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Attorneys, Baton Rouge Bar Receive 2011 LSBA Young Lawyers Section Awards

NEW ORLEANS—Four Louisiana attorneys and the Baton Rouge Bar Association are the recipients of 2011 Louisiana State Bar Association Young Lawyers Section (LSBA YLS) awards. The awards were presented by 2010-11 YLS Chair Alainna R. Mire of Alexandria and other YLS Council members during a June 29 awards ceremony, held in conjunction with the LSBA's Annual Meeting in Las Vegas, Nev.

Jonathan L. Johnson of Lake Charles received the Outstanding Young Lawyer Award.

Justin M. Chopin of Metairie received the Bat P. Sullivan, Jr. Chair's Award.

Charles William Montz, Jr. of Lafayette received the Pro Bono Award.

Jackie M. McCreary of New Orleans received the Hon. Michaelle Pitard Wynne Professionalism Award.

The **Baton Rouge Bar Association's Young Lawyers Section** received the Service to the Public Award for its Teen Court of Greater Baton Rouge program.

Award recipients' profiles follow.

• Outstanding Young Lawyer Award

Jonathan L. Johnson is a member of the Lake Charles firm of Johnson & Vercher, L.L.C. Born and raised in Moss Bluff, La., he graduated with honors in 1999 from Sam Houston High School (member of the Student Council, Beta Club, basketball team and tennis team).

He received a bachelor of science degree in accounting in 2002 from Louisiana State University. After receiving his undergraduate degree, he began studies for his law degree at LSU Paul M. Hebert Law Center. In the summer of 2004, he studied abroad at the Université Jean Moulin II in Lyon, France. Once back in the United States, he received his Juris Doctor degree and bachelor of civil law degree in 2006. In law school, he was a member of the Student Bar Association and an adjunct writer for *The Civilian*.

Johnson has served as president of the Young Lawyers Section of the Southwest Louisiana Bar Association (SWLBA), director of the Southwest Louisiana Law Center and director of the Southwest Louisiana Bar Foundation. He currently is a member of the SWLBA's Executive Council and serves as treasurer of the Southwest Louisiana Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers. He also is a member of the Leadership LSBA Class, the Council for a Better Louisiana and the American Bar Association.

Active in his community, he is a board member for the Southwest Louisiana Convention and Visitors Bureau and the Young Men's Business Club, a director of Contraband Days, Inc., a member of Trinity Baptist Church and former chair of Holiday Helping Hands.

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• **Bat P. Sullivan, Jr. Chair's Award**

Justin M. Chopin is an associate in the Metairie firm of Chopin, Wagar, Richard & Kutcher, L.L.P. He received a bachelor of arts degree in psychology in 2002 from the University of Dallas and his Juris Doctor degree in 2007 from Loyola University College of Law. He also was awarded a certificate in international law. He was admitted to practice in Louisiana in 2007.

Chopin serves as District 1 representative on the Louisiana State Bar Association's (LSBA) Young Lawyers Section Council and is co-chair of the Young Lawyers Section's Law School Membership Committee, designed to promote law student membership in the LSBA. He is a member of the Louisiana Association of Defense Counsel, the New Orleans Bar Association and the Federal Bar Association.

• **Pro Bono Award**

Charles William Montz, Jr. is an associate in the Lafayette firm of Laborde & Neuner. He received his undergraduate degree in 2001 from the University of Louisiana-Lafayette and his law degree in 2004 from Loyola University College of Law.

Working through the Lafayette Bar Association's pro bono program, Lafayette Volunteer Lawyers (LVL), Montz has assisted more than 60 clients in the past five years. He also has served as an LVL committee member for the past two years.

In addition to his litigation pro bono work, he was nominated for his dedication to community service projects sponsored by the Lafayette Young Lawyers Association. He chaired the community service initiatives for two consecutive years, including organizing a Christmas party for mothers and children at Maison de Mere (a shelter for pregnant teens) and a Christmas in July event at a local children's shelter.

Montz received the Lafayette Volunteer Lawyer Outstanding Lawyer Award in 2005, 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010. This year, he received the Lafayette Volunteer Lawyers top honor, the LVL Award, given to the volunteer who accepts the most cases of all attorney panel volunteers. Most recently, he received the Louisiana State Bar Association's 2011 Pro Bono Publico Award in recognition of his dedication to those in need of legal assistance.

• **Hon. Michaele Pitard Wynne Professionalism Award**

Jackie M. McCreary joined the New Orleans office of Stone Pigman Walther Wittmann, L.L.C., in 2004 and was elected partner in 2011. Originally from Paulina in St. James Parish, she graduated *cum laude* in 2000 from Louisiana State University. She received her Juris Doctor degree and her bachelor of civil law degree in 2003 from LSU Paul M. Hebert Law Center. While at LSU Law Center, she served as articles editor for the *Louisiana Law Review*. From August 2003 to July 2004, she served as a law clerk to Hon. Frank J. Polozola, United States District Court for the Middle District of Louisiana.

McCreary is an active member of the Louisiana State Bar Association (LSBA) and was a member of the 2005-06 Leadership LSBA Class. She has volunteered to participate in the annual LSBA Law School Professionalism Orientation Program for first-year law students. She also has judged the LSBA High School Essay Contest and High School Mock Trial Competition. Currently, she is a member of the LSBA's Access to Justice Committee and the Louisiana Bar Foundation's Development Committee. She also volunteers for the New Orleans Pro Bono Project, the Lawyers Helping Homeless Project and Louisiana Appleseed.

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• Service to the Public Award

The **Baton Rouge Bar Association's Young Lawyers Section** provides numerous volunteers for the Teen Court Project, a project that has been operating since 2006.

Teen Court is a voluntary diversion program that allows youth who commit minor offenses to be judged by a jury of their peers. The program also serves the teen volunteers, providing them an opportunity for teen leadership and a chance to learn about due process, restorative justice and the benefits of volunteering to improve their community.

Teen volunteers perform the roles of prosecuting and defense attorneys, clerk/bailiff and jurors. Teen Court sentences may include community service and participation in future Teen Court sessions, attending educational programs, writing essays and letters of apology, and repaying the victim.

The attorney volunteers serve as judges and jury monitors for the Teen Court hearings and trainers for the training sessions. The attorney volunteers also assist the teen volunteers with preparing their cases. The attorneys visit with the defendants and teen volunteers, offering information on law school and legal careers and establishing a personal connection with the teens.

Teen Court hearings are held biweekly and full-day training sessions are held at least four times a year. Teen Court statistics have reflected positively on the program in the Baton Rouge area. A review of teens successfully completing the Teen Court program from 2009-10 shows an 18 percent recidivism rate and an 82 percent success rate.

High-resolution photos of award recipients are available for download at:

<http://www.lsba.org/2007NewsResources/pressphotos.asp?Photos=29>.

The Louisiana State Bar Association assists its more than 21,000 members in the practice of law. The statewide association, as part of its multi-faceted mission, promotes and maintains access to justice initiatives for the state's residents, assists the Louisiana Supreme Court in its regulation of the practice of law, upholds the honor of the courts and the profession, and supports programs that increase public understanding of and respect for the law.

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