



## YOUNG LAWYER CORNER

# New Year, New Duties

By Michael J. Dennin

2013 is here. With the New Year comes a resolution. May I suggest we all resolve to look back to when we were admitted to practice law. Do you remember pledging your Oath? I do. After graduating Widener Law, Harrisburg Campus, we graduates were fortunate enough to be sworn in by Pennsylvania Supreme Court Justice Thomas G. Saylor. When being sworn in, I had a giddy feeling. Having passed the bar exam and thankfully obtained employment, I still had no idea what it meant to be an attorney. I heard the Oath, knew it was special and important, but it did not sink in. On December 11, 2012, the Honorable Fernandez-Vina swore in new admits to the practice of law in the State of New Jersey. Brenda Eutsler provided me an opportunity to speak with the admits after the Oath.

In now my 8th year of practice, I have come to appreciate what the Oath means. This appreciation is the tip of the iceberg, however. Some attorneys are somehow able to "get it" right away. For the majority, it is not possible to fully appreciate the Oath until you are able to practice. The Oath, the admittance to practice, brings with it incredible power and responsibility. You are now an officer of the Court. What does that mean? Well, first

and foremost it is a lifetime commitment. It is a lifetime opportunity to effect change in people's lives as well as your own. The first duty is to further the administration of justice. The duty to one's client is subordinate to the duty to the Oath and to the Court. We all make a solemn promise of ethical conduct.

The responsibility and trust given to attorneys cannot be overstated. As officers of the Court, our word is taken as true. We bind our clients day in and day out by what we say. Our clients are bound by our actions. Because our word is taken as truth, we must tread carefully. Our first words as attorneys are the Oath. Our words are our bond, and our first words are the most important ones we say. It is not a mere "recitation." When we take the Oath, we truly cannot understand the significance. While we are not Judges, our duties to the Court and practice of law are just as important as the duty of the Judge that sets forth the Oath. We promise service. Service to the client, the Court, and to others in general. We are held to a higher standard. While we may be joked about by others in certain contexts, only we can look past this and make sure people know that when they need someone to listen to them and give counsel, they can call us. We can take the joke

as what it is, and be there for the person who is the jokester. Law is a dignified profession, and we must practice with dignity.

The Oath is recited at first, but is practiced throughout our lives. We uphold the Oath inside and outside of the courtroom. Even when we get upset, depressed, frustrated, we still must know that we need to overcome adversity and be there for our client. Even when we get knocked down, we must serve and get back up. We must use our words and put our words into action. We must take ourselves to a higher level, while being the same as we have always been. When starting out, we cannot lose ourselves in title. We cannot brag, but rather must be humble. When people congratulate us on "passing the bar" or being an attorney, a simple thank you will suffice and then act to see what you can do to help the person who has given you thanks. Service starts when we pledge the Oath, and it never ends. We hope that when we pass people will remember us for our service and what we have done, and not for our triumphs as an "attorney." When we are old, retired, and tell stories to our grandchildren, we still uphold the Oath, because the Oath remains and we remain after we are gone.



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## We're Looking for YOU!

### Association Officer and Trustee Nominations Open

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Members wishing to be considered for any of the available positions are expected to have the time and means to attend and participate in the monthly Board of Trustee meetings (10), attend and participate in Association & Foundation events and programs throughout the year, and perform other duties that may be assigned by the president.

If you have the desire to help shape the future of your Association, and can meet the responsibilities outlined above, please send a letter of interest along with a resume to Louis Lessig, Esq., Chairperson, Nominating Committee, c/o Camden County Bar Association, 1040 N. Kings Highway, Suite 201, Cherry Hill, NJ 08034. **Current members of the Board of Trustees whose terms expire at the end of this bar year must also send a letter of interest to be considered for reappointment.**

Members who have practiced five years or less at the Bar of New Jersey or are 35 years or younger are eligible for the position of Young Lawyer Trustee or Vice Chairperson of the Young Lawyer Committee. Again, a commitment to attend and

chair monthly Young Lawyer Committee meetings, submit a monthly article to the Barrister, and attend monthly Board of Trustee meetings and Young Lawyer and Association events and programs must be made. To be considered for either position, please send a letter of interest along with a resume to Michael Dennin, Chairperson, Young Lawyer Nominating Committee, c/o Camden County Bar Association, 1040 N. Kings Highway, Suite 201, Cherry Hill, NJ 08034. Both young lawyer posts are for a one-year term beginning June 1, 2013.

New officers and Trustees will be sworn in at the Annual Installation of Officers & Trustees Dinner Dance on Friday, May 31st at Trump National Golf Club at Pine Hill.

For more information regarding the nominating process, please feel free to contact Executive Director Larry Pelletier at 856.482.0620 or via e-mail at [lbpc@camdencountybar.org](mailto:lbpc@camdencountybar.org).

**The deadline for consideration of nominations is 5 pm, Friday, February 15, 2013.**

## Stay Involved... Attend Events!