

## YOUNG LAWYERS

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Chair  
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## YOUNG LAWYER BOARD: HOW WE CAN SUPPORT YOU

As the new Chair of the Young Lawyer Board, please allow me to introduce myself. I am a first-generation college graduate and the only person in my family to enter the legal field. As a native West Virginian, born and raised in Parkersburg, it was important for me to stay in state for my education. In 2014, I obtained my bachelor's degree in political science and sociology from Shepherd University. Three years later, I graduated with my law degree from the West Virginia University College of Law. After law school, I served as law clerk to the Honorable Judge Bridget Cohee of the 23rd Judicial Circuit (Jefferson and Berkeley). After my clerkship, I returned home to Parkersburg. Here, I reside with my husband John Isner, who is the newly elected Secretary of the Young Lawyer Board, and our two dogs, Bosley and Bonney. Since

December 2018, I have worked in house at Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield. My work primarily focuses on regulatory compliance.

Honestly, when I was elected to serve on the Young Lawyer Board as the District 3 representative in 2019, I knew little about the Young Lawyer Section or what the board even did. Now, five years later, as I start my year as Chair of the Young Lawyer Board, I want to share with you who we are and what we do and extend an invitation to you to reach out, because the Young Lawyer Board stands ready to lead and assist our members.

The Young Lawyer Section of the West Virginia State Bar was created to assist new lawyers in making the transition between law school and the practice of law by providing a means for personal and professional growth while encouraging participation in the activities of the Bar. The

Young Lawyer Section implements and contributes to programs that promote education, leadership and public service and assists the Bar in its mission to improve the administration of justice and increase the legal services provided to the citizens of West Virginia.<sup>1</sup> All West Virginia State Bar members who either (1) have been admitted to practice in West Virginia for 10 years or less or (2) are 35 years of age or under are automatically members of the Young Lawyer Section.

The Young Lawyer Board is charged with administration of the affairs of the Young Lawyer Section, and to serve the mission of implementing and contributing to programs that promote education, leadership and public service. The Board is made up of 21 voting members, and one law student at the WVU College of Law as a non-voting member. The voting

members included regionally elected representatives, the Chair, the Chair-Elect, the Secretary, the immediate past Chair and one African American representative. As a Board we are eager to continue to fulfill our mission and serve our members. Here are some of our programs and projects:

### Bridge the Gap


All newly admitted members to the West Virginia State Bar are required to complete a mandatory “Bridge the Gap” program within 24 months of being admitted to the Bar. The Young Lawyer Board successfully holds two programs a year at different locations in the state. This past year, we held two very successful in-person “Bridge the Gap” programs in Clarksburg and Charleston. We have been working hard to execute our next program, which will be held in Morgantown this fall. During these programs, young lawyers have the opportunity to meet and network with other Young Lawyer Section members, Young Lawyer Board representatives, judges, law professors, managing partners of law firms and others such as representatives from JLAP and ODC. In addition, the Board holds a panel discussion for the newly admitted lawyers to gain some insight and mentorship from lawyers who recently stood in their position.

### Practice Handbook

The Young Lawyer Board has compiled a Practice Handbook with several chapters dedicated to different practice areas. The handbook can be found at our website <https://wvyounglawyers.com/practice-handbook/>. This is a great resource for young lawyers or even more experienced lawyers who might be venturing into a new practice area. Currently the Board is working on a project to update the chapters of the handbook. If you are interested in authoring or updating a chapter, please feel free to reach out to me.

### Service Projects

At its core the legal profession is one of service. The Young Lawyer Board strives to complete multiple community service-based projects annually. District representatives often organize yearly holiday drives in their local districts. For example, last year in District 3, with the monetary assistance of the Wood County Bar Association, we were able to provide holiday gifts for a deserving family in Wood County. Additionally, with the assistance of our law student representative MacKenzie Thaxton, members of the Board of Governors and Young Lawyer Board donated professional clothing for the WVU College of Law Clothing Closet. The clothing closet helps provide law students access to professional clothing for things like on-campus interviews. If you know of a need in your area or have an idea of a service project the Young Lawyer Board could assist you with, please reach out to your district representative, whom you can find at <https://wvyounglawyers.com/about-us/executive-committee/>.

Ultimately, I am genuinely humbled and excited by the opportunity to serve the State Bar and the young lawyers in West Virginia. I am also proud to serve alongside Shannon Smith, the new President of the West Virginia State Bar, who once served in my position as Chair of the Young Lawyer Board (previously known as the Young Lawyer Section Executive Committee). Again, as a Board we are here to serve and support you. If you have any questions or would like to become more involved with the Young Lawyer Section, please contact me at [taylor.coplin@highmark.com](mailto:taylor.coplin@highmark.com). I look forward to my year as Chair and continuing to support and grow the programs we offer. 

### Endnote

1. W.Va. State Bar Rules & Regulations Rule 13