



JYL President's Corner — May 2017



John Dollarhide
President,
Jackson Young Lawyers

How time flies! It seems like yesterday I wrote my first column as President of the Jackson Young Lawyers Association. We've had a good year around JYL. Thank you for your participation at our luncheons and special events, and generally your enthusiasm and willingness to be active in JYL.

We had a banner year of speakers. I especially thank our Speakers Committee Chairs JD Cooley and Davidson Forrester. We kicked off the year with Fifth Circuit Judge James Graves, who encouraged us to have passion in what we do. We then heard from Ole Miss Law Dean Debbie Bell, whose presentation coincided with National Pro Bono Month, and she spoke to us about service. We closed out 2016 with longtime Mississippi Bar Executive Director

Larry Houchins, who had recently announced his retirement. Larry talked about the progress he's seen in our profession during his tenure. In 2017 was Matthew McLaughlin, the Executive Director of the Mississippi Brewers Guild, who shared his story about entrepreneurship. Our penultimate speaker was CSpire Senior Vice President and General Counsel Chuck McBride, who talked about the differences between private practice and in-house work, and emphasized the gravity of counsel he is tasked with on legal and business matters. Finally, an overflow crowd welcomed U.S. District Judge Dan Jordan, who made a CLE presentation on non-verbal communication in the courtroom, greatly enhancing our skills as advocates.

Notably, we moved our membership meetings from Hal & Mal's to The Manship. This decision was not undertaken lightly. We desperately

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needed a quieter and more appropriate space to host our guests. The Manship has been good so far, and we plan to continue our meetings there.

We also had a satisfying year with our charity events. Our fall Cornhole Tournament and Silent Auction raised over \$3000 for the Boys and Girls Clubs of Central Mississippi. Our flagship event, the Legal Beagle 5k Run/Walk, raised \$8000 for the Mississippi Volunteer Lawyers Project. Thank you to Abram Orlansky, Paul Rosenblatt, Leigh Vernon, and Sam Gregory for their leadership and work on these events.

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Special commendation goes, again, to our Outreach Grant Committee, chaired by Allyson Winter and Adrienne Aikens. The committee received and considered a record number of grant applications, and awarded grants to the Little Light House of Central Mississippi of \$1500 and to Mississippi Community Education Center (MCEC) of \$750.

At the Evening Honoring the Judiciary, we presented our two annual awards. The Outstanding Service Award went to Christina Seanor for her excellent and diligent work on this year's newsletters. The Pro Bono Award went to Randall Saxton for his dedicated service to the City Court Mediation Committee. Christina and Randall are both very deserving of these awards, and we're proud to have them among us.

Our Diversity in the Law forum at Jackson State University was also a hit. Diversity Chair Roslyn Griffin led the charge on this event, securing a roster of wonderful speakers,



yours truly excluded. More than 30 diverse undergraduate students attended this event and learned about strategies for success in applying for and attending law school and practicing law.

Let me close simply by saying, “Thank you.” You all have made this year a labor of passion, service, progress, entrepreneurship, communication, and skills. I leave you in the most capable of hands in my friend and law school classmate, Alicia Hall.

See you soon, JYL.

- John Dollarhide, 2016-2017 JYL President

Featured Article

JYL's—and Your—Legacy of Service

by Anna Little Morris

Candidly, I struggled a bit to determine what I would write about when asked to contribute to JYL's quarterly newsletter. Still new to the organization, I browsed previous JYL newsletters to see what other authors considered to be interesting topics. The subject matter is diverse, ranging from prison privatization to equal pay for female attorneys, from interviews with the judiciary to “where are they now?” pieces on former JYL presidents. There have also been many articles offering advice to new attorneys. However, there was one common thread among all JYL newsletters, going back for a decade – service.



Looking back over the years of this organization's activities, JYL service efforts are truly something to be proud of. Drafting wills for local police forces and firefighters. Volunteering with and raising money for the Mission First Legal Aid Office and Mississippi Volunteer Lawyers Project. In addition to pro bono legal services, JYL has collected toys for needy children, awarded thousands of dollars to various charitable organizations, and donated professional attire to assist the less fortunate to obtain gainful employment. JYL has quite the legacy of service.

While reviewing all the pro bono projects conducted by the JYL, I could not help but think of the many forms of “service” that attorneys are especially situated to provide.

I think we can all agree that the first thing many attorneys think about when it comes to “service” is discharging our “professional responsibility to provide pro bono legal services to the poor” under the Mississippi Rules of Professional Conduct – providing a certain number of hours to receive our annual credit. While this work is of course worthy, meaningful, and in great demand, we also need to be aware that there are service opportunities all around us that have nothing to do with earning credit.

There's the hunting camp buddy facing a property line dispute. The neighbor who paid a deposit on a kitchen remodel, only to have the contractor disappear without a trace. A fellow church member in need of a will. Your brother-in-law who needs someone to take a peek at his contract for a new job offer. Your child's daycare or a non-profit you support in need of a new board member. Your college roommate and her husband, in the midst of the adoption process, who runs into a legal snag that is preventing their baby from coming home.

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All of us have received these calls; we all know that the opportunity for attorneys to serve is everywhere. As “young lawyers,” we may not yet have a lifetime of professional experience, but we can still serve. We cannot allow our lack of experience to become our token excuse not to help. In fact, our growth as lawyers demands that we push ourselves out of our comfort zones. When someone in need of legal advice comes to us for help, the question should not be, “Have I done this before?” but instead “Is this person going to be in a better position to handle

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this problem with me or without me?” All of us were taught in law school (and we continue to learn every day) how to read something complex and to decipher what it means, how to communicate clearly and accurately in the written and spoken word, and how to find answers to legal questions. We are prepared to serve, and we should serve. (Of course, the case may arise where the stakes are simply too high – for example, a death penalty appeal or a child custody dispute – and we are simply not equipped to provide competent representation. If that happens, we can refer the case to competent counsel.)

We must appreciate that we are licensed, professional members of the Bar. The nature of our education, licensure, training, and practice not only make us uniquely qualified to help, but it authorizes us to provide legal advice. This role of legal counselor is reserved only to us;

no other group has that right. With that right comes great responsibility.

JYL has fostered young attorneys to exercise this great responsibility through its legacy of service. That legacy also teaches us that we cannot limit our definition of service to the concept of pro bono projects. That legacy teaches us to keep our minds open to the many opportunities to serve those who need the kind of help that we are well suited to provide. If we do that, we will not only be serving, but we will grow as lawyers, we will strengthen our communities, and we will promote the integrity of the Bar.

Anna Morris is an attorney at Butler Snow. Her law practice focuses on complex commercial disputes concerning breach of contract, breach of warranty, and business torts. She has also successfully defended private correctional institutions in matters involving Constitutional rights. Before becoming an attorney, Anna served as the Director of External Relations for the Mississippi State Medical Association, where she advocated the Association's healthcare policy at the Mississippi Legislature and oversaw internal and external communications.

Want to contribute to JYL News?

Our Newsletter Chairs are looking for interesting articles, insightful musings and hilarious commentary that Jackson's Young Lawyers will enjoy! For a chance to be published in JYL News submit articles to Christina Seanor at cseanor@cwplaw.com and Lauren Reeves at lfreeves@gmail.com.

JYL May Membership Meeting with Judge Jordan



JYL Annual Crawfish Social

On May 10th we hosted our annual crawfish social at the Crawdad Hole in Jackson.



Pro Bono Opportunity

Guardianship Clinic Opportunity

The Solo and Small Firm Committee have joined forces with the JYL Pro Bono Committee to organize a JYL & MVLP Partnership for a Guardianship Clinic in Hinds County. The clinic will assist with the appointment of guardians, and removing children from foster homes and into a guardian's home who is also a family member. The JYL/MVLP Pro Bono Guardianship Clinic is set for late August 2017. Details will follow. Stacey Buchanan and Mindy McKay Morton, Co-Chair JYL's Solo & Small Firm Committee.



Community Grant Recipients

On April 11th, the 5 members of the Community Grant Committee met to review 9 outstanding applications for a monetary grant that it is awarded each year to a deserving nonprofit. All applications were deserving, but the committee selected Little Lighthouse and Mississippi Community Education Center, as both organization's specific needs could be met through the available grant funds. The grant funds were presented to representatives of both organizations at the JYL luncheon on May 24.

In addition, the Community Grant Committee is seeking to meet the needs of another applicant, the Junior Auxiliary of Byram-Terry, by hosting a fundraising and coat drive to benefit children in Byram/Terry Head Start, Elementary and Intermediate schools, by providing coats to those students that the teachers identify as lacking a proper winter coat.

If you would be interested in helping with this effort, please contact a member of the community grant committee: Allyson Winter at awinter@trustmark.com or Adrienne Aikens at aaikens@1call.org.



JYL Elections

For those that may have missed it, JYL congratulates the following newly-elected Executive Committee members who will begin their respective terms on June 1.

President-Elect: Andrew Harris

Secretary: Samuel Gregory

Treasurer: Erin Guyton

Director: Christina Seanor

Director: JD Cooley

They will be joined on the 2017-2018 Executive Committee by the following members:

President - Alicia Hall

Director - Haley Gregory

Director - La'Toyia Slay

Past President - John Dollarhide

Executive Director - Heather Graves

Evening Honoring the Judiciary – May 18 at the Jackson Country Club

JYL and CABA hosted the Annual Evening Honoring the Judiciary at the Jackson Country Club on May 18. JYL presented its Outstanding Service Award to Christina Seanor for her work on the Newsletter and its Pro Bono Award to Randall Saxton for his work on the City Court Mediation Committee.