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Attorneys, Bar Association Receive 2015 LSBA Young Lawyers Division Awards

NEW ORLEANS—Four Louisiana State Bar Association (LSBA) members and the Baton Rouge Bar Association received 2015 LSBA Young Lawyers Division (YLD) awards. The awards were presented by 2014-15 YLD Chair J. Lee Hoffoss, Jr. of Lake Charles and other YLD Council members during a June 8 ceremony, held in conjunction with the LSBA's Annual Meeting in Destin, Fla.

Cliff A. LaCour of Lafayette received the Outstanding Young Lawyer Award.

Bradley J. Tate of Lafayette received the Bat P. Sullivan, Jr. Chair's Award.

Laranda Moffett Walker of Pearland, TX, received the Hon. Michaelle Pitard Wynne Professionalism Award.

Rolando R. Urbina of Baton Rouge received the Pro Bono Award.

The **Baton Rouge Bar Association's Young Lawyers Section** received the Service to the Public Award for its Self-Help Resource Center.

The **Baton Rouge Bar Association's Young Lawyers Section** also received the Service to the Bar Award for its Health and Wellness Fair.

• Outstanding Young Lawyer Award

Cliff A. LaCour is a partner at NeunerPate in Lafayette. His practice areas include business and commercial litigation, employment and labor law, litigation and appeals, property damage defense, and property dispute litigation. He earned his BS degree from Louisiana State University and his Juris Doctor degree from Tulane University Law School.

LaCour is committed to providing service to his community through his activism in legal organizations such as the Lafayette Volunteer Lawyers Protective Order Panel, where he provides free legal service to victims of domestic abuse. He is the immediate past president of the Lafayette Young Lawyers Association and previously served as the secretary-treasurer (2011-12), co-chair of Law Week (2009-10) and co-chair of the Mock Trial Program (2010-11). He was a volunteer judge for the Lafayette Mock Trial Competition and served as a coach for the Northside High School Mock Trial Team.

He is the treasurer of the John M. Duhe, Jr. American Inn of Court and has volunteered his services for the Homeless Experience Legal Protection (H.E.L.P.) Program and for the Wills for Heroes Program. He is a volunteer faculty member for Tulane Law School's Civil Litigation Intercession.

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• **Bat P. Sullivan, Jr. Chair's Award**

Bradley J. Tate is tax manager for the firm of Prejean Romero McGee in Lafayette. He received a BS degree in accounting in 2005 from Southeastern Louisiana University, his Juris Doctor degree in 2008 from Louisiana State University Paul M. Hebert Law Center and an LLM (Master of Laws) in taxation in 2012 from the University of Alabama.

Tate has been newly installed as the LSBA YLD's secretary. He also served as the District 5 representative on the YLD Council. He was a member of the 2011-12 Leadership LSBA Class and co-chaired the 2012-13 Leadership LSBA Class. He is a member of the *Louisiana Bar Journal's* Editorial Board.

He has a strong dedication to the YLD's service projects. He volunteered for the rigorous workload required of the Wills for Heroes Committee co-chair and served with distinction in that role for the past two years. While continuing the Wills for Heroes Project in the state's larger cities, he was able to further diversify this project into smaller towns.

He is a member of the American Bar Association, the Baton Rouge Bar Association and the Lafayette Bar Association.

• **Hon. Michaelle Pitard Wynne Professionalism Award**

Laranda Moffett Walker practices commercial litigation in the Houston office of Susman Godfrey, L.L.P. Prior to joining Susman in 2014, she worked in the Baton Rouge office of Phelps Dunbar, L.L.P.

Walker received her undergraduate degree in communications from Mississippi State University and her Juris Doctor degree in 2007 from Louisiana State University Paul M. Hebert Law Center. Before attending law school, she worked as a news anchor and reporter for television stations in Columbus, MS, and Baton Rouge.

She served on several boards and committees for the LSBA and the Baton Rouge Bar Association (BRBA). She was member of the Leadership LSBA 2010-11 Class. She is a former chair of the BRBA's Young Lawyers Section and the BRBA's Young Lawyers Committee.

She is a member of the Louisiana Bar Foundation's Annual Fellows Gala Committee, the board of directors of the Louisiana Association of Defense Counsel and the Garland R. Walker American Inn of Court. She was selected as one of *Louisiana Super Lawyers'* "Rising Stars" in 2013 and 2014.

• **Pro Bono Award**

Rolando R. Urbina is an assistant public defender in Section 5 of the 19th Judicial District Court and the member-manager of the Law Offices of Rolando R. Urbina & Associates, L.L.C., in Baton Rouge. His areas of practice are personal injury, family law, criminal law and small business formation. He received his undergraduate degree in history and law and humanities in 2005 from Xavier University of Louisiana and his Juris Doctor degree in 2011 from Southern University Law Center.

Urbina currently serves as the president of the Louis A. Martinet Legal Society, Inc. Greater Baton Rouge Chapter and as a board member of Southeast Louisiana Legal Services. He is an investigator for the Louisiana Commission on Human Rights, where he investigates a variety of discrimination cases from racial discrimination to sexual harassment.

• **Service to the Public Award**

The Baton Rouge Bar Association's Self-Help Resource Center (SHRC), launched in 2012, received 1,645 requests for assistance in 2014. The SHRC, located at the East Baton Rouge Parish Family Court, is

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a joint venture of the Baton Rouge Bar Foundation, the East Baton Rouge Parish Family Court, Southeast Louisiana Legal Services, Southern University Law Center, Louisiana State University Paul M. Hebert Law Center and the Louis A. Martinet Legal Society, Inc.

The SHRC does not provide direct legal services; rather, it offers self-represented litigants in the East Baton Rouge Parish Family Court access to legal information, court-approved forms and community resources. Open two days per week, the SHRC links attorneys with law students to assist pro se litigants, with the added benefit of instilling the ideals of public service to the soon-to-be attorneys. Attorneys (mostly young lawyers) supervise the law students as they provide pro se litigants with court information; discuss available legal services providers in the area; assist in the completion of court-approved forms; access public records; and provide reference information on clerk of court fees and procedures.

• Service to the Bar Award

The Baton Rouge Bar Association's Young Lawyers Section offered a new project in January 2015 — the Health and Wellness Fair. This half-day program addressed stress/anxiety/depression-related issues among young lawyers and law students and provided them with techniques for coping with this demanding profession in a healthy fashion. The program included three hours of CLE on stress in the legal profession.

The event included massages offered by a health-related vendor and cookbooks for healthy living. It was a well-rounded program with a set number of attendees to make sure that all participants received the attention they needed.

The legal profession is a stressful one, especially for young lawyers who are facing hefty workloads and demanding schedules that often include high billable hour expectations and new family responsibilities. It is a known fact that lawyers are at high risk for depression and suicide. It is also an unfortunate fact that, for many, depression begins in law school. Studies have shown that law students have higher rates of depression than the general population.

Photos of individual award recipients are available online at:

<http://www.lsba.org/NewsAndPublications/PressPhotos.aspx?PRPA=45>

The Louisiana State Bar Association assists its more than 22,000 members in the practice of law. The statewide association, as part of its multi-faceted mission, promotes and maintains access to justice initiatives for the state's residents, assists the Louisiana Supreme Court in its regulation of the practice of law, upholds the honor of the courts and the profession, and supports programs that increase public understanding of and respect for the law.