

# Young Lawyers

BY JEFF CONNOR, ESQ., YOUNG LAWYERS CHAIR



## TAKING YOUR TIME (AND MAKING THE MOST OF IT)

The annual changing of the guard for the Young Lawyers Section Executive Committee is upon us, and with that comes my first of many feeble attempts to analogize the lives of young lawyers to a monthly theme for *Nevada Lawyer*. But, before I get there, I would be remiss if I didn't start this column by taking a moment to recognize our outgoing committee chair, Layke Martin. It would honestly take an entire article to identify all the ways that the YLS and the bar as a whole have benefited from Layke's time on the YLS Executive Committee, and we are going to sorely miss her passion and commitment to service in the years to come. Thanks for everything you have done, Layke, we are going to miss you!

Now, this time around, it was pretty easy to tie this column into July's water law theme in a way that is relevant to the everyday life of young lawyers. Water is a scarce resource for Nevada, so too is time for the young lawyer. But, if we

manage those resources wisely, it will pay off in dividends down the road.

The three most important pieces of advice I received when starting law school came from two college friends, then recent law school graduates, who are now both very successful Nevada lawyers. The first told me to overcome my desire to attend all the happy hours and social functions at school and just study hard during my first year; a poor first-year performance would force me to work even harder just to keep my head above water the second and third year, while second and third year would be a breeze if I did well the first year. The second told me to ditch my watch, and pick one day a week where there would be no studying allowed. He said wearing a watch would cause me to focus too much on the amount of time spent on individual tasks. He counseled me to spend as much time as it takes to learn and understand a particular rule/doctrine of law correctly, and not drive myself crazy worrying about the fact that I'd just wasted 15 minutes standing in the check-out line at the grocery store. But, he reminded me, I also needed to have a healthy outlet that allowed me to get away from school and decompress now and then.

Both of them were right, and the advice they gave me translated well into my first few years of practice too. The first two pieces of advice fit hand-in-hand: there are going to be lots of opportunities to get involved in

activities outside of your practice, and I encourage you embrace them when you are ready. But, it is wise for young lawyers to spend the first couple years of their careers focused on learning and understanding the practical aspects of the practice of law. Don't get too hung up on how much time it takes you to do things at first. Taking a little extra time to think deeply about the principle building blocks of the law early in your career will make you exponentially more efficient in your work as time goes on. Finally, the third piece of advice may seem to be at odds with the first two, but in reality, it supports them: you must have a healthy outlet outside of work. If you don't take breaks from the daily grind, your work performance will suffer. Giving yourself time to get away from work will increase your productivity and focus when you are working. Finding a good work-life balance can be difficult to achieve, but it is an essential element of being a healthy and happy young lawyer! **NL**

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