

Thank You!

By JOSHUA J. DEVINE

This will be my last article as the outgoing chair of the Young Lawyers Section. As the summer is well underway, I do hope you are taking time to enjoy the few warm weather months we have here in New England with your family and friends. I want to thank you for taking the time to read what I have written in these articles, and I hope you have found them insightful and at times thought-provoking. I also want to take a few moments to thank a few others, some of whom you will hear and see in the years to come as emerging leaders in the Young Lawyers Section.

First, I want to thank the 53 YLS Executive Committee members for their hard work and incredible dedication this year. I set several lofty goals for them, and I am pleased to report that nearly all of them were not only met but many were exceeded! Turning to the accountability I've spoken about previously—I am happy to report that the YLS Executive Committee members have provided over 1,000 hours of pro bono and volunteer services to individuals and organizations throughout the state. Your incoming officers—Chris Klepps, Sara Dickson, Vianca Malik, and Trent LaLima—were all instrumental in several ways this year as well, whether it be leading a group in organizing the annual Holiday Party (Sara), tracking pro bono and volunteer hours (Vianca), or leading a group in organizing the year-end event (Chris and Trent). To all of you, thank you for your sharing your time and leadership with the Young Lawyers Section. I look forward to many of you returning next year

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where I am certain you will all continue to succeed.

Next, I would like to thank my professional mentors. Bonnie Kumiega, a Shareholder with Updike Kelly & Spellacy PC, provided me with my first oppor-

ed my efforts and continued leadership growth with the Young Lawyers Section while also guiding me on the transition to being a successful in-house counsel. Thank you, both of you, for your professional support and guidance along my career journey.

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tunity to practice in an established firm, providing me with the guidance and training necessary to be a successful attorney. She was and remains instrumental in helping me build my brand and learning the art of successful networking. I'd also like to thank Brian DuPerre, Deputy General Counsel and Global Chief Privacy Officer for UnitedHealthcare. Brian, much like Bonnie, has support-

Mentors matter. They are the compass that guides us to where we want to go and who we want to become. All too often young lawyers struggle to find mentors to help them build their brand and counsel them early in their career journey, where their impact is most important. If you need a mentor, please let me know. If I or others on the YLS Executive Committee are not a match for you, we

would be happy to help you connect with others within the Bar Association who might be.

I would be remiss if I did not take the time to thank my family and the unyielding support I am so very fortunate to have at home. My wife, Kristina, has supported me and my volunteering in organizations such as the Connecticut Bar Association for as long as we have been together. And now with three children at home and her own very busy and successful career, she continues to support and encourage me to push myself. I know with certainty that I would not have been able to serve in the capacity I have without her loyal partnership in all of this. Thank you, Kristina, for all that you do to support me and care for our family while also driving your own professional success.

Lastly, the Connecticut Bar Association and the Young Lawyers Section provided me with the opportunity to network and meet with colleagues throughout the



state, many for whom I would not have otherwise had the opportunity to meet. I am and will remain forever grateful for this opportunity and time in my career. Thank you, to all of you at the Connecticut Bar Association.

I hope you have taken some of the challenges and insights I've provided throughout the year to push yourself far-

ther outside of your comfort zone, or to maybe set loftier goals, and find someone to hold you accountable. If you did, I'm sure you have recognized the professional growth and development that comes with intentional self-reflection and self-development.

I'm certain our paths will continue to cross. —Josh ■

CBA Annual Meeting Speech

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office while he made calls to opposing counsel. It is much harder to do that now. So, before you get into the weeds of your case, start out conversations on a personal note, especially coming out of the pandemic where we all have had common struggles and losses in our practices and personal lives. Compassion and empathy need to replace anger and apathy. And yes, it is true, you do get more with honey than vinegar!

I also want to address the importance of lawyer wellbeing! Lawyer burnout is a serious problem. While legal work can be incredibly fulfilling, it can also, by nature, be stressful and downright exhausting. Industry-wide, ultra-competitive professional cultures and excessive hours are leading to overworked lawyers and widespread wellness and mental health struggles. Consider the following

lawyer burnout statistic: A 2020 ALM study revealed that 31 percent of lawyers feel depressed; 21 percent have a problem with alcohol; 28 percent suffer from depression; and 20 percent struggle with chronic anxiety. Now add two years of dealing with the pandemic and we have a profession in crises.

We had these CBA wellness wristbands made up for each participant. If only we could tap it three times and be healthy physically and mentally. No, it is a reminder of activities and thoughts of wellness and calm to help combat our stressful days. Our Lawyer Well-Being Committee has grown in numbers, ideas, and programs offered, led by co-chairs Tanyee Cheung and Sara Bonaiuto. Check out our well-being webpage, which contains articles on healthy daily habits.

We also started a law firm well-being

pledge last year led by CBA member, Dr. Traci Cipriano. The pledge seeks a commitment from legal employers to promote lawyer well-being and healthy work environments. While the legal community has gradually been tuning-in to the value in promoting lawyer well-being, the pandemic and a multitude of other stressors arising since March 2020 have accelerated this recognition by necessity. If your firm has not signed up for the pledge, please visit our website and join the cause. Let's make a concerted effort to focus on the well-being of lawyers and our staff in this bar year and beyond.

Finally, a gifted lawyer, former President of CBA, and personal friend of mine, Ralph Monaco, was only 54 when he passed last July after giving so much to our profession and the CBA. His many accomplishments during a life caught short are a reminder that the light that burns twice as bright burns half as long. He will be missed. ■