



## JYL President's Corner — August 2015

It's hard to believe that the 2015-2016 year is already upon us. I am grateful for the opportunity you've given me to serve as this year's President of Jackson Young Lawyers, and I hope you will take a renewed interest in active membership in JYL. This past year was a banner year for JYL. I am so grateful to our outgoing President, Lindsay Dowdle, and the 2014-2015 Executive Committee and committee chairs for their hard work.



Lane Williamson Staines  
President,  
Jackson Young Lawyers

Under the leadership of our Athletic Committee Chairs and with the support of our members, JYL had one of the most, if not THE most, successful Legal Beagle events in our organization's history. Through the

event, we were able to donate nearly \$8,000 to the Mississippi Volunteer Lawyers Project.

With the efforts of our Outreach Projects Committee Chairs and committee members, we met the needs of two local organizations through our grant program. JYL's grant program was recognized at this summer's ABA Young Lawyers Division

("YLD") Annual Meeting when JYL was awarded second place in the Service to the Public category.

We gave back to the community in other ways, too. During the past year, our Pro Bono Committee Chairs coordinated a well-attended Lawyer in the Library event as well

### Feature

Thriving in a Small or Solo Firm  
Baskin Jones

### Event Recap

Wills for Heroes

Mediation Committee

Membership Meeting Speaker: Judge  
Jack Wilson

### 2015-2016 Committees

## JYL President's Corner continued

as our annual Wills for Heroes event with the Mississippi Bar Association's YLD. We also managed to squeeze in a little fun at our Costumes and Cornholes event in October, the proceeds of which benefited the Boys and Girls Club of Central Mississippi.

In 2014-2015, we continued our work to revamp the newsletter and our social media communications. Did I mention we (once again) won our division's top newsletter award at the ABA YLD Annual Meeting? A special thanks goes to our Newsletter Chairs for their persistence and dedication.

We plan to build on this success in the coming year. The 2015-2016 Executive Committee is pleased to see a number of JYL members serve in committee chair positions for their first time this year. Regardless

of whether or not you are interested in serving in a leadership role in JYL one day, I encourage you to become involved in a committee (or two). You will benefit not only from the many ways in which our committees give back to the community but also through the friendships and connections you'll make. There is no better way to get to know your fellow JYL members. A list of our current committees and committee chairs is included in this edition of our newsletter.

I'm also excited to share with you that one of our members, Lee Hill, has volunteered to spearhead a Government Attorney Initiative which is intended to help our organization recruit state and federal attorneys. If this Initiative interests you, I hope that you will contact Lee today and volunteer for this

important project.

You can be sure that our other committees are already brainstorming ideas for this year. As I mentioned before, I hope you'll take a look at our list of committees and contact the respective committee chairs to see how you can lend your time and talents to JYL. Notice how many times I said "we" in this article? It's because the many projects and events sponsored by JYL simply are not possible without the collective efforts of our members. Thanks to you we are making a real difference in the greater Jackson area.

Here's to 2015-2016!

Your JYL President,  
Lane Williamson Staines

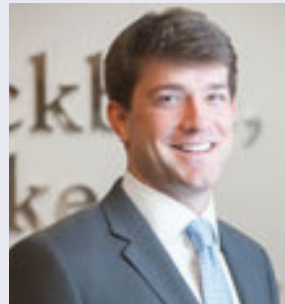
# Introducing the 2015-2016 Executive Committee



Lane Williamson Staines  
President



John Dollarhide  
President - Elect



Wesley Mockbee  
Treasurer



Heather Graves  
Executive Director



Lindsay Dowdle  
Past President



Alicia Hall  
Secretary



Betsy Turley  
Director



Kaytie Pickett  
Director



Roslyn Griffin  
Director



Sabrina Ruffin  
Director

## Feature

# Thriving in a Small or Solo Firm

by Baskin Jones

Joining a small firm or hanging your shingle in a competitive market is a daunting task. This article will attempt to provide perspective and tips to help you to weather the early days of your practice and thrive in a small or solo firm. A chancellor who was previously in private practice once described his former life as requiring “hustle,” and I think that word goes far to describe the hard work and single-mindedness that are required to keep things together in the solo or small firm. More than anything else, thriving in the small firm or solo firm environment requires grit and a “the buck stops here” mentality. As a young associate you are often the first and the last line of defense in making sure that tasks are accomplished, and as a solo it is necessary to look for opportunities to build a book of business, to only seek to control what you can, and to do it efficiently.



### 1. Building a Book of Business

Cases can come from any number of sources, but if you are looking for additional work you should consider the following:

- Make it clear to attorney friends that you are actively seeking cases, and that you are willing to pay referral fees;
- Chances are that most of the people that you come in contact with do not have a will, living will or advanced directive and would benefit from having one drafted;
- Many attorneys are willing to contract out

their research, appellate briefs and send others for chancery court matters;

- Be a source of information by providing a guide or holding a free to the public seminar concerning your area of law can set you apart as an authority in the subject area.

Sending a letter can go a long way in each of these categories. It may be worth your while to run through your contact list, and send a simple letter explaining your skills and follow up in person.

Once you have a potential intake, screening these cases is vitally important. You may have

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## Thriving, continued from page 3

heard it said that the facts of a case only get worse after intake. Even if this isn't true one-hundred percent of the time, the initial interview on any case has the potential to save you time and effort. If you identify an inability to prove your case or damages you must say no. These cases will be more trouble than they are worth and recognizing this early will free up your time and resources to focus on other areas of your practice.

### 2. Control What You Can

Controlling everything you can in a situation is a concept I focused on when reading about the former UCLA basketball coach, John Wooden. Coach Wooden had an incredible string of National Championships, but taught his players to focus on seemingly trivial details prior to game time. Coach Wooden would require his players to pay meticulous attention to things like tying their shoes in exactly the same way each game, and ensuring that there were no bumps in their socks. This attention to minute detail allowed the players to focus and achieve a base level of confidence while a stadium roared outside. This confidence was possible because each player had prepared, and done all that was within their power to win.

Preparation and confidence go hand in hand. Giving a best effort to your work and then letting go of those items that you have no control over is imperative to keeping your sanity in a solo or small practice. The difficulty is being able to determine the difference between the two.

### 3. Work Efficiently

Putting time and thought towards how your practice can be more efficient will pay dividends, and will allow you to do more. Recent studies of the brain have found that focus and concentration are finite resources each day. The research suggests that multitasking and interruptions create an additional drain on these mental resources. See *The Organized Mind* by Daniel Levitin.

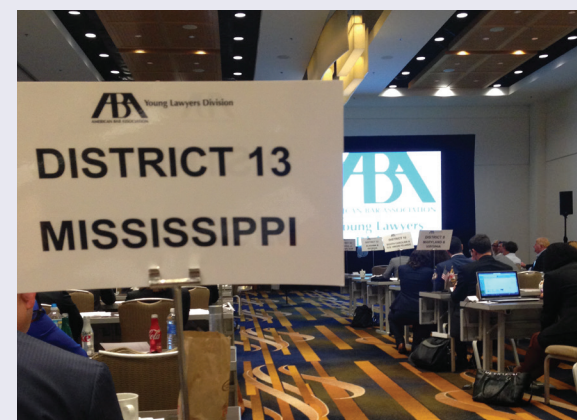
Work to find a period of time each day when you are able to focus and separate yourself from your phone, and your constant barrage of emails. Technology may also have some ways to help rather than hinder focus. Set up an out of the office notification that you will only check email during certain times of the day or find software that complements the way you work to minimize interruptions and save energy. Below are a few resources for distraction free writing:

- FocusWriter
- WriteMonkey
- OmmWriter
- Q10
- Writeroom

I hope these thoughts are useful to you; they have been to me. I am certain that there is more that could be added, and I am always interested to hear what works for other attorneys.

## JYL ABA Awards

The Jackson Young Lawyers won top honors at the ABA YLD Annual Conference recently held in Chicago. JYL won first place for the second year in a row for its Newsletter, JYL News. JYL took second place for its outstanding service to the public for the "JYL Community Outreach Grant Project."



## Membership Meetings

# Membership Meeting

## Membership Speaker: Judge Jack Wilson

JYL had its first meeting of the year on Friday, August 21 and had the honor of hosting speaker, Judge Jack Wilson, of the Mississippi Court of Appeals. Judge Wilson was appointed to the Bench on July 1, 2015, by Governor Phil Bryant. Judge Wilson discussed his experience clerking on the Eleventh Circuit and transitioning into private practice, both in Washington D.C. and in Jackson. He also shared some valuable insight from his experience working for the Governor as Deputy Clerk and then Chief Counsel. Finally, Judge Wilson gave practical advice from the Bench, including invaluable tips on both written and oral advocacy.



### Membership Information

All duly-licensed members of the Mississippi Bar who are residents of the Jackson, Mississippi metropolitan area and who are 37 years of age and younger or who have been members of the Mississippi Bar for less than three years are eligible for membership in this Association.

Benefits of membership include bi-monthly lunch meetings at Hal and Mal's Restaurant in Jackson, networking events at six social events throughout the Greater Jackson Metro Area, community service and pro bono opportunities, opportunities to participate in JYL's annual bowling tournament and Legal Beagle 5K run, and

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# Membership Meeting

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at least 1 hour of free CLE credit. Annual dues are \$110, and if you are currently employed in your first year as a government or public interest lawyer, membership in JYL is complimentary.

To become a member, please download, print, and complete the JYL Membership Form at: <http://www.jacksonyounglawyers.com/membership.html>. Mail the form, along with a check for \$110 (made payable to Jackson Young Lawyers Association), to the following address:

Jackson Young Lawyers Association  
P.O. Box 22842  
Jackson, MS 39225-2842

## Mediation Committee

On April 28th, the JYL Mediation Committee mediated six cases upon the request of the Jackson Municipal Court. Two cases successfully came to an agreement, freeing those cases from the Court's docket. The mediators who

participated were: Catherine Bell, Chanda Roby, and Randall Saxton.

Thank you Catherine, Chanda, and Randall for giving your time at night to provide this pro bono service to the City of Jackson.

## Wills for Heroes

On June 4, 2015, JYL and the Young Lawyers Division of the State Bar held a Wills for Heroes Program at the Jackson Police Training Academy. At the day-long event, JYL volunteers prepared wills for nearly 40 City of Jackson first

responders. It was one of the most successful and well-attended Wills for Heroes events ever organized in the metro area. Many thanks to the lawyers and other volunteers who gave so generously of their time.





# 2015-2016 Committee Directory

## Athletic

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Betsy Turley, *Executive Committee Liaison*

(with assistance from John Dollarhide)

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