

YOUNG LAWYERS

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THE YOUNG LAWYERS SECTION: OUR TIME TO SERVE

Over the summer, Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin issued a proclamation designating Saturday, Sept. 29, 2012, as “Governor’s Day to Serve,” a day dedicated to strengthening local communities through volunteer service. The governor encouraged community and faith-based organizations, civic and humanitarian groups and government agencies to participate in this day of service. The governors of Maryland and Virginia, along with the mayor of the District of Columbia, issued similar proclamations. This call to service caused me to reflect upon the volunteer efforts and community activities provided by members of The State Bar and, most notably, the Young Lawyers Section (“YLS”) Executive Committee. The July YLS meet-

ing at The Resort at Glade Springs in Raleigh County highlighted some of the things we have been doing throughout the state that are impacting the lives of countless West Virginians.

Under the leadership of past chairman Chris Gardill and District 16 representative Matthew Harvey, the YLS has taken steps towards implementing a “Wills for Heroes” program, a nationwide program that provides essential legal documents, free of charge, to first responders. These documents include wills, living wills and powers of attorney. The 501(c)(3) charitable, nonprofit Wills for Heroes Foundation supports these programs across the United States under the mission of “protecting those who protect us.” Unlike many other clinics and

pro bono legal programs, Wills for Heroes is designed to bring the services of a qualified attorney to the first responder’s doorstep. The YLS Executive Committee recently voted to begin a program in West Virginia, and anyone interested in volunteering his or her time toward this worthy cause may contact Mr. Harvey at matt_harv@yahoo.com.


Through my position as chairman of the YLS Executive Committee, I am fortunate to serve on The State Bar’s Veterans and Military Affairs Committee. This Committee is moving forward with an aggressive agenda of educating State Bar membership about the legal issues often faced by West Virginia’s veterans, and the YLS is ready and willing to support these educational efforts.

We anticipate a sizable attendance of young lawyers at an upcoming continuing legal education (“CLE”) seminar focused on the legal issues of veterans that will be held on Nov. 9, 2012, just three days before our nation celebrates Veterans Day. For more information on this CLE or to offer suggestions on content, please contact Executive Director Anita Casey at caseya@wvbar.org.

The July meeting also included discussion of the recent approval by the Supreme Court of Appeals of a three-year pilot program to help attorneys with addiction issues or physical or mental health conditions that affect their ability to practice law. Formerly called the “Committee on Lawyer Assistance and Intervention,” the new Lawyer Assistance Program will help protect the public and clients from harm that can be caused by lawyers who are impaired. The program will also educate lawyers, judges and the general public about issues related to dependency. This confidential service is funded by The State Bar but will require the help

of volunteers, both lawyers and nonlawyers, for it to be a success. Young lawyers throughout the state have recently contacted me and other members of the YLS Executive Committee about ways they can contribute to this program. More information can be obtained by calling The West Virginia State Bar at 304-558-2456.

Finally, as part of a public service and outreach initiative at our quarterly meetings, the Executive Committee collects monetary donations and non-perishable food items for distribution to groups in need in the local areas. Our July meeting resulted in a donation of \$235 to the Olive Branch Animal Rescue & Refuge Inc., a nonprofit organization located in Sistersville, Tyler County. This is just one example of how the YLS Executive Committee gives back to various communities throughout West Virginia.

Be sure to look for our upcoming meeting notices in the next Bar Blast and mark your calendars for Saturday, Sept. 29, 2012 for the “Governor’s Day to Serve.” 

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