

## THE ROLE OF THE YOUNG LAWYER IN THE FUTURE OF THE LEGAL PROFESSION

**Presented at the 2018 Law Week of NBA Kaduna Branch  
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### OBJECTIVES OF THE YOUNG LAWYERS FORUM OF BAR ASSOCIATIONS

Compare a few others with the objectives of Young lawyers Forum Nigerian Bar Association

- **Pennsylvania Bar-** The purpose of the YLD shall be:

(a) To organize the young lawyer members of the PBA, including law students, so that they may cooperate for the betterment of the profession and for the advancement of the objectives and works of the PBA and YLD;

(b) To provide educational and service programs encouraging the professional development of young lawyers;

(c) To provide a medium to resolve problems and meet obligations of the members of the YLD and to advise the PBA of the needs and opinions of YLD members;

(d) To provide guidance and leadership to young lawyers for the organization, development, and creation of public service programs;

(e) To encourage young lawyers to represent deserving clients on a pro bono basis;

(f) To assist in promoting worthwhile organizations that provide legal services on a pro bono basis;

(g) To support young lawyers' efforts in promoting justice and improving the quality of the legal system; and

(h) To provide organizational and programming assistance and support, where necessary, to young lawyer organizations in the sixty-seven (67) counties of Pennsylvania

- **State Bar of Georgia**

**The purposes** of the Young Lawyers Division shall be:

(a) to encourage the interest and participation of YLD members in the activities, objectives, and purpose of the State Bar of Georgia;

(b) to aid and promote the advancement of YLD members in the activities of the State Bar of Georgia;

(c) to foster among YLD members the principles of duty and service to the public;

(d) to provide YLD members with an opportunity to participate in activities directed toward improving the administration of justice;

(e) to foster discussion and interchange of ideas among YLD members relating to the duties, responsibilities, and problems of YLD members; and

(f) to provide a full and complete program of activities and projects in those areas of the State Bar of Georgia in which YLD members are particularly suited.

### Activities of Young Lawyers Forum in other jurisdictions

#### **YLD Committees**

- **YLD Advocates for Students with Disabilities** This committee provides technical support and networking opportunities to the community of attorneys whose practice or passion includes

students with disabilities and their families. The committee works to promote this practice area by providing continuing education opportunities and support on issues such as estate planning, civil rights, health care issues, powers of attorney, juvenile justice and guardianships.

- **YLD Appellate Admissions** This committee arranges the annual ceremony for admission of new Bar admittees to the Supreme Court of Georgia, the Court of Appeals of Georgia and the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Georgia.
- **YLD Business Law** This committee addresses issues specific to young lawyers whose practice involves either commercial litigation or commercial transactions. The committee monitors and addresses legal developments in the areas of business, commerce and finance on both federal and state levels.
- **YLD Community Service Projects** This committee provides opportunities for young lawyers to participate in local, state or national service projects focused on various social issues, such as working with organizations that address the needs of underprivileged children, hunger, domestic violence and the environment.
- **YLD Criminal Law** This committee strives for the improvement of the criminal justice system, and where appropriate, seeks to implement changes. The committee annually sponsors CLE seminars and the Commitment to Justice Award and is comprised of both prosecutors and criminal defense attorneys.
- **YLD Disaster Legal Assistance** This committee provides free legal assistance to persons affected by presidentially declared major disasters. Disaster Legal Assistance (DLA) is a federal disaster assistance program operated by the American Bar Association Young Lawyers Division and executed throughout the country by each state's YLD pursuant to a memorandum of understanding with FEMA. DLA connects those in need to free legal services on legal matters that arise directly from major disasters.
- **YLD Estate & Elder Law** This committee is involved in the delivery of legal services to the elderly, monitoring legislation and other legal developments affecting the elderly community, and providing general information to older Georgians. This committee also oversees the Wills Clinic, which is a pro bono service project where attorney volunteers assist first responders in the preparation and execution of basic estate planning documents. The documents offered by the Wills Clinic include a Last Will and Testament, a Financial Power of Attorney and an Advance Health Care Directive.
- **YLD Ethics & Professionalism** This committee develops educational programs to assist lawyers in achieving the ethical and professional standards set forth for the legal profession. This committee works with the Chief Justice's Commission on Professionalism to raise awareness in new developments concerning ethics and professionalism in the legal field. The committee recognizes one young lawyer who has demonstrated outstanding professionalism with its annual Ethics & Professionalism Award.
- **YLD Family Law** This committee provides educational and networking opportunities to young lawyers whose practice includes family law. The committee sponsors a networking event as part of the annual Family Law Institute, as well as an annual signature fundraising event to raise money and awareness for causes involving family-related issues in Georgia.
- **YLD High School Mock Trial** This committee provides educational litigation experience to hundreds of high school students by sponsoring an annual statewide mock trial competition, sending a team to the national competition and holding a fall law camp. Young lawyers, judges

and teachers throughout Georgia get involved in all levels of the competition as coaches, judges and committee members.

- **YLD Inclusion in the Profession** This committee facilitates, analyzes and presents initiatives and programs which promote and increase participation, retention and representation of Georgia's diverse young lawyers, to more accurately reflect the makeup of our state. This committee includes young lawyers who have been historically underrepresented and is open to all YLD members interested in supporting these goals and interests.
- **YLD Intellectual Property Law** This committee promotes communication and relationships among young lawyers practicing in the various areas of intellectual property such as trademark, copyright and patent law. The committee focuses its efforts on networking events and CLE programs, often in conjunction with other Bar sections and groups within the legal community.
- **YLD Intrastate Moot Court** This committee sponsors the annual Intrastate Moot Court Competition among students from Georgia law schools. It organizes and conducts all aspects of the competition.
- **YLD Judicial Law Clerk** This committee serves the professional needs of, and addresses issues specific to, young lawyers serving as staff attorneys or judicial law clerks in either state or federal courts throughout Georgia. In this regard, the committee monitors and addresses legal developments and issues facing the courts. Moreover, the committee provides a forum for young, practicing lawyers to gain insight from other young lawyers serving in the courts. The committee also sponsors CLE programs, covering topics of interest to staff attorneys and judicial law clerks, and offers networking events throughout the year.
- **YLD Juvenile Law** This committee engages young lawyers interested in child welfare and juvenile justice and empowers these individuals to improve the practices and policies affecting children. The committee promotes advancement of the profession through monthly meetings, annual CLE events and special recognitions, such as the Excellence in Child Welfare Award. It also encourages Georgia lawyers to become Certified Child Welfare Law Specialists. The committee organizes and co-sponsors the Celebration of Excellence, a statewide ceremony for graduating foster youth. The committee assisted in drafting the comprehensive revisions to Georgia's Juvenile Code and continues to provide technical support after the adoption of this legislation.
- **YLD Labor & Employment Law** This committee conducts educational programming and social events to enhance the skill of, and foster collegiality among, young lawyers engaged in the practice of labor and employment law.
- **YLD Leadership Academy Alumni** This committee provides continuing leadership development, community service, pro bono opportunities and networking opportunities for Leadership Academy (LA) alumni. The committee annually hosts the LA Holiday Luncheon and other events and programs to encourage members to sustain the relationships formed with their LA class, as well as forge new relationships with other LA alumni while serving the community. Members must be LA graduates.
- **YLD Legal Food Frenzy** This committee coordinates with the Office of the Attorney General to host the statewide "Legal Food Frenzy," a food drive and fundraiser competition among Georgia's law firms, law schools and other legal organizations. The committee partners with community legal leaders across the state to spread awareness about Georgia's hunger problems, and to make a significant impact by gathering both canned food donations and monetary donations to help those

affected by hunger in the state. This competition is held in the spring, and since its inception, has raised more than 3.5 million pounds of food.

- **YLD Legislative Affairs** This committee promotes education and involvement in the state legislative process. Working with the State Bar's director of Governmental Affairs, the committee promotes Bar and/or YLD-initiated legislation and assists other YLD committees in legislative-related matters, including co-hosting the annual legislative luncheon with the Leadership Academy.
- **YLD Litigation** In keeping with the motto of the YLD, the Litigation Committee is committed both professionally and civically to advancing the practices of young litigators throughout our entire state. The committee prides itself on fostering long-term relationships with fellow litigators on both the plaintiffs' and defense side of the Bar through social activities. Also, the committee recognizes the dedication and service of judicial support staff by hosting the annual Clerks' Luncheon during the holiday season, as well as a reception honoring the members of the judiciary and distinguished young litigators to conclude the Bar year. A strong emphasis on learning from the shared experiences of the stalwarts of our legal community is forged through the committee's annual "War Stories" Lecture Series, which is held in three parts in the spring.
- **YLD National Moot Court** This committee conducts the Region V competition of the National Moot Court Competition.
- **YLD Public Interest Internship Program** This committee oversees the Public Interest Internship Program, which funds grants for public interest internships for law school students and young lawyers.
- **YLD Real Estate** This committee promotes communication among young lawyers practicing in the various areas of real estate law as well as networking with other practice groups to enhance the availability of business opportunities. The committee provides CLE programs as well as social activities that promote networking and Bar participation.
- **YLD Signature Fundraiser** This committee organizes and orchestrates an annual fundraising event to raise money to support a designated charitable organization. Since its inception 10 years ago, the YLD Signature Fundraiser has donated more than \$400,000 to several worthy causes.
- **YLD Solo/Small Firm** This committee seeks to provide opportunities for, and support to, solo practitioners and young lawyers who work in small firms. Recognizing that the economy and many other factors contribute to young lawyers hanging their own shingles, this committee focuses on providing discounted CLEs, organizing networking events and creating projects aimed at sharpening the skills and increasing the success of active member participants.
- **YLD William Daniel Mock Trial** This committee hosts an annual criminal mock jury trial competition among law students. The talented competitors are law students hailing from law schools across the country. All Georgia law schools are also invited to participate. Every summer, the William W. Daniel National Invitational Mock Trial Committee sends hundreds of applications to ABA accredited law schools. Only 18 schools are invited to compete in this well-known competition named in honor of the late Judge William W. Daniel of the Superior Court of Fulton County.
- **YLD Women in the Profession** This committee's mission is to ensure the success of women attorneys by providing a forum for the exchange of dialogue and ideas on concerns of women; sponsoring programs directed to business and professional development; organizing networking

activities; and supporting organizations and causes which advance the status and progress of women in society.

#### OBJECTIVES/ACTIVITIES OF YOUNG LAWYERS FORUM NIGERIAN BAR ASSOCIATION

- No clear Objective/ No clear Activities/No Active Committees/No Independence
- See NBA Link- <http://www.nigerianbar.org.ng/index.php/sections-fora>
- “The Young Lawyers Forum of the Nigerian Bar Association was created to help Young lawyers practicing in the Nigerian”.
- **Read More- Young Lawyers Forum- Download Registration Form here**

#### NBA YLF- IS THERE A GOAL AN AIM OR OBJECTIVE FOR OUR YOUNG LAWYER’S FORUM?

**Our website declares that** *“The Young Lawyers Forum of the Nigerian Bar Association was created to help Young lawyers practicing in the Nigerian.”* *“READ MORE ... Download Registration Form Here.”* No written goal, aim or objective for our Young Lawyers Forum is written anywhere.

#### HOW DO WE ENSURE THAT YOUNG LAWYERS PLAY THEIR ROLE?

- The profession Must Help Develop their Capacities-
- Knowledge, Skills, Competencies, and Values
- Young lawyers conscious of social justice and ethical values;
- Mentoring/CLE
- Provide Canopies/Incubator Programmes/Career Counseling/Competitions/Boot Camps/Funding Support
- Employment and Welfare
- Dignity

#### PATH TO THE FUTURE BAR

1. Minimum salary must be prescribed and enforced for young lawyers.
2. Pupilage without minimum wage is sure slavery for young lawyers.
3. Young lawyers must be included in the management of the legal profession.
4. Good governance key to strong institution.

Keys include: Participation, Rule of Law, Transparency, Responsiveness, Equity, Effectiveness and efficiency, Accountability, and strategic vision.

#### OUR ROLE FOR THE FUTURE BAR: OUR SLAVERY, OUR BONDAGE UNDER FEW MEN OR OUR FREEDOM UNDER STRONG NBA INSTITUTION

What Role (s) are we ready to play to ensure that we do not remain under the bondage of a few men at the Bar who parade themselves as our leaders and representatives?

Is it possible to successfully and sustainably drive the objectives of the NBA without building a strong Institution?

Do we want to give up our right to universal voting back to delegates?

What do we do with the relationship between the National and branches?

Do we need State Bar in place of branches or State Bar Forum

How much longer should we delay the creation and sustenance of a strong high caliber civil service cadre as the pivot of good governance for NBA with an oversight governing body composed of a few elected members?

When can we allow our Sections and Forums a good measure of autonomy? Or do we continue to hold every one down on the floor?

Why is our Young lawyers Forum not autonomous as they are in other places of the World?

Why is our auditing and accounting not transparent?

Do we have procurement rules?

Why is the President of the Bar allowed to nominate/appoint all 180 NEC co-opted members alone?

Why is the President allowed to nominate/appoint most Committees alone?

Why is the governance of the Bar (both at the National and Branch levels) not inclusive? Should we continue to discriminate between our members in private practice from those in public service?

Are our ladies, young lawyers, and members with disabilities properly represented in our governance and activities?

Why are our Institutes (Institute of Continuing Legal Education and Human Rights Institute) treated as if they are Committees of the Bar? Do we not understand the role, functions and status of an Institute?

Since the proposed Legal Profession Regulation Act is likely to deal with continuing legal education, should our Constitution continue to provide for the Institute of Continuing Legal Education?

Should NBA NEC continue to have too many members as we have now?

Have we made any input towards the review of our Constitution?

Have we made any suggestions on the draft Legal Profession Regulation Act?

## **THE SPECIAL POSITION OF OUR YOUNG LAWYERS AND THE YOUNG LAWYERS FORUM**

### **YOUNG LAWYERS REPRESENTATION UNDER THE CONSTITUTION**

I sent a memorandum to the Constitution Review Committee. One of the subjects I tackled in my memorandum is the representation of young lawyers under the Constitution.

“One such needful area is the representation of young lawyers in decision making in NBA. As at present, we have the definition of “young lawyers” as those under 7 years post call.

Take a look at the composition of the NBA National Executive Committee (NEC).

1. National Officers – They are 13 in number and only 3 posts have potential for young lawyers. For these 3 posts a lawyer may vie if not less than 5 years post call but the 3 posts are not exclusively reserved for young lawyers of even 5-7 years..
2. All past Presidents (none is young lawyer)
3. All past General Secretaries (none is young lawyer)
4. 125 Chairmen of Branches who must be not less than 10 years at time of election.
5. 125 Secretaries of branches who must be not less than 8 years post call
6. 125 Branch representatives who must not be less than 10 years
7. 40 co-opted SANs
8. 40 co-opted senior members who must not be less than 25 years post call
9. 100 co-opted members from special interests who must not be less than 10 years post call
10. Chairmen and Secretaries of sections (not young lawyers).

In effect, out of about 585 members of NEC, only about 3 members could be young lawyers and as I stated earlier there is no guarantee as older lawyers are free to vie for those positions. While 40 SANs are given exclusive membership of NEC, no single position is exclusively reserved for young lawyers. The future Constitution must address this anomaly. At the branch level, there is also no exclusive and affirmative provision for young lawyers' representation. "

## CONCLUSION

Most animals in the forest support their young ones to walk and survive immediately after birth. The Nigerian Bar Association gives birth to its young and turns its back. The future of the Bar must be rebranded and there is no other cadre of members that we should put more focus on than the young lawyers- starting with setting a goal for our Young Lawyers Forum! Otherwise our race will go extinct.

And when we go extinct, there would be no Institution to make strong!

### Your Life's Blue Print

- a. Young Lawyer's individual Life's Blue Print
- b. No matter what, DO NOT allow any body bring down your dignity, Your somebodiness.

***The best way to predict the future is to create it. – Peter Drucker.***