



**THE STATE BAR
OF CALIFORNIA**

JUDY JOHNSON
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR/SECRETARY

July 9, 2008

Jill McCall, Director
ABA-Young Lawyers Division
American Bar Association
321 N. Clark St.
Chicago, IL 60610

**Re: "California Young Lawyers Get by with a Little Help from Their Friends", *The Affiliate*,
May/June 2008, ABA-YLD**

Editor:

The Board of Governors of the State Bar of California considers the California Young Lawyers Association to be an integral and dynamic component of our 217,000-member organization. Given the Board's recent efforts to more precisely define the role of CYLA, and our increased emphasis on ways to enhance our young lawyers' experience within the association, we were surprised by the recent criticism in your publication, much of which was inaccurate. The most troubling of these inaccuracies was the assertion that the very existence of CYLA was "*threatened*." There was never a proposal before the Board of Governors to to "disband CYLA" as a State Bar entity and "*place young lawyers directly into sections of the State Bar*," stated as fact in the column. The Board of Governors was urged to break down barriers to young lawyer participation in the full range of State Bar activities, beyond membership in CYLA, and to provide greater leadership opportunities for young lawyers with demonstrated interest in bar sections and bar committees.

As noted in the column, the State Bar's Board of Governors focused its 2007 annual planning meeting solely on young lawyers. The purpose -- *to focus on ways to more actively engage young lawyers in the State Bar* -- was stated in a memo sent to all invited participants. We do not understand why the column writers "*weren't sure what that meant exactly*." CYLA executive committee members were invited to participate in this planning session which was conducted by Dadie Perlov, an experienced bar association facilitator who had been retained by the Board to assist with its planning process.

"To Improve the Justice System and Assure a Free and Just Society Under the Law"

180 HOWARD STREET
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA 94105-1639

TEL 415 538-2358
FAX 415 538-2305
judy.johnson@calbar.ca.gov

July 9, 2008

Jill McCall, Director, ABA-Young Lawyers Division

"California Young Lawyers Get by with a Little Help from Their Friends", *The Affiliate*, May/June 2008

Page | 2

In the months that followed, the Board recognized the need to expand Ms. Perlov's scope of services to assist with a more comprehensive evaluation of issues faced by California's young lawyers. The State Bar commissioned a survey of California's young lawyers conducted by an independent research firm to find out what they wanted and expected from their State Bar. Interestingly, the results of the survey confirmed the view that CYLA needed to be revitalized as nearly 60% of California's young lawyers were unaware of CYLA's existence or its activities or that, by virtue of their age or number of years in practice, they were automatically "members" of CYLA.

Contrary to what was stated in the column, Ms. Perlov was not asked to interpret the aforementioned survey results but instead to compile a report (subsequently titled, "The Generational Divide: Real or Imagined") based on the many different approaches sanctioned by the State Bar Board of Governors to evaluate the issues faced by California's young lawyers: focus groups, one-on-one interviews, research of other local and state bar young lawyer entities and to incorporate a review of the young lawyer survey results. This report offered a basis for the State Bar to hold its spring summit on young lawyers and focused on ways to strengthen CYLA via staffing, funding, restructuring and career development. Again, the report did not contain a recommendation to disband CYLA as alleged in the column. The report *did* contain "Action *options for consideration and discussion*" at the Spring Summit, the first and most detailed being to "Strengthen the CYLA." The report also summarized the research conducted by Ms. Perlov and was intended to be used as a springboard for discussion at the spring summit. The full report can be obtained by e-mailing cyla@calbar.ca.gov.

Another erroneous assertion in the column states that "CYLA summoned the help of other young lawyer leaders from across the nation." In fact, the summit invitation list was developed by State Bar staff and included a broad range of individuals, both volunteers and staff from local, state and national organizations to allow for a variety of opinions in the summit discussions. The State Bar subsidized the travel of invitees to encourage full participation. Additionally, a CYLA Board meeting was scheduled immediately prior to the summit to ensure all CYLA Board members would be in attendance. There was no need for CYLA to "summon help" as participation was requested and even encouraged by the State Bar president and staff.

As expected, attendee input in the summit was crucial. Ms. Perlov submitted a final report that summarized the research and summit discussions, offering recommendations and conclusions. State Bar staff and CYLA's Board reviewed the recommendations and developed proposals for presentation to the Board that incorporated some of the final report's recommendations and rejected others. For example, the Board rejected Ms. Perlov's recommendation that CYLA's name be changed. As a result of all of these efforts, the Board issued for public comment an array of proposals to enhance CYLA and to increase its staffing and budget.

July 9, 2008

Jill McCall, Director, ABA-Young Lawyers Division

"California Young Lawyers Get by with a Little Help from Their Friends", *The Affiliate*, May/June 2008

Page | 3

Based on this thorough study, the State Bar has doubled the overall funding for CYLA for 2009, significantly increasing staff support to provide sustained communication, programming and a coordinated effort with local young lawyer groups, to help transition young lawyers into the profession. For a comprehensive review of approved State Bar initiatives in support of young lawyers, go to calbar.ca.gov and select Public Comment in the right hand menu. Although the April 26 public comment deadline has already passed, we are always open to comments and suggestions, and I personally invite anyone with an interest in this topic to share their views with Carol Madeja who provides staff support to CYLA at cyla@calbar.ca.gov.

Sincerely,



Judy Johnson

Executive Director

cc: Jeffrey Bleich, President, State Bar of California
Candy Simmons, Staff Director, Professional Services
Kristine Gregorio, Deputy Director, ABA-YLD
Richard Bright, Managing Editor, ABA-YLD *Affiliate*
Rachel Kopp, 2007-08 Editor, *The Affiliate*
Mercedes Pino, 2008-09 Editor, *The Affiliate*