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## MCBA President's Message: On 'young lawyers' and how they can grow

By: Mark J. Moretti March 8, 2017



It is stating the obvious to say that our young ("newly minted") lawyers are the future of the profession. However, they have entered the profession at a time when the economics of the practice of law have changed dramatically.

Initially there is very much a two-tiered approach to private practice opportunities for lawyers just coming out of law school.

If you are hired by a larger firm, chances are good that you will be financially rewarded with a proportionately higher financial package than ever. With that of course comes the downside of ever-higher hour requirements and expectations to hit the ground running. At your wages "young lawyers" are not a positive economic contributor to the firm and clients are not as willing as in days gone by to pay to have you learn your profession as an extra billing entity while occupying a second chair at depositions and meetings, particularly not as higher starting salaries have driven up billing rates as well. Moreover, law firm growth has slowed down with fewer lawyers being hired into starting classes at big firms.

For others, the financial remunerations at smaller firms are significantly less, but the hands-on experience is usually much greater. For some, there is no choice but to hang out a shingle on their own and enter the potentially dangerous waters of private practice without a lifeguard or helping hand to guide them. The practice of law is best learned with a more senior, experienced attorney leading the way. Although more and more law schools are offering internship programs, law schools still by and large educate you only on the broad theoretical areas of the law and do not teach you about the nuances of really practicing law, handling escrow funds, and representing clients.

The MCBA does offer significant benefits in dealing with these issues. We have a vibrant Young Lawyers Section that has been blessed with a history of strong leaders, including current chair Ryan McDonald, immediate past chair Curt Johnson, and many others.

We also have an excellent Solo and Small Practice Committee under the current leadership of Meredith Lamb and the past leadership of Brad Kammholz, which provides guidance, knowledge and networking in the profession for those in a small firm or solo practice.

I would urge young lawyers to find ways to be involved in the MCBA, both for learning and networking purposes, whether they are in large or small firms, or a solo practitioner. Join the association. Come to events. Go to CLEs. Join committees and sections.

The practice of law is a very rewarding profession, but it is a demanding and challenging one, now perhaps more than ever for both "young" and more experienced lawyers. The MCBA can help meet those challenges with the help of your fellow practitioners in this community.

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