike and all of the other extremely qualified nominees for their service to the bar and the public.



Regeana Myrick

5th Annual Young Lawyers Section vs. SBM Board of Commissioners Bowling Challenge

By James W. Low

On April 8, 2011, the Young Lawyers Section Executive Council competed with the State Bar Board of Commissioners and the State Bar executive staff in the Fifth Annual Bowling Challenge at the Royal Scot Lanes in Lansing, Michigan. In the first three years, the Young Lawyers Section took home the trophy. Last year, the Board of Commissioners took home the trophy for the first time. This year, the Board of Commissioners once again took home the trophy with a decisive victory.

Besides being an excellent social event, the Bowling Challenge raises money for Access to Justice. Each member of the losing Young Lawyers Section team donated \$10 for Access to Justice. Many of the Board of Commissioners generously joined in donating even though they were the winning team this year. Overall, more than \$300 was raised for Access to Justice.

The Young Lawyers Section looks forward to retaking the trophy next year.



SBM President W. Anthony Jenkins accepting a trophy from James Low





By June Kenny, MS
Executive Coach/
Senior Trainer, Kenny
and Associates, Inc.

June is presenting
*Relationship
Essentials to
Attract and Keep
Clients—What
They Didn't Teach
You in Law School*
this Saturday,
June 4. For more
information, see
page 9.

Eight Painless Strategies for Stress-Free Networking

Whether you are a solo practitioner or member of a large law firm, networking to build or maintain your client base is an essential part of your professional life. That doesn't mean, however, that you can't enjoy the process. Check out the following eight strategies and be prepared to be more effective and less stressed at your next networking event.

1. **Think of networking as *one-on-one connections* rather than efforts to connect with a room of 250 people.** Effective networking does not mean passing out 100 business cards in an evening. Few if any will be able to remember the face that goes with the card anyway. It's equivalent to the guy who puts low-cost aluminum siding flyers under your windshield wiper at the mall. Nobody likes that guy, including you. Having a meaningful conversation with a handful of people will be much more productive in the long run.

2. **Look for the *natural points of contact* that exist at any social gathering: registration table, coat check, hors d'oeuvres table, drink line, etc.** Intentionally make *eye contact* and *smile* at each person you casually come in contact with. Whenever you smile and look at someone, think "one-on-one connection." Later, as you look around the room and recognize a person you engaged at a *point of contact*, walk up and introduce yourself. "Hi. My name is (first & last). I believe we came in at the same time" or "saw you earlier in the drink line or food table." In fact, the food table and drink line are also excellent locations that lend themselves to icebreaking comments about the weather, sports, current events, or the esoteric value of the cocktail weenie. Relax. Everyone expects to be meeting new people at these events. You won't be viewed as a stalker. If you are, I'm sure you know a good attorney.

3. **Focus on them, not you!** This strategy alone will reduce stress. Give each person your undivided attention. Pay attention to his name, and make sure you've heard it correctly. Use his name when possible and especially when you exit the group. "It was nice meeting you, John." Give him the *gift of listening*. If you do, he will recognize your genuine interest in him, remember you, and possibly even like you. All of these are essential to any future contact with him.

4. **Introduce yourself using only 2-3 sentences!** This is not resume time or a job interview. The conversation usually goes like this:

You: "Hello. My name is (*use first and last name, please!*) It's a pleasure to meet you."

Him: "My name is _____. It's nice to meet you, too. And, what do you do?"

You: "I'm a lawyer (with _____ law firm) concentrating in _____. And, when I can manage it, I'm an avid sports (fill in name) fan! . . . and what do you do?" Or, you might say, "In my spare time I'm active with Salvation Army/community theatre/my son's little league/coaching soccer/rebuilding cars/etc."

Sharing a personal interest gives the person a choice of topics to ask you about. That's not your worry, though. Take the heat (and focus) off yourself. Your goal is to be a good listener. He will love you for it! If you first show interest in him, he will, most likely, show genuine interest in you.

Eight Painless Strategies for Stress-Free Networking

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5. **Ask non-intrusive, open-ended questions to get him talking about himself and his work.** Remember you are meeting a potential client. You are not cross-examining an adverse witness. It's best to *come prepared with an assortment of pre-planned questions* so you won't have the pressure of trying to pull them out of thin air. All questions should begin with "What" or "How." Here are some examples. Add others of your own.

- Job/Career Questions—Level One:
 - "How did you get interested in this line of work?"
 - "How did you happen to come to work for this company?"
 - "What kind of background (training, education) would one need to go into your line of work?"
- Job/Career Questions—Level Two:
 - "What's the best part of your job?" (. . . working with this company?)
 - "It sounds like your job is pretty demanding. How do you manage to keep all the balls in the air?" (. . . manage the pressure/stress/etc.)
 - "What's the most challenging part of your job?"
 - "How has your industry been impacted by the economy?" (. . . by global conditions?)
- Job/Career Questions—Level Three Question:
 - "How has that affected what you do?"
- Professional or Charity Organizations—Level One:
 - "What made you decide to support _____?"
 - "How long have you been coming to meetings of _____?"
 - "What projects have you gotten involved in here?"
- Professional or Charity Organizations—Level Two: "What was your role? How did the project turn out?"

In short, give him your *undivided attention* and *listen*. Base your next question on what he has said to you.

6. **If possible, plan to come to the event with someone who will act as your wingman and**

agree to tackle the gathering two-by-two. He will probably appreciate knowing about an easier way to meet new people. You can take turns introducing each other to groups of strangers and making sure the conversation flows easily. For example: "Excuse me. I'd like to introduce you to _____, who works at _____. And, my name is _____ from _____." The ice is broken (for both of you) and you are ready to jump into the existing conversation topic or utilize your prepared level one questions.

7. **Leave graciously.** Here are several easy exit statements when you feel it is time to leave a particular group to expand your contact opportunities:

- "Excuse me. I'm going to refresh my drink." (. . . "get something to eat")
- "Excuse me. There's someone I need to talk to about a matter."
- "Excuse me. I have a call I have to take." ("Imagine" your phone vibrating.)

8. **Remember your pressure-free objective for being at this event: *make a few good connections and favorable impressions.*** Avoid thinking "I've got to drum up business!" The chances are slim that you would ever walk away with a contract anyway. You will feel less stressed if you are thinking "*How can I be a resource to this person?*" You never know how you might be able to bring value to another. Perhaps he simply needs to know the name of a good plumber, where to buy the best New York cheesecake, or the name of a great restaurant. If you don't know the answer, perhaps someone in your network does. As your network grows, so does your value as the "go to" person. Nationally acclaimed motivational speaker Zig Ziglar noted an important life lesson which applies here: "You can have anything in life you want, if you just help enough other people get what they want."

If you want people to think of you when they have legal needs in your area of expertise and refer you to their friends, they *first have to remember you in a positive way*. So, relax, take the heat off yourself, and enjoy the event. Focus on others, not yourself, and look for ways to be a resource to others. You will be rewarded for your efforts.

Good luck at your next networking event!

Networking Stroll

By Marisa Wiener

On April 28, the State Bar of Michigan Young Lawyers Section (YLS) sponsored a Networking Stroll hosted by the American Bar Association Young Lawyers Division that drew in over 60 young lawyers. The stroll went to four restaurants in downtown Birmingham: Dick O'Dows, Mitchell's Fish Market, Forté, and South Bar. This successful event provided recent bar admittees with information on the benefits of an ABA membership as well as networking opportunities with other young lawyers. The YLS plans to sponsor a similar event in the fall.



CASAR Fundraiser

By Andrea C. Irons

In March, the SBM Young Lawyers Section sponsored a fundraiser for the Carol Ann Substance Abuse Recovery (CASAR) organization. CASAR is the organization that works with and supplies assistance to the Warren drug court. CASAR provides financial assistance, housing, education, emergency medical, dental, prescription needs, transportation, and other basic needs to promote a healthier physical and emotional life-style for people in recovery. While in drug court, defendants must remain clean, and meet with the Judge and probation once a week. Studies have proven that individuals who graduate from drug court have an extremely low recidivism rate. Drug court also saves taxpayers money because individuals are not sitting in jail with the bill going to the taxpayers.

The fundraiser was held at Madison's Pub in downtown Mt. Clemens and was extremely well attended. Over \$2,000 was raised for CASAR.

Constitution Day Project

By Andrea C. Irons

The SBM Young Lawyers Section partnered with the Macomb County Bar Association (MCBA) in September 2010 and again in May 2011 for a Constitution Day project in local high schools. On September 17, 2010, attorneys and detectives presented a criminal fact pattern to three groups of government students at local high schools. Each session had a prosecutor, defense attorney, and a sheriff's detective to explain the different roles in the court process as well as the 4th, 5th, and 6th Amendments. The scenario was a high school student leaving a homecoming party after drinking and causing an accident resulting in serious bodily function. The student was also texting while driving. Every student received a booklet copy of the Constitution.

On May 24, 2011, judges, attorneys, and court staff conducted mock trials at the same schools using the same scenario. The students were given juror numbers as they entered the auditorium and were picked as the actual jurors for the case. A trial was conducted, and the student jurors deliberated and returned with a verdict. One group returned a verdict of not guilty, while another group returned a verdict of guilty. This mock trial was conducted very close to prom season to show the students what can happen when drinking and driving. Between the September presentation and the May mock trials, we were able to reach almost 2,000 students.

2011 ABA Spring Conference

By James W. Low

Several delegates from Michigan recently attended the ABA Young Lawyers Division Spring Conference in Las Vegas, Nevada from May 12-14, 2011. Overall, the conference at Caesar's Palace hosted more than 300 young lawyers, including many of our international affiliate friends from Europe.

The ABA YLD Council met on Thursday, May 12, 2011. During the meeting, the conference sites for the 2012-2013 year were announced as Charleston, SC (fall conference, October 2012); Dallas, TX (midyear, February 2013); Minneapolis, MN (spring conference, TBD); San Francisco, CA (annual, August 2013). Also during the meeting, Disaster Legal Services Interim Director David Nguyen reported on current DLS efforts in the wake of devastating tornadoes in the south and preparedness efforts in response to flooding in many states. Finally, it was announced that the "Touch 10,000" reached its goal of 10,000 and conducted 25 meet-and-greets across the country this spring. www.americanbar.org/groups/young_lawyers/membership/touch_10k_portal.html.

The conference also offered a wide variety of other programming and continuing legal education. An opening session keynote address was given by Nevada Secretary of State Ross Miller of Carson City, NV, a fellow young lawyer and the youngest secretary of state in the nation's history. The ABA YLD also held its inaugural International Oratory Competition. Based on the Association du Jeune Barreau de Montreal/Young Bar Association of Montreal's (YBAM) English Ora-

tory Competition, this contest aimed to showcase the oratory skills of each contestant and to provide a valuable networking opportunity for lawyers from all over the world.

Great CLEs were held on such topics as trial and deposition skills; ethics: avoiding malpractice; forensic engineering; IP; gambling law; and law practice management.

Networking events were held in the evenings at venues around Las Vegas. These events gave the attendees a chance to network with other lawyers from around the country, and with the international lawyers from Europe. On Thursday night, a welcome reception was held at the Ghost Bar on top of the Palms Hotel. On Friday Night, the gala was held at Voodoo Rooftop Night Club on top of the Rio Hotel.

The next ABA Young Lawyers Division Conference will be held in conjunction with the ABA Annual Meeting in Toronto, Canada from August 4-7, 2011.



Save the Dates

Relationship Essentials to Attract and Keep Clients—*What They Didn't Teach You in Law School*

June 4, 2011 at noon

Thomas M. Cooley Law School, Auburn Hills Campus

Cost: \$30 (\$200 value). Space is limited.

Register at <http://michbar.org/younglawyers/news.cfm>

Please contact Jennifer M. Harvey at jharvey@HarveyLegalGroup.com for more information.

Think Fast! Boot Camp for New Lawyers

June 11, 2011 at 3:30 pm workshop and 8:00 pm show

Go Comedy! Improv Theater, Ferndale, MI

Cost: \$10 workshop and \$5 show

Space is limited.

Please contact Syeda Hossain-Davidson at sfhdavidson@gmail.com for more information.

Wills for Heroes

August 20, 2011

Delta Township Fire Department, Lansing, MI

Please contact Carlos Escurel at carlos_escurel@hotmail.com to volunteer.

Wills for Heroes

August 27, 2011

North Oakland County Fire Authority, Holly, MI

Please contact Carlos Escurel at carlos_escurel@hotmail.com to volunteer.

Wills for Heros Programs Continue to Help Michigan First Responders

By Carlos Escurel

In August 2011, the State Bar of Michigan Young Lawyers Section Executive Council will participate in two Wills for Heroes programs at the North Oakland County Fire Authority in Holly, Michigan, and the Delta Township Fire Department in Lansing, Michigan. We are currently looking for volunteer attorneys to assist us with these events. There is no requirement that the volunteer have any estate planning or previous experience drafting wills. Please contact Carlos Escurel at carlos_escurel@hotmail.com or (313) 465-8892 if you are interested in volunteering for an upcoming event, or if you are interested in bringing this program to your community.

The Wills for Heroes program was started by Anthony Hayes, a South Carolina attorney, shortly after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. 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.



Visit michbar.org/younglawyers/news.cfm or facebook.com/sbmys for more information about upcoming YLS events.