



# The YLD Review

The State Bar of Georgia — Working for the Profession and the Public

Volume 47, Issue 1

Young Lawyers Division

Fall 2005



YLD Officers Damon Elmore, Jon Pope, Elena Kaplan and Josh Bell are sworn-in during the Awards Brunch at the 2005 Annual Meeting in Savannah.

## Annual Meeting Full of YLD Activity

The Young Lawyers Division had a full weekend of activities during the State Bar of Georgia's 2005 Annual Meeting, which took place June 9-12 at the Westin Savannah Harbor Golf Resort and Spa in Savannah, Ga. The YLD's Annual Meeting participation kicked off Friday morning with the annual YLD/Lawyers Foundation of Georgia 5K Fun Run. The race was followed Friday afternoon by the (in)famous YLD Pool Party. A group dinner was held on Friday evening at the Pier/Pavilion at Tybee Island. Saturday morning began with the annual Awards Ceremony and Brunch, where numerous YLD members were awarded for outstanding service to the division for their work during the past Bar year. (See page 5 for a list of award recipients.)

The 2005-06 officers, President Damon Elmore, President-Elect Jon Pope, Treasurer Elena Kaplan and Secretary Josh Bell, took office at the brunch when they were sworn in by Georgia Supreme Court Justice George H. Carley. The annual YLD Golf Tournament ended the official YLD activities on Saturday afternoon!



L-R: Past Bar President Bill Barwick played in the YLD Golf Tournament; (clockwise) Past and present YLD presidents Andrew Jones, Damon Elmore, Joe Dent, Pete Daughtery, Derek White, Laurel Landon and Kendall Butterworth; Phyllis Douglas, Terri Gordon, Judge Anne Barnes and YLD President Damon Elmore run the YLD/LFG 5k; Jeff Daxe and Scott Masterson

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from the  
President

## Something for Everyone In First Issue

By Damon Elmore

The Fall edition of the YLD Newsletter is a further “changing of the guard” event between the prior year’s president and the next. I am honored to be taking over these reigns and thank Laurel Landon, as well as all past presidents of the YLD (YLS), for working to make the organization better and leaving it in a good place.

Thanks to the work of our newsletter co-editors, Amy Howell and Bryan Scott, as well as our executive director, Deidra Sanderson and Johanna Merrill of the State Bar’s communications department, we have an action packed edition for you, covering the events that have happened during the first quarter of this Bar year, and highlighting more to come.

You may notice a few stylistic changes with the addition of a photo of our Bar Center on the cover, as well as the inclusion of a new, regular feature focusing on the “Legal Lessons I Have Learned.” I provide the “insight” for this inaugural edition, but look forward to the wit and wisdom

that will be provided in future editions by our experienced and brilliant minded colleagues.

We are also fortunate to get some tips from Robert Ingram, 2005-2006 State Bar president, for the young lawyer in the areas of maintaining and creating a successful practice and flourishing business. We are grateful to Robert for his suggestions. We are also excited to highlight the activities and events from the Annual Meeting and our Celebration of Excellence – both of which occurred in June.

For those of you interested in getting active or finding out more information about the work of the YLD, we give you an update on our plans for YLD CLE this year, and announce our plans for the Leadership Academy to begin in January 2006. You can read about the Transition into Law Practice Program, as well as take a look at the work and “after-hours” life of our YLD members around the state.

There’s bound to be something for everyone. Enjoy! 🍷

## Business Tips for the Younger Lawyer

By Robert D. Ingram, President, State Bar of Georgia  
Moore Ingram Johnson & Steele LLP

### Use the Law Practice Management Program

Most of us are better lawyers than we are businessmen and women. Law school did little to prepare us for the task of operating a business. For young lawyers trying to hang out a shingle on their own once they graduate from law school and pass the Bar, the task of leasing office space, purchasing or leasing copiers, selecting the right software, handling personnel matters, purchasing medical, general liability, workers’ compensation and professional liability insurance, setting up bank accounts and trust accounts and the many other tasks necessary to operate a law firm can be overwhelming. However, most lawyers soon realize that unless those matters receive the same attention given to the individual cases of the clients they represent, their law practice will never prosper and grow.

Fortunately, new Georgia lawyers can call upon the Law Practice Management Program to help them get started. The program was developed to help new and seasoned lawyers get practical advice on managing and operating a law firm. The program has been the inspiration for many other programs around the country and does an excellent job of helping lawyers set up and manage a number of practical business issues. The program Director, Natalie Thornwell, is only a phone call away at 404-527-8770.

### Distinguish your Law Practice

Before focusing on how to generate more legal business, you first need to recognize that as a profession, we have experienced phenomenal growth over the last two decades and that the competition for legal work is intense. The Remsen Group determined that the number of persons per lawyer dropped from 400 persons per lawyer to 250 persons per lawyer in the 20-year period from 1980 to 2000. That translates into a drop of 7.5 persons per lawyer each year over the past 20 years.

Increased competition and an increase in the willingness of many clients to move their legal business in an effort to save money have forced many lawyers to try different strategies in an effort to attract and retain legal business. More and more firms are beginning to advertise, develop firm brochures, prepare firm newsletters and even hire marketing consultants. One way to attract new business is to distinguish yourself from other lawyers and firms in your area.

You can do this by narrowing the scope of your practice to a few focused areas. The legal profession, like many other professions, is becoming more specialized.

### Benefits of Specialization

- Easier to become and stay competent
- Less stressful
- Easier to market self to public and other lawyers
- Easier to get referrals from other lawyers
- Easier to have satisfying career by limiting scope of practice to an area of legal work you enjoy
- Easier to charge higher hourly rates

### How specialization worked for Moore Ingram Johnson & Steele

- In the mid-1980s, the Marietta market was dominated by general practitioners operating in small firms or as sole practitioners
- Firm started in 1984 as commercial real estate practice
- Firm vision – Establish full service law firm in Marietta with lawyers specializing in different practice groups by offering individuals and businesses an alternative to large downtown Atlanta law firms
- Firm grew from five lawyers in 1986 to 60 lawyers in 2005
- Firm focused practice in following areas:
  1. Commercial real estate/zoning
  2. Corporate/transactional
  3. Taxation
  4. Estate Planning
  5. Domestic Relations/Criminal Law
  6. Civil Litigation: Business, Class Action, Commercial, Construction, General and Probate
- Insurance Defense: Product liability, Tort and Workers’ Compensation
- Firm lawyers always explore opportunities to cross-sell
- Firm strongly discourages lawyers handling legal matters outside their area of specialty. 🍷

# Top Ten Ways to Grow a Law Firm

By Robert D. Ingram, President, State Bar of Georgia  
Moore Ingram Johnson & Steele LLP

## 1. Return phone calls promptly

Return call even if after hours and leave voice mail – it's the thought that counts. If necessary, have legal assistant return calls while out of town, in depositions or on trial. Use a real person to answer phone and voice mail as an option.

## 2. Avoid legal fee "estimates"

Identify and confirm hedge factors in writing if ballpark estimate must be given.

## 3. Discuss the difficult up front

Never put off addressing the difficult issues such as hourly rates, retainers, billing procedures, payment expectations, past due interest, etc.

Explain:

- Everyone in litigation is a loser.
- Even if you win, attorney fees are rarely awarded.
- Client time and aggravation are lost forever.

Don't overstate anticipated results while selling client on your legal ability. Most clients appreciate candor and if they don't, you don't need them as a client. Refuse to accept cases from clients who will not abandon unrealistic expectations.

## 4. Always send engagement letter

Confirm hourly rate, amount of retainer, how retainer will be handled, billing procedure, payment expectations, past due interest. Confirm risk and potential down-sides to pursuing a course of action, i.e., counterclaims, counter-offer offending opposing party, claims for attorney fees if litigation unsuccessful, etc. Confirm inability to predict amount of attorney fees necessary to complete task. Send non-engagement letter when not retained by potential client.

## 5. Never guarantee results and avoid predictions

Lawyers, like medical doctors, sometimes can render good treatment but not cure the illness. Use engagement letter to confirm inability to guarantee results.

## 6. Involve client in strategic decisions

You can lead a client to water and make them drink. If you can't sell your client on the obvious, your client needs a new lawyer. Prepare logical analysis supporting recommendations to client. Involve client in evaluating pros and cons associated with strategic decisions.

Benefits of client input:

- Client becomes invested in decision.
- Client feels good about decision when things go well.

- Client shares responsibility if things go wrong.
- Puts client on notice of attorney activity so that client is prepared for attorney invoice.

## 7. Make client look good

Give client credit for decisions that turn out well. Document client's good decisions by sending letters and e-mails confirming same. Clients want to utilize attorneys who don't trumpet themselves as heroes for solving problems. If you solved a problem you did what you were hired and paid to do.

## 8. Avoid surprises

Clients don't fire lawyers for bad results. Clients fire lawyers because of surprises. Keep your client informed. Clients can handle bad results if they are properly prepared for the bad result and calculated risk is taken before bad result is reached. Clients can handle bad results if invested in decision to swing for the fence even when end result is a strikeout.

## 9. Keep client in the loop with timely and user friendly reporting

Informed clients are happy clients. Copy client with significant correspondence, pleadings and discovery so that client is kept informed and is prepared for significant legal invoices based on activity observed. Prepare user friendly status reports. Recognize good results may be secondary to timely reporting with some clients. Use invoices to educate and inform. Invoices should thoroughly describe work performed. Use common sense in describing activity.

## 10. Suggest ways to reduce attorney fees and litigation expenses

One of the best ways to build trust with a client is to talk the client out of engaging in unnecessary activity suggested by client that would result in increased attorney fees with little chance of success. Explore settlement early in appropriate cases where opposing counsel has realistic expectations before performing a lot of discovery and explain reasoning to client. Play your cards early when dealt a winning hand if you know opposing counsel and resolution can occur without necessity of filing motions. Use client or client's employees to perform legwork for clients wanting to hold down attorney fees. Refuse to engage in unnecessary discovery battles even when client prefers to fight. Many clients believe that mean, uncooperative attorneys get better results. Dispel the myth. Client must be educated that unreasonable attorneys generally receive bad results and cause unnecessary attorney fees and litigation expenses to be incurred by all. Persuade clients not to pursue claims that are not financially feasible. Recognize fighting on principle loses its appeal after the legal fee invoices begin to roll in.

By utilizing the resources the State Bar makes available through the Law Practice Management Program, by distinguishing your practice, and by applying the Golden Rule to treat your clients the way you would like to be treated, your practice will flourish. 🍀

## Leadership Academy

The Young Lawyers Division is excited about its new program, the YLD Leadership Academy, that will begin in January 2006.

Following the lead of the State Bar of Georgia's recognition of the importance of utilizing mentors in the education of young lawyers and in the development of their professional careers, members of the YLD are developing a comprehensive leadership development program as an intensive "next step" to follow the new mentor program beginning January 2006.

The Leadership Academy will provide in-depth leadership training for young lawyers who have completed the one-year mentoring program or who are exempt from that program because they have completed their first year of

practice before January 2006. The program will combine a mentor relationship with organized workshops in one of six areas. The topic areas include: Bar Activities; Community and Public Service; Professionalism; Firm Leadership; Service on Corporate and Non-Profit Boards; and Lawyers as Elected Officials. Twenty prominent members of Georgia's bench and bar will serve as mentors to 40 young lawyers from around the state. Young lawyers will be matched with mentors who share similar interests and career paths. Further information about this program, and how to participate, will be distributed in the near future. You may also contact Laurel Landon at [llandon@kilpatrickstockton.com](mailto:llandon@kilpatrickstockton.com) or the YLD Executive Director Deidra Sanderson at [deidra@gabar.org](mailto:deidra@gabar.org).





## Cherry Happy Hour a Charitable Success

By Terri Gordon, YLD Board of Directors

**O**n June 22, approximately 75 young lawyers came together at Cherry Restaurant in Midtown Atlanta for a charity happy hour organized by the Community Service Projects Committee of the YLD. All in attendance agreed that the great weather, delicious appetizers and sushi, cool drinks, and great company combined to make the event a big success. As always, attendees enjoyed a free drink, free appetizers, and a dinner discount in exchange for making a \$10 donation to charity.

Thanks to the generous sponsorship of Ernst & Young's Global Investigations and Dispute Advisory

practice, all of the proceeds from the charity happy hours go to the Emergency Food Bank of the Fulton County Department of Family and Children Services. When combined with the proceeds from the previous happy hours this year, young lawyers will have contributed \$1,000 to the Food Bank simply by having a few drinks with old friends and meeting some new ones!

Keep an eye out for details on the next charity happy hour where the Community Service Projects Committee will give you all the information you need to participate in this year's community service projects.



**Above Left:** (Clockwise) Kylie Holladay, Kevin Thomas, Leslie Thomasson, Laura Fahey Fritts, Mike Krause, Josh Curry and Ivy Doster gathered at Cherry in midtown Atlanta on June 22 for the Community Service Projects Committee's charity happy hour.

**Above:** Harry Foster and friends at the happy hour

## Young Lawyers Meet for Augusta Happy Hour

**T**he Young Lawyers of Augusta (YLA) held their monthly happy hour on July 21 at Wild Wings Cafe in Augusta. Brown Court Reporting sponsored the event. More than 50 young attorneys from the Augusta area enjoyed food, drinks, fellowship and drawings for Braves tickets provided by Brown. The YLA's social events are important because they allow young lawyers to meet in a relaxed setting, thus improving collegiality among the bar. The YLA's monthly happy hours are generally held on the third Thursday of each month. For more information about the YLA, please contact President Natalie Schweers at Natalie.Schweers@SunTrust.com.



Chris Hudson, Todd Boudreaux and Jake Kennedy



**Top:** Jeff Ingram, Sybil Coody and Karin Dickens from Brown Reporting with Laurel Landon (center).



**Bottom:** Troy Lanier, Connie Shugars, Bill Keogh and Mark Williamson

## Report from the Macon Bar Association YLD

By Cristen Freeman, President

The Macon YLD has a service project in the works where our members will work, this year, with Dr. Tom Glennon of the GA Children's Museum in Macon to develop curriculum for the civics floor of the museum. We will help set up the courthouse, bank, etc., and develop written materials for the children to learn about the court system. We'll invite schoolage children from public schools and have them come as a whole class in the late afternoons. We will also do mini mock trials where there's only a short opening, one direct and cross and a closing about a subject matter they would find interesting. We're also working with the Mentor's Project of Bibb County and the Truancy Intervention Project.

# Legal Lessons I've Learned

By Damon E. Elmore  
YLD President

**N**ext year I will have been at this law thing for 10 years. When I started, that seemed like a mighty long time, but I'm here to tell you... I have seen a bit working for a municipal corporation, in private practice with a small firm, through my bar work and, most recently, in-house and in HR for a public company. I figured in conjunction with the sage advice Robert Ingram, our State Bar president, shares in his "Business Tips for the Younger Lawyer," I would lay down some of the wisdom I have stumbled upon in that time. Maybe you've seen some of the same things too. If not, you will.

- Never underestimate your law school classmate, professional colleague, associate or even paralegal; he or she may be your client, judge, boss or Supreme Court nominee one day.
- I once worked for the City of Atlanta's Law Department. I would always hear jokes about "bureaucracy" and "government" employees. Having been in private practice and the corporate world since then, it ain't much better. In many instances, I have seen less scrutiny (no AJC watching every opinion you give), less passion (no worry about "clients" that are politicians and taxpayers who are never satisfied), and more selfish interests. (In government, you got all that good stuff for a third of what a new associate at a large firm could make. And bonuses, what bonuses!?) Never assume.
- Everyone doesn't think like I do. That doesn't make me right.
- If you are in your first five years of practice, "you may think you know, but you have no idea..."
- Sometimes, your boss is wrong. At the end of the day, he's still your boss. Actually, I can't help you with that one but thought you should keep it in mind.
- One day, you're gonna need your receptionist, secretary, mail room worker, copy team, messenger, paralegal, computer guy, building security guard, court

stenographer, bailiff, judicial law clerk, filing clerk, courthouse and other administrative agency personnel. Perhaps all on the same day! Say "good morning" before then.

- If your client is a corporation or business, especially a small one, know it.
- If your client has issues that are more personal (criminal/domestic/estate matters), understand their passion.
- Never get too wrapped up in your client's business or personal affairs.
- NO, you should never hit a 16 when the dealer's up card is a 3! YES, it does affect my stake!
- If your adversary needs an extension, let 'em have it. That karma thingy!
- Work at avoiding the need to request an extension.
- Enjoy (en joi' vt. 1. To take pleasure in something) your lunch.
- As president-elect, my year on the Investigative Panel reinforced the notion that you should return your clients' calls. Even if you have bad news or no news at all, tell them. In fact, call them first.
- That 21-year-old student/bike messenger, with all the tattoos and piercings, who lives in 30311, could be your jury foreperson.
- If you're doing a commercial, rehearse. At least once.
- Skip the e-mail and write by hand your thank-you notes.
- Write thank-you notes.
- I once heard "luck favors the prepared." They weren't lying.
- I am also always reminded of an old African Proverb that tells us "the new broom may sweep clean, but the old one knows the corners." They weren't lying either.
- Finally, getting involved in something, anything else, makes you a better lawyer (especially the YLD!) 🎁

## 2004-05 YLD Committee Awards

### Outstanding Committee Juvenile Law Committee

Melissa Dorris, Amy Howell and Brooke Silverthorn, Co-Chairs

### Outstanding Service to the Public

#### Community Service Projects Committee

Paul Greenspan and Lexi Liner, Co-Chairs

### Outstanding Service to the Profession

#### Litigation Committee

Jeff Daxe and Scott Masterson, Co-Chairs

### Most Improved Committee Aspiring Youth Committee

Antavius Weems and Suzanne Deddish, Co-Chairs

### Best Project

#### Ethics and Professionalism Committee

Michael Geoffroy and Curtis Romig, Co-Chairs

### Ethics and Professionalism Award

Douglas Chandler

### Best Event 2004-2005 Advocates for Students With Disabilities Committee

Leslie Lipson and Craig Goodmark, Co-Chairs

### Most Statewide Involvement Litigation Committee

Jeff Daxe and Scott Masterson, Co-Chairs

### Commitment To Justice Criminal Defense

Emily Gilbert

### Commitment to Justice Criminal Prosecution

James Sullivan



**Above:** Emily Gilbert receives an award from President Damon Elmore at the Awards Ceremony

**Left:** Tonya Boga and Leigh Martain May

# Georgia Juvenile Code Revision Project

By Amy Howell and Soledad McGrath

In early 2004 the Juvenile Law Committee (JLC) began a project to revise the Georgia Juvenile Code. Initiated by a request from then President of the Council of Juvenile Court Judges, the Honorable Robin Nash, the JLC was in a unique position to undertake this project. Currently, the juvenile code is difficult to use, lacks clarity, and does not reflect research-based best practices. More importantly, the code does not meet the needs of the juvenile courts and the legal practitioners who serve the courts.

After submitting a proposal in September 2004, the Georgia Bar Foundation generously awarded the JLC a \$40,000 grant to begin the Juvenile Code revision project. The next step was to hire an author and expert consultants to lead a collaborative effort to rewrite the code and to support legislative passage of the model code. As a result, JLC hired attorney Soledad McGrath to serve as the primary researcher and author, and secured the participation of the Honorable Velma Tilley of Bartow County Juvenile Court as an expert consultant.

To date, significant progress has been made. Extensive research began in November 2004 with a focus on investigating the strengths and weaknesses of the current code, researching model codes, and researching best practices in juvenile law through a review of national resources and juvenile codes from other states. In addition, in early March 2005, the JLC held focus group meetings to identify specific areas of concern among practitioners. To ensure on-going public participation in this project, the JLC provides monthly

updates and opportunities for feedback through its Web site at [www.juvenilelawcommittee.org](http://www.juvenilelawcommittee.org). After the revised code is completed, the committee will widely circulate the product and in an effort to gather feedback and build consensus, the JLC plans to hold statewide forums for public comment.

The JLC is committed to the improvement of jurisprudence in the area of juvenile law. It is uniquely positioned to coordinate the Juvenile Code Revision Project and to build consensus among the various stakeholders who work with the code in courts across Georgia. The JLC hopes to further this unique role through its current participation in the legislative Study Committee on the Juvenile Code created by the Senate Resolution (SR)161, signed into law by Gov. Perdue on May 5, 2005. Current committee Co-Chair Amy Howell and Immediate Past Co-Chair Elizabeth Reimels represent the JLC on this committee.

The goal of the Juvenile Code Revision Project is to create a research-based, comprehensive and well-organized, evidence-based best practices model juvenile code for Georgia. A revised and reorganized juvenile code will better fulfill the purpose of the juvenile courts, which in turn will result in better outcomes for Georgia's children. Ultimately, the hope is to provide Juvenile Courts with the legal tools to better and more effectively meet the goal of the juvenile code: to protect and restore the well-being of at-risk children. ☛

## Mentoring Program Launches with New Admittees

By Douglas Ashworth

Director, Transition into Law Practice Program

Remember when you were a “new or green” lawyer? Does reflecting upon your “trials by fire” motivate you to help a newer member of the profession learn how to be a lawyer?

To assist lawyers in their transition from student to professional, the Supreme Court of Georgia, on Feb. 2, 2005 authorized the State Bar of Georgia to proceed with the creation of the Transition Into Law Practice Program. The core of the program, informally known as the Mentoring Program, is to match beginning lawyers, after admission to the Bar, with a mentor during their first year of practice.

The purpose of the program is to afford every beginning lawyer newly admitted to the State Bar of Georgia with meaningful access to an experienced lawyer equipped to teach the practical skills, seasoned judgment, and sensitivity to ethical and professionalism values necessary to practice law in a highly competent manner. The program is essentially an educational program that combines a mentoring component with a Continuing Legal Education component.

The first class of beginning lawyers who will be required (unless exempted pursuant to applicable State Bar Rules) to participate in the mandatory

program will be those who are admitted after June 30, 2005. The program does not call for conditional licensure; beginning lawyers will be admitted to practice as now without restriction. However, they will be required to complete the program in the year of admission or in the next calendar year. Failure to complete the program by this time would expose the beginning lawyer to license suspension in the same manner as a lawyer who fails to meet the CLE requirements pursuant to the mandatory CLE Rules of the Commission on Continuing Lawyer Competency.

Most beginning lawyers will be paired with an experienced lawyer in the same law firm, office, or practice setting who will serve as the beginning lawyer's mentor (“inside mentor”). However, based upon historical averages, roughly 150 to 200 newly admitted lawyers each year will enter practice on their own and not in association with a lawyer who has at least five years of experience and who is qualified to serve as a mentor. These beginning lawyers will be matched through the program with an outside mentor or assigned to a Mentoring Group as part of a group of beginning lawyers and mentors arranged on a regional basis.

The CLE component of the pro-

gram that lays the groundwork for and supports the mentoring component is provided by the ICLE. Most beginning lawyers will attend an Enhanced Bridge-the-Gap Program that combines a day of introduction to law practice with a second day of instruction focusing on the roles of attorneys in working with and counseling clients, dealing with others as representatives of clients, and negotiating for clients.

An alternative continuing legal education program, called the Fundamentals of Law Practice, will also be offered. While the length and content of the instruction in this program will be substantially the same as the Enhanced Bridge-the-Gap Program, the format and setting will differ. Most instruction will be offered in small groups of 12-15 persons to permit close, hands-on guidance and interaction between the corps of experienced lawyer-instructors and the beginning lawyers. Priority in attending the Fundamentals of Law Practice Program will be given to beginning lawyers who are not practicing in association with an experienced lawyer. This priority is based on the effort to replicate, as far as possible in this setting, the kind of interaction between a new attorney and an experienced attorney that occurs naturally

in an office setting where new attorneys practice in association with experienced attorneys.

Mentors will be appointed by the Supreme Court of Georgia for one-year terms and may serve for more than one term. They must meet minimum qualifications, including being a member in good standing with at least five years practice experience with a reputation in the local legal community for competence and ethical and professional conduct. An orientation for new mentors will be offered by ICLE each year, live and over the internet. The first program will be held on Nov. 9 at the Bar Center. Mentors will receive three hours of CLE credit and will not be charged for the Mentor Orientations.

The program is operated under the auspices of the Commission on Continuing Lawyer Competency, through its Standards of the Profession Committee, pursuant to its general supervisory authority to administer the continuing legal education rules.

For more information, including the minimum qualifications for serving as a mentor, read the the Transition Into Law Practice Program Executive Summary, or contact the program Director Douglas Ashworth at (404) 527-8704 or [tilpp@gabar.org](mailto:tilpp@gabar.org). ☛

# 2005 Celebration Recognizes Largest Class To Date

By Allyson Anderson, Jessica Breaux, and Beth Reimels

On June 16 the Celebration of Excellence recognized a record breaking 344 graduates at the Fox Theatre in Atlanta. This was the largest graduating class to date and included 26 college graduates. The Celebration of Excellence awarded \$76,000 in scholarships to nineteen deserving young students in conjunction with the event including a scholarship sponsored by the State Bar of Georgia Young Lawyers Division.

The Celebration of Excellence is an annual statewide graduation event and scholarship program that recognizes the academic achievements of youth who have grown up in Georgia's foster care system and who have graduated from high school, a GED program, vocational school, or college. Youth who grow up in foster care face many educational challenges. They change foster care placements and schools often — sometimes in the middle of the school year. A study by Child Welfare League of America suggests that it takes a child from four to six months to recover academically from the disruption of changing schools. Other studies have found that children living in foster care are twice as likely as the rest of the school population to drop out of school before graduation.

This year's event was a grand success! Gov. Sonny Perdue and Mrs. Mary Perdue welcomed the graduates

and offered their congratulations. Wanda Smith, the V-103 on-air morning personality served as the mistress of ceremonies and had the audience rolling in the aisles.

The final hour of Celebration of Excellence is reserved for the graduate's speeches. Young people who had spent much of their lives feeling isolated and alone looked into a sea of faces and felt the warmth of support. The volunteers of Celebration of Excellence made sure these kids felt what every child deserves: love as big as Georgia itself.

The Celebration was founded by Child Advocate Attorney Dorothy Murphy as a project of the Juvenile Law Committee of the Younger Lawyers Division State Bar of Georgia to celebrate and honor the significant accomplishments of Georgia's youth in foster care. It has grown over the years and now is organized by a part-time program coordinator who is assisted by multiple community partners in Georgia's child welfare system, including the YLD, the Division of Family and



YLD President Damon Elmore, committee co-chairs Amy Howell and Brooke Silverthorn and YLD Director Deidra Sanderson at the Celebration of Excellence award ceremony.

Children Services, the Georgia Association of Homes and Services for Children, the Office of Child Advocate, and the volunteer and non-profit community.

The Juvenile Law Committee would like to offer our special thanks to the co-chairs of the volunteer committee, YLD members Melissa Dorris and Allyson Anderson.

Extra special thanks to Celebration of Excellence Project Coordinator, Cara Fox. Cara is leaving her position as project coordinator to stay home with her two small children. She has done a remarkable job of fundraising for this event, this year raising \$76,000 in scholarships alone, and she will be missed. 🙏

## Family Law Committee Hosts Reception at Institute

In May 2005, the Family Law Committee hosted a "kick-off" reception at the Family Law Institute at the Ritz-Carlton, Amelia Island. Attended by lawyers and judges who were among the 400 plus attendees at the Institute, the event was a great success in creating awareness of the new committee.

The Family Law Committee was founded by its first chairman, Jonathan Tuggle, of Warner, Mayoue, Bates and Nolen of Atlanta. He sent out the call for members after recognizing the significant contributions of younger lawyers in the area of family law.

The committee has held its initial meetings to organize its structure and identify areas where opportunities for service exist. All YLD members who have interest in family law or would like to be a part of a vibrant new committee are welcome. Anyone interested in joining should call Jonathan Tuggle at (770) 951-2700 or e-mail him at jtuggle@wmbnlaw.com.

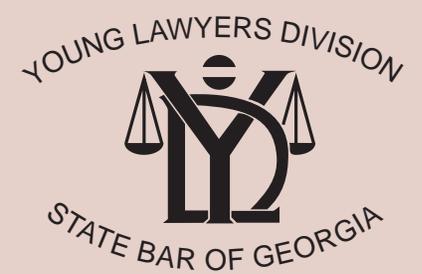


Marvin Solomiany, David Marple, Pilar Prinz, Todd Orston and Jonathan Tuggle

## 2005-06 YLD CLE Calendar

- Summer Meeting, Charleston: "What I Now Know: Legal Lessons Learned — A Conversation with Bar Leaders Old and New." Current and former Bar leaders will discuss the hows and whys of Bar involvement.
- Fall Meeting, Athens: Were you not able to hear Justice Kennedy speak at the Bar Center dedication? Watch a video replay and join the post-video discussion.
- Midyear Meeting, Atlanta: It's time for boot camp again! The half-day CLE programs will focus on family law and intellectual property law.
- Spring Meeting, Las Vegas: Take a break from the "ka-ching" of the casino and learn from Georgia Supreme Court Justices in our half-day CLE.
- May 2006: The YLD will present a full-day CLE on "everything you never knew you'd need to know" about a variety of topics; a great primer for the newest and refresher for more experienced young attorneys.

Interested in being a CLE speaker? Have a great topic idea for the YLD CLE series? Is your committee working on a CLE and in need of assistance with finding speakers? Contact YLD CLE Director Sherry Neal at sherry\_v\_neal@yahoo.com.



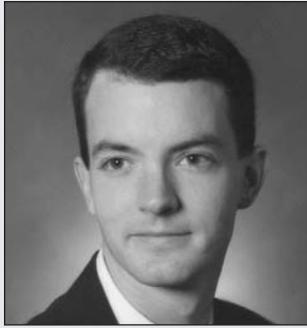
## 2005-2006 YLD Meetings

**Fall Meeting**  
October 21-23  
Foundry Park Inn & Spa  
Arkansas vs. UGA  
Athens, Ga.

**2006 Midyear Meeting**  
Jan. 5-7  
Renaissance Waverly  
Hotel  
Atlanta, Ga.

**2006 Spring Meeting**  
April 20-23  
MGM Grand Hotel and  
Casino  
Las Vegas, Nev.

**2006 Annual Meeting**  
June 1-4  
Westin Hilton Head  
Hilton Head, S.C.



from the  
Editor

# Experiencing Joy In the Practice of Law

By Bryan D. Scott

**H**ave you ever struggled with not enjoying the practice of law? How should we deal with unhappiness in practicing law? Should we just accept it as our lot in life as attorneys? Is that just “the way it is”? Or is there hope? Can we practice law and enjoy it at the same time, or are they mutually exclusive? I would suggest that if we take one or more of the following actions and attitudes, we can experience the joy and blessings that come with practicing law.

## Reevaluate your “Lawyer Life”

Are you in an area of practice that you do not enjoy? Request a change of direction from your bosses, or implement the change yourself. Is your workload too cumbersome? Cut back on your caseload. Do you have time to relax? Commit to not work on weekends and to leave at a specific time each night, whether you are done with your work or not. It will still be there in the morning. Are you burned out? Start exercising a few minutes each day, eat healthier and get a good night’s rest.

## Find Contentment in your Circumstances

The grass is not always greener on the other side. Be satisfied with your current position in life. Do not focus on what you do not have, but rather on the blessings that you have been given. If we focus on the positive, we can free ourselves from that discontentment that robs us of our joy. If we focus on the negatives (and there will always be negatives), then we will never be satisfied in the practice of law. Keep in mind that there are people who would love to be in your position, even with its stresses and worries.

## Put on an Attitude of Gratitude

You can always find something to be thankful for, even in the worst of circumstances. Do your circumstances dic-

tate your happiness, or are you able to find happiness in any and all circumstances? Remember, life is one percent circumstance and 99 percent attitude.

## Take off the “Golden Handcuffs”

If you are in a situation that you do not enjoy, but stay because of the nice salary, then you need to really contemplate life and work. Do you wish you could do something different? Usually we lie to ourselves and tell ourselves that we “can’t afford to make a change.” But the truth is we can’t afford not to make a change! We spend about half of our waking hours (maybe more) at work. No amount of money can pay for happiness and fulfillment in doing what you enjoy doing during those hours. This is especially true considering how the greatest gifts in life are free, such as the gift of nature and loving relationships with family and friends.

## Invest in People

Let your joy and fulfillment come not from the practice of law, but from the relationships that develop and exist as a result of your practice of law. I once heard a convocation speaker whose theme was “It’s all about people.” Practicing law is just that—all about people. Take the time to bring joy to the people around you. Sometimes in bringing a smile to someone else’s face, we bring ourselves out of the struggles we ourselves are experiencing. Take joy in those people and relationships that will have lasting meaning when all is said and done.

Perhaps if we put into place some of these actions and attitudes, we can fully experience the joy and fulfillment that is available to us in our practice of law. ✎

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