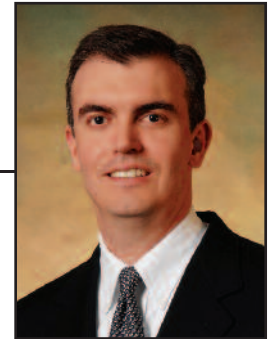


YOUNG LAWYERS

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Chairperson
Young Lawyers Section
The West Virginia State Bar



GETTING TO KNOW YOUR FELLOW ATTORNEYS

As a young lawyer, one of the more important things you can do on your way to becoming successful is develop relationships with other attorneys. In the first several months and years of practice, you will encounter many areas where you simply need someone with more experience who you can talk to, ask questions to and discuss your approach to cases and the practice of law in general. Your opponent one day in court may be your best source of advice weeks, months or even years down the road. That concept is easy to forget in your first months and years of practice when you may come in with a win-at-all-costs attitude. It is important to treat the attorneys

you encounter on a daily basis with respect so that you can call on them later in your practice if you need someone to talk to.

Technology has advanced in the years since my graduation from law school; it has opened many doors and opportunities for attorneys to network with those whom they met in law school, those with whom they work on a regular basis and those they might not have otherwise come into contact with if it were not for these advances in technology. When I began practicing, it seemed that attorneys were limited to calling upon the attorneys with whom they worked on a fairly regular basis in their area and attorneys with whom they were

familiar from their law school years. Even my law school classmates became harder and harder to find if I did not keep up with them on a regular basis. Technology has changed that. Resources are now available that allow you to keep in touch with your associates, both professionally and personally.

Don't limit yourself to only asking your other so-called "Young Lawyers" for guidance, either. The more experienced attorneys in your area may be very willing to help guide you as you work through your early years of practice. The relationships that you build can be beneficial to both you and the attorney you call on as a mentor. As you gain

insight into the practical aspects of practicing law from those who have been through it before you, you can share approaches taught in law schools today as well as new advances in technology that may not have been available when your mentor began his or her own practice. Through this information-sharing teamwork, you can help to build a better Bar and improve your own practice.


One of the projects that the Young Lawyers Executive Committee has devoted attention to over the last several months is developing a social media presence for young lawyers in the state of West Virginia. As the online community grows, it will provide a network that was unavailable to many of us when we graduated from law school. The committee initially chose to enter the social media arena using Facebook; you can find the YLS Facebook page by logging onto Facebook and searching for “West Virginia Young Lawyer Section.” You can then join the group by simply clicking “Like” on the group’s page.

As more and more attorneys join the West Virginia Young Lawyers Section’s Facebook page, the benefits of social media will become a reality. This forum will allow West Virginia’s young lawyers to interact with a broader and more diverse group of attorneys than they may otherwise have been able to do in the area where their practice is located. The page is also going to be used as a forum to distribute relevant information to members concerning events and issues of importance to young lawyers.

In that regard, you may have seen and will continue to see a request from the Young Lawyers Executive Committee in the Bar Blast to send the committee your contact information. By sending your contact information to us at wvyounglawyers@gmail.com, you will be notified as events occur throughout the state and in particular in your area. Additionally, wvyounglawyers@gmail.com is a new email address that will remain the permanent contact email for the chair of the Young Lawyers Executive Committee going forward, which will simplify the process of getting in touch with the committee and will also provide future chairs with historical information related to the past actions and communications of the committee.

In addition to the Facebook presence and new email address, the committee continues to maintain a website separate and apart from that of The West Virginia State Bar: www.wvyounglawyers.com. On

that site, you can access the *Practice Handbook* free of charge, participate in Bridge the Gap, check out upcoming events and contact your district representatives and officers.

The committee consists of representatives elected from Bar districts throughout the state. As a committee we are always looking for projects or programs that can be either of benefit to the young lawyers of the state or beneficial to the state and accomplished by young lawyers. I would encourage you, whether you are a young lawyer in your first year of practice or a seasoned attorney with decades of practice, to contact your district representatives with ideas that you think may fit within the mission of the Young Lawyers Executive Committee, or send your questions, comments and suggestions to wvyounglawyers@gmail.com. 

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