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Your YLS Offers Plenty of Opportunities to Serve Our Communities

The past few years, the majority of my practice has been in jurisdictions outside of Alabama. As a result, there were many times when I truly felt like the outsider that I was. As you would expect, I did not have many common bonds with the other lawyers involved in my cases. I did not attend the same college or law school, did not know the same people from various local towns and did not cheer for the same sports teams. Occasionally, this void appeared to affect the very communication and atmosphere of the litigation. I think the lack of a common bond made it easier for some opposing counsel, certainly not all, to act in ways that were less than professional. Issues that should have been contested, but yet done so respectfully, often were not handled in a very dignified manner. History has taught us well that it is always easier to mistreat individuals when

you define them as outsiders or something less than human. Of course, it may just have been that I was the one who was stubborn and hard to get along with, but I do not typically experience such a lack of civility among members of our own bar or with professionals with whom a common bond is present. My observation is not a criticism of any other state bar. Clearly, my limited experience does not justify any sort of extrapolation beyond the individuals with whom I dealt.

Because of my own experience, I began thinking about the role that communal bonds have on our relationships in and out of the legal profession. For many reasons, our collective rapport with the non-legal community has become more conflicted over the years. The frayed bindings of our relationship with society is evidenced by the recent, and increasing, number of violent attacks against both lawyers and judges

(and/or their families). Of course, I am mindful of the calculated and mostly political attacks against our profession that some have argued is at the root of this wave of violence. Regardless of the actual cause, I am confident that part of the solution lies in a renewed interest in our role in the communities where we serve and live.

The Young Lawyers' Section of the Alabama State Bar provides an excellent opportunity for any person to get more involved in the community. Through the year, we have a large number of service projects where our members really get to make a difference in people's lives. Our service projects are as diverse as our membership. We help many groups in communities all over the state. Some of our activities include mentoring and speaking to students in grades K-12 and visiting and working with children who are physically and mentally challenged. In times of natural disaster, we provide assistance in the cleanup and rebuilding of communities as well as by helping many victims solve their legal

problems. Additionally, we are very proud to host minority pre-law conferences in both Montgomery and Birmingham. Our participation in these service projects endear our members both to the communities we serve and to each other. Some of my most fulfilling relationships are those that were developed as a result of my involvement with your YLS.

I once heard former United States Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor say, "Personal relationships lie at the heart of the work that lawyers do. Despite our vast technological advances, the human dimension remains constant." Your Young Lawyers' Section strives to honor Justice O'Connor's sentiments and welcomes your participation in our future events. For more information, go to our Web site at www.alabamays.org.

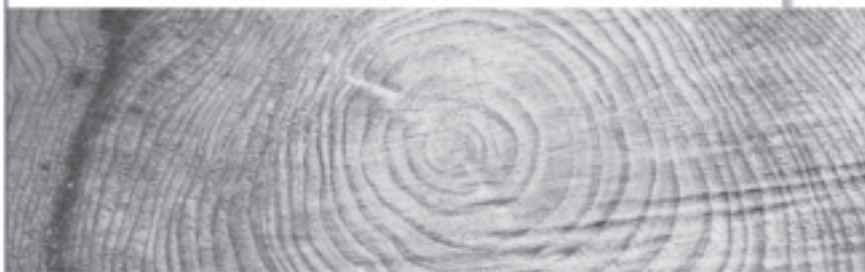
And, don't forget—your Young Lawyers' Section is having its annual CLE in Sandestin May 18-19, 2007. This is always a well-attended event that promises to be lots of fun. Everyone's invited! ■



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