

Juggling Life, Professionalism, and Ethics CLE

Aspirational Tenets on Professionalism: Meaningful Connections

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Practicing law involves a lot of independent judgment and work, but a law career flourishes best when it occurs in a community. You might say it takes a village to raise a lawyer. This is reflected in the Lawyer's Creed which, with regards to other lawyers, says:

“As to my colleagues in the practice of law, I will aspire [t]o recognize and to develop our interdependence; [t]o respect the needs of others, especially the need to develop as a whole person; and, [t]o assist my colleagues become better people in the practice of law and to accept their assistance offered to me.” *A Lawyer's Creed and the Aspirational Statement on Professionalism*, lines 139-143.

“As to our profession, I will aspire [t]o improve the practice of law. As a professional, I should [a]ssist in organized bar activities.” *A Lawyer's Creed and the Aspirational Statement on Professionalism*, lines 144-147.

While working late trying to meet that EOD deadline given only hours ago, it may not feel like there is much *interdependence*, but the aspirational tenets of the Lawyer's Creed highlight just how prevalent connectivity really is. Just as our current law depends on past rulings via *stare decisis*, our current lawyers depend on the work and product of past lawyers, and our successes may depend on the support of others in the legal community.

Throughout my legal career, I have strived to make, nurture, and maintain meaningful connections with fellow attorneys. By serving in YLD leadership and on the Executive Committee of the State Bar of Georgia, I get to support other lawyers and impact our profession. In doing so, I have surrounded myself with like-minded individuals who strive to make meaningful connections with me in return.

More specifically, I have been active in the YLD since graduating from Mercer Law in 2018. I started by serving as a co-chair of the Legal Food Frenzy Committee in 2019 because a friend encouraged me to get involved. It was so enriching to challenge lawyers across the state to donate food and funds to families and children in need. I served in that role for 3 years, and in that time, the Legal Food Frenzy raised over 2 million dollars, equivalent to approximately 8 million meals for food insecure communities. Then in 2021, I applied and was accepted to Leadership Academy and in 2022, I ran for YLD Secretary for the 2022-23 Bar year. I have since served as YLD Treasurer (2023-2024) and currently serve as YLD President-Elect.

At each stage of involvement, being active in the YLD has been an intentional choice. I chose to be involved and run for YLD leadership because I care about the future of the YLD. The YLD provided a support group like no other, and I can't help but want to give back to an organization that gave so much to me. Working on the YLD Executive Council, I got a glimpse of what the YLD is really like behind the scenes, and I had ideas about things that weren't being done that I felt the young lawyers of Georgia needed. The platform I ran on was about fostering a YLD with accountability and increasing resources, community impact, and diversity. I'm looking forward to my year as President so I can fulfill some of those promises.

Balancing work, Bar obligations, and a personal life has been challenging at times. I have always wanted to have a family, and it was something I considered when running for office. We planned to have our first child while I was YLD Secretary and to have our second before my presidency. We were lucky enough to welcome our daughter in October of 2023, and we are currently expecting our second in May of this year. It helps having a great partner and good friends, but it really does take a village.

I got to experience exactly what it looks like to have a village at the State Bar Mid-Year Meeting in Savannah, Georgia in January of this year. The meeting fell on the snowmageddon weekend of 2025, and all of my childcare options were snowed in. I felt like for the first time, I had to choose being a mom over being an officer. But before the meeting, Jessica Oglesby, YLD Director, asked me the pivotal question: "why can't you do both?" She went on to say that she and everyone at the YLD would have my back if I decided to come and bring my daughter. So, I took a risk, and it paid off. YLD Officers, Executive Committee members, Past-Presidents, Board of Governors members, and countless friends in Bar leadership and Bar staff supported me that weekend. I was able to bring my daughter and attend the meetings I had to. I was able to be a mom and an officer, and I wasn't less of either.

That weekend, I was reminded that I didn't have to let life stop me. All I had to do was lean on others and ask for help, and my legal community lifted me up and supported me. The good news is that it is never too late to start building these connections. The biggest step to making connections and being more active is showing up and attending events. Although networks don't get built up overnight, if you can make one to two meaningful connections at each event you attend, in a year or two, you'll be blown away at how wide your support group can become. And it never has to stop growing.

I hope to lead as an example to others, to young leaders who want to be parents, and parents who want to be leaders. If you choose to follow a path similar to mine, remember to make meaningful connections along the way, because they will be what helps you juggle life, professionalism, and ethics.