

## YOUNG LAWYERS

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# THE YOUNG LAWYERS SECTION EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE'S YEAR IN REVIEW

It seems like just yesterday that I began my term as chairperson for the West Virginia State Bar Young Lawyers Section Executive Committee (EC) and wrote my first article for *The West Virginia Lawyer*. Now, as my term draws to a close, I find myself writing my last article. As quickly as this past year seemed to go by, I am happy to report that the EC made great progress toward the goals outlined in my first article.

In that first article, I listed the three primary goals for the EC: (1) continue and strengthen each of our existing programs; (2) complete several projects on which the Executive Committee has been working; and (3) expand the services that the EC provides to its members. The following paragraphs will summarize the progress the EC has made toward each of these goals.

Goal No. 1: Over the past year, the EC has worked hard to ensure each of the programs it supports continues to operate efficiently and effectively. One example of these efforts is the consolidation of several programs dedicated to Young Lawyer volunteer opportunities within our primary and secondary schools. These programs include the Department of Education Outreach, West Virginia Law Adventure and Bullyproof. The Department of Education Outreach Program pairs school teachers looking for guest speakers on topics such as civics and government with Young Lawyers who are interested in volunteering within our schools. The EC sub-committee responsible for administering the West Virginia Law Adventure Program develops case materials that participating middle school

students use to script their own mock trials. Members of the EC then grade each of the scripts. The participants from each grade level with the highest score on their mock trial scripts are invited to Charleston to perform their mock trials for a panel of judges. Bullyproof is a new program that was featured in the July-September 2014 edition of the magazine. This program provides Young Lawyers with information to present to schools regarding the bullying epidemic.

Historically, participation in the Department of Education Outreach and West Virginia Law Adventure Programs has been lower than expected. The EC has determined that the most efficient way to increase participation in these programs is to consolidate them into a single resource that is easily accessible to both teach-

ers and Young Lawyers. In the near future, a tab will be added to the Young Lawyer Section (YLS) website, [www.wvyounglawyers.com](http://www.wvyounglawyers.com), titled Department of Education Resources. This tab will take users to links for each of the programs listed above. Here, Young Lawyers will be able to sign up as volunteers for the various programs and teachers can find Young Lawyers in their area that are willing to volunteer their time. This ease of communication between teachers and Young Lawyers will hopefully lead to greater participation in these important programs.

Goal No. 2: As mentioned in the April – June 2014 YLS article, the Wills for Heroes and Mentoring Programs were still in the planning stages. In the past year, the EC made great progress on both of these programs. All of the administrative materials for the Wills for Heroes Program have been developed. The EC is now in the process of identifying first responders interested in participating in the program. After the first responders are identified, they will receive a packet of materials to assist them with the preparation of their respective wills. Participating first responders then review the materials and provide the required information to the Young Lawyers participating in the program. Next, the Young Lawyers input the information into the appropriate will template. When the templates are complete, all of the participating first responders will meet with the Young Lawyers and receive their respective wills. Notaries and witnesses will be on-site to ensure proper execution of the wills.

Like the Wills for Heroes Program, the preliminary work for the Mentorship Program has also been completed. Those attorneys who have been licensed to practice for 10 years or more will be eligible to participate in the program as a mentor. The State Bar will send solicitations for mentors via email to all eligible attorneys. Those attorneys who are willing to serve as mentors can also sign up for the program on the

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YLS website. Information regarding the Mentorship Program will be sent to Young Lawyers via email from the State Bar. Newly admitted attorneys will receive information regarding the program in conjunction with the Bridge-the-Gap Program.

Goal No. 3: Responding to member concerns is an important service that was not mentioned the April – June 2014 YLS article. One example of the EC's performance of this service was the subject of YLS article in the October – December 2014 edition of the magazine

regarding issues related to Public Defender Services (PDS). This article precipitated a very informative and productive meeting between State Bar representatives, including members of the EC leadership, and representatives of PDS, including the executive director. During this meeting, the participants discussed issues of concern for those lawyers providing court-appointed criminal defense services and the issues facing PDS. The meeting also provided the participants with an opportunity to discuss potential solutions to these issues in a cooperative and collaborative manner. Over the coming months, the State Bar will be working with PDS to provide opportunities for members of the Bar to meet with PDS representatives to discuss their concerns and learn about the efforts PDS is undertaking to respond to those issues. In an effort to facilitate this type interaction between the EC and its constituents in the future, Young Lawyers will be able to post their concerns under a tab on the YLS website.

The progress toward the three goals discussed above is only a small sample of the work the EC has accomplished in the last year. As my term as chairperson comes to a close, I would like to thank each member of the EC. The EC would not be able to accomplish its mission without their dedication and hard work. Finally, I would encourage each Young Lawyer to volunteer their services in one or more of the many programs administered by the EC. **WVL**