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## **LSBA Members, Local and Specialty Bar Associations, University Recognized with Young Lawyers Division Awards**

**NEW ORLEANS**—Louisiana State Bar Association (LSBA) members, two local bar associations, two specialty bar associations and a university received LSBA Young Lawyers Division (YLD) awards, presented by 2019-20 YLD Chair Scott L. Sternberg during the Louisiana Young Lawyers' Conference on Jan. 17, held in conjunction with the LSBA's Midyear Meeting in Baton Rouge.

**Micah C. Zeno** of New Orleans received the Outstanding Young Lawyer Award, presented to a young lawyer who has made exceptional contributions to the legal profession and the community.

**Ashley J. Heilprin** of New Orleans received the Hon. Michaele Pitard Wynne Professionalism Award, presented to a young lawyer for commitment and dedication to upholding the quality and integrity of the legal profession.

**Brett D. Sandifer** of Baton Rouge received the Pro Bono Award, presented to a young lawyer for commitment and dedication to providing pro bono services in his/her community or the state.

**The Greater New Orleans Louis A. Martinet Legal Society, Inc.** received the Outstanding Local Affiliate Award, presented to an organization that has impacted the lives of young lawyers.

**The Greater New Orleans Louis A. Martinet Legal Society, Inc. and Dillard University** received the Outstanding Program of the Year Award for the Pre-Law Mock Trial Summer Camp Program. The award recognizes programs that serve the public or legal profession and enhance the lives of young lawyers.

*Award finalists also were selected in each of these five categories. Profiles of award winners and finalists are listed below.*

### **• WINNER, Outstanding Young Lawyer Award**

#### **Micah C. Zeno, New Orleans**

Micah C. Zeno is a civil litigator at Gordon, Arata, Montgomery, Barnett, McCollam, Duplantis & Eagan, LLC, in New Orleans. He is a member of the Louisiana State Law Institute and has served in various positions with the Louisiana State Bar Association (LSBA). He currently is co-chair of the LSBA Outreach Committee and is a member of the Diversity Committee. He served on the 2019 Louisiana Access to Justice Commission Strategic Planning Committee, was a member of the Leadership LSBA 2016-2017 Class and a co-chair of the Leadership LSBA 2017-2018 Class. In 2016, he was a member of the Law School Outreach Committee. Since 2016, he has been a lecturer for the LSBA Suit Up for the Future High School Summer

more

## **YLD Awards**

### **Add 1**

Legal Institute Program and has participated in the LSBA Law School Professionalism Orientation Program. He also volunteers as a judge for the Richard N. Ware IV State High School Mock Trial Competition and is a speaker with the Louisiana Center for Law and Civic Education's "Lawyers in the Classroom/Judges in the Classroom" Program. He is a member of the Federal Bar Association Younger Lawyers Division's board of directors, serving as Communications Committee chair and as a member of the Law School Committee. He is the outgoing co-chair of the Young Lawyers Committee of the Louis A. Martinet Legal Society, Inc. board of directors. As co-chair, he was responsible for coordinating the annual Judge Ivan L.R. Lemelle Mixer, a networking and professional development event for students of color at Louisiana's four law schools. He also helped organize Martinet's "Enhancing Diversity in Judicial Clerkships" panel discussion.

#### **• Finalist, Outstanding Young Lawyer Award**

##### **Joseph J. Cefalu III, Baton Rouge**

Joseph J. Cefalu III is a partner with Breazeale, Sachse & Wilson, LLP, practicing civil litigation in the Baton Rouge office. He is a member of the firm's recruiting and diversity and inclusion committees. He has worked extensively with the Baton Rouge Bar Association (BRBA). He is on the BRBA's Young Lawyers Council and currently serves as the assistant editor (and soon-to-be editor-in-chief) of The Baton Rouge Lawyer. He participated in the Louisiana Association of Non-Profit Organizations' "Community Leader" training program in 2015 and the Baton Rouge Area Chamber's 2020 Leadership Class. He is involved with the Boys & Girls Club of Greater Baton Rouge, serving on the board of trustees. He co-founded Club Blue, a young professional affinity group of the Boys & Girls Club, in 2014. Club Blue plans events with the Boys & Girls Club children and coordinates networking events for its membership. Club Blue also hosts the Great Futures Gala, a fundraiser where 15 community-driven young professionals are honored each spring. Club Blue has approximately 85 active members and raised more than \$80,000 for the Boys & Girls Club in 2019. Cefalu graduated cum laude in 2012 from Louisiana State University Paul M. Hebert Law Center, where he was a member of the Louisiana Law Review.

#### **• Finalist, Outstanding Young Lawyer Award**

##### **Eric A. Foley, New Orleans**

Eric A. Foley is an attorney in the Louisiana office of the Roderick & Solange MacArthur Justice Center, a nonprofit law firm dedicated to reforming the criminal justice system. He has led the New Orleans Chapter of the Federal Bar Association Younger Lawyers Division (NOFBA YLD) in multiple efforts to increase its civic engagement and philanthropic work in the community. He served as the NOFBA YLD Pro Bono/Philanthropy Committee chair from September 2018-August 2019 and currently serves as the committee's co-chair. He spearheaded the NOFBA YLD's Landmark Cases Project. Now in its fourth year, the Landmark Cases Project is a yearlong series of classes on landmark Supreme Court cases, currently offered at the International High School of New Orleans, which enriches high school students' civics curriculum. Foley is treasurer of the National FBA's Civil Rights Law Section. In this role, he worked in the planning and execution of the day-long "Civil Rights Etouffee" CLE in February 2019. In his role at the MacArthur Justice Center, Foley challenges, among other things, bail fees. He recently obtained an important ruling from the U.S. 5th Circuit Court of Appeals holding unconstitutional bail fees required by the Orleans Parish Criminal District Court. The significant ruling won local and national attention.

## **YLD Awards**

### **Add 2**

- **Finalist, Outstanding Young Lawyer Award**

**Teresa D. King, Houma**

Teresa D. King is a solo practitioner in Houma. In 2014, she became a Fellow of the Louisiana Bar Foundation and a member of the Bayou Region Community Partnership Panel. Through her work on the Partnership Panel (currently serving as chair for the second year), she assists local non-profits such as CASA and Chez Hope in getting grants from the Louisiana Bar Foundation. She was president of the Terrebonne Bar Association from 2018-2019. As a member of the local bar association board, she has coordinated continuing education courses, banquets and holiday parties. The Terrebonne Bar Association expanded its scholarship offerings in 2018 and now offers two scholarships to deserving law students from the bayou region. King is a member of the Louisiana State Bar Association's (LSBA) House of Delegates. As a Leadership LSBA Class alum, she served as co-chair for the Leadership LSBA 2019-2020 Class. She is a member of the LSBA's Committee on Alcohol and Drug Abuse. King has offered free consultations to incarcerated clients and pro bono services to indigent clients. When overcrowding occurred at the local jail, she traveled across the state to maintain contact with her incarcerated clients who were sent to facilities in northern Louisiana. She has successfully defended thousands of clients in criminal court. She also handles uncontested custody matters and represents parents involved in Child in Need of Care cases.

- **Finalist, Outstanding Young Lawyer Award**

**Keith J. Naccari, New Orleans**

Keith J. Naccari is a founding partner of Sternberg, Naccari & White, LLC, where he leads the firm's transactions practice. He primarily focuses on mergers and acquisitions, tax law and business counsel. He is a board member of the Entrepreneurs' Organization Louisiana Chapter, an Executive Committee member of the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, and co-chair/founder of the Young Members Network for the World Trade Center. He is an active member of the Young Leadership Council, the New Orleans Chamber of Commerce, the Association for Corporate Growth, the Rotary Club of New Orleans, VITA and the LSBA Young Lawyers Division. He volunteers with Crescent City Café, which hosts a free, volunteer-led, restaurant-style breakfast twice a month for homeless and low-income guests. He also periodically teaches business law as adjunct professor at Tulane University. He received professional recognition as a New Orleans Magazine "Top Lawyer" in business and was recently honored as a 2019 Junior Achievement Rising Star. He earned an MBA and J.D. magna cum laude from Loyola University New Orleans, where he was a member of Loyola Law Review and a William S. Crowe Scholar. He also holds an L.L.M. in Taxation from New York University.

- **WINNER, Hon. Michaele Pitard Wynne Professionalism Award**

**Ashley J. Heilprin, New Orleans**

Ashley J. Heilprin practices in the areas of civil trial and commercial litigation at Phelps Dunbar, LLP. She created the Pathways & Pipelines to Success (Pathways) program in 2016 while serving as the Young Lawyers Committee chair for the Greater New Orleans Chapter Louis A. Martinet Legal Society, Inc. Pathways is a professional development seminar created to assist minority law students from all four Louisiana law schools on honing their networking and career-building strategies through interactions with African-American judges and lawyers. In 2017, she led the effort for Martinet to partner with the Association of Women Attorneys on a CLE, "Not Just A Pretty Face: Developing Powerful Women of Substance for Success." She served on the Diversity & Inclusion and Pre-Trial Practice & Discovery Committees for the ABA Section of Litigation and was a member of its Diverse Leaders Academy. She has published several "practice pointers" for the Pre-Trial Practice & Discovery Committee and recorded "Sound Advice" podcasts for the Diversity & Inclusion

## **YLD Awards**

### **Add 3**

Committee. This year, she is co-chairing the Diversity & Inclusion Committee's newsletter. She co-chairs the Distance Learning Subcommittee and plans roundtable discussions for ABA members across the country. She was a member of the Committee for a Better New Orleans' Class of 2016, the Young Leadership Council's 2013 Leadership Development Series Class and the Emerging Philanthropists of New Orleans' Class of 2014. She also served on the board of directors for Collegiate Academies, the Young Leadership Council, the ACLU of Louisiana and the House of Ruth of New Orleans.

- **Finalist, Hon. Michaele Pitard Wynne Professionalism Award**

**Chelsea Gomez Caswell, Baton Rouge**

Chelsea Gomez Caswell is an associate in the Baton Rouge office of Kean Miller, LLP. She is vice president on the board of directors of The Arc Baton Rouge. The Arc promotes and protects the human rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and actively supports their full inclusion and participation in the community throughout their lifetimes. She will serve as the 2020 chair-elect of the Baton Rouge Bar Association Young Lawyers Section Council (BRBA YLS). During her term as BRBA YLS secretary (2019), she spearheaded the Council's organization of Belly Up with the Bar (annual fundraiser for the Baton Rouge Bar Foundation's award-winning Youth Education programs); Cocktails with the Court (annual event with judges and young lawyers); the 1st Circuit Court of Appeal panel luncheon/CLE; and the Summer Sizzlin' CLE (focusing on the importance of professionalism in the legal practice, work/life balance, and how to successfully work with more seasoned attorneys). She is a member of the LSU Pi Beta Phi Alumnae Advisor Committee, working with college woman's fraternity members. She earned her B.A., summa cum laude, from Louisiana State University in 2009. She earned her J.D, cum laude, from the LSU Paul M. Hebert Law Center in 2013.

- **Finalist, Hon. Michaele Pitard Wynne Professionalism Award**

**Druit G. Gremillion, Jr., Baton Rouge**

Druit G. Gremillion, Jr. is a partner in the Baton Rouge office of Breazeale, Sachse & Wilson, LLP, practicing in the area of casualty litigation. He has devoted a significant portion of his practice to representing law enforcement agencies against Section 1983 claims and other civil rights litigation. He also taught the principles of ADA Title II to law enforcement officers of the Livingston Parish Sheriff's Office and how it relates to their job and livelihood. He has attained more courthouse experience, particularly in federal court, through arguments before the U.S. 5th Circuit Court of Appeals and admission before and filings with the U.S. Supreme Court. Through this experience, he served on the executive board of the Baton Rouge Chapter of the Federal Bar Association. He was named a "Rising Star" by Louisiana Super Lawyers in 2019. He attended Louisiana State University and obtained a bachelor's degree in political science. He received his J.D. from LSU Paul M. Hebert Law Center, where he was a member of the Louisiana Law Review, president of the Moot Court Board and an officer in the Student Bar Association.

- **WINNER, Pro Bono Award**

**Brett D. Sandifer, Baton Rouge**

Brett D. Sandifer is an in-house attorney for Liberty Mutual Insurance Company in Baton Rouge. He joined the Baton Rouge Bar Foundation's Pro Bono Committee in 2017 and currently serves as committee chair. He works diligently with the committee to provide guidance and direction on how the Pro Bono Project can be most effective to the low-income and underserved populations in the BRBF service area. He accepts as many pro bono cases as his schedule will allow. He worked with law professors to identify law students to

## **YLD Awards**

### **Add 4**

potentially pair with attorney volunteers to streamline the back-end work in case representation. He has been an active volunteer with the Pro Bono Project since his admission to the bar in 2011. He has donated a total of 100 hours of service since 2017 through his work with the committee and pro bono client representation. He has volunteered at the Self-Help Resource Center at Family Court. After the Baton Rouge flood in 2016, he notarized documents needed for flood relief funds, free of charge for victims. He has served as a facilitator and presenter of CLE Pro Bono Roundtable seminars targeted at recruiting new volunteers for the pro bono program and outreach services. He received his bachelor's degree from Louisiana State University and his J.D. from Mississippi College School of Law.

#### **• Finalist, Pro Bono Award**

##### **Eric A. Foley, New Orleans**

Eric A. Foley is an attorney in the Louisiana office of the Roderick & Solange MacArthur Justice Center, a nonprofit law firm dedicated to reforming the criminal justice system. He has led the New Orleans Chapter of the Federal Bar Association Younger Lawyers Division (NOFBA YLD) in multiple efforts to increase its civic engagement and philanthropic work in the community. He served as the NOFBA YLD Pro Bono/Philanthropy Committee chair from September 2018-August 2019 and currently serves as the committee's co-chair. He spearheaded the NOFBA YLD's Landmark Cases Project. Now in its fourth year, the Landmark Cases Project is a yearlong series of classes on landmark Supreme Court cases, currently offered at the International High School of New Orleans, which enriches high school students' civics curriculum. Foley is treasurer of the National FBA's Civil Rights Law Section. In this role, he worked in the planning and execution of the day-long "Civil Rights Etouffee" CLE in February 2019. In his role at the MacArthur Justice Center, Foley challenges, among other things, bail fees. He recently obtained an important ruling from the U.S. 5th Circuit Court of Appeals holding unconstitutional bail fees required by the Orleans Parish Criminal District Court. The significant ruling won local and national attention.

#### **• WINNER, Outstanding Local Affiliate**

##### **Greater New Orleans Louis A. Martinet Legal Society, Inc.**

The Greater New Orleans Louis A. Martinet Legal Society, Inc. began in 1957, founded to encourage the interchange of ideas, promote legal scholarship, advance the science of jurisprudence, promote the administration of justice, uphold the order and ethics of the courts and the profession, and to promote the legal profession in Louisiana. During the 2018-2019 year, Martinet's initiatives included successfully campaigning to pass Louisiana's Amendment 2, which required the state to have unanimous juries. Martinet also held its 4th Annual Pathways and Pipelines to Success Program, which offers African-American law students from all four Louisiana-area law schools professional development, career-building tools and networking opportunities by immersing them in experiential learning, exposing them to exceptional professional development resources and role models, and assisting them in transitioning after law school to professionals. The program was nationally recognized by the American Bar Association with the 2019 E. Smythe Gambrell Professionalism Award.

#### **• Finalist, Outstanding Local Affiliate**

##### **Jefferson Bar Association Young Lawyers Division**

The purpose of the Jefferson Bar Association Young Lawyers Division (JBA YLD) is to stimulate the interest of young lawyers in the activities of the Jefferson Bar Association and to conduct programs of interest and value to young lawyers. Every month, the JBA YLD hosts a Wine Down Wednesday event to bring together



## **YLD Awards**

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new and seasoned attorneys, judges and community leaders to share knowledge and experiences. The JBA YLD hosts Coffee with the Court two to three times a year for young lawyers to meet and interact with the bench. The JBA YLD offers all young lawyers two free CLE programs. The Region 4 High School Mock Trial Competition has been organized and hosted by the JBA YLD for several years. The JBA YLD has created a Crawfish Cook-Off to benefit CASA Jefferson. In two years, this event has raised over \$6,000 in donations. These events are in line with the JBA's commitment to assisting and serving its members in the practice of law, promoting the administration of justice, upholding the honor of the courts and the legal profession, promoting the professional competency of attorneys through continuing legal education, increasing public understanding of and respect for the law, and encouraging collegiality among its members.

- **Finalist, Outstanding Local Affiliate**

- New Orleans Chapter of the Federal Bar Association Younger Lawyers Division**

- The New Orleans Chapter of the Federal Bar Association Younger Lawyers Division (NOFBA YLD) hosts its annual Malcolm Monroe Federal Practice Seminar, its annual Federal Defender and Criminal Justice Act Panel Training Program, and bi-monthly Lunch with the Court programs. This past year, the NOFBA YLD partnered with the International High School of New Orleans on the Landmark Cases Project. The YLD continued its mentorship program to help connect law students to the diverse local legal community. The YLD also hosted a professionalism CLE titled "Things I Wish I Had Known: Tips for First Generation Lawyers" at Tulane. The YLD also invited the law schools to participate in mock off-campus interviews and held its annual Morning at the Federal Courthouse program.

- **WINNER, Outstanding Program of the Year**

- Greater New Orleans Louis A. Martinet Legal Society, Inc. and Dillard University Pre-Law Mock Trial Summer Camp Program**

- When the Greater New Orleans Louis A. Martinet Legal Society, Inc. was founded in 1957, one of its objectives was to promote the legal profession in Louisiana. In keeping with that objective, Martinet and the Dillard University Pre-Law Program held its first Mock Trial Camp in June 2019. During the week-long camp, seventh and eighth graders from the greater New Orleans area learned the framework of a trial, including voir dire, opening and closing arguments, and direct and cross-examinations. The students applied their learning to a mock trial problem and presented a trial at the end of the week in front of sitting and/or retired judges in Louisiana.

- **Finalist, Outstanding Program of the Year**

- Baton Rouge Bar Association Sidebar Luncheon Series**

- The Baton Rouge Bar Association's (BRBA) Young Lawyers Section coordinates Sidebar Luncheons in courts in different jurisdictions. The luncheons are an opportunity for young lawyers to interact with judges and their staffs in an informal setting while learning more about the practice of law in that judge's courtroom. It is natural for young lawyers to be intimidated by court appearances. The BRBA's YLS Council has worked to combat this initial intimidation by developing a program specifically designed to foster relationships between YLS members and local judges, and to teach young lawyers vital rules for practicing in local courts. These seminars help alleviate unnecessary anxiety or stress by addressing many of the topics that young lawyers want to know prior to appearing before a particular judge. Each luncheon includes a tour of the courthouse, a lengthy discussion on interpretations of the local rules and different courtroom practices, followed by a lunch with judges and other court personnel.

## **YLD Awards**

### **Add 6**

- **Finalist, Outstanding Program of the Year**

#### **New Orleans Federal Bar Association Younger Lawyers Division Landmark Cases Project**

The Landmark Cases Project is a yearlong series of classes on landmark Supreme Court cases taught by a diverse group of government, public service and private practice lawyers to high school students. The classes coincide with the students' Civics curriculum and are designed to teach and encourage civil discourse. Students learn about constitutional rights; Marbury v. Madison and judicial review; constitutional limits on executive power in wartime, focusing on Japanese internment and the war on terror; slavery and segregation, from Dred Scott to Brown v. Board of Education; and the guarantees of the Fourth Amendment, with emphasis on its application in schools. The program includes a field trip to the WWII Museum and a moot court at the U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Louisiana, where students argue before a federal judge.

*Photos (headshots) of award winners and finalists are located online at:  
<https://www.lsba.org/NewsAndPublications/PressPhotos.aspx?PRPA=66>.*

*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.*