



CHRISTY MALATESTA

Young Lawyers Division President
2020-2021

The Mississippi Bar



Young Lawyers Division

YOUNG LAWYERS DIVISION NEWS

I recently read an article that's thesis statement was, "[p]reventing COVID-19 from spreading isn't somebody else's job; it's everybody's job." I think the Young Lawyers Division has taken that message to heart as we continue to see the effects of COVID-19 in our community and our profession. As we have all faced the uncertainty of this time, it has been the renewed focus on our common goals that made both the Bar and the Division's success possible this Fall. We are almost halfway through this most unusual year, and the usual work of all our committees is thankfully well underway!

We have learned to adapt to the pandemic's ever-changing landscape, which included transitioning from our in-person Bar Admissions Ceremony to a virtual process. Thank you to Bar Admissions Ceremony Chair Kyle Williams, his committee members, and the Bar staff who worked tirelessly to ensure Mississippi's newest lawyers had the information they needed to be admitted to the practice of law. While I hate we did not get an opportunity to congratulate our new members in person, I look forward to the day when we can gather together again to celebrate their accomplishment.

With our new colleagues sworn in, Seminars Chairs Christina Seanor and Lindsey Lazinsky have been hard at work transitioning the new lawyer Bridge the Gap program from the traditional in-person offerings to an online format. We appreciate the lawyers who agreed to help with this undertaking and who volunteered their time and their talents to make sure that Bridge the Gap

continues to offer valuable educational opportunities to our newest lawyers in the Bar. I know firsthand how well thought out the agenda is for these offerings and what a massive undertaking it is to coordinate. Everyone involved in the process, including the committee, has sacrificed their time for this worthwhile training. Special thanks to Daniel Reed, the Division's new coordinator, for hitting the ground running by shepherding this effort.

Our Public Service and Pro Bono chairs KJ Miri and Alex Shoemaker have also been busy working with the Mississippi Access to Justice Commission and the Mississippi Volunteer Lawyers Project to staff and coordinate virtual expungement clinics. These clinics provide both a valuable service to members of our community and CLE for lawyers who participate. I know there are plans for more of these clinics in the Spring, and I look forward to seeing the fruits of these efforts. We are also excited about new opportunities coming up in the Spring through our Child Advocacy Committee, chaired by Megan Bennett. Plans have been underway this Fall to develop similar clinics geared toward various issues affecting older children in our state's foster care system. If you are interested in assisting with either of these committees' upcoming offerings, please reach out to let us know!

In mid-October, the Division co-hosted a virtual networking event with the LatinX Law Student Association at the University of Mississippi School of Law. More than a dozen law students and young lawyers

continued on next page

from a variety of backgrounds came together to share questions, experiences, and laughter over Zoom. Thank you to Jess Waltman and KeNosha Whitehead, chairs of the Division's Diversity and Social Justice Committee, who helped spearhead the event. They also welcomed Daniel E. Matos Meléndez, the President of the Young Lawyers Division of Puerto Rico, who answered several questions about the practice of law in Puerto Rico and talked about the importance of being an expert in a given field. Look for more networking and educational opportunities from this committee as the year progresses.

And speaking of Puerto Rico, I have enjoyed getting to know Lindsay Lopez Murillo, our American Bar Association district representative currently serving the district, which now encompasses both Mississippi and Puerto Rico. Lindsay has kept in constant contact with our statewide leaders, particularly as we have had such an active hurricane season this year. I look forward to continuing to build the Division's special relationship with Puerto Rico in our newly combined ABA district.

Finally, the High School Mock Trial Committee, chaired by Kye Handy and Elizabeth Hyde, has posted this year's exciting problem for our students. However, like many things in 2020, the competition itself will look different. We are transitioning to an all virtual competition! In a normal year, Mock Trial is a massive undertaking in which we need help from lawyers across the Bar to accomplish its aims. This year, we need your help more than ever to ensure the safe, smooth transition to our new format. When you start getting the emails to volunteer, you know the ones, please try to give of your time as freely as possible. Thank you to all the lawyers who coach teams in your area, volunteer as judges, or support the program in other ways. This program cannot be successful without you, and we do not take that for granted. The Central Regional will be held January 16th, the Southern Regional will be held January 23rd, the Northern Regional will be held January 30th, and our statewide competition will be held February 26th and 27th. Please contact Daniel Reed at dreed@msbar.org or sign-up on the division's web page on The Mississippi Bar's website to volunteer!

We had an active Fall, maybe despite or because of COVID-19. I look forward to carrying this momentum into 2021, when we will hopefully begin to see a return to more normal programming and participation opportunities. If you would like to get involved with the Division, please reach out to Daniel Reed at dreed@msbar.org or me at cmalatesta@danielcoker.com.



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**2349 TWIN LAKES CIRCLE
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Office: (205) 598-2447 ext. 103
Cell: (601) 580-7770
www.vocrehabconsultants.com
dr.singleton@vocrehabconsultants.com