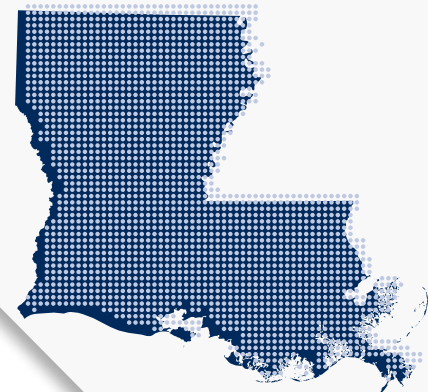




SIGNATURE PROJECTS

Professional Development Seminar: 25 Years of Service

By Megan S. Peterson

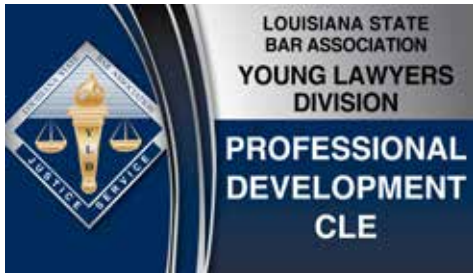


The Professional Development Seminar, a cornerstone event of the Louisiana State Bar Association's (LSBA) Young Lawyers Division (YLD), is recognizing its 25th anniversary. The seminar, conducted in January, allows YLD members to earn their professionalism, ethics and law practice management credits in an affordable and easy manner, hearing from a variety from speakers ranging from fellow young lawyers to bar leaders and judges. The seminar has become the standard by which other YLD programs, such as the Louisiana Young Lawyers Conference, have been founded. The 2020 shift to the virtual format, still in place today, demonstrates that the program is evolving and growing as the needs of the YLD change.

To commemorate the 25th anniversary of the Professional Development Seminar, we reflect on the years past and the success that this seminar has achieved over the years. We offer the insights of those who have been involved over the years.

Megan S. Peterson is a partner at Simon, Peragine, Smith & Redfearn, LLP, in New Orleans. She currently serves on the Louisiana State Bar Association's Young Lawyers Division Council as the Young Lawyer Member/American Bar Association House of Delegates. She is the 2023-24 LSBA YLD CLE chair. She previously served as the 2022 co-chair for the LSBA's Young Lawyers Conference. (meganp@spsr-law.com; 1100 Poydras St., 30th Flr., New Orleans, LA 70163)





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I have had the pleasure of being the chair of the Young Lawyers Division Professional Development Seminar for the past two years. I have found that this seminar, in general, is an opportunity for young lawyers to have access to useful skill development topics that will help them throughout their legal careers. In putting together the topics for the seminar, I strive to make sure that topics that are important to young lawyers are the main force. Furthermore, a major consideration when putting this seminar together is ensuring that there are topics that can be presented by young lawyers. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time as chair of this seminar and look forward to the future of the event.””

—Jared E. Nelson,
Professional Development
Seminar Chair, 2022-2024

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The Professional Development Seminar was the brainchild of Lisa Winter, who served as the Young Lawyers Division chair. She kindly asked me, as the then-Young Lawyers Division Council representative from District 2, to chair the initial seminar. We wanted to create an affordable CLE seminar with relevant, timely topics that were important and useful to young lawyers with fewer than five years' experience. We also wanted to have young lawyers as speakers or presenters. Our goal was to provide young lawyers with an opportunity to present at a CLE seminar and create a pipeline of CLE speakers for the LSBA. Initially, we faced challenges in simply creating the wheel and overcoming a steep learning curve to determine the topics needed and to find speakers. However, the seminar was a great success and continues to be successful today, providing great CLE opportunities and valuable networking with other young lawyers across the state.””

—Valerie T. Schexnayder, Inaugural Chair, 1999
Professional Development Seminar

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The Professional Development Seminar (PDS) has been a staple program for the YLD. It is high-quality continuing education directly applicable to early career attorneys for a great value. As part of its strategic plan, the YLD wanted to offer a Young Lawyers Conference. The PDS was a great stepping stone before the envisioned conference could become an independent event. In 2019 and 2020, the YLD pivoted the PDS into a Young Lawyers Conference in connection with the LSBA Midyear Meeting. In 2021, we were ecstatic to have a stand-alone Young Lawyers Conference. As YLD chair, I thought it was still important to have a young lawyer CLE opportunity at the Midyear Meeting, so we brought back the traditional PDS. We initially thought that it was unfortunate that the 2021 PDS had to be virtual because of COVID. However, the turnout was excellent. We provided quality CLE programming to more attorneys than we could do in person and stretched our reach to all corners of the state and beyond. I'm proud to know the PDS continues to provide valuable continuing education to young attorneys throughout the state.””

—Carrie L. Jones, LSBA YLD Chair, 2020-2021



Wills for Heroes:

Putting Louisiana's Emergency Responders First

By Quinn K. Brown



In October 2008, the Louisiana State Bar Association's Young Lawyers Division (YLD) hosted Louisiana's first Wills for Heroes event in Lake Charles for the Calcasieu Parish Fire Department. Since that time, the YLD has continued to host events for Louisiana's first responders, including firemen, police officers, sheriffs' deputies and state troopers. On Sept. 30, 2023, the YLD returned to Lake Charles for a Wills for Heroes event to celebrate 15 years of providing first responders and their spouses with attorney volunteers to assist in preparing wills and other estate planning documents at no charge.



Wills for Heroes event at the Central Fire Department.



Wills for Heroes event at the David Crockett Steam Fire Co. in Gretna.

Wills for Heroes is a 501(c)(3) non-profit established in 2001. The Louisiana State Bar Association's Young Lawyers Division (LSBA YLD) first partnered with Wills for Heroes in 2008. As part of the program, members of the YLD visit Louisiana communities to provide estate documents to first responders and their spouses. This gives the first responders and their families the peace of mind knowing their affairs are in order should the unthinkable occur.

The YLD utilizes a mobile clinic to provide estate documents to first responders throughout the state. During each clinic, first responders have the opportunity to meet one-on-one with an attorney volunteer to discuss their estate planning needs at no cost. After first responders have had an opportunity to have their estate questions answered, attorney volunteers draft basic wills, powers of attorney and health care directives.

Each clinic requires the participation from local attorney volunteers from all different backgrounds. No estate planning experience is necessary for the attorney volunteers as all volunteers participate in a training CLE for guidance on the Wills for Heroes program.

Since the inception of its partnership with Wills for Heroes 15 years ago, the LSBA's YLD has provided free estate documents to thousands of Louisiana first responders. In 2023 alone, the YLD provided estate documents to 291 first responders.

Quinn K. Brown is an associate in the Baton Rouge office of LaFleur Laborde, LLC. She currently serves as the District 5 representative on the Louisiana State Bar Association's Young Lawyers Division Council and will assume the position of YLD secretary in 2024-25. She serves on the YLD Wills for Heroes Committee. (qbrown@lalawfirm.com; Ste. 225, 6160 Perkins Rd., Baton Rouge, LA 70808)



Requesting A Wills For Heroes Event

All Wills for Heroes (WFH) events are organized and coordinated by the Louisiana State Bar Association's Young Lawyers Division (YLD).

The WFH program provides first responders and their spouses with attorney volunteers to assist in preparing wills and other estate planning documents at no charge. Those eligible include police officers, firefighters, EMTs and paramedics, corrections officers, and spouses or widows/widowers of these personnel.

The YLD frequently contacts first responder groups directly. But the YLD welcomes first responder groups to make contact about hosting an event in their area. Once contacted by a group, the YLD, along with the chairs of the WFH Committee, will begin making arrangements for the event, including time, date and location.

Interested in requesting an event? For current WFH Committee contacts, go online to: www.lsba.org/YLD/YLDcommittees.aspx. Click on "Select Committees," then "Public Service/Wills for Heroes Committee." Or email willsforheroesLA@gmail.com to request an event.

For more information on the program, access "Frequently Asked Questions" at: www.lsba.org/goto/WFH.



A 2017 Wills for Heroes event in 22nd JDC.



A 2017 Wills for Heroes event in Opelousas.

