

YLD...In Brief

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

December 2008

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Mock Interview Program

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Summer Fellowship - **J. Brent Moore**, chair

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Greetings from the Chair



J. Brent Moore

As the year draws to a close, it is my great pleasure as the Chair of the Young Lawyers Division (YLD) to address the YLD membership and other members of the State Bar of New Mexico. I'm proud to

inform you that YLD has had an extremely productive year in 2008, and I would like to take this opportunity to highlight our accomplishments.

In 2008, YLD implemented a new service project called Wills-for-Heroes. The Wills-for-Heroes project provides free legal services to police officers, firefighters, emergency medical technicians, and other first responders by bringing together the first responders with volunteer attorneys, laptop computers, witnesses, and notaries, and providing first responders with fully executed estate planning documents after a one hour session. This year YLD held three Wills-for-Heroes events. These events were held in Las Cruces, on the Westside of Albuquerque, and at the State Fair in Albuquerque. All three of these events were tremendously successful, and anyone interested in participating in this program in the future should refer to the article on the project for more details.

Throughout 2008, YLD also continued its other public service projects which include its Annual Call-In Program for Law Day, Dismas House Project, Junior Judges Program, and Choose Law Program. These programs were aided by the gracious help of volunteer attorneys whose assistance was the key to the success of these projects. YLD continued to provide assistance to the Homeless Legal Aid Clinics in Las Cruces and Albuquerque, and assisted the opening of new clinic in Santa Fe. These clinics provide an invaluable service to homeless individuals in desperate need of legal services. YLD also sponsored two Brown Bag Lunches for YLD members with State and Federal Judges. These lunches

provide an excellent opportunity for YLD members to meet judges and other young lawyers in their area.

Several programs that benefit law students at the University of New Mexico Law School were continued in 2008. We continued our Mentorship Program, which pairs law students with practicing attorneys for the purpose of mentoring the law students regarding the practice of law. We continued our Mock Interview Program, which provides law students the opportunity to practice their interview skills. We continued our Summer Fellowship Program, which provides funding to law students so that they have the opportunity to work for public interest entities or in the government sector. YLD was proud to provide funding to a law student to work this summer with Pegasus Legal Services for Children.

This past summer YLD held its annual meeting on July 19, 2008, at the State Bar Convention in Scottsdale, Arizona. The convention had great programming and accommodations, and the Wills-for-Heroes program was showcased at the State Bar Convention. YLD was excited to offer registration rebates to young lawyers who wanted to attend the convention. These rebates were intended to offset the cost of attending the convention, and YLD will continue to seek this assistance for YLD members for future conventions.

continued on page 4

INSIDE THIS ISSUE...

First Annual Justice for All Ball... 2

Join the ABA Now!..... 2

Wills for Heros Program..... 3

Summer Fellowship

Reflection 4

The First Annual Justice for All Ball: A YLD Perspective

By Martha Chicoski



Martha Chicoski, YLD Member and co-chair of the Ball, and Brent Moore, Chair of the YLD, at the Justice for All Ball.

The First Annual Justice for All Ball, held on November 1, 2008, by either the formal or informal definition, was just that – a ball. Approximately 360 guests, dressed to impress in black tie or “cowboy formal” attire gathered at the Embassy Suites in Albuquerque to honor the life and achievements of The Honorable Pamela B. Minzer, to recognize outstanding individuals whose work helps ensure access to the legal process for all New Mexicans, and to celebrate the 2008 Equal Access to Justice fundraising drive.

Co-sponsored by The Young Lawyers Division and Equal Access to Justice, the event raised over \$10,000 for the legal aid organizations across the state. James Mason of Mason & Isaacson, and Fletcher Catron of Catron & Pottow, received the 2008 Pamela B Minzner Award. Richard Minzner also accepted the award posthumously for Justice Minzner.

The Ball drew an astounding turnout, especially for the Saturday night before Election Day. Following the program, which was overseen by



Kate Mulqueen, co-chair of the Ball, and Sandra Beerle, member of the Justice for All Ball Planning Committee, prepare for the big event.



Steve Curtice and Scott Fuqua, members of the Justice for All Ball Planning Committee, enjoy the First Annual Justice for All Ball.

Mistress of Ceremonies Maureen Sanders, many guests continued the festivities and danced to the music of Tapestry. Be sure to look at the professional photographs from the event, which are posted at www.bluehorsephotography.lifepics.com; event code: Justice.

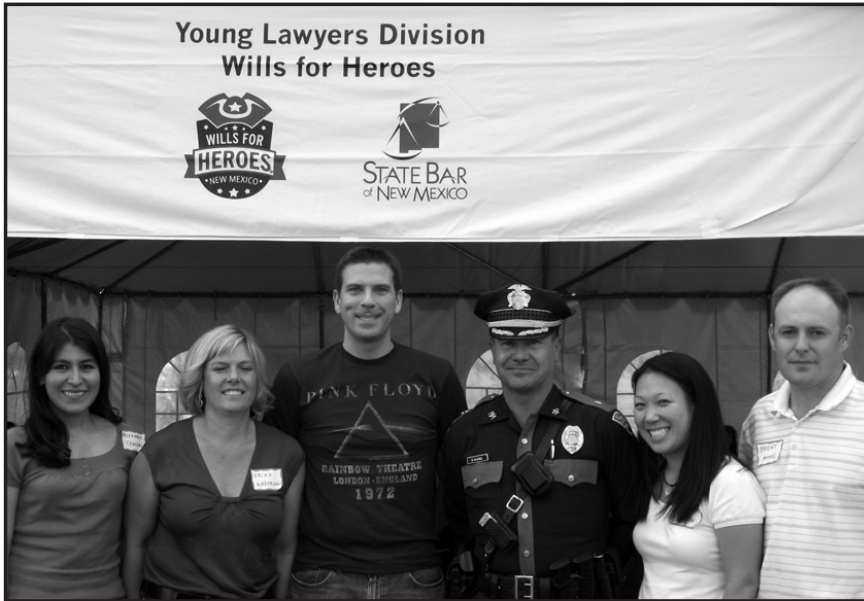
The many volunteers were crucial to the evening’s success. Several YLD members helped on the Planning Committee, including Steve Curtice, Scott Fuqua, YLD board member Clara Moran, and YLD vice chair Martha Chicoski, who co-chaired the event with Kate Mulqueen, Campaign Director for EAJ. Additionally YLD Chair Brent Moore and Chair-Elect Briana Zamora, and YLD board member Roxanna Chacon volunteered their time to help during the evening.

The YLD Board is honored to have co-sponsored the First Annual Justice for All Ball and extends a heartfelt thank you to all those who participated in or contributed to this special evening.

JOIN THE ABA NOW!

The American Bar Association (ABA) offers specialized services that allow young lawyers to learn from mentors, gain knowledge from experts and have valuable resources. An ABA membership can also help introduce young lawyers to a new profession, assist in advancing their careers, provide valuable networking opportunities and provide special discounts on legal services. Please contact Erika Anderson at erika@roblesrael.com, Roxanna Chacon at lgrmc@zianet.com or lcrdrmc@nmcourts.com or Brent Moore at brent.moore@state.nm.us to find out more about the services the ABA offers and how to join the ABA for half the price! Act now because there are a limited number of discounts available.

Wills For Heroes Program Underway In New Mexico



YLD Board members Roxanna Chacon, Erika Anderson, Dustin Hunter, Martha Chicowski and Brent Moore with an officer from the New Mexico State Police at the September 11, 2008 Wills for Heroes event.

By Roxanna Chacon

In a reversal of roles, many first responders have been aided by the Young Lawyers Division of the State Bar of New Mexico. This is due to the introduction and implementation of the Wills for Heroes program in this State.

The first event was held at the Town of Mesilla Fire Department on June 21, 2008. The volunteer attorneys from the Las Cruces area were eager to be the first to promote the program. The second event was held with the Albuquerque Fire Department on July 12, 2008. The third and biggest event to date was held at the New Mexico State Fair in Albuquerque on September 11, 2008.



Wills for Heroes is now in place throughout the country and continues to grow, thanks in part to the Wills for Heroes Foundation and the American Bar Association Young Lawyers Division. The foundation works with young lawyer organizations all over the country to help provide free wills and other estate-planning documents to first responders, including police officers, firefighters, paramedics, corrections and probation officers. The New Mexico YLD is committed to continuing the program and expanding it to other areas of the State. Events in the Farmington and Roswell areas are currently being planned for early 2009. If you are interested in volunteering or would like to help organize an event, please e-mail Roxanna Chacon at lglrnc@zianet.com or lcrdrmc@nmcourts.gov.



YLD volunteer attorneys discuss estate planning information with first responders at the September 11, 2008 Wills for Heroes Event.

Summer Fellowship Reflection

Every year the New Mexico YLD provides fellowships to law students so they have the opportunity to work for public interest entities or in the government sector. This year Aaron W. Martin was awarded with a summer fellowship from the YLD. Below is a summary of his experience.

As the spring semester of my first year of law school drew to a close, I had no idea what I was going to do over the summer. Because I am a licensed special education teacher and have experience in construction and landscaping, I knew that I could work as a summer school teacher or manual laborer, but I wanted to do something that would help me become a better attorney. I needed experience, and I wanted to explore special education law if at all possible. I met Larry Kronen at the Law School's Public Interest Law Fair, where I learned that Pegasus did special education work. While I was interested in the Externship opportunity Larry was offering at the job fair, I realized that, as a homeowner, my mortgage precluded me from taking an unpaid summer position. The YLD Public Interest Fellowship allowed me the opportunity to gain the legal experience I wanted and meet my financial obligations.

While courses in Advocacy and Legal Reasoning, Research, and Writing provide students with an excellent foundation in research and writing, they are no substitute for authentic experience in their area of interest. Performing research in a firm environment helped me to become a more efficient researcher and allowed me to develop familiarity with the research problems unique to my area of interest, special education. Because I was able to refine my research skills at Pegasus, I wrote onto the Natural Resources Journal and secured an on-campus job as a research assistant. My experience as a YLD Fellow has yielded immediate benefit and will help me to become a better practitioner.

One of the most exciting things I did this summer was to work on the New Mexico Children's Code Task Force. I performed research for proposed changes to the Mature Minor Doctrine and Compulsory Attendance Law. These projects provided insight into some of the

problems faced by New Mexican children and families and allowed me the opportunity to propose improvements by researching practices in other states. It was truly a privilege to advocate for New Mexican children and families at the legislative level.

I am confident my client interviewing skills have improved because of the interviews I was able to attend while at Pegasus. I sat in on interviews for kinship guardianship cases with Larry Kronen and was impressed with his ability to ease a very difficult situation through compassionate inquiry. These cases involve the suspension of parental rights by a family member who wishes to become a caretaker, most usually due to abuse or substance abuse in the home. They involve extremely sensitive and volatile topics and desperate circumstances. By observing Larry in the course of these interviews and debriefing with him afterward, I learned techniques that will help to keep an interview moving, despite the client's possible reluctance to do so.

I strongly encourage students to apply for a YLD Public Interest Fellowship. The fellowship allowed me to gain practical legal experience working at Pegasus Legal Services for Children. At Pegasus, I was able to sharpen my research skills on diverse projects such as remedies under IDEA and working with the New Mexico Children's Code Taskforce on the Mature Minor Doctrine and Compulsory Attendance law. I also learned to gather and marshal facts in sensitive cases by observing client interviews and drafting motions for kinship guardianship. Finally, I was able to observe hearings in the Federal District Court and test my understanding of the law by discussing the proceedings with Tara Ford and Gail Stewart, two of New Mexico's preeminent plaintiff's attorneys in special education suits. Thanks to the YLD Public Interest Fellowship, I was able to gain great experience in special education law after my first year of law school.

Greetings from the Chair *continued from cover*

On November 1, 2008, YLD partnered with the Access to Justice Commission to host the Equal Access to Justice Ball. The awards dinner was a wonderful event that honored Justice Pam Minzner and other attorneys who have donated time and energy to the cause of providing legal representation to those in need. The event was a great success and YLD looks forward to continuing our association with this event in the future.

Finally, I would like to thank all of the members of the YLD Board for their enthusiasm, hard work, and boundless energy this past year. It has been an absolute pleasure to serve with each of you. These Board members are the core of the YLD, and they make YLD the strong division that it is. YLD has an exciting future under the incoming chair, Briana Zamora, and I invite anyone who wants to get involved with YLD or any of our projects to contact her or attend one of our upcoming events.

*J. Brent Moore, Chair
Young Lawyers Division*