

Equipped to Evolve

By SARA J. O'BRIEN

Over the past year, we have watched as both the federal and state legislative and judicial branches of government made changes that, while seemingly affecting a direct issue or population, undoubtedly affect us all. We have watched as landmark cases have been questioned, protested, and even overturned. Cases that we once studied in law school, that set precedent and molded the world as we have come to know it, and for many young lawyers, the world as we have only known it to be. The law offers us few certainties, but change is one of them.

As legal professionals, we are afforded a great deal of responsibility to uphold the law, fight for justice, and generate changes when that rule of law or justice is threatened. In his "Letter from Birmingham Jail," Martin Luther King, Jr. wrote, "[i]njustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly."¹

My hope is that as we embark upon this new bar year, with the ideas we hope to bring to fruition and the plans we hope to successfully execute, we do so to effectuate change for the betterment of our profession and those we serve.

CBA president, Maggie Castinado, presented an appeal to hope in her speech at the Connecticut Legal Conference in July, wherein she indicated that her goals for this year included:

- A hope for greater understanding of the importance of a diverse and inclusive legal community;

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- A hope for the betterment of our marginalized communities in Connecticut;
- A hope that we continue to fight disparities within our justice system;
- A hope that we support and protect the humanity of all people within our legal community; and
- A hope that we recognize the importance of wellness in our profession.

Attorney Castinado believes the best path towards achieving these goals is through engagement, education, and empowerment. The CBA Young Lawyers Section stands by this mission and hopes to support it further through our own programming this year.

The Young Lawyers Section's primary goals are the promotion of justice, the encouragement of public service, and the promotion of diversity and education of young lawyers and newly admitted practitioners. As young lawyers, we bring a new level of energy and passion to our profession and to the communities in which we

live and serve. We come to the table with fresh ideas for improvement and change, and with the hope that our work will make a difference in the lives of others. We are equipped to evolve. This year, it is my hope as chair of the YLS, that through our programming we continue to generate change within our legal community that will fight disparity and inequality, protect humanity, and encourage wellness.

As I embark on my year as chair of the YLS and my sixth year on its Executive Committee (EC), I look forward to seeing what this organization will accomplish. In August 2023, we held our annual EC leadership retreat at Foxwoods with Justice Keller as our keynote speaker. The EC left the retreat energized and excited about the bar year ahead. With three overarching pillars guiding our plans, the EC has already begun taking this bar year by storm.

Pillar #1

This year we will focus on pro bono le-

gal work and community service projects. For the past two years, the EC surpassed its goal of providing at least 1,000 hours of pro bono work and/or public service each year throughout Connecticut. The EC is committed to reaching this goal once again, and I encourage any young lawyer or newly admitted practitioner to explore pro bono opportunities, many of which often offer training or education for those interested in new or different practice areas. The CBA offers a number of pro bono opportunities (e.g., CT Free Legal Answers, Free Legal Advice Clinics, Lawyers in Libraries, or CBA Pro Bono Connect), and

in, make networking less stressful, and are conveniently spread throughout the state. Beginning with a happy hour kick-off event at the Barrelhouse in Killingworth on September 6, 2023, we will plan several social events throughout the year, including a trivia night, our annual holiday party, and the Women in the Law Golf Outing, among many others. I hope to see you there!

Pillar #3

We will strive to provide new, relevant, and engaging CLE programs for the benefit of the bar. In September, we hosted the first-ever Northeast Regional Professional

of practice areas, all aiming to provide pertinent material that can be used in general practice. Our programming is great for attorneys looking to learn something new and for attorneys looking to refresh their knowledge on a particular topic. I hope you will register for at least a few throughout the year.

These events are only made possible by the hard work and dedication of the YLS EC and CBA staff. To my predecessor, Christopher Klepps, thank you for making this past year a success for the YLS. Your commitment to this organization is inspiring and it has been a pleasure to work with

THE 3 PILLARS

Focus On Pro Bono Legal Work and Community Service Projects



Focus On Developing and Executing New Social and Networking Opportunities for Lawyers in Connecticut



Strive to Provide New, Relevant, and Engaging CLE Programs for the Benefit of the Bar



the EC will be hosting our annual pro bono fair at the Hartford Golf Club on October 19, 2023, where YLS members can register to play nine holes of golf (optional) followed by a cocktail reception with short presentations from various pro bono organizations throughout Connecticut.

Pillar #2

We will focus on developing and executing new social and networking opportunities for lawyers in Connecticut. As young lawyers, we are constantly encouraged to network, which does not always feel as natural as we may hope. The EC recognizes the challenges of networking, especially in a post-COVID world, and the competing priorities that impact young lawyers' "after-work" time. Our goal is to organize networking events that are fun to engage

Development Conference at Mohegan Sun for young lawyers from New England, New York, and New Jersey. Seminar topics included:

- Lawyer's Guide to Social Media Success;
- AI and the Future of the Legal Profession;
- Panel Discussion on Corporate and In-House Counsel Career Paths;
- Alternative Pathways to Leadership: Government, Lawyering, and Community Engagement; and
- Balancing Wellness with the Scales of Justice: A Perspective on Attorneys and Wellness.

Additionally, the YLS EC will continue to plan many other CLE programs in a variety

you. For anyone interested in learning more about the YLS or the EC, I encourage you to attend some of our events this year, and to apply for a position within the EC next year. It is an experience your career should not go without.

Whether directly or indirectly, we have all been affected by the changes within our society and legal community, in the law and legal precedent, and in ourselves as we grow and develop in our careers. Together, we can make our communities stronger, encourage diversity and equality, and support access to legal services and legal rights. Together, we can evolve. ■

NOTES

- 1 Martin Luther King, Jr., "Letter from Birmingham Jail"