

# YLD...In Brief

The Official Newsletter of the Young Lawyers Division of the State Bar of New Mexico

April 2006

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Bridge the Gap -  
Roxanna M. Chacon and Román Romero  
Call-In Programs - Mo Chavez,  
Steven L. Almanza, Joseph F. Sawyer and  
Dustin K. Hunter  
Homeless Legal Clinics - Sean Olivas and  
Steven Almanza  
In Brief - Roxanna M. Chacon  
Mentorship Program - Román R. Romero and  
Valerie Suzanne Reighard  
Mock Interview Program -  
Martha Chicoski and Brian Colón

## Greetings from the YLD Chair...

*S. Carolyn Ramos, Chair*

The YLD has been busy during these first ninety days of 2006. In January, we teamed up with the State Bar and the Older Wiser Law Students (OWLS) to co-sponsor a resume party where UNM SOL students tucked their draft resumes and cover letters under their arms and sought job search advice from attorneys from all areas of practice. It was a huge success and a great pipeline into the Mock Interview Program that took place in February. Program Chairs Brian Colón and Briana Zamora put on a fantastic show with 40 attorney volunteers conducting mock interviews for 74 law students. Many students debriefed with YLD members saying that the mock interview was more challenging than their actual interviews and that the experience made them more relaxed and confident when it counted. Brian will be aging out of the division this year so I want to take this opportunity to thank him for his dedication to this important YLD program. The YLD also sent a strong delegation of members to the ABA Mid-Year Conference in Chicago this February where resolutions concerning medical liability, immigration and a dues increase were argued and voted upon.

March proved to be a challenge as well when Santa Fe failed to produce any real snow for our ABA/YLD Rocky Mountain Regional Ski-Le! Nonetheless, it was a great success. Where else in the country can you get a guided tour of the Supreme Court building, a presentation on territorial justice and professionalism along

with an overview of the nuts and bolts of appeal work from sitting judges? Only in New Mexico. Santa Fe is indeed the "City Different." We thank Chief Justice Bosson, Justice Minzner, Justice Serna, Justice Maes, Justice Chavez and Judge Pickard for spending the day with conference attendees and preparing valuable course materials. Steve Hattenbach, Craig Orraj and Arturo Jaramillo presented on day two of the conference and the YLD is grateful for their time and talents as well.

Community service has always been a top priority for the YLD and 2006 is no different. This year we are proud to sponsor two Summer Public Interest Fellowships for law students interested in working for an entity with no funding to pay them. Please contact Brent Moore ([brent\\_moore@nmenv.state.nm.us](mailto:brent_moore@nmenv.state.nm.us)) for more information. We are also sponsoring the Junior Judges program which will put young lawyers in elementary classrooms to help empower children to make smart choices when it comes to cheating, bullying and other potentially delinquent behavior. Please contact Martha Chicowski ([martha@robles-rael-law.com](mailto:martha@robles-rael-law.com)) for more information and to volunteer. The YLD is also sponsoring a series of life skills training sessions for residents of Dismas House - a non-profit organization dedicated to assisting people in the transition between incarceration and parole. I am thrilled to report that we had more volunteer presenters for this program than we have spaces! We are still looking for volunteers to take part in the YLD Law Day call-in program April 29<sup>th</sup>. We will have call centers set up in Albuquerque, Las Cruces, Farmington and Roswell. Please contact Mo Chavez ([mo@chavezlaw.com](mailto:mo@chavezlaw.com)) for more information and to sign up.

It has been a great quarter. To be sure, the rest of year will only get better. I am privileged to be working with a superb Board of Directors and Bar Commissioners comprised of enthusiastic, devoted and creative leaders with a common goal - the professional and personal development of young lawyers in New Mexico. ¡Palante!

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# Young Lawyers Division Board Members



**S. Carolyn Ramos** is a senior litigation associate with the Albuquerque law firm of **Butt Thornton & Baehr, P.C.**, where she practices primarily in the defense of trucking, medical malpractice, product liability and other personal injury cases. She was born and raised in New York City and earned her bachelor's degree from Middlebury College in 1993. She became a Teach for America Corps member, teaching bilingual elementary school in

Washington, D.C. In 2000, Carolyn earned her J.D. from the UNM School of Law where she was the recipient of the *Lewis Sutin Award for Excellence in Trial Advocacy*, the *National Association of Women Lawyers Award* and honors in clinical law. She is on the boards of the YLD and the New Mexico Defense Lawyers Association, a member of the New Mexico and National Hispanic Bar associations, American Bar Association, Defense Research Institute, Supreme Court Rules of Evidence Committee and a panelist on the New Mexico Medical Review Commission. Ramos is also a member of the first graduating class of the Lawyers' Leadership Training Institute.



**Erika E. Anderson** received her undergraduate degree from the University of Colorado in 1992, her masters in counseling from UNM in 1994 and her J.D. from UNM in 2001. She currently practices law at **Long, Pound & Komer, P.A.**, in Santa Fe where she specializes in civil litigation, employment law and civil rights cases. Anderson has been on the YLD board as a director-at-large (position five) since January 2004 and

will serve as chair in 2007. She served as vice-chair of the board and chair of the YLD/UNM Mentorship Program from 2004–2005.



**Román R. Romero** has begun his third year as a member of YLD's board of directors and currently serves as vice-chair. He is president of the **Romero Law Firm, P.A.**, a small law firm that practices in the areas of criminal defense, personal injury, appeals and federal civil rights.



**Joseph F. Sawyer** practices with the **Roberts Law Firm** in Farmington. He earned his bachelor's degree from UNM and a law degree from Notre Dame Law School. He practices primarily in criminal and family law.

**J. Brent Moore** is a 1994 graduate of Texas Christian University with a B.A. in history. He graduated from the UNM School of Law in 1998. Moore participated in the Legal Honors Program for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development in Washington, D.C. He was then agency counsel for the Navajo Nation Environmental Protection Agency. He is currently an assistant general counsel for the **New Mexico Environment Department** where his practice focuses on enforcement actions, rulemakings and permit proceedings in the areas of surface water, ground water, hazardous waste and solid waste. Moore is the YLD Region 2 director, which covers the 1st, 4th, 8th, and 10th judicial districts. He has been on the YLD board of directors since 2002 and is the coordinator of the YLD Summer Fellowship Program.



**Dustin K. Hunter** graduated from Cameron University in 1995 with a B.A. in political science. He earned his J.D. degree from Texas Tech University School of Law in 1998. He then worked in the litigation department of Kemp Smith, P.C., in El Paso and served as director of the El Paso Young Lawyers Division of the Texas State Bar. In 2004, Hunter started his own law firm, **Kraft & Hunter, L.L.P.**, which includes a wide

range of civil and corporate matters, including family law, business litigation and corporate matters, insurance coverage and insurance litigation, contracts, probate, personal injury and wrongful death. Hunter currently serves as a director on the YLD board for Region 3, which encompasses Southeastern New Mexico.



**Roxanna M. Chacon**, a native of Las Cruces, is a 1997 graduate of New Mexico State University and a 2001 graduate of the UNM School of Law. Chacon has practiced primarily in the area of civil litigation and served as a law clerk for the 3rd Judicial District Court in Las Cruces. She is the past chair of the YLD and served as a Board of Bar Commissioner in 2005. She was named the State Bar's *Outstanding Young Lawyer of the Year* in 2003.

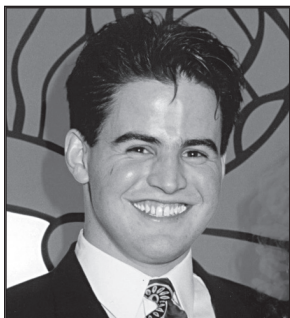
Chacon has served on the YLD board since 2002 and is currently serving on the American Bar Association Young Lawyers Division's

Affiliate Assistance Team. She is currently an associate with **The Jaffe Law Firm** in Albuquerque.

**Briana Zamora**, a native New Mexican, graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in psychology and government from New Mexico State University in 1996 and from the UNM School of Law in 2000. She is currently an associate with **Butt Thornton & Baehr, P.C.** Previously, she worked as an assistant public defender, assistant attorney general and workers' compensation mediator. She is on the boards of YLD and Dismas House of New Mexico. She is a member of the New Mexico and National Hispanic Bar associations and the American Bar Association. Zamora serves on the State Bar Committee on Diversity. She is currently chairing the YLD/Dismas House Community Service Project and co-chairing the YLD/UNM Law School Mock Interview Program.



**Joseph A. Sapien** is a native New Mexican born in Albuquerque and raised in Bernalillo. He earned his undergraduate degree *cum laude* in finance from the UNM Anderson Schools of Management in 1990. After college, he worked with the State Farm Insurance Companies in various capacities, including underwriting management, agency, and property and casualty claims. He earned the Chartered Property Casualty Underwriter designation in 1996. Sapien earned his J.D. from the UNM School of Law in 2002 and joined Butt Thornton & Baehr, P.C., working in general liability, products liability, professional liability, workers compensation and trucking and transportation. With his brother Phillip, Sapien formed **Sapien Law, L.L.C.**, in 2005. The firm practices in the areas of personal injury, criminal defense, wrongful death, workers compensation, contract disputes and formation, employment law, business law, insurance claim settlements and wills and trusts. Sapien is a member of the American Bar Association, the Hispanic National Bar Association and the Association of Trial Lawyers of America. He is also a board member of the New Mexico Hispanic Bar Association and is currently on the board of the YLD, at-large position #three.



**Steven L. Almanza**, a native of El Paso, received his B.A. in English-philosophy from the University of Notre Dame in 1996 and his law degree in 2001 from the UNM School of Law. He is currently an associate with the **Law Office of Mario A. Esparza** in Las Cruces and is a former Las Cruces assistant city attorney. He serves as the Region 4 representative for the YLD.



**Morris "Mo" J. Chavez, Esq.**, was appointed the state gaming representative for the state of New Mexico in 2004. His primary duties are to monitor compliance of the 2001 Tribal-State Class III Gaming Compacts entered into by the 13 tribes/pueblos and the state of New Mexico. Prior to his appointment, Chavez worked in the insurance/financial services industry, most recently at the Manuel Lujan Agencies. He received

his undergraduate degree in political science from the University of San Diego in 1995 and maintained a private law practice since graduating from the UNM School of Law in 1998. He has been actively involved in the State Bar, serving as a Board of Bar Commissioner and past chair of the YLD. Chavez is a member of the Committee on Diversity and is currently serving as the American Bar Association/Young Lawyers Division District 23 council representative for New Mexico and Arizona. He was named the State Bar's *Outstanding Young Lawyer of the Year* in 2005.

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## The Windy City Hosts the ABA/YLD Mid-Year Meeting

*Mo Chavez, ABA/YLD Dist. 23 Representative*

Earlier this year, the ABA/YLD held its mid-year meeting in Chicago, IL. While the meeting was originally scheduled to be held in New Orleans, the unfortunate circumstances surround Hurricane Katrina near the end of 2005 forced the ABA to change the venue on very short notice. Within minutes of ABA President Mike Greco announcing that the meeting was being moved, an ABA/YLD host committee from Chicago was in place and making arrangements for our meeting. Needless to say, they did an outstanding job as the host city.

Once again, New Mexico was very well represented at the meeting by various young lawyers from around the State. During the meeting, the New Mexico delegation was informed that New Mexico was within a few young lawyers of being granted a few more delegates to the ABA/YLD Assembly. The number of delegates from each state is based upon the number of registered ABA/YLD members from each state. If you are currently not a member of the ABA/YLD but would like more information on the benefits of the ABA, please visit the ABA/YLD website at [www.abanet.org/yld](http://www.abanet.org/yld). I would also like to encourage everyone to consider attending the spring ABA/YLD meeting that will be held in Portland, OR from May 17-20, 2006.



# American Bar Association Young Lawyers Division

Marguerite L. Carr, Associate Editor for *The Affiliate - ABA/YLD Newsletter*



As a licensed lawyer in New Mexico you are a member of the New Mexico Bar Association and you can choose to join the American Bar Association (ABA). You

are a member of the ABA Young Lawyers Division if you are under 36 years of age or have been a lawyer for 5 years or less. So, you might be thinking to yourself why would I join the ABA? What can I gain by going to ABA meetings? The ABA is a nationwide organization that gives young lawyers from around the country the chance to get to know each other, make contacts, learn new things from each other and have a lot of fun. The ABA Young Lawyers meet four times a year on a nationwide basis. The meetings are held all over the country, from Honolulu, Hawaii to Miami, Florida and even sometimes outside the country, for example in the Spring of 2007 the ABA YLD will be meeting in Montreal, Canada. The YLD has a meeting in Portland, Oregon May 18-May 21, 2006 and will also meet in Honolulu, Hawaii from August 3-August 6, 2006. Being involved with the YLD is a lot of fun and going to the meetings really combines the fun with a chance to learn. The meetings generally consist of CLE programming, policy making discussions, and of course

social events. Most recently the ABA YLD met in Chicago, Illinois. This meeting kicked off on Thursday with a Welcome Reception held at a local downtown Chicago bar and many people ventured out for further fun at other area bars. On Friday the day was filled with informative CLE's and the kick off of this years Member Service project called "Do it Yourself: Creating a Blueprint for a Solid and Satisfying Career." One of the great advantages to being involved with the ABA YLD is that even if you are unable to travel to these meetings the Division is working on putting the materials from this Member Services Project on-line so that ABA members can access them whenever they want to. Friday of the meeting wrapped up with a great dinner dance function at Chicago's Union League Club. The event was joint with the Tort, Trial and Insurance Practice Section and the General Practice, Solo, Small Firm Division. This was a great event, giving young lawyers the chance to really get to know members and leaders from these other entities in a social setting. After the dinner many of the people danced into the night as the songs ranged from Kool and the Gang to AC/DC. On Saturday most young lawyers were found attending the YLD Assembly. The Assembly is made up of representatives from every state including representatives from New Mexico. This is the decision making body within the ABA YLD. There were numerous issues brought to the floor at this meeting including the controversial issue of a raise in the dues for

the ABA. The YLD Assembly voted against this measure. The issues that the YLD votes on at these meetings are typically issues being addressed throughout the larger Association and very often are going to be brought to the floor of the ABA House of Delegates which is the Associations decision making body. The vote of the YLD Assembly can have a profound impact on the outcome of the House of Delegates and therefore the YLD's opinion is very important. These meetings are a lot of fun and informative. There are numerous ways that you can get involved with the ABA YLD. One is simply to become a member of the ABA which will give you access to the ABA YLD website and all the information it contains. Want to be a little more involved? Try joining one of the YLD's committees. There are committees ranging from Outreach to Law Student and Women in the Law to Dispute Resolution and Litigation. You can also apply for other positions like being a member of the Affiliate Assistance Team or Member Services Project Team. These positions are appointed by the Chair-Elect of the ABA YLD and last for one year at a time. These positions usually require a little more of a time commitment, but also at times help with the costs of traveling to the meetings. Involvement in the ABA YLD is very rewarding and fun. If you are interested in more information regarding the ABA YLD please feel free to contact me at [maggiocarr@abanet.org](mailto:maggiocarr@abanet.org).

## Summer 2006 Fellowship Program

J. Brent Moore

The Young Lawyers Division (YLD) for the New Mexico State Bar will be conducting its fellowship program once again during the summer of 2006. This summer, however, two fellowships will be awarded. The fellowship program was designed by YLD to allow two law students the ability to work in unpaid positions in the area of public interest law or the government sector. The fellowship awards are specifically intended to provide the opportunity for law students to work in positions that might not otherwise be possible because the positions are unpaid.

Last year's fellowship award of \$3,000 was given to Tim Gardner, a law student at the University of New Mexico School of Law. Mr. Gardner worked during the summer 2005 with an organization called Enlace Comunitario. This organization's primary mission is to provide general assistance and legal assistance to Spanish-speaking victims of domestic violence.

The application deadline for this summer's fellowship is March 31, 2006. Fellowship recipients will be notified of their selection by April 15, 2006.

### YLD Schedule of Upcoming Events

**April 29**

Law Day Call-In  
(Albuquerque, Farmington, Las Cruces and Roswell 9 am - 1 pm)

**May 18-21**

ABA/YLD Young Lawyers Division  
Spring Conference  
Portland, Oregon

**July 21-22**

NM Bar 2006 Annual Meeting  
NM YLD Annual Meeting  
Taos, New Mexico

**August 3-6**

ABA/YLD Annual Meeting  
Honolulu, Hawaii