

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

New Year, New Opportunities!



BY GUEST AUTHOR BRONAGH M. KELLY, ESQ.,
CHAIR OF THE YOUNG LAWYERS SECTION

January is often seen as a fresh start, a blank slate, time to turn over a new leaf and start anew. (And for those of us in private practice, the start of a whole new billable quota!)

I had the honor of welcoming the new class of admittees to the State Bar of Nevada in October 2022. They now have two months as lawyers under their belts. Congratulations! As the chair of the Young Lawyers Section (YLS) of the state bar, I implore all of you, young lawyers and more experienced counsel alike, to make this the year to get involved in *your* state bar.

Why become active in the state bar? With so much on our plates between work and personal lives, it can be overwhelming to even think about committing to one more thing. But when we realize what the state bar can do for us, that commitment feels less like an obligation and more like an opportunity. The State Bar of Nevada offers so many opportunities, both professionally and socially, to become engaged, to become acquainted with your colleagues, and to give back to the communities in which we live. The affinity bars and practice-specific sections each bring together attorneys with similar interests and passions. The members of these sections will provide an invaluable resource, specifically to young lawyers at the beginning of their careers, to provide guidance and mentorship. Whether you are new to Nevada, the profession, or simply wishing to reinvigorate your practice, there is a section or committee for you.

As well as being the chair of the YLS, I am also vice president for the

Northern Nevada Women Lawyers Association, a member of the Family Law Section's Executive Council, and a member of the Functional Equivalency Committee. Formerly, I was the Young Lawyer Representative on the Access to Justice Commission. Each of the sections put me in contact with great minds, expanded my knowledge of my chosen practice area, and provided many opportunities to interact with and get to know lawyers in other fields. My time spent at meetings, conferences, and of course, social events, has proven invaluable to my career.

The YLS is made up of seven executive council members and a number of committee chairs. We have social events, we provide CLE, we present to and engage with the Board of Governors, and we provide opportunities to volunteer in the community through our Serving Seniors program, our Goldilocks program in schools, and our pro bono opportunities.

One of the major events conducted by YLS is the Trial Academy. This intensive two-day course will allow you to hone your litigation skills on everything from opening statements, how to cross examine a witness, and to how to give a closing argument that leaves a lasting impact on the jury. In prior years, the Trial Academy was held during the state bar's annual conference. However, more recently, it has been a stand-alone event, which enables young lawyers to attend both events, and fully engage with all other section members at the annual conference. In 2023, the Trial Academy will take place in Reno. If you are a young lawyer, I strongly encourage you to participate in this program when the time is right for your career. As young lawyers,

we cannot compete with the number of trials or evidentiary hearings many of our opposing counsel will have under their belts. What we can do, however, is invest in our own careers by taking every opportunity to practice, improve, and become the best litigators we can be.

Another advantage to becoming an active member of the YLS is the opportunity to attend out-of-state conferences. The American Bar Association has four conferences a year directly tailored to young lawyers. These conferences offer excellent opportunities to obtain CLE credits, engage with young lawyers from across the country, and become leaders in your field.

Involvement in your state bar will enhance your practice in many ways. While your level of involvement may change with life events, work commitments, and other circumstances, it is vital to our careers and practices to establish relationships and personal connections with colleagues. You never know what your impact will be. That social interaction may turn into a referral or potential client. Even more likely, you may find yourself on the opposing side of a case, and having a personal relationship outside the office or courtroom will elevate your ability to represent your client.

As we begin this new year, think about how your state bar can help you achieve your goals, both personally and professionally. Whether you commit to joining a section, taking an active role on a committee, or simply to attending one of the CLE presentations or social events offered throughout the year, I hope you find your "why." More so, I hope you find your opportunity.

BRONAGH M. KELLY is an associate attorney at Woodburn and Wedge in Reno, where she practices family law. She was named State Bar of Nevada Young Lawyer of the Year in 2020. She is the chair of the Young Lawyers Section of the state bar, vice president of the Northern Nevada Women Lawyers Association, and a member of the Family Law Section's Executive Council, as well as a member of the Functional Equivalency Committee. Formerly, she was the Young Lawyer Representative on the Access to Justice Commission. A graduate of Queen's University Belfast in Ireland, she practiced in New York City from 2011 until she relocated to Reno in 2016. She is married to a fifth-generation Nevadan, and they have a 1-year-old son.