



# Worth the Price of Admission

By Aidan R. Welsh

Aidan R. Welsh is chair of the Connecticut Bar Association Young Lawyers Section for the 2017-2018 bar year. She is partner at Schoonmaker George & Blomberg PC in Greenwich, where she handles complex divorce and family law actions involving significant assets and client custody issues. Attorney Welsh frequently speaks on issues related to family law for the CBA and has authored several publications in this field. She graduated with honors from UConn School of Law in 2006.

"The more effort you put into it, the more you will get out of it." This is what I told the members of the Connecticut Bar Association Young Lawyers Section Executive Committee at our recent annual Leadership Retreat Conference. Prior to each bar year, the executive committee of the CBA Young Lawyers Section organizes and runs a leadership retreat for our executive committee members, which consists of approximately 50 lawyers who are eligible for participation in the Young Lawyers Section. These lawyers practice in over 20 different practice areas, come from a diverse population, and represent some of the best and brightest future leaders of our profession. The main purpose of this leadership conference is to plan for the upcoming bar year, provide networking opportunities for young lawyers, and train young lawyers to become future

leaders of the CBA and the legal profession. My personal goal as chair of the YLS is to motivate the motivated—an easy but important task, given the current climate of association involvement.

Over the past several years, the current and past leaders of the CBA have focused on long-term planning and brainstorming to increase membership, maintain current membership, and strategize ways to ensure that the organization is, and remains, an organization that Connecticut lawyers desire to be a part of. With the landscape of legal practice changing, so too must the CBA. As we seek ways to accomplish these tasks, I can certainly say that, as a leader in the YLS for the past seven years, it is not only essential to the growth and development of the association to encourage the involvement of young lawyers, but it is also

equally important for the growth and development of young lawyers themselves to get involved. Involvement in the CBA is more than worth the price of admission.

When I said, "The more effort you put into it, the more you will get out of it," I was referring to involvement in the CBA, specifically the YLS. I truly believe that the more involved young lawyers become, more doors will open for them. I have seen this in my own practice and career, and I desire for my fellow members to have the same experience.

Members of the Young Lawyers Section are exposed to not only attending continuing legal education programs, but they also become the driving force behind the planning and organization of them. This section provides many young lawyers with opportunities to speak,

present, and publish. Successful young lawyers do not just want to have their names on a shingle one day, they want to have people know and recognize their names now. Positive name recognition is important to client and practice development, garnering respect from fellow professionals and members of the judiciary, and promotion and encouragement of their confidence and self-growth. In addition to all of these benefits of participation, YLS also organizes and sponsors many networking events for members to mingle with senior bar members, members of the judiciary, and outside professionals. These opportunities to network with future employers, potential clients, and referral sources are essential to the development of any young lawyer irrespective of what type of job they have now and in the future. Involvement in the CBA can

pave the way to a successful and worthwhile legal career. For example, at the leadership conference, our members had the opportunity to meet Connecticut Supreme Court Justice Gregory D'Auria during the annual luncheon. Justice D'Auria spoke to the group about the importance and benefits of young lawyers working on pro bono matters, and gave wonderful insight from behind the bench of what makes a good legal presentation in the courtroom.

The YLS is off to a great start as we enter the 2017-2018 bar year. Our recent leadership conference was a success, many CLEs have been planned and organized, and networking events brainstormed. Our CLE programming will kick off in September and in the fall, we will hold our annual pro bono fair where we introduce members of the bar to various nonprofits across the state in need of lawyers willing to provide hours of free

legal service to their clients. We are also working on a public service initiative that will include joining forces with Habitat for Humanity and introduce the ABA Anti-Bullying Alliance to local classrooms. As a section, we also recognize, that in order to grow our membership base, we need to be directly involved with the local law schools. To this end, we are working hard on making connections with them to involve students in our programming and networking efforts. We look forward to getting more young lawyers involved this year and encourage all to join us in our efforts.

So, as I said—and will say again—being involved in the CBA, specifically the Young Lawyers Section, is more than worth the price of admission. The experience you will receive, and the doors that will open, are priceless. **CL**



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