

# YLD...In Brief

The Official Newsletter of the State Bar of New Mexico Young Lawyers Division

December 2015

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## YLD PROGRAM CHAIRS

Veterans' Clinics, **Spencer Edelman**

Serving Our Seniors, **Tomas Garcia**

Wills for Heroes, **Spencer Edelman,**

**Jordan Kessler, Sonia Russo**

Law-Day Call In, **Spencer Edelman, Robert Lara, Erin**

**Atkins, Jordan Kessler, Sonia Russo**

Law Day Essay Contest, **Robert Lara, Tomas Garcia**

Constitution Day, **Erin Atkins**

Diversity Collaboration, **Sonia Russo**

YLD/UNM SOL Mentorship Program,

**Tomas Garcia, Ben Sherman**

YLD/UNM SOL Speed Networking,

**Sean FitzPatrick, Ben Sherman**

YLD/UNM SOL Mock Interview Program,

**Spencer Edelman, Ben Sherman**

Summer Fellowship Program, **Ben Sherman**

YLD ... In Brief, **Ben Sherman**

Bylaws Committee, **Sean FitzPatrick**

Interview Program, **Tomas Garcia, Sean FitzPatrick**

YLD CLE, **Robert Lara**

## Message from the YLD Chair...

By Ken Stalter



As 2015 draws to a close, allow me to thank everyone who participated in YLD programming this year. We had an extraordinary year of service to the public and the profession. It was only possible because of those who gave their time.

Thank you to all the volunteers who made our public service projects so successful this year. We've been especially lucky to have a fantastic turn out from

experienced attorneys as well as members of the paralegal division. Without them, we would not have been able to sustain our two biggest public-service programs the Veterans' Civil Justice Initiative and Wills for Heroes.

Thank you to all those who have participated in our member service projects, particularly YLD/UNM School of Law Mentorship Program. The practice of law in New Mexico is unique in its collegiality and sense of community. YLD's commitment to member service helps foster that sense, especially as we introduce new attorneys to the profession.

Thank you to the other divisions and sections that have collaborated with us throughout the year. These collaborations have been fun and informative—a wonderful means for new attorneys to expand their horizons.

Thank you, finally, to the members of the YLD board. You are the heart of the YLD and I have been honored to work alongside you. I want to welcome Spencer Edelman as chair for 2016 as well as the other incoming officers. I look forward to what Spencer has in store for us and I know the division will be in good hands.

# ABA YLD Update

By Sonia Russo, Director-At-Large, Position 4

2015 is in the books for the American Bar Association Young Lawyers Division, and it's been a great year. The year kicked off with the ABA Midyear Meeting, Feb. 5–7 in Houston, Texas. Long-time YLD board member Keya Koul co-chaired a presentation on appointments, scholarships and fellowships within the ABA YLD. ABA Secretary Mary T. Torres and prominent Albuquerque attorney Roberta Cooper Ramo were also featured as speakers on a panel of ABA trailblazers. Ramo later received the ABA's highest honor, the ABA Medal, during the ABA Annual Meeting in Chicago in July.

In April board members of the State Bar YLD and other young lawyers from New Mexico traveled to Aspen, Colo., for the first annual Four Corners Regional Summit. The two days of the conference were packed with comprehensive affiliate leadership training that provided substantive, specific tools and advice for providing better programming for both the legal community here at home as well as the public that we serve. The regional summit was a wonderful opportunity to get to know and learn from other active young lawyers in Utah, Wyoming, Colorado and Oklahoma.

This year, the two main public service initiatives of the ABA YLD have been Project Street Youth, which aims to serve homeless youth, and World Wise Web, which is designed to keep children safe online and decrease their exposure to cyber predators. World Wise Web is the ABA YLD's public service project for 2016–2017. Also new this year is the What Do Lawyers Do project, which aims to provide programming for undergraduate students, particularly racially and ethnically diverse students, on how to enter the legal profession. At least one What Do Lawyers Do event will be held here in New Mexico and the ABA YLD held one of these programs during the Fall Conference in October in Little Rock, Ark.



*From top left, Allison Block-Chavez, Sonia Russo, Chris Wharton and Audrey Phillips at the Fall Conference in Little Rock, Ark.*

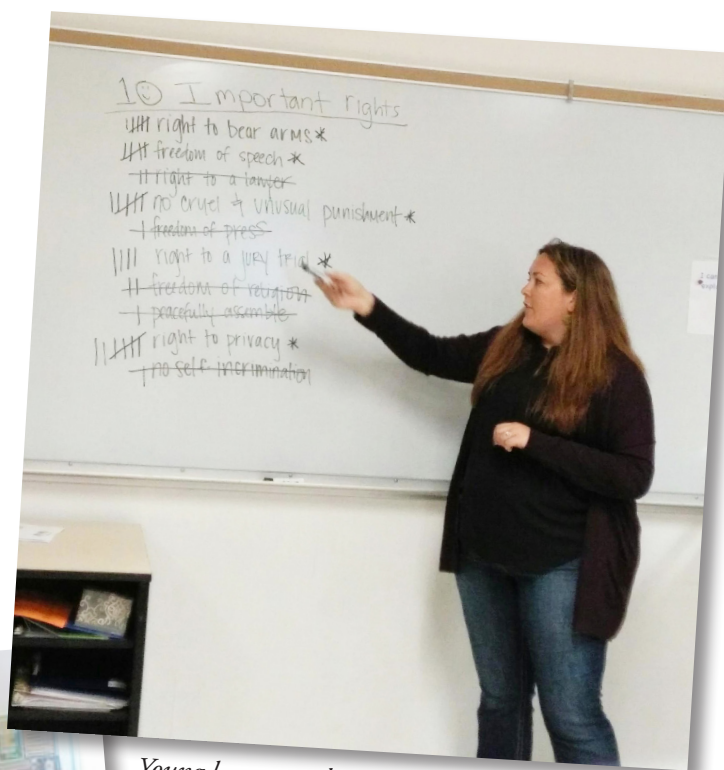
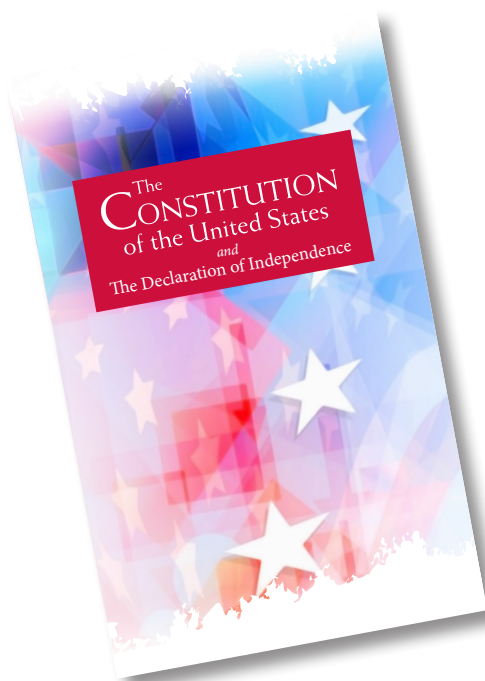
Looking forward, the ABA YLD is poised to continue great work with the What Do Lawyers Do initiative, and with World Wise Web. The ABA Midyear Meeting will be in San Diego, Calif., in February and the ABA YLD Spring Conference will be in St. Louis, Mo., in May. What Do Lawyers Do events will also be implemented at these meetings. For more information about how you can get involved with the ABA YLD, contact Sonia Russo at [srusso@da2nd.state.nm.us](mailto:srusso@da2nd.state.nm.us).



# Constitution Day

By Sean FitzPatrick, Director-At-Large, Position 3

During the week of Sept. 14–18 attorneys from across the state participated in Constitution Day presentations for fifth grade classrooms in the YLD's annual Constitution Day celebration. YLD Board Members organized volunteer judges and attorneys and matched them with schools in their local areas. 85 schools and more than 5,000 students participated in the event! Each student received a copy of the Constitution, courtesy of the YLD. The volunteers led games, discussions and even passionate debates with the students. This event was a great success again this year! The YLD wishes to thank all who participated and inspired the young students of New Mexico.



*Young lawyer and Public Defender Petria Schrieber presenting to fifth graders at Tularosa Elementary School.*

*Joachim Marjon teaches fifth graders at Pojoaque Elementary School*

# Law Day Call-in

By Erin Atkins, Region 4 Director

On Saturday morning, May 2, a deep breath brought in the familiar scent of fresh, hot coffee. It was quiet. Attorneys around the state of New Mexico were catching up and making new acquaintances. But when the clock struck 9 a.m., phones started ringing and the otherwise normal Saturday morning resembled the scene of a telethon. Except it wasn't a telethon, it was the Young Lawyers Division Law Day Call-in!

Lawyers at various locations around the state in Albuquerque, Alamogordo, Gallup and Roswell took more

than 220 calls from the public. Calls flooded in, thanks, in large part, to past YLD Chair Ben Sherman promoting the event on KOAT-7. Free legal advice was provided on a range of topics including wills, real estates, personal injury, criminal law and family law issues.

With more than 30 attorney volunteers that morning, there was a total of over 120 hours of combined free legal advice. YLD especially thanks the many volunteers who participated and made this day a success.

## Law Day Call-in Program



*Alamogordo Volunteers: Canon Stevens, Petria Schreiber, Kay Pearson, Hon. James Waylon Counts, John Hakanson, Mark Reeves, Darla Gorman, Irene Counts and S. Bert Atkins*



*Roswell Volunteers: Chelsea Seaton, Dustin Hunter, Jared Kallunki, Hon. Charles Currier, Kelly Cassels, James "Mitch" Mitchell, Jared Ford, Clayton Hightower, Beth Hightower, and Elizabeth Shields*



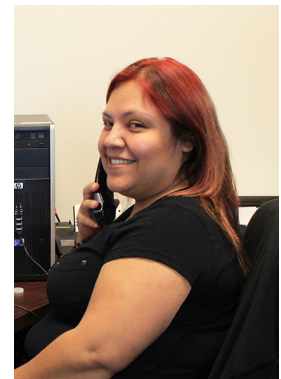
*Randy Powers Jr.*



*Paul Cash*



*Sean FitzPatrick*



*Lizeth Cera*





# YLD/UNM SOL Mentorship Program

*By Ben Sherman, Immediate Past Chair*

The YLD/UNM School of Law Mentorship Program remained one of the most popular and successful programs of the year in 2015. This year, more than 75 young lawyers volunteered to mentor law students from the University of New Mexico. On the evening of Sept. 23, more than 100 mentors and mentees gathered on the back patio of the law school for the annual Mentorship Program BBQ Kickoff. As music played and drinks flowed, mentors and mentees enjoyed meeting each other for the first time. After speeches from representatives of both the Young Lawyers Division and Career Services, pairs of mentors and mentees were able to network and socialize, thus beginning professional relationships that will foster valuable learning experiences and could even lead to future job offers.

On Nov. 12, young lawyers and law students braved the cold and gathered at Backstreet Grill, in Old Town, for the popular annual Mentorship Program Happy Hour. In a warm atmosphere with live music, food, and drinks, pairs of mentors and mentees networked and socialized. Fun was had by all as lawyers mingled with law students in a casual and relaxed setting. At the event, lawyers and law students reported positive experiences with their mentors and mentees and were able to form new relationships.

The YLD/UNMSOL planning commission is excited about the next event, which will take place after winter break. On

Nov. 17, YLD board members, Student Bar Association representatives and career service faculty met at the law school to discuss the annual late winter/early spring event. We are excited to announce the next event will be a Trivia Night on February 24, 2016, at Ponderosa Brewery. The event begins at 5:30 p.m. Attorney mentors and law student mentees will be divided into teams to enjoy in a friendly trivia competition in a fun and lively atmosphere. We hope to see everyone at this popular and fun event!

The YLD wants to expressly thank all of the lawyers who volunteered their precious time to bettering the future lawyers of New Mexico and developing the pipeline to the profession.



*Sean FitzPatrick, Ben Sherman and Sonia Russo*



*YLD members gather at the Isotopes tailgating event.*



# Speed Networking

By Ben Sherman, Immediate Past Chair

Always a well-attended and popular event, the annual YLD Speed Networking was no different in 2015. The event took place on Oct. 27 at the State Bar Center. This year, more than 40 attorneys and law students participated in the event, aimed at improving law students' networking skills. During the exercise, lawyers are asked to form an outward-facing circle (good thing we don't use much Geometry in our jobs!). Law students then form an inward-facing circle around the lawyers so that law students and lawyers are face-to-face (as seen below). Once everyone is in position, lawyers and law students are instructed to begin to talk as if they have just met and only have a few minutes to chat. Every 2-3 minutes, a chime is rung and the law students are asked to rotate 1 person. By the end of the event, each law student is able to meet and talk to every single attorney in the room.

YLD is committed to improving the pipeline to the legal profession and the Speed Networking event an excellent way for law students to build confidence and skill when networking with other professionals. Over the years, we have heard countless instances in which law students have formed long-term learning and mentoring relationships with lawyers they met at the event. Everyone had fun and we look forward to continuing this worthwhile event next year! Thank you to all of the lawyers who took time out of their busy schedules to volunteer.





# Wills for Heroes

By Spencer Edelman, Chair-elect

New Mexico has seen its share of tragedy this year, losing first-responders who put their life on the line to protect the public. Unfortunately, the tragic loss of life is a reality for first-responders that will never go away. The Young Lawyers Division, together with the Paralegal Division and members of the State Bar have helped deal with this reality through the Wills for Heroes program.

Wills for Heroes provides free wills and other estate planning documents for qualified first responders. The program originated after Sept. 11, when Anthony Hayes asked what lawyers could do to help in response to the terrorist attack. He quickly identified a crucial need—Very few of the first responders who selflessly responded to the attack had any estate planning documents. Following those first efforts to provide pro bono services to New York's first responders, the program was expanded to help police, firefighters and EMTs around the country.

This year Wills for Heroes had its largest impact in New Mexico to date. Four Wills for Heroes clinics were hosted in the Albuquerque metro area coordinated by Spencer Edelman. One clinic was hosted in Alamogordo coordinated by Erin Atkins and the 12th Judicial District Bar Association. One clinic was hosted in Socorro at the Fourth Annual Fire & EMS Expo at the New Mexico Firefighters Training Academy coordinated by Robert Lara. An upcoming program is in the works in Farmington. With such a successful year, the YLD hopes to reach even more first responders in 2016.

One of the best things about the program is that lawyers with no experience in drafting wills or estate planning



documents can guide first responders through a few simple questions, and the first responders can leave that day with a will in hand. If you are interested in volunteering at an upcoming clinic please keep an eye out for emails from the State Bar and announcements in the Bar Bulletin. If you are interested in helping the YLD host a clinic for a group of first responders in your area contact Spencer Edelman at [spencer.edelman@modrall.com](mailto:spencer.edelman@modrall.com).



## Young Lawyers Division 2015 Election Results

Congratulations to **Sean FitzPatrick** who has been elected to  
YLD Director-at-Large, Position 3!

He will assume office January 1, 2016 along with  
the other new board members below:

Region 1 Director: **Evan Cochnar**

Region 3 Director: **Anna Rains**

Director-at-Large, Position 1: **Allison Block-Chavez**

Director-at-Large, Position 5: **Robert Lara**

## Upcoming YLD Events

**Jan. 30, 2016, 8:30 a.m.-noon, UNM School of Law:**

**UNMSOL/YLD Mock Interview Program**

Attorney-volunteers are needed to give mock interviews to law students.

**Feb. 24, 2016, 5:30-7:30 p.m., Ponderosa Brewery:**

**Annual Mentorship Program Trivia Night**

All attorneys participating in the mentorship program are invited to attend with their mentees.