

A Call to Serve!

Savalle C. Sims, 2004–2005 Young Lawyers Conference President



© Dupont Photographers, Inc.

My predecessor, Kathleen M. Uston, challenged Virginia young lawyers to take up the call to join the work of the Young Lawyers Conference and change their lives. She recognized that the YLC can only remain a vibrant and energetic conference with involvement from a multitude of young lawyers who bring diverse viewpoints, practices and experiences to both the practice of law and service to the bar. The YLC Board decided to join this challenge by looking inward and reexamining how the YLC serves the public and the bar, with an eye towards serving efficiently and effectively. With these goals in mind this year, I am pleased to have the opportunity to lead an organization that embraces the past accomplishments and service of its leaders and members, but yet strives to initiate programs to meet the evolving needs of the public and the bar.

This past summer, the YLC board decided that this year the YLC will undertake a voter education initiative in conjunction with the Virginia State Board of Elections to distribute a “know your voting rights” pamphlet throughout the commonwealth. Through this program, the YLC hopes to educate Virginians about their basic voting rights and support their right to be heard as part of the democratic process.

On another front, the YLC board has learned that past YLC president and newly installed American Bar Association President Robert J. Grey Jr. has decided to devote his term to creating better juries through a jury initiative project. The ABA Young Lawyers Division has joined in its support of his jury initiative by creating a program designed to educate high school students about the importance of jury service. We have pledged our support to Robert Grey’s initiative and look forward to implementing projects designed to educate the bar and public about jury service this year during our annual Professional Development Conference and Community Law Week.

In August, the YLC received several awards from the ABA Young Lawyers Division, including second place for the Professional Development Conference-Litigation in the bar service category; first place for the Spanish translation of the Domestic Violence

Safety Brochure, in the public service category; and first place for the *Docket Call* newsletter, in the newsletter category. We are extremely proud of these accomplishments and look forward to building on these successes in the new bar year.

On reflection, I got involved with the YLC to give back to my community, to honor our profession and to strive to improve the perception of our profession in the community. I am constantly amazed and proud to see the unbridled enthusiasm and dedication exhibited by numerous young lawyers across Virginia who develop creative programs and initiatives to make a difference in our profession and community, while juggling demanding practices and balancing family commitments.

For those of you who have not yet heard or responded to the call to serve, the YLC stands ready to welcome you into the fold and to share the wonderful rewards that service brings, including meaningful opportunities to serve the bar and public and to interact and work with talented young lawyers throughout Virginia.

There are a number of ways to serve as part of the YLC, including programs relating to emergency legal services, immigrant outreach and domestic safety. Additionally, we have established three new commissions—Women and Minorities in the Profession, Children and the Law, and Pro Bono—to evaluate unmet and evolving needs and develop new programs in the aforementioned areas. If you are no longer a young lawyer, I encourage you to support the YLC, to support our programs, to support young lawyers who participate in the YLC and to share the benefits of service with young lawyers in your community.

Finally, the YLC board and I hope to meet many young lawyers across the commonwealth this year. We are planning receptions at locations to be announced in conjunction with our meetings and programs throughout the year. I encourage you to attend the receptions, and I look forward to joining you in answering the call to serve this year! 🍷