

## YOUNG LAWYERS

Jason C. Pizatella

Chairperson  
Young Lawyers Section  
The West Virginia State Bar



## RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE YLS AND THE COLLEGE OF LAW

As my term as Chairman of the Young Lawyers Section of the West Virginia State Bar (YLS) comes to an end, I found myself reflecting on the renewed relationship between the YLS and the West Virginia University College of Law. For those that may be unfamiliar, a third-year law student from the College of Law appointed by the Dean has a seat on the YLS Executive Committee. This year we have had the great fortune of being joined by Michael Nissim-Sabat, a native of Williamsburg, Va. and a graduate of the University of Mary Washington and Marshall University. Michael attended each of our meetings and provided the

members with a detailed update of everything happening at the College of Law.

One of the most interesting topics of discussion, of course, has been the progress of the \$25 million addition and renovation project slated to be fully complete in mid-2015. As the only law school in the State, it is important for us as young lawyers to connect with the many soon-to-be graduates and future members of the West Virginia State Bar because each new member automatically joins the YLS. This outreach has allowed our group to develop a lunchtime lecture series concerning topics relevant to young lawyers as well as provide ideas for

the newly improved and updated “Bridge the Gap” seminar.

Most notably, however, from our discussions with Michael has been the importance of the expanded clinical programs now offered at the College of Law. I can remember a time not that long ago when the general civil practice “law clinic” was the only offering available. Now, 3Ls have the opportunity to be a part of one of only a handful of United States Supreme Court clinics nationwide where students research and draft petitions for certiorari, as well as write briefs, working primarily on criminal, immigration, prisoner, and civil liberties appeals. Another exciting clinical

law option is the West Virginia Innocence Project, a program that brings together third-year law students and law school faculty dedicated to post-conviction litigation and policy reform. The list literally goes on as students may elect to participate in the following clinical programs:

- Child & Family Law
- Low Income Taxpayer
- Veterans Assistance
- Entrepreneurship
- Immigration
- Land Use and Sustainable Development Law

Moreover, and given the State of West Virginia's enviable position as national leader in energy, the

establishment of the Center for Energy and Sustainable Development did not go unnoticed. After serving almost a year as the YLS Chairman, and as a member of the College of Law Visiting Committee, I cannot overstate the value of having a representative from the law school on the Executive Committee as we strive to make the practice of law more engaging for our colleagues.

Finally, I would be doing a huge disservice if I did not congratulate Dean Joyce McConnell and the faculty, staff, and students at the College of Law on the recent \$7.5 million gift from the Hazel Ruby McQuain Charitable Trust, the largest capital gift in the College's history. I think the Dean's words were extremely appropriate when she described the gift as "transformative."

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Johanna Fisher Stewart  
Attorney at Law

P.O. Box 4297  
Morgantown, WV 26504  
304-599-6770