

Make the Barristers a First Step toward Professional Achievement

AS THE INCOMING PRESIDENT of the Barristers Section of LACBA, I invite the new and young attorneys of Los Angeles to learn about and participate in our activities. Our membership includes any attorney who is under 36 or who has been practicing for five years or less. We are the only LACBA section focused exclusively on the needs of new and young attorneys, and our section provides these attorneys with opportunities for networking, pro bono and community service, and leadership in the profession.

Many new attorneys do not yet understand the value of being part of a bar association, much less a section that is not specific to a particular practice area. Some of you have begun working at a law firm and may feel that your firm supplies all the connections and case assignments you need. Many of you have not yet found your first job and feel that you are too busy job hunting and volunteering to have the luxury of attending bar activities. But regardless of what you are doing at this early point in your career, the Barristers provides you an opportunity today to begin to take control of what you will be doing in the future. Engagement in the Barristers gives you a chance to meet other new and young attorneys to develop connections outside your immediate network. Meeting other new attorneys allows you to avoid feeling isolated at your firm or alone in your efforts to find work. The Barristers can help you find the kind of close social community that was more readily available in law school. The Section also provides opportunities to let your leadership skills shine, so that you can make contributions to the legal community even as a newcomer and begin to develop a professional reputation that you carry with you as your career evolves. Indeed, in a profession that generally places a high premium on seniority and experience, the Barristers is unique in providing meaningful opportunities for new and young lawyers to lead, to be visible, to develop the profession, and to help people in need.

How to Get Involved

Getting involved with Barristers can take many forms, whether attending an MCLE event, stopping by our monthly happy hours, or joining a committee. Here is a descriptive list of our committees and events:

- The Legal Profession Committee presents programming on the hot-button issues facing the legal community today. Past programs have included panels on finding a job in a difficult legal market and starting a solo practice. This summer, the committee will host a clinic on managing law school debt. The committee also organizes Barristers' Annual Summer Party at the House of Blues.
- The Networking Committee hosts networking events geared to new and young attorneys. This year, the committee popularized our monthly Thirsty Thursdays—happy hour mixers on the first Thursday of every month held simultaneously in hot spots in Century City and Downtown. The committee also hosts mixers to raise money and awareness for some of LACBA's various community legal services organizations, such as the Domestic Violence Project.

- The Pro Bono Committee connects young attorneys with volunteer opportunities by teaming with legal services programs to provide free or low-cost MCLE trainings focused on serving the legal needs of low-income or underprivileged individuals. This year, the committee organized Law Day 2013, a day-long training series promoting pro bono work among newly admitted attorneys. The committee also hosted a panel on *In Re Garcia*, the pending California Supreme Court case to decide whether an undocumented immigrant can be admitted to the state bar, which was followed by a training on providing pro bono assistance to immigrants seeking relief under the Obama Administration's deferred action plan.
- The MCLE Committee hosts educational programs to deliver continuing education to new and young attorneys. This year, the committee premiered its New Attorney Litigation Survival Guide—Getting a Litigation Job and Doing It Well. The committee also offers MCLE programs to help our members obtain those hard-to-get credits in substance abuse and elimination of bias in the legal profession.
- The Law Student Outreach Committee connects area law students with the bar association and ensures that Barristers programming is relevant to law students. Over the years, we have participated in law school panels about job opportunities and in student bar association social events.
- The Government Relations Committee provides a forum for new and young lawyers to develop leadership skills by interacting with elected officials from across the political spectrum. This year, the committee cohosted a mixer with Los Angeles County Supervisor Mark Ridley Thomas.
- The Bench and Bar Committee connects the courts with newer members of the bar. This year the committee held the first of what we hope to be annual mixers organized for Barristers and other area young lawyers to meet local judicial officers.

The Barristers are more than event planners, however. This year the Barristers partnered with area law schools to provide mock job interviews for law students. Over the years, Barristers have also walked in the Los Angeles AIDS Walk, sent members to participate in Dialogues on Freedom, and provided mentoring at local high schools.

I urge new and young attorneys to find out more about the Barristers. Get involved. Check out some of our events, or start dropping by our Thirsty Thursday happy hours—maybe you will become a regular. If our committees sound interesting to you, let us know which committees you are most interested in joining. If you have new ideas for programs or activities, let us know, and maybe you can start to shape the future direction of our section. We look forward to working with you as we continue our 80-year tradition of fun and excellence in serving the new and young attorneys of LACBA. ■

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