

American Bar Association Young Lawyers Division
The Affiliate

Affiliate Spotlight: Mound City Bar Association's "Foundations of Justice" Brings History to Life

By Edward L. Wright, Jr.

The Affiliate welcomes one of the ABA YLD's newest affiliates, The Mound City Bar Association.

The Mound City Bar Association (MCBA), led by its 45th President Ronda F. Williams, holds the honor of being the oldest African-American bar association west of the Mississippi River. Organized as The St. Louis Negro Bar Association on January 13, 1922, the group organized at a time when African-American lawyers were not allowed to join the all-white St. Louis Bar Association. Their bar association's objective is to advance the professional interests and professional development of its members, promote the administration of justice, uphold the honor of the legal profession, and provide service to the community.

Foundations of Justice

The MCBA's theme for this year is "Foundations of Justice: Bringing History to Life." MCBA President Williams explains that this theme "represents the notion that an organization like Mound City Bar is rooted in the principles of fairness and equality, and those roots must be cared for and nourished so that [they] can grow."

The MCBA, through its President, has taken a comprehensive approach to developing programs and activities that will appeal and benefit law students, new lawyers, and many of its more experienced lawyers by focusing on four areas: community involvement, bridging the gap, professionalism, and law student development. In addition, the association has recently developed a Young Lawyers Division and implemented an Adoption Program in which the association has adopted various groups for the year.

The MCBA provides support to the community through several programs and relationships such as their "Ask-A-Lawyer" program and their work with local politicians on issues of importance to their constituents. Two of the most notable programs in which the Mound City Bar Association participates in to promote service in their community are "Project Angel Tree" and "Operation Shoebox."

Project Angel Tree (Motion for Kids)

"Project Angel Tree is an annual holiday party held at the Edward Jones Dome and sponsored by the Bar Association of Metropolitan St. Louis and the St. Louis Rams for more than 3,000 local children," Williams says. "The Bar Association of Metropolitan St. Louis held its first Angel Tree holiday party in 1992 to benefit area children with a parent in the Missouri prison system. Since Angel Tree's inception, it has grown each year and now includes children in the foster care system."

MCBA and its members committed to sponsor 10 Angels for the program. But in keeping with their commitment to provide service to the community, they exceeded that commitment by sponsoring an exceptional 24 Angels.

Operation Shoebox

Williams explains: "In Operation Shoebox—founded in 2003 in an effort to send support, healthy food, and much needed personal care items to our troops deployed outside of the USA—the community is encouraged to support their fighting men and women deployed overseas in these dangerous times. The most frequent response from the 'boots on the ground' is that receiving mail from the home front is a huge morale boost!"

The MCBA through its commitment to the community and "Operation Shoebox" adopted two soldiers (one man and one woman) who are stationed overseas fighting in Afghanistan and/or Iraq and have committed to sending a monthly care package to each soldier.

To learn more about "Operation Shoebox," go to <http://operationshoebox.com>.

Please join me in welcoming this historic association to the ABA YLD family. We at *The Affiliate* look forward to meeting our colleagues from MCBA at ABA YLD conferences and hearing about more of their outstanding community service projects and contributions to the Young Lawyers Division.

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