



## That's a Wrap

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 a 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.

What a way to end my year as chair of the Young Lawyers Section. On May 21, 2018, I found myself, along with my six-year-old son, walking up the marble steps of our country's most impressive courthouse. On this day, I, along with 30 other members of our bar, were scheduled to be sworn-in before the United States Supreme Court. This event was the culmination of my journey as chair, but let's start at the beginning.

If you read my first article as chair in *Connecticut Lawyer* then you know that I have been an active member of the Connecticut Bar Association for many years. I joined immediately after graduating from law school and several years into practice I was appointed to the executive committee of the Young Lawyers Section. I ini-

tially served as co-chair of the YLS Family Law Committee and moved up through the ranks of director and officer. Seven years later, I was looking up *Robert's Rules of Order* for the 100th time, ready to commence my first meeting as chair.

My main goal was to increase opportunities for young lawyers to get involved in our local and legal communities, and organize programs that would improve and further hone lawyers' legal skills. When I look back on this past year, I am certain this goal was met and want to share our successes with all of you as we as a section now look to next year and beyond.

We started the year with our Annual Executive Leadership Retreat for members of the executive committee. This retreat is designed to plan our bar year and teach our new leaders how to lead. This process is essential for our success as a section. Justice D'Auria of the Connecticut Supreme Court joined us at our luncheon. He spoke with our future leaders about the importance of mentorship and pro bono involvement—two key pillars of the Young Lawyers Section.

During and after the leadership retreat we got right to work planning our year. Part of the planning revolved around creating and organizing various types of networking events for young and senior lawyers. These events were led by my wonderful team of directors and committee chairs. Early on in the bar year, my pro bono director, Melanie Dkyas, ran our annual Pro Bono Fair in October. The organization of this event changed this year to help drive attendance from more lawyers in the community. We worked hand in hand with Quinnipiac University School of Law as well as the University of Connecticut School of Law to hold two separate events on the same day, highlighting local nonprofit organizations needing pro bono assistance from lawyers. This was a perfect opportunity to introduce lawyers to the many opportunities in the legal community to get involved as well as provide a networking opportunity to mix and mingle with leaders of the bar.

This year, we again ran our Tasting Series, a social networking event held at a local brewery and vineyard. Most recently, we organized and held two golf events. On May

16, we held our Annual Women's Professional Golf Event sponsored by the Women in the Law Committee. This is always a favorite event among lawyers. It provides an opportunity to work with a pro and participate in a nine-hole tournament. We also turned our year-end event into a casual golf tournament to encourage involvement in our section, and the weather was perfect.

In addition to providing networking opportunities for young lawyers to get involved in our legal community, another major goal was to create opportunities to give back to our local communities. At the helm of this task was my Public Service Director Joanna Kornafel. Attorney Kornafel organized several different clothing and supply drives for the benefit of several local organizations. In December, with the sponsorship of Faxon Law Group, we held a widely attended holiday event, which we used as a drop off location for collections. We collected numerous boxes of donations for My Sister's Place, a nonprofit organization located in the Hartford area, and raised monetary donations for CT Coalition to End Homelessness. Most recently at our year-end meeting and golf tournament, we collected work clothes donations for Dress for Success and a veterans' organization. One of my personal favorite events of the year was our project with Habitat for Humanity. The CBA teamed up with other organizations for the day to help build homes in Hartford. Nothing feels better than swinging a hammer and feeling like you truly accomplished something for the benefit of someone else.

Probably the most important and time consuming task the YLS performs during the year is the planning of continuing legal education programs for the association. My fantastic CLE directors, Kyle McClain and Joshua Devine, skillfully organized our CLEs and worked with all of my wonderful co-chairs to put on successful and well-attended educational programs. It is our duty as lawyers to always continue to learn and improve our skills. This is true for all lawyers, not only for young lawyers. It is a great task that the YLS puts on all these wonderful programs.

One of my final programs of the year was

the US Supreme Court Swearing-in. Without the time and dedication of Suphi Philip, Shari Shore, and the CBA Staff this event would not have been possible. More than 30 members of the Connecticut bar traveled to Washington, DC to be sworn-in on May 21, 2018. This was an incredibly inspiring and special day. I asked my young son to join me, figuring he would be impressed by the building and interested in this learning experience with mom. Perhaps I thought we needed another lawyer in the family! (We already have seven and that is just counting close family!) No matter how bored he might have been, he looked proud, and that made the experience worth it.

May 21 was decision day. To us in Washington, DC this meant seven out of the nine justices were present for our swearing in and we had the opportunity to hear Justice Gorsuch render his decision in the case of *Epic Systems v. Lewis*, a decision that may forever alter employee/employer relationships. If that was not exciting enough, out came Justice Ginsburg wearing her infamous dissent collar. She let the Court and all of us sitting there know what she thought of the majority's opinion.

As we exited the grand courtroom, much to our surprise, Justice Ginsburg's clerk announced that she wanted to meet with us

all. When she walked in, the silence in the room was deafening. I'm not sure I have ever experienced such a reaction to one single person. She casually talked to us about her decisions, her walk on the red carpet at the premier of *RBG*, and had us all in stitches about her comments on Stephen Colbert. Impressive is an understatement. After this once in a lifetime opportunity, we were joined at our luncheon by Sam Simon, Senator Blumenthal's chief counsel. He shared with us his experience on the hill as a government lawyer in the Trump era, and told us about his role as chief counsel to an active senator. It was a fitting end to the event to hear from a young lawyer who has found great success at our nation's capital.

The moment of walking up those marble steps and joining the ranks of some of the most well-known lawyers of our time is a memory I will not forget. More importantly, what I will not forget is my time and experience working with the Young Lawyers Section. As I said in my first article, I truly would not be where I am today in my career without this experience. I would like to take the opportunity to thank all the leaders who came before me and mentored me, and all the leaders who will come after me. Leaders are born out of this section of the bar. **CL**

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