



# The YLD Review

The State Bar of Georgia - Lawyers Serving the Public and the Justice System

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Young Lawyers Division

Spring 2008

## Soirée de la Chance Raises \$45,000 to Benefit HERO for Children

by Stephanie Kirijan

The Young Lawyers Division raised \$45,000 at its second annual casino night fundraiser, more than doubling the funds raised last year and allowing the YLD to more than triple its charitable donation. The Soirée de la Chance took place Jan. 11, in conjunction with the State Bar’s Midyear Meeting. The event raised money for HERO for Children, a non-profit dedicated to improving the quality of life of children infected with and affected by HIV/AIDS through enriching programs, unforgettable experiences and connections to the community.

The venue, Paris on Ponce’s Le Moulin Rouge, transported guests to a bohemian casino. Guests availed themselves of a photo booth replete with props that could transform any buttoned up lawyer into a whimsical character. A photographer was on hand to capture it all and photos are available at [www.flickr.com/yld](http://www.flickr.com/yld). The event was packed with close to 200 attorneys, judges and friends of the YLD who enjoyed casino tables, food and drinks. **Chief Judge Anne Elizabeth Barnes** of the Georgia Court of Appeals and her colleagues **Judge G. Alan Blackburn** and **Judge John Ellington** were all in attendance to show support for the YLD and each of them walked away with items purchased from the silent auction.

The most popular distractions of the evening were the eight casino tables ranging from games such as Texas hold ’em poker to roulette to blackjack to craps. Tables were sponsored by Kilpatrick Stockton LLP, Troutman Sanders LLP, Sutherland Asbill & Brennan and Daughtery,

*Continued on page 7*



**Left:** Georgia Court of Appeals Judge G. Alan Blackburn and Fundraiser Co-Chair Jennifer Blackburn



**Top Right:** Terri Gordon, Shane Mayes and Shiriki Cavitt



**Bottom Right:** HERO for Children founders Ryan Gembala and Garrett Gravesen address the crowd.

Soiree Photos by Gavin C. Jackson and Johanna B. Merrill



**2007-08 YLD Officers:** President-Elect Josh Bell, Newsletter Co-Editor Stephanie Kirijan, Treasurer Amy Howell, President Elena Kaplan, Newsletter Co-Editor Curtis Romig and Secretary Michael Geoffroy. Not pictured: Immediate Past President Jon Pope.

## Mary McAfee Joins the Young Lawyers Division



The Young Lawyers Division of the State Bar of Georgia welcomes its new director, **Mary McAfee**. Mary comes to the YLD from the Chief Justice’s Commission on Professionalism, where she worked for the past seven years. Her work as the Commission’s office administrator has prepared her to successfully manage the YLD office. Unlike many residents of Atlanta, Mary is a native Atlantan, born and raised in the metro area. She attended Cobb County schools and received a bachelors in Business Administration from Kennesaw State University. Mary resides in Douglasville with her husband Tommy and their 10-month-old son Abram. As she gets settled into her new role, Mary hopes to meet many of the YLD members and welcomes your questions, comments and suggestions. She can be reached at 404-527-8778 or [mary@gabar.org](mailto:mary@gabar.org).

Mary resides in Douglasville with her husband Tommy and their 10-month-old son Abram. As she gets settled into her new role, Mary hopes to meet many of the YLD members and welcomes your questions, comments and suggestions. She can be reached at 404-527-8778 or [mary@gabar.org](mailto:mary@gabar.org).

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From the  
President

# Save for a Rainy Day

by Elena Kaplan

Given that you elected a tax and benefits lawyer as YLD president, I am sure you will not be too shocked to find that I have been itching to write an article with tax and benefits advice for younger lawyers. And, as it is tax season, it seems like the perfect time!

## Save for Retirement

I know! I know! It is super hard. I freely admit that I have not always practiced what I preach. When I first graduated from law school, it seemed impossible to balance all of those new household expenses with paying student loans, much less contributing to the 401(k). In addition, many firms do not allow employees to contribute to the 401(k) for a period of time, which causes associates to get used to living on the extra money. But eventually I started contributing and increased the amount every year. A great way to effect the increase is to increase your annual contribution by the amount of your raise for the year. Because contributions are on a pre-tax basis, allocating your whole raise allows you to increase your contribution not only by the amount your paycheck would have increased due to the raise, but also by the amount your tax bill would have increased.

The general wisdom is that everyone should be saving 15-20 percent of his or her gross income for retirement. Don't think you can afford that? Consider this: In 2006, households earning \$100,000 or more were in the top 19.09 percent of income earners in the country, while households earning \$150,000 or more were in the top 7.56 percent.<sup>1</sup> If you can't save 15-20 percent of your gross income and still be able to live on the remainder, how are all these other people living when all they get paid is the remainder? Or, maybe your excuse is that you want to pay off your student loans first. You can do both! And saving for your retirement is too important to put off. Further, the differential between the rate your retirement savings can earn and the rate you pay in student loan interest will likely put you in a better position by saving. You don't have to believe me—go see a financial planner and ask him or her.

If you are not eligible for a 401(k), contribute to an IRA. In fact, contribute to an IRA even if you are eligible. How else are you going to put away 15-20 percent of your gross income when the maximum employee contribution is \$15,500 for 2008 and most associates do not receive employer contributions? Even if you make too much to get a deduction for contributing to a Traditional IRA or to contribute to a Roth IRA, you can still make a non-deductible contribution to a Traditional IRA. In 2010, the income cap for converting to Roth IRAs will disappear and you can convert your Traditional IRA into a Roth IRA. You will have to pay tax on the earnings through the date of conversion, but the advantage of having that money in a Roth should be worth it.

Finally, go talk to your employer about ways they can improve their retirement plan. If they do not offer one or you are not eligible, tell them you want to be able to participate and that you would like for them to make that possible. Tell them how much you want to contribute. If there is a large demand for more money being put into retirement savings, your employer may be able to adjust its compensation structure to increase retirement savings and decrease salary by a commensurate amount. You would have a little less in your paycheck, but would come out ahead in the long run because you could put more away through your retirement plan. You can also request that a Roth 401(k) component be added so that you can get the advantages of a Roth IRA through your 401(k) plan.

## Estate Planning

Making sure you and your loved ones are protected in case calamity strikes is another thing that most of us put off, but really should take care of sooner rather than later. As lawyers, we should know better; but, like the cobbler's kids, we are often the last ones to "get new shoes." It was not until I volunteered in a Wills for Firefighters program that I finally took care of having these documents prepared.

Estate planning is not just about preparing a will and determining who should be the beneficiaries of your life insurance and retirement plan assets. It is also preparing an advance directive for health care and a financial power of attorney. The advance directive makes sure that the person you want to make healthcare decisions for you, in the event you are unable to, has the legal right to make those decisions. It also provides that person and your caregivers with guidance on how to proceed in the event you have an incurable or irreversible condition. The financial power of attorney grants another person the right to take care of some or all of your financial affairs. This can be useful not just if you have a healthcare issue, but in other situations too. For example, say you go on a party weekend to Vegas and run out of money; the person designated as your attorney can wire you additional funds!

I know you want to save the money and do this yourself, but it really is worth it to go see a lawyer. If you have estate planning attorneys in your firm, go see one of them (some firms provide this service to firm employees at no cost or a discounted rate). Even if you have to pay, it is worth it. The cost should run around \$1,000 if there are no complex circumstances.

## Save for a Rainy Day

That's right! In addition to saving 15-20 percent of your gross income for retirement, you also need to create a stash of money outside your retirement savings that equals three to six months of your expenses (note this is expenses, not take home pay). This money is there in case of an emergency. It is not there because you want to buy a new BMW or really want to vacation in the Seychelles; rather it is there so that if something unforeseen happens, you can weather the storm without destroying your retirement.

The emergency could be a variety of things—you or your spouse becomes ill or is laid off; a family member becomes ill; or even your house is destroyed by tornado or fire. Any of these events will result in needing access to cash quickly. None of us should assume that we will never face these issues. Particularly in our globalizing economy, it is no longer a safe bet that a job will always be here in the United States in your particular practice area. Run an Internet search for "lawyer outsource India" and you will see that lawyer jobs are already going overseas!

Building this stash is one goal that I am still working on and I am slowly getting there. I also have a home equity line of credit, which gives me some peace of mind that I will have access to money even if I run through the emergency funds that I have saved. While it does seem overwhelming to try to put away tens of thousands of dollars, putting away a few hundred a month will slowly get you there!

Okay. That is enough preaching for now. And, of course, as always, my last piece of advice is: get involved in the YLD!

1. U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement, Table HINC-06. In addition, households earning \$200,000 or more were in the top 3.46% and households earning \$250,000 or more were in the top 1.93%.

# Young Lawyers Divisions Around Georgia



Savannah YLD's Second Annual Christmas Sweater Contest winners: Robert Hughes (1st place), Daniel Jenkins (2nd place), Ben and Sally Perkins (Best Couple).

## Savannah YLD

by Christopher Smith

The Savannah YLD capped off 2007 with two exciting social events. First, the Savannah YLD members took a Historic Trolley Tour, which was both educational and entertaining (thanks to the beer and pizza sponsored by Jon Pannell's credit card). The trolley tour could only be topped by the Second Annual Christmas sweater contest, which turned out to be no contest at all. **Robert Hughes**, last year's winner, ran away with another hard earned Tackiest Sweater prize by borrowing a costume, which debuted in a recent "Saturday Night Live" skit.

The Savannah YLD will kick off 2008 with a Trivia Contest to determine who is the Smartest Lawyer in Savannah. Savannah YLD members can also look forward to several community projects, including a mock trial for area students put on by **Christopher Smith** and **Colin McRae** and the opportunity to volunteer in the pro bono HELP project. For more information about these events or about how to become involved with the Savannah YLD, please e-mail Christopher Smith at [csmith@HunterMaclean.com](mailto:csmith@HunterMaclean.com).



Carrie and Darrell Sutton at the 2008 YLD Signature Fundraiser on Jan. 11.

## Cobb YLD

by Darrell Sutton

The Cobb Bar YLD had a productive year in 2007. The group held monthly business meetings and hosted several socials to give members a forum to interact socially with each other and other members of the Cobb Bar Association. The first two socials of the year were held at local restaurants and were well attended. In December, the Barnes Law Group hosted a holiday social that featured a canned food drive to benefit a Cobb County shelter, a raffle to benefit the American Red Cross and an appearance by a not-so-traditional Santa Claus.

The Cobb YLD has also teamed with the Cobb Bar Family Law Section to create a pilot program to educate and assist *pro se* litigants in family law cases. The program, which has been endorsed by and implemented with the support of the Cobb County Superior Court judges, consists of monthly seminars where *pro se* litigants are instructed on the basics of lawsuits and the various types of family law actions. The litigants are also provided with packets that contain form pleadings and other information needed to litigate family law cases. Litigants are also informed of the various options for legal representation available to them, including the opportunity to obtain limited scope representation for a reduced fee from Cobb YLD and Family Law Section members. For more information about these events or about how to become involved with the Cobb YLD, please e-mail **Darrell Sutton** at [DLSutton@mijs.com](mailto:DLSutton@mijs.com).



Zachary Cowart and Valdosta YLD President Luanne Smith at the Valdosta YLD Holiday Social in November.

## Valdosta YLD

by Luanne Smith

The Valdosta YLD was formed in the summer of 2007 to provide an avenue for community service and networking for younger attorneys in Valdosta and Lowndes County. The group gathered for its first community project in August to lend their services to the Valdosta-Lowndes County Habitat for Humanity in construction of a new home in honor of the late **Father John O'Brien**, former Saint John Catholic Church pastor.

After its first event, the Valdosta YLD welcomed officers of the State Bar YLD to its holiday social in November. YLD

President **Elena Kaplan**, YLD President-Elect **Josh Bell**, and *YLD Review* Co-Editor **Stephanie Kirijan** were in attendance. The State Bar YLD sponsored the event at Kinderlou Forest Golf Club. The **Hon. Richard Cowart** and members of the Valdosta Bar Association also attended. Young attorneys in attendance were encouraged to participate in the bar community, both at the state and local level. The Valdosta YLD ended 2007 by participating in a holiday service project in which members selected and presented Christmas gifts to children whose parents are incarcerated. The Valdosta YLD rang in the New Year with its inaugural After-Christmas Party, hosted by Valdosta YLD President **Luanne Smith** and her family. The event gave members a wonderful opportunity to socialize and relax before launching into 2008.

In the coming months, the Valdosta YLD will undertake a March fundraiser and participate in April's Great Day of Service. The Valdosta YLD has an exciting year planned and invites all attorneys in the area under the age of 40, or who have been in practice for less than eight years, to get involved. Monthly meetings give members an opportunity to discuss YLD business, share ideas, network and have fun all at the same time. For more information about these events or about how to become involved with the Valdosta YLD, please e-mail Luanne Smith at [luanne.smith@colemantalley.com](mailto:luanne.smith@colemantalley.com).

## Macon YLD

by Carl Varnadoe

Reconstituted in 2004, the Macon Bar Association Young Lawyers Division (MBA-YLD) is now in its fourth year. The MBA-YLD is open to all lawyers less than 36 years old or who have been practicing less than seven years. As the service arm of the Macon Bar, MBA-YLD members participate in several community service projects each year including the Great Day of Service in April and annual Department of Family and Children Services Holiday Gift Drive. Over the past three years, the gift drive has resulted in the sponsorship of more than 130 foster children in the Macon-Bibb County area. On April 5, the MBA-YLD will join forces with the Junior League of Macon to construct a handicap-accessible playground at a local park.



YLD President Elena Kaplan and MBA-YLD President Carl Varnadoe at the YLD Holiday Party that took place at the Four Seasons Atlanta in December.

Recognizing that all young lawyers' time is a precious commodity, service projects often coincide with one of four annual socials. The most recent social, sponsored by HIRECounsel, was held in February at the 1842 Inn, a local bed and breakfast that was host to Oprah Winfrey on her recent visit to Macon. Annual dues total \$40. Current officers are **Carl Varnadoe**, president; **Kelli Hill**, vice-president; **Jed Hill**, treasurer; and **Sarah White**, secretary. For more information about these events or about how to become involved with the MBA-YLD, please e-mail Sarah White at [swhite@jbpslaw.com](mailto:swhite@jbpslaw.com).



**Event Co-Chairs:**

Jennifer Blackburn and Stephanie Kirijan

**Host Committee:**

- Jason Alloy
- Amy K. Averill\*
- Griffin B. Bell
- Josh and Deana Bell
- Jen Blackburn and Bennett Hollberg\*
- Anthony Frost Bonner
- Sarah L. Bright\*\*
- Tyler J. Browning
- S. Kendall Butterworth
- Shiriki Cavitt\*
- Jeffrey A. Daxe\*\*
- Joe Dent
- Laura and Andrew Fritts\*
- Elizabeth L.A. Garvish\*
- Michael and Tara Geoffroy\*\*
- Emily Hogue and Michael Krause\*\*
- Robert C. Hughes III
- Jennifer and Lawton Jordan\*\*
- Elena Kaplan
- Colin K. and Kelly B. Kelly\*\*
- R. Scott Masterson\*
- Whitney D. Mauk\*
- T. Shane Mayes\*\*
- North Fulton County Bar Association
- Stephanie L. Oginsky
- Carey Olson
- Jonthan Pannell
- Juanita Anna Passyn\*
- Jonathan and Amy Pope
- Laura Cunard Reis\*\*
- Curtis and Jennifer Romig\*
- Leslie Slavich\*
- Darrell L. and Carrie L. Sutton\*
- Meredith L. Wilson\*\*
- Rachel Zichella\*\*

\* Member of the Executive Planning Committee

\*\* Member of the General Planning Committee

**Sponsored by:**

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- Kilpatrick Stockton LLP
- Michael Geoffroy for YLD Treasurer
- RLSS, Inc. (Regional Litigation Support Services)
- Stephanie Kirijan for YLD Secretary
- Sutherland Asbill & Brennan LLP
- The Barnes Law Group for Jennifer Auer Jordan for YLD Secretary
- Troutman Sanders LLP
- Visual Litigation Services
- YLD Community Service Committee



**Above:** Rachael Zichella, Garland Reid, Garrett Gravesen, Kelly Scott and C. Suzanne Johnson

**Below left:** Mary Hethcox and Steven Chen



Sponsor Cory Phillips of Forge Consulting, Court of Appeals Judge John Ellington and DeKalb Bar YLD President Jennifer Little



Soirée de la Chance Sponsorship Chair Curtis Romig, Event Co-Chairs Jennifer Blackburn and Stephanie Kirijan and Silent Auction Chair Whitney Mauk



Greg Schwarz, Nedal Shawkat, and Patrick Connell

**Silent Auction Items**

**Donated by:**

- Actors Express
- All Star Enterprises
- Alliance Theatre
- Atlanta Business Magazine
- Atlanta Medical Management
- Atlanta Shakespeare Co.
- Atlanta Wine School
- Augusta Designs
- Micahel Berson
- Buckhead Life Restaurant Group
- Tom and Carol Chambers
- Cheetah Lounge
- Core Body Decatur
- Dad's Garage Theatre Company
- Joseph Dent
- Earth Rock Designs

- Eddie's Attic
- Embassy Suites—Olympic Park
- Four Seasons Atlanta
- Elizabeth Garvish
- Ryan Gembala
- Georgia Shakespeare
- Hal's Restaurant
- Hilton Garden Inn—Atlanta
- Warren Hogue
- Horizon Theatre Co.
- Institut Dermed
- Elena Kaplan
- Doug Kertscher
- Lee Grider Photography
- Amy Mauk
- Edward McAfee
- Mudd of Richie Arpino Salon
- NFI

- Beau Odom
- Omni Hotel at CNN Center
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- Sonz
- Taqueria Del Sol
- Telrite Wireless, Inc.
- The Cook's Warehouse
- Thinking Man Tavern
- Tulipano
- Ulta Salon Buckhead
- White Oak Landscape
- Woodfire Grill

# Young Lawyers Gather for Midyear Meeting



**Far Left:** Cristen Freeman, James Freeman and Elizabeth Garvish at Trader Vic's

**Left:** Sharri Edenfield and Carl Varnedoe at the officer and directors meeting.

by Curtis Romig

The YLD Winter Meeting returned to Atlanta in conjunction with the State Bar's 2008 Midyear Meeting and the result was three days of work, fun and fundraising. Once again the Midyear Meeting provided a great opportunity for YLD members to share their successes with each other, to collaborate on new and exciting projects and to meet and network with each other and other members of the State Bar.

The YLD portion of the Midyear Meeting began with a kickoff happy hour on Jan. 9, at Sidebar in downtown Atlanta. The Community Service, Litigation, Women in the Profession, Corporate Counsel and Ethics and Professionalism Committees sponsored the event and all of the proceeds were given to the YLD's 2008 signature fundraiser event, the Soirée de la Chance.

On Jan. 10, approximately 20 attorneys attended the ICLE and YLD Women in the Profession Committee co-sponsored three-hour CLE seminar, "Emerging

Issues in Health Law" at the Bar Center. Later in the afternoon, the YLD got down to business, as YLD officers and directors met to discuss the latest committee accomplishments and projects, the YLD's work to date this Bar year and plans for the rest of the year. Many of the officers and directors then joined other YLD members at Trader Vic's at the Hilton for Polynesian fare and fruity drinks.

On Friday morning, it was back to business as the YLD held its business meeting, followed by a meeting of the 2007-08 YLD Leadership Academy class. The business meeting featured numerous committee and officer reports to the YLD members in attendance. Many of the 57 members of the Leadership Academy class also attended the business meeting, where many of them learned not only how the YLD works, but how easy it is to get involved.

The YLD portion of the meeting closed in grand style on Jan. 11, with the Soirée de la Chance. Attendees the Soirée were left with great memories and a new legacy of fundraising. The 2008 Spring Meeting is in Destin, Fla., April 11-13.

## Annual YLD Holiday Party at Four Seasons Atlanta



Scott Masterson, State Bar Treasurer Lester Tate, Georgia Court of Appeals Judge John Ellington, Supreme Court of Georgia Justice Harold Melton, Lauren Melton and Edward McAfee at the YLD Holiday Party.



Newsletter Co-Editor Curtis Romig, YLD Treasurer Amy Howell and YLD Past President Chuck Driebe



**Above:** Juvenile Law Committee Co-Chairs Ari Mathé and Lea Thompson

**Above Left:** Mawuli Davis and Shane Mayes  
**Below Left:** Amy Averill and Jason Alloy



# Legislative Affairs Committee Hosts Happy Hour



Rep. Mike Jacobs (D-DeKalb), Committee Co-Chairs Ashley Harris and Ben Vinson, and Ansley Campbell.

Young lawyers had an opportunity to speak with several local lawyer-legislators when the Legislative Affairs Committee hosted a happy hour in December. State legislators in attendance included **Rep. Mike Jacobs** (D-DeKalb), **Rep. Stacey Abrams** (D-DeKalb), and **Rep. Edward Lindsey** (R-Fulton). The event, which was the first of its kind for the committee, took place at Tap in Midtown Atlanta and was co-sponsored by McKenna Long & Aldridge and Waste Management. The Legislative Affairs Committee hopes to make this an annual event. For more information about the committee and upcoming events, please contact the committee co-chairs Ben Vinson at [bvinson@mckennalong.com](mailto:bvinson@mckennalong.com) or Ashley Harris at [aharris2@wm.com](mailto:aharris2@wm.com).



YLD President Elena Kaplan, Supreme Court of Georgia Presiding Justice Carol Hunstein and WIPC Committee Chair Jennifer Jordan

like to thank the tea's sponsors, Merrill Corporation, King & Spalding, Jennifer Auer Jordan for YLD Secretary, Forge Consulting LLC, Professional Document Services and Capstone Financial Partners, for making the event possible.

## Women in the Profession Committee Meets for Tea

About 60 women and one brave man, YLD Secretary **Michael Geoffroy**, gathered in December at the Buckhead Ritz-Carlton for an afternoon tea hosted by the YLD Women in the Profession Committee. Supreme Court of Georgia **Presiding Justice Carol Hunstein** spoke at the event, and shared with those gathered her inspiring story. Justice Hunstein closed by reminding the women in attendance that they should not only strive to achieve their own goals, but they should also support other women's efforts to achieve their goals. Georgia Court of Appeals **Chief Judge Anne Elizabeth Barnes** also attended the afternoon tea. The YLD and the Women in the Profession Committee would

## YLD Ethics and Professionalism Committee's Fourth Annual Ethics and Professionalism Award

*"Always do right—this will gratify some and astonish the rest."*  
Mark Twain, message to Young People's Society, Greenpoint Presbyterian Church, Brooklyn, NY, Feb. 16, 1901.

The Ethics and Professionalism Committee of the Young Lawyers Division of the State Bar of Georgia invites nominations for a "young lawyer" (see eligibility guidelines below) who demonstrates and exemplifies professional and ethical conduct in the practice of law.

### Eligibility:

1. Member in good standing of the State Bar of Georgia;
2. Less than 36 years old, or have been admitted to practice in their first bar within the past 5 years; and
3. Not a member of the YLD Ethics and Professionalism Committee.

### Selection Criteria:

The nominee should embody the Lawyer's Creed adopted by the Chief Justice's Commission on Professionalism. Such criteria include: fairness, integrity, diligence, good judgment and professionalism. The nominee should demonstrate exceptional ethical qualities or judgment relative to his or her peers, in one respect or another.

### Required Information:

1. Nominating Party: Name, address, telephone number and e-mail address.
2. Nominee: Name, address, telephone number and e-mail address.
3. Narrative: Explain how the nominee meets the selection criteria provided above, including, if applicable, specific instances where the nominee's ethical qualities were evident.

### Send Nominations to:

Nicole Iannarone  
Ethics & Professionalism Co-Chair  
Bondurant, Mixson & Elmore  
1201 W. Peachtree St., Suite 3900  
Atlanta, GA 30309

David Adams  
Ethics & Professionalism Co-Chair  
Womble Carlyle Sandridge & Rice  
1201 W. Peachtree St., Suite 3500  
Atlanta, GA 30309

**Deadline for receipt of submissions:** April 9, 2008

### Nomination Form

*This form is optional. Letters and other forms of nominations will be accepted by the committee.*

### Nominating Party:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Firm/Company (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

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

Phone No.: \_\_\_\_\_

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

### Nominee:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Firm/Company (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

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

Phone No.: \_\_\_\_\_

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

**Please attach narrative.**

# Midyear Happy Hour Raises Money for Charity



**Left:** Community Service Co-Chairs Shiriki Cavitt(l) and Terri Gordon(r) and YLD Past President Damon Elmore  
**Right:** YLD President Elena Kaplan and Scott Masterson

During the Midyear Meeting, more than 30 YLD members gathered at Sidebar for a joint committee happy hour to raise money for HERO for Children, the YLD's chosen charity for its signature fundraiser, the Soirée de la Chance. The event was hosted by the YLD's Community Service, Litigation, Women in the Profession, Ethics and Professionalism, and newly formed Corporate Counsel committees. Community Service Co-Chair **Terri Gordon** called into the Q100 Bert Show to promote the YLD and invite Vermont law student **Jennifer Matte** to the happy hour. Jennifer is temporarily in Atlanta and called the radio station looking for fun networking events. She attended, as did **Maria Mucha**, who also heard Terri on the radio.



Tony Kalka, Litigation Committee Co-Chair Edward McAfee, U.S. District Court Northern Division of Georgia Chief Deputy Clerk Robert L. Minor and Litigation Committee Co-Chair Shane Mayes

for the second consecutive year. The committee is planning next year's luncheon and will continue to expand its list of invitees to include clerks from additional metro area counties. As Court of Appeals Clerk **Bill Martin** remarked, "This is a wonderful event and the clerks truly appreciate the committee hosting this event and I am already looking forward to next year." The committee could not agree more and is looking forward to the fourth annual luncheon as well!

## Litigation Committee Hosts Third Annual Holiday Luncheon

In December, the Litigation Committee held its third annual Holiday Luncheon for metro Atlanta court clerks and Litigation Committee members' paralegals and assistants. Held at Maggiano's Little Italy Restaurant in Buckhead, the luncheon was sponsored by LexisNexis; more than 80 metro area clerks, committee members and staff attended. The committee thanks those who participated and especially thanks LexisNexis for generously sponsoring the event

## Soirée Raises \$45,000 ...

*Continued from page 1*

Crawford, Fuller & Brown LLP. The YLD also raffled off two round-trip tickets on AirTran Airlines and accommodations at the YLD Spring Meeting in Destin, Fla. The evening's lucky lady was **Tamera Woodard** who held the winning raffle ticket. The silent auction wowed many guests who had the opportunity to bid on guitars signed by Jimmy Buffet, U2 and Dave Matthews as well as signed sports memorabilia from Michael Jordan, Tiger Woods, Mark Richt and Herschel Walker, among others.

All items not sold at the close of silent bidding were sold live in a raucous auction on stage where the Soirée de la Chance Co-Chairs **Jennifer Blackburn** and **Stephanie Kirijan** encouraged those in attendance to open their wallets for charity. State Bar Treasurer **Lester Tate** noted that if Kirijan and Blackburn's legal careers do not pan out, they should pursue auctioneering. More importantly, the silent/live auction raised close to \$8,000 by selling more than 80 items. A very special thanks to Silent Auction Chair **Whitney Mauk** and her committee for their hard work in obtaining the fabulous items that made the auction such a success.

The Soirée de la Chance could not have been possible without the statewide support from the YLD, whose members came from every corner of Georgia to attend the event. More than 50 YLD members were involved in the host, executive and planning committees. The fundraising efforts could not have exceeded everyone's expectations without the work of these YLD members, including Sponsorship Committee Chair **Curtis Romig** and his dedicated committee members who raised more than \$20,000. Please see page 4 for a full list of Soirée de la Chance host committee members, sponsors and silent auction donors.

Finally, the event would never have taken place without the support of the dedicated staff of the State Bar. **Michelle Garner, Johanna Merrill, Jennifer Mason** and **Stephanie Wilson** all gave heavily of their own time to make the event such a great success. The YLD cannot thank them enough.

## Call for Candidates—YLD Executive Council

Interested in serving as a representative on the Executive Council? It's time to throw your hat in the ring! Elections for representatives occur at the YLD's Annual Meeting, taking place in 2008 at the Amelia Island Plantation in Amelia Island, Fla., June 5-8.

The Executive Council is composed of 10 representatives from each Federal Judicial District in Georgia (Northern, Middle and Southern). The representatives participate in the YLD's five annual membership meetings, provide input and perspective with respect to YLD activities and serve on various YLD committees.

If you are interested in standing for election to the YLD Executive Council, please send a biography or resume to: Mary McAfee, YLD director, by mail at 104 Marietta St. NW, Atlanta, GA, 30303 or e-mail to [mary@gabar.org](mailto:mary@gabar.org) or fax to 404-287-4990.

For more information about the elections, contact YLD Director Mary McAfee at 404-527-8778 or [mary@gabar.org](mailto:mary@gabar.org) or YLD President-Elect Josh Bell at 229-246-3900 or [joshbell@kirbokendrick.com](mailto:joshbell@kirbokendrick.com).



### 2008 YLD Spring Meeting April 11-13 The Grand Sandestin Destin, Fla.

YLD Rates: \$179-269/night

Events include: welcome reception, group dinner, local YLD programming meetings, general session meeting and a CLE.

Visit the State Bar's website for a meeting brochure and registration form or contact YLD Director Mary McAfee at 404-527-8778 or [mary@gabar.org](mailto:mary@gabar.org) for more information.

Early-bird registration cut-off date: March 14, 2008





## Editor's Block

# Courting Public Opinion

by Stephanie Kirijan

What's wrong with lawyer jokes? Lawyers don't think they're funny and nobody else thinks they're jokes. The public opinion of lawyers is no laughing matter. In 1977, a Harris poll showed that more than a third of the public believed that lawyers had "very great prestige." Today, polling shows that less than 16 percent of the public thinks that lawyers have any prestige at all. In a politically correct environment, lawyers are one of the only groups that are still an acceptable target for jokes.

Although the legal profession has a dignified history and a special role in society, there are reasons that the perception of lawyers has declined. The public scoffs at lawyers they believe find loopholes to get their criminal or corporate clients off the hook. Many clients complain that lawyer fees are too high, while salaries in the profession continue to rise. As the number of lawyers steadily increases, so does the amount of litigation. Increased media attention ensures that the most sensational cases are highly publicized.

In the early 1990s, the American Bar Association (ABA) commissioned a public opinion poll where lawyers achieved a 40 percent favorability rating. Lawyers ranked far below other professions; only stockbrokers and politicians were lower. This prompted the ABA to focus on improving the image of lawyers. More recently, the ABA Litigation Section's "Public Perceptions of Lawyers" study found that clients do not feel lawyers communicate well and that they do not understand, or trust, lawyers' fees. Participants urged lawyers to communicate with the public about lawyers' public service and pro bono activities.

The ABA is not the only professional organization to take an interest in the public perception of lawyers. In 2001, the Canadian Bar Association launched the "Lawyers Care" billboard campaign to promote the work of lawyers and the positive role that lawyers play in society. The following year, the president of the Florida Bar asked its members to contribute funds to the "Dignity in Law" campaign designed to improve the image of lawyers. The Wisconsin Bar launched the "Expert Advisers Serving You" campaign that same year,

which consisted of radio and print ads. The Missouri Bar also embarked on a television and radio campaign with a message that the legal system works and that lawyers are affordable problem solvers. And last year, the Pennsylvania Bar Association developed television spots themed, "You Have Rights. Lawyers Protect Them," highlighting how lawyers help citizens and protect their rights.

The State Bar of Georgia is doing its part too with the "Foundations of Freedom" campaign. The program is designed to educate the public about the American legal system and how it protects a democratic society. The ultimate goal is to help restore confidence in the judicial system. Communications professionals are helping to develop and deliver the message via television, radio and print media. While "Foundations of Freedom" is a well-planned, strategic program that should help shape the public perception of the justice system and the lawyers that serve it, others have faced criticism for similar campaigns. Critics assert that a slick public relations campaign designed to sway public opinion should not replace lawyers' actions to improve their image through service and pro bono work. And critics are right; the public relations campaign must be in addition to, not instead of, the public service and pro bono work that lawyers provide.

The Young Lawyers Division plays an important role in the shaping the public image of the profession and promoting the credibility of the judicial system because the YLD is the public service arm of the Bar. Whether young lawyers are building a park for handicapped children in Macon, escorting underprivileged children to a professional basketball game in Atlanta or uniting statewide to raise \$45,000 to benefit HERO for Children (a non-profit that improves the lives of Georgia children affected by HIV/AIDS), YLD members are making an impact on our communities. Supreme Court of Georgia **Justice Robert Benham** told YLD Leadership Academy graduates that clergy heal the soul, doctors heal the body and lawyers heal the community. Involvement in the YLD allows us to live up to that noble credo and assist the State Bar in its efforts to make Georgia an even better place for lawyers to live, work and raise their families.



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