

American Bar Association Young Lawyers Division *The Affiliate*

Awards of Achievement Winners

By Keya Koul

The ABA YLD presents annual awards to local Affiliate programs as part of its Awards of Achievement Program. The Awards of Achievement Program is an opportunity for state and local young lawyer organizations affiliated with the ABA YLD to submit their best projects for evaluation and recognition by a jury of their peers. It is designed to encourage project development by recognizing the time, effort, and skills expended by young lawyer organizations in implementing public service and bar service projects in their communities. Additional recognition is given to minority attorney involvement projects and Affiliate newsletter programs.

The 2009–2010 Awards of Achievement were presented during the ABA YLD Assembly at the ABA Annual Meeting in San Francisco, California. Applications for the 2010–2011 Program will open April 1, 2011. Eligible organizations include any ABA YLD Affiliated Organization that falls under Articles 3.1(a) or 3.1(b) of the ABA YLD Bylaws. A copy of the Bylaws is available at www.abanet.org/yld/affiliateleaders/ByLaws.pdf.

Categories and Applications include the following:

1. **Single Project/Service to the Public**—The most successful public service project conducted during the last concluded activity year.
2. **Single Project/Service to the Bar**—The most successful professional service project conducted during the last concluded activity year.
3. **Single Project/Minority**—The most successful project conducted during the last concluded activity year that assisted minority lawyers in their career development or increased their level of involvement in the bar.
4. **Comprehensive**—The broad range of programming conducted during the last activity year. Competition is based on the totality of programs.
5. **Newsletter**—The role of an Affiliate newsletter in achieving the Affiliate's overall goals and objectives.

The judges for this program are recruited by the ABA YLD Affiliates Director through a targeted mailing. No judge will participate in the evaluation of an application from his or her own state. Qualities that the judges consider when evaluating the projects include:

- well-rounded or balanced nature of overall bar program(s),
- degree of change or growth,
- achievement of goals/impact,
- degree of participation by members,
- originality, and
- compliance with the program rules.

Here is a summary of some of the winning programs for 2009–2010.

Service to the Public

R U Safe? Protecting Yourself in Cyberspace Texas Young Lawyers Association—Texas

R U Safe? is a DVD containing four separate videos designed to educate children and their parents about online dangers and give them the tools needed to be safe while online. It is intended to serve students at every age level (elementary, middle school, and high school) and also contains a section for parents. Using experts from law enforcement and child advocacy groups, the video covers such wide-ranging topics as cyber bullying, social networking, chat rooms, "sexting," and online predators.

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Project Grace

North Carolina Bar Association

Young Lawyers Division—North Carolina

The North Carolina Bar Association YLD's Law & Aging Committee established "Project Grace" in order to provide health care powers of attorney and living wills free of charge to those of limited means. In total, Project Grace through the efforts of twenty-seven attorney volunteers, and approximately thirty non-attorney volunteers served 130 people and 260 documents were drafted.

Tennessee Flood Disaster Legal Services

Tennessee Bar Association

Young Lawyers Division—Tennessee

The TBA YLD worked closely with Tennessee Area Legal Services to coordinate flood relief efforts and, at the direction of FEMA, helped with the establishment of disaster legal services hotlines in the counties declared eligible for federal assistance. The TBA YLD kicked into high gear just days after devastating floods hit Middle and West Tennessee—activating a toll free hotline for disaster victims to request free legal assistance, coordinating the response among nine legal organizations in the state, and educating lawyers on the legal issues disaster victims often face.

Protejase! Luche Contra el Fraude

(Protect Yourself! Fight Against Fraud)

Dallas Association of Young Lawyers—Texas

The DAYL created "Protejase! Luche Contra el Fraude" (which means "Protect Yourself! Fight Against Fraud"), a Spanish public service campaign that details the warning signs of credit repair scams, notario "notary" fraud, and fraud generally. The DAYL sought to combat frauds perpetuated by scam artists attempting to take advantage of language barriers and diverse cultural norms in these tough economic times.

What's So Special About Special Education?

Houston Young Lawyers Association—Texas

The "What's So Special About Special Education?" seminar is designed to provide parents, advocates, attorneys, and teachers with information regarding numerous aspects of special education and topics related to special needs children. Four attorneys presented eight 75-minute sessions on topics related to children with special needs and the law.

Service to the Bar

Public Interest Internship Program

State Bar of Georgia Young Lawyers Division—Georgia

The Public Interest Internship Program's goal is to provide law school students and recent graduates with summer employment opportunities in public interest organizations throughout the state. The program was designed to respond to the growing numbers of new young lawyers who were unable to find employment and the increasing need for indigent legal services by providing an opportunity to gain practical legal skills while serving the public.

Young Lawyers Leadership Conference

State Bar of Wisconsin Young Lawyers Division—Wisconsin

The Wisconsin YLD developed and organized its first Young Lawyers Leadership Conference to provide young lawyers with leadership training and to encourage greater participation in the YLD, the state and local bars, and in the community. In addition to CLE training, young lawyers also participated in a speed networking event as well as a reception afterwards.

Legislative Leadership Academy

The Iowa State Bar Association Young Lawyers Division—Iowa

The Legislative Leadership Academy is a unique, bi-partisan program that offered attorneys advice and information about running for and maintaining a role in public office. The event centered on the practical issues lawyers face while seeking public office and the need for more lawyer-legislators. The program featured several experts and lawyer-legislators from across the state.

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Lunch and Learn

Dallas Association of Young Lawyers—Texas

“Lunch and Learn” is a 12-month CLE series designed to provide litigation training for young lawyers and is offered free of charge to DAYL members. Each program in the series averaged 70 attendees and addressed such topics as initial pleadings, discovery, experts, summary judgment motions, and avoiding legal malpractice.

HYLA Swearing-In Ceremony

Houston Young Lawyers Association—Texas

HYLA organized and planned a “Swearing-In Ceremony” at South Texas College of Law for newly licensed attorneys on November 17, 2009. The event was created for those who could not attend the Austin Swearing-In Ceremony. HYLA recognized the importance of creating a comparable event, so a newly licensed attorney who was unable to travel for whatever reason, could share his or her achievements with their family in the same manner.

Minority

Oliver Hill / Samuel Tucker PreLaw Institute

Virginia State Bar Young Lawyers Conference—Virginia

The Oliver Hill/Samuel Tucker PreLaw Institute reaches out to minority high school students, particularly disadvantaged or academically at-risk students whose only exposure to the legal system is, generally, through television or the juvenile justice system. For one week, students live on a college campus and attend a number of mock classes and seminars on career opportunities in the law, test-taking strategies, and the college admission process.

Bar Exam Writing Clinics

North Carolina Bar Association

Young Lawyers Division—North Carolina

The NCBA’s Minorities in the Profession Committee holds free bar exam writing clinics every year in January and June in preparation for the February and July bar exams. The clinics are designed to provide insight and strategies on passing the North Carolina Bar Exam, with particular emphasis on the essay portion. Minority young lawyers assisted with the January and June writing clinics by, among other things, setting the agenda, soliciting speakers, and preparing and presenting study materials to the attendees.

HYLA Urban Debate League

Houston Young Lawyers Association—Texas

The HYLA Urban Debate League was started to build, support, and sustain programs in Houston’s public school system to make debate an educational resource available to all students. The UDL seeks to teach students the basics of effective communication, preparation, organization, and teamwork.

More information about the ABA YLD Awards of Achievement Program is available online at www.abanet.org/yld/awards/aoa.

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