



## The Power of Community

by Shayda Zaerpoor Le  
YLS President

As a member of the MBA and as President of the YLS at a time when professional associations across the country are evaluating how they can retain members and adapt to the changing needs of their membership, I reflect on the power

of community and the strength of a collective organization. As both our profession and the needs of our membership change, our programs and offerings evolve as well, and the YLS remains an avenue for many of the most critical categories of young lawyer interest and development.

Like all YLS Board members, my involvement started as a committee member, but the impetus for joining a committee was begotten from the actual needs of a young(ish) professional. I had graduated into one of the worst legal markets in recent memory (2011). What I thought I needed was a job. What I actually needed was a community.

It remains true that involvement in a bar association is an important component of being part of a guild and contributing to the profession; it is a way to give back and is an avenue for the important role that lawyers play in society. But in addition to that, for the young lawyer, it is also a critical part of development; meaningful involvement in a bar association is one of the most direct ways for a young lawyer to test their strengths, develop their skills, and *demonstrate* their potential, almost like a very long (and more meaningful) job interview with several potential employers or clients at once.

YLS involvement did ultimately lead directly to a job opportunity for me, but that wasn't a finish-line. As an associate at Barran Liebman, YLS and MBA involvement were strongly encouraged. That continued involvement led to a good professional profile and aided my ability to generate business and bring in clients, in large part because it was an avenue for me to present myself to professional contacts and potential clients through an actual demonstration of work or service. Continued YLS involvement certainly contributed to my advancement and my ability to become a partner, and continues to serve my professional and personal development. It's not just about meeting people, although that's certainly helpful. The community of professionals I have come to *know* through bar service affords me the ability to make introductions and connections between people, to serve my clients by making solid referrals based on personality and approach, to put together community projects, to fundraise for important initiatives, to gather information from different perspectives, to help a new lawyer find a job, and to develop within a professional community much bigger than I could ever establish within a single firm. I am a better (and more successful) professional because of all of these benefits. This is the collective power of a community.

That's my soapbox. I hope that every MBA member reading this article knows how fortunate we are to have the professional environment that Portland (and Oregon) provides, and will consider connecting with a new member or potential member to bring them into the fold.

So, what are we up to this year? The YLS houses four focused committees (which volunteers can join throughout the year): CLE, Membership, Pro Bono, and Service to the Public.

**...involvement in a bar association is an important component...**

The CLE Committee organizes a number of targeted CLEs throughout the year, and also works to identify potential areas of interest that may not have been covered in recent years to implement into subsequent years' rotations. This year also continues our offering of multiple nine-week series which build upon a sequence of topics, such as our Young Litigators Forum. The committee (and the YLS Board) is also looking to develop programs which focus on professional development and growth within different practice settings, in recognition of the skills which are often critical to professional success but which are distinct and separate from substantive legal knowledge.

The Membership Committee plans a variety of social events, which are important not just because they are fun, but because those events serve as the building blocks for bringing together new members of our legal community and introducing them to potential friends and colleagues, as well as driving new members toward greater YLS participation. The committee has a number of popular and recurring events, such as a family-friendly winter event at the Portland Children's Museum, supporting "Justice Trivia" with the Campaign for Equal Justice, as well as drop-in socials throughout the year. In addition, the committee holds joint events with other bar groups, which are an excellent way to foster cross-involvement and volunteer work with other local bar organizations.

The Pro Bono Committee develops opportunities for young lawyers to get involved with pro bono efforts early in their careers, both creating programs and promoting existing pro bono projects through other organizations. There is an annual Pro Bono Pour event, benefiting Legal Aid Services of Oregon. The committee also holds multiple Wills for Heroes clinics throughout the year, providing free wills and basic estate planning documents to local first responders, which is an incredible way to provide critical services to the folks who put their lives on the line to keep all of us safe.

The Service to the Public Committee helps make us all look good! The committee's community outreach activities highlight the positive roles of attorneys in society, educate the public about the legal system, and engage young lawyers in community outreach and service. The committee plans monthly community project days which provide volunteers with the opportunity to engage in discrete volunteer work ranging from soup kitchens to park clean-ups. In addition, the committee is working to implement its second Poetry Slam event, in which students will compose original slam poetry focused on this year's ABA Community Law Week theme of "Free Speech, Free Press, Free Society." This is an innovative way to further the next generation of Portland artists, thinkers, and civically engaged students. This is one of several community-facing programs the committee plans each year.

In addition to our committees, our board members are also concentrating efforts this year on high school outreach to connect with students about careers in the legal field. This focus is intended to introduce students to lawyers through an interactive format, and will highlight the diversity of opportunities available in the profession and different avenues for students with varying levels of resources and exposure. We are excited to support the efforts of the MBA Professionalism Committee in this effort! Our hope is to spark interest in potential future lawyers through an engaging representation of how great it can be to be a lawyer, and to demonstrate how varied individual lawyers and practice environments can be.

So please – join us! Encourage a young lawyer in your life to get involved. Introduce them to the opportunity to develop leadership, collaboration, project management, and a myriad of other skills. Give them the chance to test their strengths and showcase their abilities to their community. Allow the YLS to provide an avenue to becoming the next generation of movers and shakers, spurred in part by developing relationships with the existing, and amazing, members of this legal community. Please feel free to reach out to me personally about opportunities at sle@barran.com.

**Allow the YLS to provide an avenue to becoming the next generation of movers and shakers...**

## mba|CLE

To register for a CLE, please see p. 4 or visit [www.mbabar.org](http://www.mbabar.org) and log in as a member to register at the member rate.

### DECEMBER

**12.5 Wednesday  
Science of the Mind**  
Judge Michael Simon  
Chris Dominic

**12.6 Thursday  
Ethics in Mediation: Beyond Client Confidentiality and Conflicts of Interest**  
Jeffrey Batchelor  
Eric English  
Dayna Underhill

**12.18 Tuesday  
Helping Clients Through the Intersection of Logic and Emotion**  
Devin Howington  
Sam Imperati

### JANUARY

**1.16 Wednesday  
Tips From the Courtroom: Insights from Current and Former Judicial Clerks**  
Bonnie Calhoun  
Lee Ann Donaldson  
Kendall Gourley-Paterson  
Gabrielle Hansen  
Megan Oshiro

**1.23 Wednesday  
ADA and FHA Architectural Access Provisions**  
Matthew Ellis  
Matthew Serres  
Ted Wenk

**1.29 Tuesday  
Internal Investigations in the #MeToo Era: Assessing the Risks and Rewards**  
Derily Bechthold  
Elisa Dozono  
Kalia Walker

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## SAVE THE DATE!

### MBA 17th Annual WinterSmash

*A Family Friendly Bowling Event*



**Saturday, February 2  
11 a.m. - 2 p.m.  
KingPins  
3550 SE 92nd Ave**

*A Multnomah CourtCare Fundraiser*