

PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

CHRISTINE A. AMALFE

Young Lawyers—Make the NJSBA Your Professional Home



A generation is only as strong as the one behind it. In July, I had the pleasure of hosting a listening session with lawyers who have participated in the NJSBA Leadership Academy. What I heard was passion for the practice of law, an understanding that hard

work pays off, and a universal view that being active in the NJSBA has reaped great rewards.

No profession can flourish without an invigorated and passionate generation that follows. The young attorneys I met with are putting their noses to the grindstone today to become the legal leaders of tomorrow. I am heartened to see young lawyers who strive to better themselves by giving back to the profession through mentorships, legal clinics and community outreach programs. It is inspiring, and a reminder that the future is bright thanks to the rising generation.

The difficult truth in legal practice, and in all professions, is that connections sometimes count more than credentials. Few attorneys advance their careers without help from a strong professional network. Mentorships are crucial to guide young attorneys through new experiences and the fork-in-the-road moments that can define a career. Connections help young lawyers find the next job. A network of mentors provides a lifetime of learning.

The NJSBA wants to become your professional family and home. To today's young attorneys and law students – we need your optimism, your idealism and your sincere desire to make a difference as a lawyer. To our more seasoned lawyers, we need your experience, wisdom and willingness to teach and offer advice.

Through the NJSBA, we can connect you with our vast network of members, who can provide valuable insight into how they successfully addressed the challenges you will face and how they navigated the winding road of a career in this profes-

sion. The benefits of joining, especially for young lawyers, are numerous.

The transition from law school into the profession is difficult for everyone. Law school teaches theory, but the real-world skills, professional relationships and guidance needed for career growth take time to develop. This is where the Young Lawyers Division excels. The YLD is a group within the NJSBA organized by young lawyers, for young lawyers – available to those under 36 or licensed to practice for less than 10 years. It is one of the most powerful groups available to early-career attorneys in New Jersey to network, have fun, get professional development and participate in service opportunities in the community.

By joining the NJSBA and the YLD, you can access like-minded and similar-aged attorneys who know the struggles you may face. You walk into a built-in support system. The YLD offers CLE seminars, newsletters and workshops tailored to newer attorneys. They love to have fun and give back to the community. No doubt, it provides unparalleled networking. Each month YLD members gather in a different part of the state for social events to build camaraderie at baseball games, volunteering opportunities, axe-throwing competitions and more. For those interested in giving back, the YLD provides pro bono legal services to first responders and other programs that support the community. These are initiatives led by rising attorneys who recognize the essential role that attorneys play in community service.

The NJSBA understands the financial limitations young attorneys face. For newly admitted attorneys, the first year of your membership is free, and you can join an NJSBA section of interest at no cost. Young attorneys also enjoy lower dues during the early stages of their legal careers and bar involvement.

In so many ways, the NJSBA is here to be your foundation, your community and your guide in the legal profession. I encourage you to visit the NJSBA website to explore the Association's many offerings, learn about upcoming events and connect with YLD leaders, who are eager to share their insights and welcome you aboard. ■