

Inter Alia

Among Other Things

Summer 2009

www.michiganyounglawyers.com

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A View from the Chair: Those Who Stay Will Be Champions . . .



Bernhardt D. Christenson, III
Christenson & Fiederlein PC
302 E Court St
Flint, MI 48502
P: (810) 232-1112
F: (810) 232-1113
E: cchristenson@cflegal.net

“Those Who Stay Will Be Champions.” In 1969 during his first year as head coach of the University of Michigan football team, Bo Schembechler posted that phrase in the locker room. The message was simple and clear, perseverance and hard work will payoff. The sentiment applies to the state of Michigan now. Young lawyers in Michigan are faced with some of the toughest job market conditions anywhere in the country. Coupled with the trouble the state is having, surviving as a young lawyer is challenging to say the least.

Despite the economy, this has been a great year. During this past year, the SBM Young Lawyers Section has continued the tradition of helping young lawyers and the community with the programs and events that we put on. Most recently, the Young Lawyers Section completed the second annual young lawyers summit at Soaring Eagle and the programming was outstanding. Along with many great speakers, the president of the State Bar of Michigan, Ed Pappas, addressed the crowd at lunch with a positive message about the future. Young lawyers throughout the state have continued to donate their time and skills in various ways including participating at holiday dinners, various school programs and pro bono work. I would encourage everyone to consider community work during these trying times, not only does it make you feel good and keep you busy, but it can also lead to connections and work in the future.

Lastly, this is my final article as Chair of the Young Lawyers Section and I cannot believe how quickly the year has flown by. I would like to thank everyone for all of your hard work during this past year. Keep up the good work and next year will be even better.

B.D. ‘Chris’ Christenson
Chair-Young Lawyers Section

ABA YLD Report from the Spring Confernece in New Orleans



James W. Low

Sullivan Ward Asher &
Patton PC
25800 Northwestern Hwy
Ste 1000
Southfield, MI 48075

P: (248) 746-2710
F: (248) 746-2760
E: jlow@swappc.com

Dear Affiliate Leaders:

This report summarizes the 2009 ABA Spring Conference held in New Orleans, Louisiana, May 14-16, 2009. It also provides you with updates regarding the ABA YLD 2008-2009 bar year. Additional information about the conference and the ABA YLD as a whole can be found at www.abanet.org/yld.

New Orleans was a perfect place to visit, especially to see how far it has come since Hurricane Katrina. The council meeting for the body on which I was sitting as a proxy for our district representative Danielle Mason Anderson took place on Thursday, May 14, at the historic Hotel Monteleone—our home base for the conference. There were many lively discussions and reports from affiliates and bar leaders from across the country. In addition, there were speeches from our international guests from England and Denmark.

A welcome reception sponsored by the Louisiana Bar Association was held Thursday evening on Bourbon Street, as well as a first time attendees orientation that allowed the newcomers to ask questions and learn how to get the most out of the meeting.

Numerous CLE and informational programs were presented on Friday, including Financial Strategies for Young Lawyers, Insurance Coverage in Times of Natural Disaster, Writers Workshop, Marketing in the Internet Age, and others.

The Friday evening dinner dance was held at the very surreal Mardi Gras Parade Hanger, with many of the floats and props from Mardi Gras parades past. Prior to the dinner dance, the attendees participated in a parade through the streets of New Orleans, complete with a marching band. A good time was had by all.

The CLE continued bright and early Saturday morning at 9:00 a.m. The presentations on Saturday included Administration of Justice in Times of Disaster, Identifying and Avoiding Conflicts of Interest, Mobile Technology: Practicing Law from Wherever You Want to Be, Strategies of Effective Oral Communication, Becoming a Superstar Associate, and others.

As a reminder, the ABA YLD 2008-2009 Public Service Project, “Voices Against Violence,” continues. Saturday afternoon, many attendees participated in the ABA YLD Voices Against Violence: NOLA Community Service Project at a New Orleans domestic violence shelter by helping with office duties and sorting clothes. For more information about this year’s service project, please visit the service project’s website found at www.abanet.org/yld/dv. There is a video available to be used in the education of young lawyers, as well as an awareness and prevention toolkit.

Upcoming Events and Deadlines

The next ABA YLD meeting is the ABA Annual Meeting in Chicago July 30–August 1, 2009.

The ABA Section of Litigation’s Litigation Institute for Trial Training, co-sponsored by the ABA YLD, will be held July 9 and 10, 2009, in Chicago.

Please let Danielle Mason Anderson know about any programs or events in your affiliates. She would like to include them in her report to the ABA YLD. We all know Michigan has great affiliates who are very active, and we would like to inform the rest of the ABA YLD as well!

As always, please update your leadership information at www.abanet.org/yld/affiliateleaders/update.html if there have been any changes, and send an e-mail to Danielle or me.

Please feel free to contact Danielle with any questions, concerns, comments, etc. at andersond@millercafield.com or (269) 383-5880. I will be taking over her position as district representative in the fall, so you will be seeing many e-mails from me in the future.

Regards, *Jamie Low*

CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

FOR THE
4TH ANNUAL
SBM YOUNG LAWYERS SECTION



BASH

SATURDAY, AUGUST 22, 2009, 1:00 P.M. – 4:00 P.M.
 DETROIT RESCUE MISSION (DEVOS CENTER)
 16525 WOODWARD AVENUE
 HIGHLAND PARK, MI 48203
 (313) 868-1946

Are you an enthusiastic attorney looking for ways to serve the community? If so, this may be the opportunity for you! YLS needs 40 volunteers for its 4th Annual Back to School Bash. This event will benefit children whose parents are living in Metro Detroit shelters. Each student will receive a backpack stocked with school supplies for the upcoming year. We need volunteers to assist in the following areas:

<u>Duty</u>	<u>Shift</u>	<u>Volunteers Needed</u>
✓ Registration	9:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.	2
✓ Meal Preparation	10:00 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.	6
✓ Games and Entertainment	11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. (set-up)	3
	12:15 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. (coordinate)	14
✓ Meal Service	12:15 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.	8
✓ Backpack Stuffing	12:15 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.	8

If you would like participate, please contact Heather Anderson at handerson@mail.michbar.org or (517) 346-6414 by August 19, 2009.

2009 Networking Stroll

On Thursday, May 21, 2009, the Young Lawyers Section of the State Bar sponsored a “Networking Stroll.” There were approximately 50 young lawyer participants. We went to four restaurants in Birmingham, Michigan. We started at the hot new Birmingham restaurant, Chen Chow Brasserie, where servers circled the crowd offering varied and delicious appetizers. Next we went to the lively and fun Dick O’Dows for some chicken fingers and potato skins. Then we walked to 220/Edison’s for a quiet and classy break. We enjoyed fried risotto balls and a wonderful artichoke dish. We ended the evening at Forte Restaurant, where we enjoyed a delicious sampling of their menu.

In an effort to encourage networking and socializing among the participants, we played a few games. Upon arrival, the participants were provided a bead necklace for the “Don’t say ‘No’” game. The object of that game was “You cannot say ‘No!’” If you were caught saying “No,” you had to give your necklace(s) to the participant who caught you. The top three participants with the most necklaces at the end of the night won a \$50 gift certificate to a Birmingham restaurant.

Finally, during the initial registration process, participants were asked to provide three trivia facts about themselves so that throughout the evening the hosts could ask the participants: “Who among us did/does this?” Two \$50 gift certificates for each participating restaurant were awarded to the participant who was able to answer the questions correctly for each of the four (4) participating restaurants. Examples of the trivia questions were, “Who among us has a Mickey Mouse tattoo on HIS hip?” “Who among us was an intern for Justice Marilyn Kelly of the Michigan Supreme Court?” “Who among us was pictured and quoted in *Rolling Stone* magazine?” “Who among us walked out of a business enterprise exam before finishing because she could not take it any more, and is now a corporate lawyer?” Needless to say, we were a very interesting group. We enjoyed the company, delicious food, varied atmospheres, and plenty of opportunities to win 1 of 11 \$50 gift certificates.



Young Lawyers Gather Together to Support Nonviolence

Several members of the State Bar of Michigan Young Lawyers Section gathered together in May to support nonviolence at an Ann Arbor area fundraiser. They met at Bar Louie in Ann Arbor to raise money and show support for Safe House Center, an Ann Arbor-based organization committed to building communities free of domestic violence and sexual assault. The event provided a networking opportunity for young lawyers, while promoting awareness of Safe House Center and its mission against domestic violence within the community.

The fundraiser was inspired by the ABA YLD theme for this year – Voices Against Violence. State of Bar of Michigan Young Lawyers Section Executive Council member Bonnie Shaw spearheaded the event. Also in attendance were Rosemary Frenza, Mark Jane, Elizabeth Kitchen-Troop, and David Nacht. Safe House Center is currently engaging in an outreach to the community to educate the community and gather support. Donations are particularly important to this cause because financial constraints often prevent victims from leaving abusive situations.

Trouble in Paradise

On April 25, 2009, the YLS joined with the Association of Black Judges of Michigan, the D. Augustus Straker Bar Association, the Detroit Metropolitan Bar Association and the Wolverine Bar Association to host a mock trial for students from Stewart Elementary and Central High School in Detroit.¹

Approximately thirty motivated students convened at the Frank Murphy Hall of Justice to serve either as jurors, witnesses or counsel for the plaintiff or the defense. The trial was based on a storyline borrowed from the popular DREAMWORKS® film, SHREK.® With the help of volunteer attorneys, the students litigated a civil claim against Donkey for trespassing on Shrek's swamp. Donkey's defense was that Shrek invited him there, and that any damage was caused by a wild party hosted by the Big Bad Wolf, Pinocchio and the Three Blind Mice.

After an extremely lively trial with intense cross-examination, the jury overwhelmingly rejected Shrek's claims and absolved Donkey of liability. After the trial, Donkey (played by Southfield attorney Devlin Scarber) issued the following statement:

Donkey is still traumatized by such relentless cross examination. In fact, Donkey still has not gotten over the entire trial. There was absolutely no basis for th[e] lawsuit and Donkey has sought legal counsel to see if he has any recourse. Many jurors came up to Donkey afterwards in shock, and some in tears, after hearing the horrendous and baseless allegations against Donkey, a pillar in this community. Per MCR 2.114 and MCR 2.625 (as Donkey's attorneys have advised), a party pleading a frivolous action or claim can be sanctioned, and is subject to costs. Donkey's attorneys will be filing the appropriate motions.

Donkey may even set a new legal precedent by bringing an intentional infliction of emotional distress action against the Plaintiff's attorneys. Of course, this can all be quickly resolved if Donkey gets the other half of the swamp and Shrek's house.

/s/

Donkey

A great time was had by all (except perhaps for Donkey). If you are interested in organizing or hosting a similar event for students in the future, please contact Brandy Robinson at byrobinson@gmail.com.

Endnotes

1 All students were affiliated with Saving Kids of Incarcerated Parents (SKIP), a community organization dedicated to supporting families where one parent is or has been imprisoned.



Stand and Deliver!

Improve and Perfect Your Public Speaking Skills

- What:** A Public Speaking Workshop by Dale Carnegie®
- For Who:** All Young Lawyers Section Members
- Where:** Detroit Golf Club - Detroit / Highland Park, MI
- When:** August 29, 2009: 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
- Why:** Because communication and public speaking skills are essential to successful advocacy
- Cost:** \$50 per person until August 7, 2009; \$65 per person thereafter
- Lunch:** Included and co-sponsored by Brooks Kushman P.C.
- Bonus:** One attendee will win a scholarship for a full 12-week Dale Carnegie® course, which will be raffled at the end of the day - approximately a \$1,500 value.
- Bonus:** All participants will receive a \$49 gift cart for use at a future Dale Carnegie® one-day workshop.

Registration details can be found at www.michbar.org/younglawyers

For further details check the website or call Heather Anderson at handerson@mail.michbar.org; (517) 346-6314.

Congratulations to Jade Edwards Winner of the 2009 Regeana Myrick Outstanding Young Lawyer Award



(Left to Right) Chris Christenson, YLS Chair; winner, Jade Edwards, Ms. Rebbie Myrick, Regeana Myrick's mother; Danielle Mason Anderson, YLS Chair-Elect; and Tim Gardner, YLS Vice Chair.

Challenges Embraced by a New Lawyer

By Vassal Johnson

After three years of law school and passing the bar exam, I decided to take the leap and start my own law practice. In my first year of practice, I knew it was vital to gain experience in a variety of cases. In addition, it would be helpful to meet with judges and other attorneys. As a result, I had the opportunity to handle court-appointed cases for several district courts in the metro Detroit area. In my view, this opportunity has helped me to market my skills and gain familiarity with how each district court functions.

As a young lawyer, there will always be a new case that you will have to decide whether to handle. Recently, I was asked to handle a guardianship case and informed the client that this would be my first guardianship case. After I considered handling the case, I decided to consult with an experienced attorney. The experienced attorney advised me to conduct research into guardianships and to contact the case worker. Here, the assigned case worker could provide me with case's procedural history. I was retained on this case almost one year after the initial guardianship petition was filed.

Going into the court date, I thoroughly prepared myself on the facts and the law. However, I did not know what questions the judge would pose, so I was extremely nervous. Nevertheless, the proceeding was not as difficult as I initially imagined. As a result, it enhanced my confidence in future court proceedings.

More importantly, I learned challenges should be embraced as opportunities for building new skills and developing relationships in the legal profession. As new lawyers, we should look to broaden our horizons and open ourselves to new areas of the law.