

# The YLS Executive Committee and Accountability for its 2021-2022 Initiatives

By JOSHUA J. DEVINE

**S**pring is here and for many of you, so is a return to the traditional in-the-office work setting (albeit for some, like me, you may have already been back in the office in a modified hybrid form). For me, it has felt wonderful to get out of the house and to be back in the office three days a week. The flexibility to work from home two days a week has been great. I save on commuting expenses and it also enables me to focus an entire day on critical work assignments, without the distractions of preparing for commuting to and spending the day in the office. That said, I've also truly enjoyed resuming in-person meetings versus what seemed like day-long Zoom meetings for nearly two years. In addition to the arrival of spring and some return to normalcy, it's also that time of year when we appreciate that the close of the bar year is quickly approaching. This is my fifth column as chair of the YLS for the 2021 – 2022 bar year. My final message will come this summer, only months from now. To say the past two years have been unprecedented would be an understatement. No one could have predicted what we've all just gone through and how the world has changed in so many ways. Time has surely gone by quickly for me. But for all of us, the future looks bright!

Throughout the year I provided you with updates on the challenge I issued to the YLS Executive Committee to provide 1,000 total hours of combined pro bono and volunteer services to our local communities. I thought now would be a good time to share what we've achieved in that

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regard as well as where we stand with some other key initiatives.

## **Pro Bono and Volunteerism (Completed More Than 600 of our 1,000 hour goal)**

At our annual leadership retreat in August of 2021, the YLS Executive Committee was divided into nine teams. Typically, these groupings are created with the expectation that each team will organize a fun non-CLE social event throughout the bar year for YLS members. However, this year these groupings served a dual role in also being the YLS Executive Committee teams for the Pro Bono Challenge, with the team with the most volunteer hours donated in their communities through pro bono work to be honored with an award in June. Of the nine teams, Team Four, made up of Sara Dickson, John Russo, Jr., Michael Curley, Kelly Scott, Hannah Kalichman, and Kara Zarchin currently leads the way in terms of both hours and accountability with nearly every member participating and, as a group, accruing close to 200 hours of the more than 600 hours that the YLS Executive Committee has provided in pro bono and volunteer services.

## **Prelaw Symposium and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**

Scott Garosshen and Leland Moore, the YLS Executive Committee's civics education directors, have successfully led a committee made up of Haseeb Khan and Nicole Fluckiger in planning and coordinating a Prelaw Symposium, with the goal of bringing together approximately 125 high school students in the greater New Haven and Middletown areas and Connecticut legal professionals to discuss topics beginning with the impact of the legal profession on society and concluding with strategies to navigate the path to a legal career. The revitalization of this program is one of our pipeline initiatives to nurture diversity, equity, and inclusion in the profession. Our goal is to work with high school students to ensure folks from a diverse array of backgrounds have the resources and network to make a legal career a reality.

## **CBA Membership Growth**

Growth of the Connecticut Bar Association, and specifically the Young Lawyers Section, was another goal for both myself as chair and the YLS Executive Commit-

tee this year. Despite the challenges of the ongoing pandemic, the YLS Executive Committee has put on successful networking events nearly every month, hitting the capped registration numbers on multiple occasions. While it is not common to place a cap on registration, this has been a safety measure implemented during the pandemic to ensure we were offering both valuable and safe events as we navigated the need to social distance. As we head into the closing months of the bar year, I expect that success to carry on as we offer our year-end event at a Hartford Yard Goats game for all YLS members and their families to attend as well as other networking and CLE opportunities. Lastly, our YLS Executive Committee members have been hard at work planning CLEs every week on a variety of topics and practice areas for young lawyers, which provides us with an opportunity to both learn from and network with talented attorneys throughout the state.

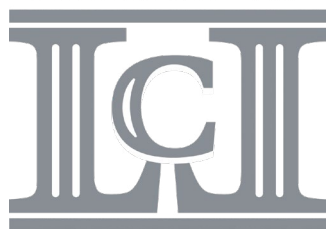
As we all edge ever closer to a return to both social and workplace normalcy (or



whatever our post pandemic professional lives evolve to be) and the end of the bar year, I'd like to remind all our members that our individual accountability is key to driving our continued successes. I do hope this article serves as both an update on some of our events as well as an accountability and progress check-in for the Executive Committee. If you are interested in more details on any of our events, please reach out to me directly. If

you want to challenge or see something new from the YLS Executive Committee, please also reach out and let me know that as well. While my time as chair is quickly ending in a few months, it is my intention to leave the YLS Executive Committee primed for continued success. In that regard, I would appreciate any thoughts you might have as I prepare to close out my term and pass the torch to the incoming chair. ■

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