Congratulations, new lawyers and welcome to the Virginia Bar! Getting to this point is a huge accomplishment and one for which you should be incredibly proud. For those of you who plan to use your newly acquired license and have successfully secured a job in this economy, we have a few tips and pointers to assist you during your first year practicing or clerking.

By now you have probably figured out that law school did not teach you everything there is to know about being a lawyer; in fact, we will wager that most of you would not know what to do if someone assigned you your own case today. Yet, whether you realize it or not, you have been through a similar experience before and made it out successfully: law school. When you began your 1L year, you faced a rather steep learning curve. But you eventually figured the system out—you joined study groups, made outlines, got involved in extracurriculars, registered for classes with the best professors, and likely watched your GPA rise during your tenure as a law student.

Being a first year attorney is no different. If you apply the same skills you learned in law school to your first year of practice, we are confident your year will be successful.

1. Get Comfortable Being Uncomfortable

In law school, the Socratic Method was pretty intimidating. At first, being cold-called in front of your classmates was unnerving, but eventually you got used to it and developed your own coping mechanisms.

The same goes for practicing law. Spoiler alert: At some point over the next year, you will be asked to do something in which you have zero experience, and you will likely make a mistake. The good news is that mistakes are common among first-year attorneys. If you use each mistake as a learning opportunity, you will likely avoid making that mistake again. Understand that trial and error are the most effective learning tools, and just because you mess up once does not mean you are going to be sued for malpractice, lose your license, or get fired. Be open to challenging yourself, and by the end of the year you will be shocked at how much you learned.

2. Don’t Use Your Inexperience As a Crutch

While you need not be a perfect attorney in your first year, do not fall into the trap of using your inexperience as a crutch. In law school, you may have found yourself saying, “I’m only a 1L, I don’t need to get involved in extracurriculars.” Or, “I don’t know how to argue a motion, so I don’t have to participate in moot court.” Over time, however, you may have realized you were using your inexperience as an excuse to avoid trying new and scary things.

Instead of making excuses, get scared. In your first year of practicing, it will be easy to catch yourself saying, “It’s okay that I did not make my billable hours this month because I am still new.” Or, “I do not need to attend that networking event because I am young and do not need to be marketing.” While your supervising attorneys may have lower expectations for you during your first year, do not rely on these excuses and certainly do not let them become a habit. Now is the important time to create a good reputation and good habits for your future as a lawyer.

3. Get Involved

We are sure your peer advisors or section leaders in law school encouraged you to get involved and join extracurriculars. Some of you may have done so to explore potential job avenues, volunteer in an area in which you were passionate, or simply pad your resume before interviews. Regardless of your motivations, joining groups and getting to know your fellow classmates likely created opportunities and formed relationships that may have passed you by if you had spent all of your time in the library. Similarly, becoming an attorney will present numerous opportunities to get involved. Although your first year may seem overwhelming, as you get your feet underneath you, remember the value you received back in law school through meeting new people and participating in extracurricular activities. In addition to the time you spend in the office, join local bar associations; pick up a pro bono case if you are so inclined; and make an effort to get to know the people you work with each day.

4. There Are Still Scary Professors

We assume most new attorneys had at least one law school professor that imparted a lasting fear upon them through brutal cold calls, impossible exams, or just their general demeanor. But we also assume most of you adapted and figured out a way to succeed, or at least survive, in those difficult situations. Sadly, intimidating figures will remain present in your early legal career, whether they be judges, supervising attorneys, or experienced opposing counsel. However, the skills you used to learn the style that your intimidating professors appreciated or required will serve you well as you begin to practice law. Make an effort to learn what a particular judge expects in his or her courtroom by talking to...
other attorneys or clerks. Be prepared to draft a memo for your supervising attorney in a style he or she finds most helpful. Learn how to create an efficient and productive relationship with experienced opposing counsel by asking other attorneys how they handled cases in the past with that attorney.

5. Play Nice
Unfortunately, some of us can name a fellow law school classmate who developed a negative reputation. In fairness to that person, that reputation may not have been warranted (given that law school can be a bit like high school). Yet, it probably had a negative impact on that person’s law school experience nevertheless.

As you enter this next stage, remember the importance of developing a positive reputation as an attorney from the beginning. Be collegial and respectful of others, do not become known as someone who is difficult to work with or cannot be trusted, and focus on developing a reputation as a hard-working and honest attorney. That kind of reputation can make all the difference in difficult situations.

We hope we provided you with at least a glimpse into your next year. Again, we are glad to welcome you to the Virginia Bar. Good luck as you begin your first year!

Lindsey A. Strachan graduated from the University of Richmond School of Law in 2012 and is an associate at McCandlish Holton, P.C. in Richmond, Virginia.

Emily W. Mathews graduated from the University of Virginia School of Law in 2011. She clerked in the Virginia Beach Circuit Court prior to becoming an associate at McCandlish Holton, P.C. in Richmond, Virginia.
The Young Lawyers Conference: Forty Years of Service

The Young Lawyers Conference of the Virginia State Bar (YLC) was created in 1973 to serve as a voice for young lawyers across Virginia. Through the years, the YLC has evolved from a few hundred members in its inaugural year, to over 10,000 members today. The YLC membership has grown to currently encompass more than one third of all active Virginia attorneys. YLC members have gone on to become leaders in the business world, and particularly in the legal field. Our alumni include government leaders, judges, managing partners of law firms, and legal scholars, among others.

Over the past forty years, the YLC has made tremendous changes to meet the needs of our community. In the beginning, the YLC was created as a limited membership resource for new attorneys. The YLC has since evolved into an extensive network of professional resources and service projects, governed by a body of 20 board members, 25 project chairs, and 31 Judicial Circuit representatives. From Danville to Alexandria, the YLC governance represents every area of the state. YLC leaders strive to ensure our members’ wide range of needs are met.

The YLC currently manages over 25 service programs for attorneys and non-attorneys alike. Our member-service projects help acclimate new attorneys to legal practice, and enhance the professional development of more experienced attorneys. Our public-service programs have expanded to serve children, the elderly, community first responders, and others in need. From helping victims of domestic violence to those involved in a natural disaster, the YLC provides services to thousands of Virginians.

The YLC strives to provide effective service projects to the bar, and the community at large. Each year the YLC board assesses our current programs, and phases out programs which may no longer be relevant. The YLC also looks for new programs to meet the ever evolving needs of our members and community. The YLC’s innovative projects consistently earn state and national recognition by the American Bar Association.

The YLC continues in its mission of staying relevant and delivering effective services to our members and the community. For example, the YLC recently launched the Professional Development Series, a free weekly podcast devoted to educating its audience on a wide range of topics, including basic trial skills, career development, and the business-end of the law. This year the YLC also developed initiatives to combat the growing problems of school bullying and human trafficking. These two new programs grew from YLC members recognizing problems in their profession and communities, and developing innovative ways to combat those problems.

The YLC’s services consistently evolve to meet the ever changing technological needs of our members. The YLC began with sending letters to members. Over the years, the YLC acquired a website, and later joined the social media revolution with a Facebook page. From webinars to teleconferencing, the YLC seeks creative ways to meet our members’ needs. The YLC also utilizes Twitter, LinkedIn, Google Plus, and YouTube to reach out to our members and convey our message. We video record our legal training programs and provide them to our members. With these services, our members are able to learn a wide-range of skills without ever leaving their homes or offices.

As we move into the future, we ask that you join us. Membership to the YLC is not exclusive. Rather, membership is automatically open to all VSB members 36-years-old or younger, or Virginia State Bar members who have been admitted to the bar for less than three years. You do not have to sign up to join the YLC, and you do not have to pay any additional dues. All YLC funding comes from the Virginia State Bar’s annual budget, which is supported by your annual dues.

The YLC invites you to visit our website (www.vayounglawyers.com) and review the numerous YLC projects in which you can become involved. You may complete the volunteer form online and let us know about your interests. To volunteer, contact our Membership Chair, Macel Janoschka (mjanoschka@faplawfirm.com) or me (vsbylcpresident@gmail.com). You may also use our website to sign up for the YLC list serve, which we use to send out email blasts about upcoming events. We also share our news with the help of our award-winning newsletter, Docket Call, and social media tools such as Facebook.

Whether you have a little or a lot of time, the YLC has a volunteer opportunity for you.

Kenneth Alger is the Commonwealth’s Attorney for Page County and the President of the Young Lawyers Conference of the Virginia State Bar. He can be reached at vsbylcpresident@gmail.com.
The YLC coordinates a variety of programs in service to both the Bar and the public. If you are interested in assisting with any program or commission, please contact any YLC Board Member, Program Chair, or Co-Chair, or your Circuit Representative.

SERVICE TO THE BAR

ADMISSION AND ORIENTATION CEREMONY
This committee is responsible for organizing and staging a special ceremony sponsored twice a year by the YLC at which time all newly licensed attorneys are given the opportunity to appear before the Supreme Court of Virginia to be admitted to practice in the courts of Virginia. Because the Court sits in Richmond, this committee typically is comprised principally of young lawyers practicing in the metropolitan Richmond area.

Contact:
M. Scott Fisher, Jr.
sfisher@hccw.com

ANNUAL MEETING/ATHLETICS
This committee plans a CLE or other special interest program to take place during the Bar’s Annual Meeting held each June in Virginia Beach. During gubernatorial election years, this committee typically schedules a debate.

Contact:
Andrea C. Davison
adavidson@beankinney.com

ANNUAL MEETING/ATHLETICS
This committee is responsible for organizing the “Run in the Sun” 5 kilometer foot race and the David T. Stitt Memorial Volleyball Tournament, both sponsored by the YLC during the Bar’s Annual Meeting in June in Virginia Beach.

Contact:
Laura M. O’Brien
lobrien@kbdamilylaw.com

BENCH BAR CELEBRATION DINNER COMMITTEE
Each year the YLC hosts a dinner to honor newly elevated women and minority judges from across the state. The dinner provides an opportunity for young lawyers to interact with judges in a casual, relaxed atmosphere.

Contact:
Melissa York
Myork@morrismorris.com

SERVICE TO THE PUBLIC

COMMUNITY LAW WEEK
This committee develops programs and sponsoring activities during the first week in May devoted to enhancing the public’s awareness and appreciation of the role of law in American life. Included among the activities are presentations in the media, programs in the public schools, and public forums.

Contact:
David Irvine
David.irvine@tremblaysmith.com

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SAFETY PROJECT
The committee is responsible for developing programs to raise awareness about legal issues related to domestic violence. The DVSP has, for example, distributed a Safety Brochure and a Legal Pamphlet in both English and Spanish to domestic violence victims statewide. The DVSP also trains attorneys to provide pro bono representation to domestic violence victims.

Contact:
Elizabeth Cooper
Ecooper@pagecounty.virginia.gov

EMERGENCY LEGAL SERVICES
This committee, in conjunction with VBA-YLD, has developed and implemented a statewide Emergency Legal Services Response Plan, which includes training volunteers and working with other bar organizations to establish communication plans in the event of natural disasters and other declared emergencies.

Contact:
Jessica Trivizas
jtrivizas@lawmh.com

IMMIGRANT OUTREACH
This committee designs projects, including the Immigrant Outreach-Education Regarding Deportation Ramifications of Criminal Convictions program, to raise awareness about the legal issues facing Virginia’s immigrant population.

Contact:
Jamillah D. LeCruise
jdlecruise@gmail.com

LEGAL HANDBOOK FOR CANCER SURVIVORS
Recognizing the need for a resource addressing the legal issues faced by cancer survivors in the Commonwealth, the YLC plans to develop a Handbook covering topics such as insurance, employment, advance medical directives, and wills. Once drafted and approved by the VSB’s Publications committee, the Handbook will be printed and distributed to medical facilities and cancer advocacy organizations throughout the Commonwealth.

Contact:
Kristi Cahoon
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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE
This committee implements a one day CLE program addressing practice tips and professionalism issues specific to young lawyers.

Contact:
Christopher Fortier
cfortier@gmail.com

FIRST DAY IN PRACTICE SEMINAR
In conjunction with the General Practice Section, this committee plans and implements the First Day in Practice Seminar for new lawyers traditionally held the day after the Fall Admission and Orientation Ceremony.

Contact:
Robert Dean
rdean@frithlawfirm.com

NEWSLETTER/DOCKET CALL
The editor and editorial board of the Docket Call are responsible for publishing four issues of the YLC’s newsletter each year.

Contact:
Gail Deady
gdeady@lawmh.com

PROJECTS COMMITTEE
This committee designs projects, including the Handbook covering topics such as insurance, employment, advance medical directives, and wills. Once drafted and approved by the VSB’s Publications committee, the Handbook will be printed and distributed to medical facilities and cancer advocacy organizations throughout the Commonwealth.

Contact:
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BOARD MATCH
Board Match is a program that the YLC is developing to provide an opportunity for local non-profit organizations to solicit new board members and board participation from area lawyers.

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Christopher C. Johnson
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Contact:
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Contact:
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Contact:
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continued next page
MENTAL HEALTH LAW COMMITTEE
This committee puts on a free, semi-annual CLE in different locations around Virginia. The CLE explains notable developments in Virginia mental health law as they apply to aspects of all practice areas. Mental health laws touch a broad range of practice areas, including employment, family law, trusts and estates, civil rights and criminal law. The course is presented in an engaging format consisting of panelist discussion, audience participation and hypothetical problems.

Contact:
Shayla N. McGee
Shayla.sipp@fema.dhs.gov

MINORITY PRE-LAW CONFERENCE
This committee plans a seminar that strives to expose college students, especially minority students, to many aspects of a legal career. From LSAT prep courses, mock law school classes, and a mock trial to panel discussions with the bench, bar, and law students, this course provides valuable information to Virginia students considering a career in the law. The event is held in Northern Virginia, Southern Virginia, and Tidewater.

Contact:
Northern Virginia
Nichelle Charles
Nichelle.charles@gmail.com
Aaron Gleaton
avgleaton@gmail.com

Hampton Roads
Edwin J. Wu
edwinjwu@gmail.com
Shemeka Hankins
Shemeka.hankins@norfolk.gov

NO BILLS NIGHT
The Conference, through this committee, conducts No Bills Nights to provide a forum for the public throughout Virginia to raise legal issues and to seek information regarding their legal rights, without cost. This year, the Conference hopes to put on programs in Abingdon, Charlottesville, Danville/ Martinsville, Lynchburg, Fredericksburg, Northern Virginia, Staunton/Lexington, Richmond, Roanoke, Tidewater and Winchester/Harrisonburg.

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Martinsville
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Northern Virginia
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VACANT

Tidewater
VACANT

Winchester
VACANT

OLIVER HILL/SAMUEL TUCKER PRE-LAW INSTITUTE
The Virginia State Bar Young Lawyers Conference in conjunction with the Millennium Diversity Initiative and the University of Richmond T.C. Williams School of Law has designed a program, the Oliver Hill/Samuel Tucker Law Institute, to facilitate diversity in the legal profession. The program enables at-risk, minority students to attend a weeklong comprehensive seminar that encourages them to become members of the legal profession.

Contact:
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STUDENTS DAY AT THE CAPITOL
This committee organizes efforts to teach children about the judiciary, including coordinating a visit to the capitol in Richmond.

Contact:
Justin Sheldon
Justin.sheldon@leclairryan.com
Elizabeth Beck Miller
elizabethbeckmiller@gmail.com

WILLS FOR HEROES
In response to the events of September 11, 2001, the Young Lawyers Division of the South Carolina Bar Association created a program called Wills for Heroes to allow the legal community to show its appreciation for the efforts and sacrifices made by firefighters, police, sheriffs and emergency medical technicians. This committee, in conjunction with VBA-YLD, has developed and implemented a program in the Commonwealth to provide simple wills, advanced medical directives, and powers of attorney to First Responders on a pro bono basis.

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YLC Commissions
Children and the Law Commission
Helen Chong
hchong@courts.state.va.us

Pro Bono Commission
K. Alyse Latour
alatour@mofo.com

Women and Minorities in the Legal Profession Commission
Krystle Cobran
Krystlec24@gmail.com

Health and the Law Commission
Shayla N. McGee
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Elizabeth A. Hafey
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Find even more online! >
In 1983, the YLC established a statewide network of Circuit Representatives appointed from each of the state’s 31 judicial circuits. This network is designed to meet three objectives: (1) to provide a liaison between practicing young lawyers on the local level and the Young Lawyers Conference Board of Governors; (2) to promote statewide communication and participation among young lawyers in the projects and activities of the YLC; and (3) to increase the quantity and quality of public service legal programming throughout the Commonwealth. The primary responsibility of each Circuit Representative is to organize and carry out an annual project for young lawyers in his or her judicial circuit. These projects have ranged from CLE programs, to community service programs, to YLC membership projects. If you are interested in becoming a Circuit Representative or assisting with any of the projects of the YLC, please contact any YLC Board Member or your Circuit Representative.
TWENTY-NINTH CIRCUIT
Counties: Giles, Bland, Tazewell, Buchanan, Russell & Dickenson
Pebbles L. Burgess
pld@streetlawfirm.com

THIRTIETH CIRCUIT
City: Norton
Counties: Wise, Scott & Lee
Sarah W. Jessee
swynn@vt.edu

YLC BOARD LIAISONS FOR CIRCUIT REPS:
Regenea A. Hurte
rahurte@gmail.com
Maureen E. Danker
mdanker@kbdfamilylaw.com

Nathan J. Olson
nolson@cgglawyers.com

If you are interested in becoming a Circuit Representative or assisting with any of the projects of the YLC, please contact any YLC Board Member or your Circuit Representative.

A full listing of volunteer opportunities and a volunteer form can be found at http://www.vsb.org/site/conferences/ylc/view/volunteer-opportunities

New lawyers no longer need to feel alone. The Virginia State Bar and its Young Lawyers Conference have numerous resources at your disposal to give new lawyers the skills they need to succeed in law practice, and in life. These resources are available on demand, as well as during our live conferences.

The YLC Professional Development Series (PDS) is an extension of the Professional Development Conference, and provides audio and video broadcasts introducing new lawyers to law practice. Every Monday, the YLC will post a broadcast on its website covering a topic related to the practice of law. Each broadcast will last between 30 minutes and one hour, and will address issues within the following four categories: basic substantive legal skills; the business side of law; career planning and development; and physical and mental health issues. These broadcasts will help answer the basic questions of law practice, and allow new lawyers to practice more competently, as directed in Rule of Professional Conduct 1.1.

The Professional Development Series’ third season will premiere on December 5, 2013. This season’s broadcasts will combine the best programming from outside the state, including the American Bar Association’s Young Lawyers Division, with a vast array of past YLC programs, such as the YLC’s Professional Development Conference, and the First Day in Practice and Beyond Seminar. Broadcasts will also include new features specially developed for the Professional Development Series.

The first broadcast will discuss networking during the holiday season, which provides many opportunities to meet new people through parties and service projects. However, it can be difficult to make contacts that lead to jobs, work referrals, or new client relationships when everyone in the room wants to catch up and spread holiday cheer. This podcast from the American Bar Association’s Young Lawyers Division features networking experts and prominent ABA leaders from the Professional Development Series Planning Committee who will provide essential tools and tips for navigating the tricky holiday season. The YLC will post new video and audio broadcasts every Monday through December 16, 2013, and will resume its weekly broadcasts on January 6, 2014. Programming will continue through May. The fourth season of the Professional Development Series will begin when the next class of new lawyers is sworn in at the June Admissions Ceremony.

Past programming from the Professional Development Services is available on the YLC website, http://www.vsb.org/site/conferences/ylc/pds. You may also access programming on the YLC’s Facebook page (Young Lawyers Conference of the Virginia State Bar), Twitter page (@VSBYLC), Google Plus page (VSB YLC), and LinkedIn page (VSB YLC). The Professional Development Series Planning Committee is also accepting new members, and welcomes YLC members’ suggestions for programming relevant to new lawyers. If you are interested in joining the Professional Development Series Planning Committee, contact me at crfortier@gmail.com.

Christopher Fortier is the Program Chair for the YLC Professional Development Conference and the Professional Development Series Planning Committee. He can be reached at crfortier@gmail.com.

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**Practice Pointers by Christopher Fortier**

**For New Lawyers, the Professional Development Series Introduces the Practice of Law**

Sign up for the YLC List Serve

http://mailman.listserv.com/listmanager/listinfo/ylc
### YLC Conference Districts

**District Judicial Courts Within District**

1. 1, 3, 5, 7, 8
2. 2, 4
3. 6, 11, 12, 13, 14
4. 17, 18
5. 19, 31
6. 9, 15
7. 16, 20, 26
8. 23, 25
9. 10, 21, 22, 24
10. 27, 28, 29, 30

Find your District Representative on page 2.