



*Leadership Forum Session 1*

# LEADERSHIP FORUM AT AGE 15: A Year to Reflect, Renew and Reenergize

*By Leadership Forum Alumni*

Since its inception in 2005, the Alabama State Bar Leadership Forum (“LF”)

has graduated nearly 400 lawyer servant-leaders and sent them back into law firms, businesses, non-profits and governmental entities across the state to carry out the mission of the LF. Thanks to the insight and vision of Assistant Executive Director Ed Patterson, the state bar’s Board of Bar Commissioners created the forum “to produce committed and involved lawyers willing to take significant leadership roles in local and state bars, and serve as role models in matters of ethics and professionalism.” Leadership Forum

graduates are equipped not only to influence the bar, but to shape the future of the state. They are models of ethical and professional behavior both within and outside the legal community.

Over the last 14 years, the program has produced two bar presidents (and a president-elect), more than 25 Bar Commissioners, 10 presidents of the Young Lawyers’ Section, more than 20 judges and countless local bar leaders. Recognizing the need for servant-minded bar and community leadership training, under Patterson’s leadership and with the consistent support of the BBC, the LF has become a nationally-recognized, cutting-edge

leadership program. The forum sets the standard for other state bars and legal organizations to follow. In 2013, the American Bar Association awarded the LF the E. Smythe Gambrell Professionalism Award, the nation's leading award honoring the best professionalism programs and practices of law schools, bar associations, professional commissions and other law-related organizations.

This year's retirement of Patterson and the addition of Ashley Penhale as the bar's new director of programs gave the Leadership Forum the opportunity to celebrate its 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary by taking a strategic one-year pause in its typical annual class structure. With

the support of bar staff and leadership, the LF Section has taken 2019 to focus on LF alumni by engaging them in reflecting on what has worked well in the past and what improvements they could recommend, as well as joining with other bar leaders to plan for the future of the forum.

To accomplish this goal, under the leadership of LF alumni including ASB President-Elect Christy Crow, Bar Commissioner George Parker, former LF Alumni Section Executive Council member Kitty Brown and LF Alumni Section President Janine Smith, three Leadership Forum Alumni summits were held in Montgomery and Birmingham in

February and April. While each summit was specifically designed for a targeted group of LF classes, all alums were invited to attend any and all summits. Each summit enjoyed a high rate of participation and engagement from LF alumni, giving true testament to the impact that this program has had on so many over the past 15 years.

Each summit kicked off with a Thursday night social for forum alumni to reconnect and network. In Birmingham, those events were held at Top Golf and The Woolworth, and in Montgomery participants enjoyed a Montgomery Biscuits baseball game. The following morning, the summit was



*Leadership Forum Session 2*



*Leadership Forum Session 3*

split into two sessions. The initial session featured alumni speakers who shared their life experiences in the form of brief “Ed Talks,” named in honor of Patterson and his lasting impact on the program.

Summit speakers included Ed Sledge, Judge Bess Creswell, Jenna Bedsole, Judge Pamela Higgins, AAJ President-Elect Josh Hayes, Pooja Chawla, Bar Commissioner Emily Baggett, Bar Commissioner Brett King, Judge Craig Cargile, state bar General Counsel Roman Shaul, Judge Jim Hughey, Bar Commissioner Audrey Strawbridge, Judge Gray Borden, Holly Sawyer, Bar Commissioner John Brinkley, Jaffe Pickett, Judge Emily Marks, Wilson Green, Heather Fann, Ashley Peinhardt, Judge John England, Judge Adrian Johnson, George Newton, Starr Drum, Bar Commissioner and former ASB Vice President Diandra Debrosse and Rip Andrews. The LF Alumni Section thanks this outstanding group

of lawyers and judges for taking the time to share their stories.

Following the “Ed Talks,” alumni were separated into focus groups for discussions led by LF alumni facilitators Othni Latham, Nathan Dickson and Adam Plant. Judge Shera Grant, Janine Smith and Adam Israel served as reporters for these sessions. The focus sessions resulted in multiple ideas that will be implemented in the near future, including creating an active LISTSERV for alumni, organizing regular regional socials and increasing involvement by alumni in future bar CLE programs. In addition, the “Ed Talks” were filmed and will be included in future LF promotional and marketing materials.

Special thanks to LF alumni Cassandra Adams, Brandy Robertson, Andrew Nix, Chris Waller and Ashley Peinhardt, and state bar Director of Programs Ashley Penhale, Administrative Assistant to the Director of Programs Robyn Bernier and



*LF Alumni Soo Seok Yang and Cassandra Adams*

Communications Co-ordinator Alex Edwards for their hard work in planning and executing the sessions.

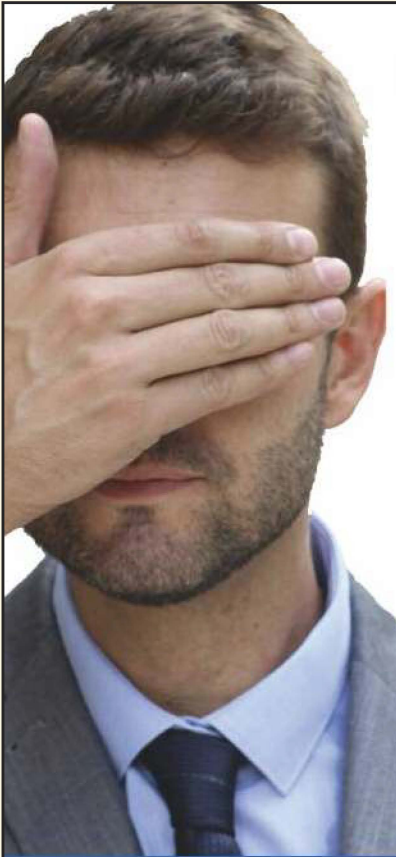
The future of the LF is bright. The 2019 summits resulted in an invigorated group of LF alumni, which in turn will result in an invigorated program going forward. All bar members are encouraged to make plans to nominate qualified



candidates to be a part of LF Class 15. Applications will be available on the bar's website in the fall of 2019 for the 2020 Class. Those

lawyers whose last year of eligibility fell within 2019 are invited to apply for the 2020 class. More information about the LF summits


and excerpts from the "Ed Talks" will be presented at the state bar's Annual Meeting on Thursday at 2:00 p.m. ▲



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