MAKING CONNECTIONS

By E. Taylor Stukes, Chair

No matter how much time has passed since one has finished school, it is hard to get away from the academic calendar. August always feels like the end of one year and the beginning of a new one. August also happens to be the best time to become involved in the MCB Young Lawyers Division because it is at the beginning of a new year for the YLD.

What lies ahead for the YLD is our Ask-A-Lawyer Days, community service projects, seasonal socials, CLEs, YLD-sponsored tables at MCB events and multiple other opportunities to get involved in the YLD in big and small ways. If you have not done so already, the YLD is easy to join. Visit www.MeckBar.org and click on the Young Lawyers Division button found under the "Get Involved" tab. YLD dues are \$20/year, and even if you only attend the seasonal socials, you will come out ahead in food and drink.

Some young lawyers do not join the YLD because they perceive that they will not get a

large enough return on their investment of time. This is a huge misconception. One of my principal goals as YLD Chair is to provide as many substantive opportunities as possible to young lawyers in Mecklenburg County to connect with one another and form the professional relationships necessary to a thriving legal career. Before too long, YLD members will be leaders in business, government and the law. Relationships begun today can make a huge difference in careers tomorrow. The YLD strives to provide the best forum for Mecklenburg County's young lawyers to build quality relationships within the MCB by providing a great deal more than empty networking events with a roomful of lawyers. If we are falling short of what you expected out of membership or if you look over what the YLD has to offer and still do not believe YLD membership makes sense to you, please let me know so that we can continue to improve our programming.

After you join the YLD, I recommend you join a YLD committee to get the most out of the YLD. Currently, the YLD has six

committees: Social, Community Service, Legal Assistance, Membership, Education and Connectivity. Membership on YLD committees is open to all members of the YLD. All you need to do to join a committee is e-mail YLD Membership Committee Chris Hood at chood@horacktalley.com or me at taylorstukes@mvalaw.com with which committee you would like to join. Chris or I will put you in contact with the committee chair who will then get you quickly involved. Once on a committee, consider eventually stepping up to become the chair. Each committee chair serves on the YLD Council. The YLD Council meets monthly to handle YLD business.

The YLD is an easy place to start broadening the foundations of young lawyers' careers before they move on to bigger and better things. Failing to at least try the YLD for a year is a missed opportunity. That is why I hope that joining the YLD will be a priority for each young lawyer in Mecklenburg County for this "new" year.

Young Lawyers Division

MEET YOUR COUNCIL

Christian H. Staples of Shumaker, Loop & Kendrick, LLP was unanimously selected to serve as the YLD Secretary/Treasurer for 2013-14. As secretary/treasurer, he is responsible for the oversight of all minutes, books, papers and financial affairs of the Division in 2013-14.

Christian received his B.A. in political science and Spanish from

Wake Forest University. While at Wake Forest he served as chairman of the Honor & Ethics Council and was inducted into the Political Science Honor Society. Christian received his J.D. from Campbell University School of Law in 2009 where he served as Executive Editor of the Campbell Law Review and competed in the ABA National Appellate Advocacy Competition. Christian is recently married and enjoys running with his wife Jennie in the NoDa Brewery Run Club.



Christian H. Staples

- Area of Practice / Expertise Business Litigation
- On which YLD, MCB or MBF Committees have you served? YLD Social Committee, YLD Connectivity Committee, YLD Executive Council and MCB Nominating Committee
- What is the best advice you've received during your legal career?

 Work harder than your adversary.
- What advice would you give others?
 Having a sense of humor makes everyone else around you more relaxed.
- career?

 My practice is very diverse, so being able to jump from one area of the law to

■ What is the most challenging part of your

- another is probably the biggest challenge, but it is a challenge that I enjoy greatly.
- What is your favorite part of your current job?
- Honestly, my colleagues at SLK. Despite being a larger firm, we are a close-knit group of attorneys, paralegals, and support staff.
- Besides the YLD, what other community efforts are you involved with?
 I was recently a member of the Citizens Advisory Group which assisted the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Department in its effort to relax zoning requirements to allow breweries to open and operate in urban neighborhoods like South End and Plaza Midwood.