



# WSBA

WASHINGTON YOUNG LAWYERS DIVISION

To: WSBA Board of Governors  
From: Dainen Penta, WYLD President  
Re: WYLD Quarterly Report (Winter)  
Date: November 21, 2011

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Thank you for the opportunity to report on the programs and activities of the Washington Young Lawyers Division (WYLD). I am pleased to report that the 2011-2012 WYLD year is off to a strong start, thanks to the WYLD's energetic and hard-working leaders. Our staff liaison, Brian Salts-Halcomb, has been vital in providing long-range perspective and bringing a new "fit and focus" to WYLD since he joined WSBA in 2009.

**Brief Overview of WYLD:** The WYLD groups its activities and programs into three focus areas: Transition to Practice, Member Outreach and Leadership, and Pro Bono and Public Service. The WYLD Board of Trustees provides strategic direction and oversight through a Director for each focus area and a board member assigned to each WYLD program or committee.

**WYLD Strategic Objectives, 2011-2012:**

1. **Bringing Value to WYLD Members.** WYLD leaders will connect Division members to WYLD and WSBA, focusing on Moderate Means and WSBA public service programs, New Lawyer Education, LAP, and LOMAP.
2. **Increasing Breadth of Participation.** WYLD leaders will connect Division members to one another, to their county young lawyer groups, and to voluntary bar associations. Board meetings held in various locations around the state will facilitate outreach to young lawyers statewide. WYLD will serve as a resource for county bar leaders and members on potential program, event, and activity ideas.
3. **Bringing Excitement and Fun to WYLD.** WYLD leaders will connect Division members to fun! WYLD programming will offer social, networking, and mentorship opportunities to assist young lawyers in building their professional network and connecting with one another.

**First Board Meeting and Orientation.** The WYLD Board of Trustees met on October 15, 2011 at WSBA offices in Seattle. At this first meeting of the new bar year, we welcomed several new trustees to our board. Our Board is excited about integrating young and new lawyers into the profession, advancing the work of the Division, and representing new and young lawyer interests in a variety of local, state, and national bar organizations. Returning trustees provided an

overview of all WYLD programs and activities, and each trustee reported on events and activities in their district.

Board members met on October 16 at WSBA offices with program and committee chairs for Orientation. This meeting is one of the few times the WYLD Board comes together with program and committee leadership, and constructive and productive discussions allowed leaders to build a shared vision for the WYLD and to plan for the year.

We are very much looking forward to another joint BOG/BOT dinner and social while in Bellingham. Future in-person BOT meetings will be held in March, June, and August; we will also meet by teleconference in February. WYLD officers (President, President-elect, Immediate Past President, and the Focus Area Directors) will be holding monthly meetings by teleconference. Ad hoc board “working groups” will also be used to help the Board’s in-person meetings be more efficient and productive.

**ABA Fall Conference and Meetings.** Approximately 350 young lawyers from around the country, including the WYLD Board came together in Seattle from October 14-15 at the ABA Young Lawyers Division Fall Conference. The Seattle Host Committee was chaired by WYLD Immediate Past President Kari Petrasek, and her efforts were recognized at the Fall Gala held at Experience Music Project where she was presented with a “Star of the Quarter” award by the ABA YLD. Several past WYLD Presidents came to the Gala to celebrate the successes of Washington young lawyers and to continue to celebrate the WYLD’s 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.<sup>1</sup>

Conference participants enjoyed a mix of CLE and non-CLE programs, as well as the launch of the ABA YLD public service project, “Project Salute: Young Lawyers Serving our Veterans.” Project Salute is a program that educates and assists veterans with obtaining VA benefits. Colorful copies of *De Novo*, the WYLD’s award-winning newsletter, were proudly displayed at the ABA YLD Affiliate Showcase, where young lawyer groups from around the U.S. show off their best projects.<sup>2</sup> We also showed off pictures and distributed information about Open Section Night, one of the WYLD’s newest signature events, which brings young lawyers in contact with WSBA section leaders to foster learning in a fun and relaxed environment.

**Summary of WYLD by Focus Area:** For this first quarterly report, an overview is provided of WYLD programs and committees by focus area to better acquaint you with the broad range of WYLD activities.

1. **Transition to Practice (Director Michael O’Meara):** Integrating new lawyers into the profession is key for the Transition to Practice focus area.
  - **Section Liaison Program:** Each year, the WYLD appoints liaisons to most of the WSBA sections. Each appointed liaison gains knowledge about their section, gains key contacts through working with their section, and the section benefits from a young lawyer perspective.

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<sup>1</sup> Past Presidents in attendance included Kari Petrasek, Julia Bahner, Jaime Hawk, Mark O’Halloran, Noah Davis, Patrick Palace, Kathleen Hopkins, Rosemary Daszkiewicz, and Tom Fitzpatrick.

<sup>2</sup> *De Novo* was honored with 1<sup>st</sup> Place Award in the ABA YLD’s Awards of Achievement, Newsletter category, for the 2010-2011 bar year.

- Trial Advocacy Program: TAP is a trial-skills program that consists of a two-day CLE and a mock trial. This year's successful program was held in Seattle on October 22-23 and November 5 (mock trials). TAP is an outstanding value at \$199 (less than 4 years in practice). Local judges and commissioners volunteer each year to judge the mock trials, and provide immediate feedback and helpful suggestions to participants. TAP is part of WSBA New Lawyer Education (NLE) programming.
- NLE Focus Group and Preadmission Program: The former WYLD CLE Committee is now the NLE Focus Group, which works with the WSBA to develop and implement ideas for NLE programs. WYLD has been intimately involved this year in improvements to the mandatory preadmission program, with a live program held in Seattle on October 25 at the WSBA Conference Center followed by a post-program networking social sponsored by the WYLD. Mikaron Fortier, NLE Development Specialist, is also working with WYLD on print materials to help orient new lawyers to the WYLD and acquaint them with resources in the WSBA.
- Access to Justice and Bar Leaders Conference: The WYLD plays an important part in shaping the annual Access to Justice and Bar Leaders Conference and in broadening the conference's appeal to new and young lawyers, including encouraging young lawyers to submit proposals for conference sessions.

2. **Member Outreach & Leadership (Director Scott Husbands)**: Providing statewide outreach to WYLD members and creating leadership opportunities for young lawyers are the objectives of this focus area. Positive relationships with regional young lawyer groups are key, particularly with our largest YLD affiliates, KCBA YLD and Spokane YLD (SYLD).

- De Novo is our award-winning newsletter, published six times a year and led by Editor Claire Been, Associate Editor Joel Matteson, and the Editorial Advisory Committee. Notable past themed issues include the February 2011 "Love" issue and the "2011 Young Lawyer Survival Guide" published in August.
- Open Section Night is discussed above. This section "fair" was a great success in 2010 and a repeat for January 2012 is in the works. Spokane YLD has expressed a great deal of interest and plans are underway to produce Open Section Night "Spokane Edition." This event grew out of the need to foster organic mentoring relationships and to increase young lawyer participation in section activities.
- Social and networking events will continue, such as happy hours, sporting-event socials, and more. Events with non-lawyer groups such as young business professionals and mental health professionals are especially beneficial to young lawyers building their networks. Social co-chairs are key in synchronizing the social calendar with other WYLD programming around the state.

3. **Pro Bono & Public Service (Director Nanette Blackburn)**: WYLD Pro Bono and Public Service (PBPS) efforts emphasize that new and young lawyers who are unemployed or underemployed can obtain substantive skills while helping those who would otherwise go without an attorney, as well as provide opportunities for young lawyers to give back to their communities. The "standing" PBPS Committee will be considering a range of possible projects this year, including compiling a list of past and future projects that county young lawyer leaders can implement (Volunteering for

minority bar clinics, county bar volunteer lawyer programs, ABA public service projects, etc.).

- The Washington First Responder Will Clinic provides basic estate plans to police officers and firefighters, at no charge, in recognition of their service. The program helps ensure first responders have vital legal documents in place to protect their loved ones. The WYLD provides funding and staff support to the program.
- The Yakima Pre-Law Student Leadership Conference is a “pipeline” program to introduce high school students to the legal profession and to attorneys and judges, and is planned for May 2012. WYLD partners with the Latina/o Bar Association of Washington (LBAW) and works with Yakima-area high schools to ensure student attendance.
- The YMCA Mock Trial Program is supported each year by a financial contribution; the March WYLD Board of Trustees meeting coincides this year with the state championships in Olympia. Many lawyers across the state serve as mock trial team coaches.
- Serving Our Seniors is a wills clinic, much like the First Responder Will Clinic. Last year, WYLD implemented an exploratory “SOS” clinic in Wenatchee in collaboration with the Chelan-Douglas County YLD. Another pilot clinic will be held this year thanks to the receipt of a grant from the ABA Young Lawyers Division.
- ABA/FEMA Disaster Legal Services Program: When a disaster is declared in our state, WYLD volunteers provide legal assistance to disaster victims. WSBA staffs a toll-free hotline and expenses of administering the hotline are reimbursed by FEMA. The ABA YLD District 29 Representative receives training and has primary responsibility for this program when a disaster is declared.

**WYLD Diversity Report:** RaShelle Davis is our new At-Large Trustee. She is the former Chair-elect of the WYLD Committee for Diversity and has previously worked with the WSBA Committee for Diversity (CFD) during the transition of that committee. RaShelle continues to serve a liaison to the CFD from the WYLD Board and will participate in integrating young lawyers into the CFD’s programs and activities, as well as serving as a WYLD liaison to Washington’s minority bar associations and other diversity entities around the state.

**In conclusion,** if you have questions, feedback, or concerns about WYLD programs and activities, please do not hesitate to contact me at any time, by email at [dainen.penta@gmail.com](mailto:dainen.penta@gmail.com) or by phone at (206) 633-1520. The WYLD is truly the future of Washington’s legal community, and I am looking forward to an exciting year of continued growth for the Division.

In the spirit of service,



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