Jason Pierson
YLS Member Spotlight

by Tom Adams
YLS Board

Jason Pierson is one of our community's rising stars who owes part of his success to his involvement in the MBA. Jason joined the MBA when he was still a law student at University of Oregon. He became a liaison between the YLS Board and the law school and jobs for the YLS Pro Bono Committee. His involvement has only increased since he passed the bar. Still a Pro Bono Committee, he is now the lead organizer for the Will's For Heroes clinic, and is attempting to increase the number of clinics each year. Will's For Heroes is a YLS pro bono event in which young lawyers provide wills for police, fire at the risk of death, and other first responders and their spouses.

Landerholm Law. Jason's practice focuses on protecting the interests of children who too often become marginalized and unidentified individuals. And, only one year passing the bar, he has already handled multiple high-profile custody disputes.

Jason spends his free time gardening, hiking, and exploring new restaurants in the Portland area. "After living in Las Vegas," says Jason, "the green of Oregon lifts my spirits." He takes inspiration from Dr. Seuss quote: "You have brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself any direction you choose."

Jason has proved this by ending up in Oregon and so quickly becoming a dedicated attorney, volunteer, and member of his community.

As the MBA Young Lawyer Section Delegate to the ABA, I recently had the opportunity to attend the ABA Young Lawyers Division Fall Conference, which took place in Detroit, Michigan. The YLD holds four conferences a year, two of which (mid-year and annual) line up with the big ABA. Fall and spring conferences are held separately, so they're a great opportunity for new and young lawyers to meet others from around the country who are similarly situated in practice experience and career development.

**Legal Education:** One of the highlights of the conference is the variety in programming, all of which is targeted toward lawyers who are young(s) or new(s) in the practice. This quarter's lineup consisted of topics such as: the Anatomy of a Solo/Small Firm; Justice for Flint; Ethics and the Interplay Between the Judicial System and the Media; Gender Identity, Title IX and K-12 Education; Data Breaches and Cyber Security; Emerging Security, Economic and Legal Challenges to Airport Security; Lessons from Detroit: Municipal Bankruptcy and its Implications on City and Local Government Operations; Women in Public and Leadership; Prosecutorial Discretion in the Wake of Public Outsourcing; LGBT Family Law Considerations and Practice Tips; and Work-Life Management. There's something for everyone, regardless of practice area.

**Public Service:** Consistent with the Division's focus on public service, each conference provides an opportunity for attendees to participate in a service event in the local community. The Dare to Dream event was held with local middle school students and consisted of a vision-boarding program with the children, led by lawyers in small groups. At Wayne State University School of Law, a panel discussion was held, entitled What Do Lawyers Do, which educated prospective law students on preparation for law school, the law school experience, and different career paths available to law school graduates. Panels ranged from practicing attorneys, including a legal aid lawyer, to a judge, to the University's Director of Career Services.

**Leadership and Career Development:** Each conference focuses attention on the different components of leadership development and career growth. In particular, this year's YLD Chair has developed a theme for the bar year focused on relationships, relevance, and resilience with specific emphasis on personal development and professional advancement.

Attendees were able to learn about effective messaging as well as practice developing a targeted "elevenor pitch," and participate in a workshop on leveraging personality types for effective, which included a focus on how leadership styles may change in the gradual transition from associate to partner.

The YLD leadership also met for the Council Meeting to discuss division status reports, including an update on Disaster Legal Services organized by young lawyers throughout the country, initiatives focused on increasing diversity in the legal profession, as well as a special presentation on the law and impact on disaggregating transgender individuals with a focus on social justice, First Amendment considerations, and the Affordable Care Act. Networking: In recognizing the importance of networking and relationship building at all stages of development, each conference provides ample opportunities for networking: from the first-time attendee orientation, to speed networking, to the welcome reception, and the dinner events. The fall and spring conferences also provide an amazing experience called the Affiliate Showcase, in which YLD affiliates throughout the country (such as our own MBA YLS and Oregon New Lawyers Division) host a booth and provide materials and a quick presentation on programs that have been successfully implemented in their areas. What is especially significant about this event is that the showcase is focused on providing tools and materials to allow other affiliates to take these projects and implement them in their own areas. The range of projects and initiatives is as varied as the attendees themselves: from teaching constitutional rights to school-age children, to Native American law school recruitment, to bringing community members together with policing agencies, to human trafficking awareness, to training new lawyers on children's immigration issues (thanks to Oregon New Lawyers Division).

For those looking for that small push to get more involved locally, the MBA YLS offers numerous opportunities to meaningfully participate in local initiatives and ABA programs through committees, events, and targeted projects. In addition, the MBA mid-year conference will be in Miami, Florida from February 1-3 and registration is now open on the ABA website. I encourage young lawyers in our area to consider attending, and I invite you to reach out to me if you have questions about opportunities to get more involved with the YLS or the ABA YLD.