

Bridging the Divide Between Baby Boomers and Millennials

By Lawrence J. Centola III



With the creation of the Louisiana State Bar Association's (LSBA) Senior Lawyers Division, the LSBA's Young Lawyers Division has a wonderful opportunity to tap into the hearts and minds of more experienced lawyers. The Young Lawyers Division and the Senior Lawyers Division plan to collaborate on projects that will serve the Bar and the legal community as a whole.

YLS to YLD

Prior to 2011, the LSBA had a Young Lawyers Section (YLS). Qualifications for the YLS were:

Every member of the Louisiana State Bar Association who has not reached the age of thirty-nine (39) years or who has been admitted to the practice of law for less than five (5) years, whichever is later, is by virtue thereof a member of the Young Lawyers Section. (Article I, Section 1, Bylaws of the Louisiana State Bar Association, Young Lawyers Section).

Hence, admission to the YLS was automatic. There was no application. There was no additional fee.

The LSBA has 30 sections open to Bar members. These sections enable attorneys to network with other licensed legal



professionals within their specific fields and areas of interest. To join a section, an LSBA member must complete an application and pay an annual fee. The section's annual fees comprise a majority of the section's budget. A full list of LSBA sections can be found at: www.lsba.org/InsideLSBA/Sections.asp.

As the other LSBA sections required an application and an additional fee, and as membership into the Young Lawyers "Section" was automatic, the LSBA determined that the Young Lawyers "Section" really acted as the Young Lawyers "Division." Further, the Young Lawyers "Section" did not have a membership fee. The Young Lawyers "Section" was funded by a line item in the LSBA budget. So, in 2011, the LSBA decided to change the Young Lawyers Section to the Young Lawyers Division (YLD) and the name change was made official by a LSBA House of Delegates resolution in June 2011 and a subsequent vote of the membership. There are approximately 6,000 YLD members.

Creation of the Senior Lawyers Division

In 2010, the LSBA formed a Senior Lawyers Committee appointed by then-LSBA President Michael A. Patterson. Richard K. Leefe, recently installed as the 2013-14 LSBA president, was the first

chair of the Senior Lawyers Committee. As the young lawyers were converting into a Division, the LSBA decided to establish a Senior Lawyers Division (not just a committee). The Senior Lawyers Division (SLD) was also created by a LSBA House of Delegates resolution in June 2011 and a subsequent vote of the membership.

The SLD members are those LSBA members who are age 65 or older. There are approximately 2,500 SLD members.

Nationwide, senior lawyers are retiring from the practice of law at a rate of thousands per day. These lawyers hold a wealth of knowledge. The senior lawyers and the young lawyers are committed to working together to harness that knowledge and make sure that the legal lessons learned are passed down to the next generation.

Baby Boomers

"Baby Boomers" is the term for the generation of people born from 1946 to 1964. Although only some of the Baby Boomers are currently SLD members, each year more Baby Boomers will age into this Division. This generation lived through the Civil Rights movement, Woodstock, Vietnam, Beatlemania and Watergate. The Baby Boomers are confident, independent and self-reliant. They are achievement-oriented and career-focused.

Baby Boomers did not, however, grow up with the conveniences of modern technology. Some Baby Boomers may be technologically naïve or unfamiliar with the latest technology products. They did not start their careers with the ability to “telecommute.” This generation started work without computers, without cell phones, without email and without modern copy machines. Thus, the actual tools that Millennials grew up using may be foreign to some Baby Boomers.

Baby Boomers make up a large majority of today’s leaders in law. They are the managing partners at law firms. They are the Bar leaders. They are the leaders of industry. Thus, the younger generations must learn how to have a “simpatico” work relationship with the Baby Boomers.

Millennials

Although the Millennial generation start date is not set in stone, Millennials generally are people born in the late 1970s to the early 2000s. Millennials grew up with the Internet. Experts have claimed that Millennials have different behaviors and attitudes from other generations because of the technological and economic implications of the Internet.¹ Some Millennials have never owned a compact disc, much less a cassette tape or an actual vinyl record. Millennials have been shaped by 9-11, the War in Iraq, Bush v. Gore, music downloads and an economic downturn.

Millennials are technology natives — meaning they literally grew up with technology. They started using computers in grade school. They had cell phones in college. They are comfortable reading something on a computer screen and not hard copy because they grew up reading on a computer screen. Millennials may not be tethered to a brick-and-mortar office. They believe that as long as they are connected to modern technology, they can work from anywhere.

Millennials also have been criticized for being the Peter Pan Generation — never wanting to grow up. Some Millennials have lived at home for longer periods of time than their parents



lived with their grandparents. Some Millennials moved back home with their parents after college as they were unable to find employment during the late 2000s recession.

Some of the Millennials are starting new families. The Millennials with families of their own may be struggling with work-life balance. Work-life balance itself is a term that the Baby Boomers did not grow up with as the term was first used in the press in 1988.² As Baby Boomers did not grow up with the “work-life balance” term, the concept may be foreign to them. In addition, work-life balance is more difficult today as young families often have two income earners making child care logistics more challenging.

Bridging the Divide

With nearly 6,000 YLD members and with about 2,500 SLD members, it is in the best interests of all to work together for the benefit of the legal community and the community at large. Although the law changes and the technology changes, the wisdom gained by the senior lawyers is pertinent to today’s situations. The leadership of the YLD and the SLD are working on a number of mutually beneficial projects including:

► ***I Know What You Did Last Summer*** is a presentation to law students about the

dos and don’ts of a summer clerkship. Summer clerks/associates enjoyed presentations last year on what to expect during the job experience, particularly what a student can do to stand out in positive, as well as negative, ways. Law students want to know the thoughts of the YLD members and the SLD members.

► **The Résumé Writing and Interview Skills Seminar** is another project aimed at law students. The YLD and SLD want to hold seminars for interviewing clerks and lawyers on how to polish resumes³ and how to have a successful interview. The SLD members are managing partners of law firms. Law students and recent law graduates want to hear from managing partners and other law leaders on how to make a good first impression.

► **Mentoring Program.** The Louisiana Supreme Court has approved a pilot mentoring program in limited areas of the state. The Mentoring Program is set to begin in 2014. Incoming lawyers/mentees will be paired with a mentor and the mentees will have certain milestones that they have to reach in a 14-month period. The SLD will be heavily relied upon to serve as mentors to the new admittees/mentees, who of course will be YLD members as well.

► **Technology Outreach.** The YLD will present technology-themed CLEs

for SLD members. The first CLE titled “What Is This and How Do I Turn It On” will be presented at the LSBA Annual Meeting in Destin, Fla. While there are a number of high-tech CLEs available in the marketplace, some SLD members are not ready for the advanced courses. Thus, the YLD members will present beginning technology courses so senior lawyers can feel comfortable with the basics and later take the advanced CLE courses.

Conclusion

Moore’s law says that the number of transistors on integrated circuits doubles approximately every two years. Technology is getting smaller, faster and more integrated every day. As the speed of technology increases, our lives tend to speed up. Likewise, the practice of law speeds up. The Senior Lawyers Division needs to impart wisdom to the younger Bar members on the practice of law so that the YLD members can keep up with the speed. In turn, the YLD needs

to impart wisdom to the senior lawyers on technology so that the senior lawyers can keep up with that speed.

My 5-year-olds cannot believe that I did not have facetime when I went to college. The facetime comment from my 5-year-olds proves that 1) 5-year-olds are using technology every day, and 2) some people already think I am a dinosaur. Age is relative. Getting older is better than the alternative. There is always someone older than you and there is always someone younger than you. The YLD and the SLD look forward to sharing their strengths with each other to better serve the public and the Bar.

If you are interested in getting involved with one of the YLD/SLD symbiotic projects, email me at lcentola@mbfirm.com.

3. As an aside, Richard Leefe and I discussed why law schools limit the résumés of students to one page. Lawyers do not normally limit their résumés to one page. The experts we use certainly do not limit their résumés to one page. So why are law students so limited? The law students need to hear from the senior lawyers that it is not the length of the résumé that is important but the content. The students need to learn how to include relevant content.

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FOOTNOTES

1. *Nine Shift: Work, Life and Education in the 21st Century*, William A. Draves and Julie Coates.
2. Tom Brown, “The Model Employee,” *Industry Week*, Aug. 1, 1988.



Need some help managing your law office?

The Louisiana State Bar Association (LSBA) has established the Law Office Management Assistance Program (LOMAP, for short). This program is designed to assist lawyers in increasing the quality of the legal services they provide.

Questions or comments about LOMAP may be sent to Shawn L. Holahan, Practice Management Counsel.

And don’t forget about the LSBA’s other programs assisting lawyers...

- ▶ Fastcase for free online legal research, accessible from the LSBA’s home page, www.lsba.org.
- ▶ Lawyer Fee Dispute Resolution Program for quick, inexpensive, informal and final resolution of attorney/client and attorney/attorney fee disputes. Contact Shawn Holahan at shawn.holahan@lsba.org or call (504)619-0153 or (800)421-5722, ext. 153.

For more information on all LSBA programs, go to www.lsba.org.