



Dictum

The newsletter of the NJSBA Young Lawyers Division

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Chair's Message

by Jonas K. Seigel

You have probably noticed some changes in the YLD this year.

First, it has been decided that our county representatives will no longer be hosting county events. The reason is largely due to the problems created with scheduling. The NJSBA and county bars voiced major difficulties in spreading the events out evenly throughout the year, marketing the events, and making sure they were not too close in time to other county and state bar events, which diluted the attendance at each event.

Another change will be the holding of quarterly meetings instead of monthly meetings. The idea is to spend less time at the Law Center discussing business and spend more time socializing/increasing membership, bridging the gap between the county and state YLDs, and holding more CLE/community outreach programs in other counties.

I am still in discussions with the NJSBA over increasing the diversity of our YLD Executive Committee, hosting events with other law organizations/associations, providing job fairs/mentoring opportunities, and increasing the number of YLD sponsors.

I understand that all of my goals will not be accomplished during my term as chair, but I am hopeful I will be able to draft the blueprints for a more active, inclusive, and efficient organization.

In the meantime, please make an effort to join one of the following committees:

- Long-Range Planning
- Membership
- Social/Far Hills
- Seminars
- Earth Day
- Law Day
- Nominations
- Awards

As always, please feel free to email me any questions, thoughts, or committee requests. I am excited to make this year the greatest year the YLD has ever had, and I look forward to serving with each of you. ■



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SAVE THE DATE

December 5—Brew-Ho-Ho at the Fox & Hound in Edison

December 16—2017 Young Lawyers Symposium

9 a.m. - 4 p.m. at the Law Center in New Brunswick

The Young Lawyers Symposium is new, revamped, and high energy. Don’t miss the opportunity to obtain the latest info and discuss the hottest topics important to young lawyers. No lectures here, just conversations with experts prepared to help you overcome some of the biggest challenges you face, grow your practice, take care of your debts, and better represent your clients. Sharing is highly encouraged, so bring your own ideas and examples of what worked and what didn’t to share with your peers.

February TBD—YLD Executive Committee Meeting

March TBD—Biergarten Networking in Hudson County

March TBD—Motorsports Speedway in Cumberland County

April 3—NJ Devils Game at the Prudential Center in Newark

May 16-18—NJSBA Annual Meeting and Convention in Atlantic City

Correction

In our last issue we wrote that Deborah Massaro is the chair of the Essex County Ethics Committee. She actually chaired the Passaic County Ethics Committee.

The opinions of the various authors contained within this issue should not be viewed as those of the Young Lawyers Division, Dictum, or the New Jersey State Bar Association.

Young Lawyers Division Leadership

CHAIR

Jonas K. Seigel
Seigel Law
505 Goffle Road
Ridgewood, NJ 07450
201-444-4000
jseigel@seigellaw.com

CHAIR-ELECT

Dana M. Van Leuven
Van Leuven Law, LLC
142 Speedwell Avenue, Unit 1
Morristown, NJ 07960
973-975-0788
dvl@vanleuvenlaw.com

TREASURER

Rajeh A. Saadeh
The Law Office of Rajeh A. Saadeh, LLC
50 Division Street, Suite 501
Somerville, NJ 08876
908-864-7884
rsaadeh@rajehsaadeh.com

SECRETARY

Michael J.P. Schewe
Connell Foley, LLP
One Newark Center
1085 Raymond Boulevard, 19th Floor
Newark, NJ 07102
973-436-5789
mschewe@connellfoley.com

IMMEDIATE PAST CHAIR

Marisa B. Trofimov
The Deni Law Group, LLC
32 Church Street, Suite 2
Flemington, NJ 08822
908-782-2900
mtrofimov@denilaw.com

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Ali Ali
Michael A. Austin
Joseph Bahgat
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Katheryn Eisenmann
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Kanwal Sajjad
Brandon Wolff
Thomas Zuppa

How Does Your Paycheck Compare?

There is always gossip in the legal industry about money. While some 'Big Law' firms release their salary information, most attorneys have no real benchmark to use to compare their compensation. To remedy this, the YLD started conducting a salary and compensation survey.

We hope the results of the survey, which are being collected anonymously and will be reported anonymously in the next issue of *Dictum*, will help YLD members benchmark their compensation against their peers so that we can all make more informed career decisions.

➔ Click [here](#) to take the survey.

➔ Click [here](#) to see last year's results.

If you have any questions about the survey, please contact [Emily Kelchen](#), the editor of *Dictum*.

Get to Know the YLD Chair, Jonas Seigel

Katrina Homel (KH), assistant editor of Dictum:

How would you describe your current practice?

YLD Chair Jonas Seigel (JS): Seigel Law is a small firm focusing on catastrophic injury, wrongful death, and medical malpractice matters in Ridgewood and Red Bank, New Jersey. Unlike most firms with similar practice areas, we only take a small number of cases, which allows us to provide the personal interaction that clients/families need after experiencing serious injury or death. Our trial attorneys are all certified and our doctor-lawyer is always available to explain the most complex of medical conditions. In addition to priding ourselves on the work we do in the courtroom, we are equally as proud of the community service and charity work we accomplish out of the courtroom.

KH: What were your first steps out of law school?

JS: My first steps out of law school were unforeseen and spontaneous—after Hurricane Katrina destroyed most of the Gulf Coast I headed down to New Orleans and volunteered with New Orleans Habitat for Humanity. I planned to stay for a week, but ended up staying for several months, living in a tent and supervising a roofing crew. Once I returned to New Jersey, my goals were simple: 1) learn medicine, 2) gain courtroom experience by litigating every case I could get my hands on, and 3) get involved with the county bar associations, as well as the New Jersey State Bar Association.

KH: How did you first become involved in the Young Lawyers Division?

JS: Because I did not go to law school in NJ, clerk for a judge in NJ, or work at a large firm, I knew that I would have to rely on myself to market and build relationships. Back in 2008, I begged my supervising attorney to let me attend the New Jersey State Bar Association Annual Meeting in Atlantic City and was allowed to go. As a young attorney, it was by far the best decision I ever made. To this day, I am extremely close with many of the lawyers I met at my first Annual Meeting. I began attending YLD events and worked my way on to the YLD Executive Committee, as well as serving as chair

of the Young Lawyer Division and section of the Bergen and Passaic County bar associations.

KH: How has the YLD helped you in your career?

JS: Being active with the YLD has helped me get to know my adversaries and the judges on a personal and social level. It's always nice to walk into a courtroom or an arbitration having planted trees in Newark together or having been introduced at the Far Hills Race. The marketing component has also been extremely helpful. Many of my best referral sources were born out of the YLD.

KH: What made you want to become chair of the YLD?

JS: I never wanted to be chair of the YLD. I just wanted to catch up with friends and do my part. As I see it, the YLD/NJSBA is my union, and I have a responsibility to help my fellow members and staff make the practice of law better for tomorrow than it is today. My philosophy really stems from the idea that there were so many lawyers and bar association staff who helped me get to where I am and I could never pay it all back, but I could pay it forward.

KH: What has been the most rewarding experience you've had while being involved with the YLD?

JS: I have had several rewarding and humbling experiences while being involved with the YLD, from starting the Young Lawyers Symposium to donating weekends to write wills for our first responders through the Wills for Heroes program. However, the most rewarding experience I had was when I received the Young Lawyer of the Year Award. The accomplishment had stemmed from my community service and work with the bar associations, but more importantly from a motorcycle death case. What made the case special was that the deceased motorcyclist's family was denied representation by several of the larger PI firms because the police and insurance companies attributed fault to the deceased motorcyclist. I believed in the family and was able to find surveillance footage identifying the at-fault motorist and a receipt for an industrial piece

of equipment connecting the motorist to his corporate employer. Not only was I able to identify the man who killed the motorcyclist, I was able to obtain a large seven-figure settlement via *respondeat superior*. Resolving the case and providing the family with a better life was a blessing and, to be recognized by my colleagues in the YLD, my most rewarding experience.

KH: What goals do you have for the YLD this year?

JS: My goals this year are to take the YLD Executive Committee meetings out of the Law Center and on the road to parts of the state that have been overlooked for years. I attend YLD events at the county and state level, as well as new lawyer events in other organizations, and I have learned that young lawyers want to have a voice and want to get involved. It's tough when we only have meetings in New Brunswick with fellow executive committee members. So I am excited to meet throughout the state this year and give young lawyers the opportunity to join their union, or at least have their voice heard. I am also excited to get out of the conference room and in the trenches. This year I have reduced the number of executive committee meetings in order

to cultivate the relationships of our county brothers and sisters. I have noticed a strong disconnect between the county and state bar leadership. By spending less time in a conference room talking about how to grow our membership or what young lawyers want, we can actually do something about it. Less talk and more action goes a long way in my book. Lastly, I look forward to our Young Lawyers Symposium, Far Hills Race, community service projects, but most importantly the opportunity to listen to the next generation of attorneys on how we can better a fantastic organization.

KH: How can new members get involved with the YLD?

JS: New members can get involved by attending one of our events, checking out our website/social media posts, or by simply emailing me at JSeigel@SeigelLaw.com.

KH: Is there anything else you would like the YLD to know about you?

JS: I enjoy southern cooking, cheap beer, and a good fight...often in that order. ■

Do You Have Something to Say?

Do you know something that you think other members of the YLD should know? Why not submit an article or announcement to the YLD's newsletter, *Dictum*?

In the future, we would like to publish articles about:

- Professional development tips
- Law school debt: Living with it, and paying it off
- Mental health issues faced by young attorneys and resources available for those who need help
- Diversity: What does it mean for young lawyers?
- Clerking: How did you get your clerkship and how did you make it a success?
- *Pro bono* experiences: Do you have a story about your experiences to share?
- E-filing and bail reform: Are these topics impacting your practice or your clients?

We are also open to publishing other submissions of interest to young lawyers, so don't let this list of topics limit your writing. Submissions to *Dictum* should be around 1,500 words or less, and concern something of interest to young lawyers. **The deadline to make it into the next edition of the newsletter is Nov. 27.** Please email anything you would like considered for publication to *Dictum*'s editor, [Emily Kelchen](#), with *Dictum* in the subject line.

NJSBA President Robert Hille Offers Advice to Young Lawyers

by Katrina Homel



NJSBA President Robert Hille got his start in the legal profession before even applying for law school.

“I had no connection with the profession at all, but it was something that I always wanted to do. When I was in college, the principal of my high school [went to attorney] Jerry Breslin...who was handling a case for the high school... and suggested that this fellow was really interested in getting into the legal profession,” Hille recounted. “And Jerry Breslin gave me a shot in the summer of my junior year of college. He didn’t tell anyone that I wasn’t in law school, and I was doing interrogatories and deposition summaries, and I sat there with the clerks.”

Hille, a Bergen Catholic High School and Bucknell University alum, went on to attend Seton Hall University School of Law. After law school, Hille clerked for the late Honorable Kevin O’Halloran, later the presiding chancery judge of Bergen County. During his clerkship, Hille had the opportunity to observe great trial attorneys, which had a substantial influence on his later career.

“You see these people in front of you as a law clerk, trying these cases from start to finish, [seeing] the interactions with the juries, watching the evidence being presented—there were complex cases factually, so they required experts—so you really sort of got a full picture of what was going on in a trial,” he said.

Following his clerkship, Hille worked as a firm associate. Hille was interested in trial work early on, and cited that some advice he received early on was instrumental in helping him gain experience in that area. “If you want to get into the courtroom, because I wanted to get into the courtroom and try a case, sign up with work with the public defenders,” Hille said he was advised. “So I did sign up locally with the state public defenders office and did a lot of criminal work there.”

From there, Hille continued to gain experience as a trial lawyer, though not without some tense as well as humorous moments as he sought to make a name for himself as a young lawyer. Hille recounted that he had one case as a young lawyer involving two very experienced trial attorneys in front of the Honorable Garrett Brown Jr., a United States district judge for the District of New Jersey, and later chief judge.

“We were in chambers...and [one attorney] couldn’t remember my name, so he kept saying ‘and him, and him, and him,’ and at one point I said, ‘you know, him has a name,’” Hille shared. “Everyone chuckled and we had a laugh over it. I think they remembered, at least for that case, who I was, but it was a good lesson in humility.”

After working in a firm for some time, Hille went out on his own as a solo practitioner. He stated that one challenge he experienced as a young solo practitioner was making sure that he got paid for his work.

“I think one of the toughest lessons to learn as a solo practitioner who controls their firm dynamic...is understand[ing] what you can give your clients in terms of value in your discussions with the client, whether their expectations are reasonable, and whether you mutually can agree on a compensation that will benefit both—for the client it’s got to be value; for the lawyer it’s got to be enough to divert those resources to that project,” he said. “I think that’s not an easy lesson to learn, and it’s one that you sort of develop over time.”

Hille later went back to work in a firm, and is now a partner in the Morristown office of McElroy, Deutsch, Mulvaney & Carpenter LLP. His practice focuses on healthcare, insurance, and professional liability defense.

Hille related that, “as a young lawyer, all of your lessons are tough. But as a young lawyer, you are best able to bounce off of those lessons.”

“I got a lot of noes in my career and a lot of doors sometimes politely closed, sometimes not so politely closed,” he said. “I think persistence pays off.”

Hille urged young lawyers to find an area of law of strong interest and be open to new opportunities. “You want an area that hopefully is going to grow, expand, or is just healthy. And then you need to learn everything that you can learn about that area, and then you need to be out there as a source and resource for that area,” he said. “In other words, be speaking, be writing, if someone were going to type the word into that practice area, your picture would come up, or would come up as one of the leading experts.”

“That takes time, it’s not going to happen overnight. But the sooner you get started on that pathway, the sooner you’ll be there,” he added.

Throughout his career, Hille was involved in the Bergen County Bar Association and then the NJSBA. He shared that in the early days of his involvement with the Bergen County Bar Association as a young lawyer, he served as chair of the dinner committee, a position that reaped unexpected benefits.

“But what was interesting about it was that one of the tasks was that when we had dinner meetings, you had to register everyone in. The benefit to me was that in that first year, certainly, you always had a couple hundred or so people at that. I got a chance to connect names with faces and meet people I otherwise would never have met in my practice area by checking them in at the door,” he said.

From those early days, Hille took on increasing responsibility in the Bergen County Bar Association, becoming its president, and later on, in the New Jersey State Bar Association, moving up to his current position as NJSBA president.

Hille stated that a key focus of his presidency at the bar association is examining the evolutionary impact of shifts in the practice of law from that of a local nature to a global one.

“I’m trying to change the whole way we’re thinking and looking at things. I’m concerned that the evolutionary forces at work in the profession...are threatening our current model, which is primarily a small business model, a professional business model practice, which recycles resources into the community it serves,” he said. Hille noted that 94 percent of New Jersey law firms are one to five attorney law firms.

“We formed a task force to look at the changing nature of the practice of law,” Hille added. “We have the unauthorized practice committee *ad hoc* committee looking at the outside competition models.”

Hille further stated, “We’re also looking at this idea, the allure of a UBE, standardized testing, portability of admission. The question is, does that really translate to opportunities, or does that create distance and virtual practice models that will compete with the lawyers who are here, and because they can be subject to lower regulatory oversight and more favorable tax treatment, makes them unfairly competitive with what we have now?”

Hille challenged the Young Lawyers Division (YLD) “to motivate its members, and the young lawyers out there, to be part of the NJSBA and the YLD.”

“Ask: Do I see the state bar as important? Is the state bar doing things that I want them to do? Do I know what they’re doing? How are they important to me? How are they not important to me?” he said. The YLD is uniquely positioned to work with the larger state bar to try and zero in on the young lawyer, their troubles, [and] their concerns.”

Though Hille put in a lot of hard work on the way to the presidency of the NJSBA, he also noted that work-life balance is important. “I think the law, as a profession, is a challenge...You take it home with you, you take it on trips with you, ...you’re always going to carry that with you somewhere,” he noted. “But you need to also be able to put it on the shelf at intervals to focus on what’s really important in life, which is not just helping the people who you are entrusted with helping as a professional, but living the life that you’ve been blessed with and the people in it that you’ve been blessed with.”

Despite his demanding schedule and career, Hille has continued to maintain outside interests. He is an avid musician and outdoorsman, and may soon add another accomplishment to his resume—rock musician. Young lawyers should stay tuned to see when they can catch Hille playing with his neighborhood band. ■

Katrina Homel is an associate in the Yardley, Pa. office of Hill Wallack LLP, where she is a member of the employment and labor, school and municipal law practice groups. She is an assistant editor of Dictum.

Happenings

Scenes From the Annual Meeting

The Young Lawyers Division brought their A-game to the 2017 NJSBA Annual Meeting and Convention in Atlantic City in May. The YLD sponsored four jam-packed educational seminars at the Borgata—“What I Wish I Knew;” “Ethics 101: A Panel Discussion;” “Practical Evidence;” and “New Beginning: Prisoner Reentry Training for Lawyers.”

During the YLD’s Annual Meeting, awards were presented to Andrea Joy Albrecht for service to the community; Nicole J. O’Hara for service to the bar; CJ Griffin for professional achievement; Emily Kelchen for her work on the YLD Executive Committee; and James J. Uliano as the Young Lawyer of the Year.

We also enjoyed the opportunity to network during meals and at special events. We can’t wait for next year’s meeting on May 16-18!

Click [here](#) to see other photos of YLD members in Atlantic City.



Highlights from the ABA Annual Meeting

by Brandon Lee Wolff

The American Bar Association had its annual meeting in New York in August. Some of the highlights included “A Trial of Two Pizzas” between Chicago deep dish and New York thin crust pizza, the President’s Reception at Rockefeller Center and a performance by the New York City Bar Chorus.

The Young Lawyers Division had its own schedule of programs and CLEs specifically for young lawyers. In addition, a major component of the YLD schedule was the YLD Assembly, which was held over two days. Delegates from across the country debated resolutions that, if adopted, are then sent to the ABA House of Delegates for consideration. The New Jersey YLD delegation included Nicole O’Hara (outgoing district representative for New Jersey), Brandon Lee Wolff (incoming district representative for New Jersey), and Joshua Gamboa.

The next YLD Assembly will be held during the ABA’s Midyear Meeting in Vancouver in February. If you are interested in being a part of the New Jersey YLD delegation, please contact Brandon Lee Wolff at brandon.wolff@leclairryan.com. In order to be a YLD delegate from New Jersey, you must be a member of the ABA YLD and an affiliate bar organization in New Jersey, such as the NJSBA YLD.



Brandon Lee Wolff represents clients in state, federal and bankruptcy courts at LeClairRyan.

New Attorney Day

by Michael Schewe

On July 19, the NJSBA hosted a reception for new attorneys. Food and refreshments were provided, along with ample networking opportunities. The YLD Executive Committee was on hand to personally meet with these new members of the bar, who were provided with a free membership to the NJSBA and YLD just for coming out!

During the presentation portion of the program, Professor Cynthia O'Connell performed a mindfulness exercise, and talked about the importance of mindfulness and meditation for attorneys to maintain a healthy work-life balance. USI Affinity discussed strategies for saving money by consolidating student loans, and our YLD chair-elect, Dana Van Leuven, discussed the importance of membership in bar associations, especially the NJSBA YLD.

The program was extremely well received by those who participated, and the bar association hopes to plan similar events for new attorneys in the future.

Michael Schewe practices all aspects of immigration law, from corporate/business immigration and compliance to consular processing and removal defense at Connell Foley LLP. He is the YLD secretary.



Young Lawyers Division Kickoff BBQ

This year's YLD kickoff BBQ on Sept. 8 was a lot of fun. The weather was perfect, and the conversation was even better.



Sixth Annual Art Show Reception Draws a Crowd

The New Jersey State Bar Foundation's sixth annual Art Show was so popular there was barely room to move around in the bar's visitor's lounge.

Dictum editor Emily Kelchen had a photo she took of the Missouri River selected for display.



Resources for New Attorneys

Get Help

Everyone needs help from time to time, even lawyers.

If you have emotional issues or substance abuse problems, don't hesitate to reach out to the New Jersey Lawyers Assistance Program. It's free and confidential.

If you have ethics questions you should talk to the Office of Attorney Ethics.

Continuing Legal Education

All attorneys must meet certain mandatory continuing legal education (CLE) requirements every two years. If you still have questions about CLEs or the reporting process after checking out the Court's website, you can email or call the Court and someone will be happy to help.

The *Pro Bono* Requirement

New Jersey attorneys are required to provide 25 hours of volunteer service with an approved organization each year, or the Court will assign you a case not of your choosing to handle.

FREE STUFF

Legal Forms

The New Jersey Judiciary has an extensive collection of forms for handling matters regarding the Appellate Division, tax court, family court, Civil Division, foreclosure, and more.

Meeting Space

The New Jersey Law Center has plenty of space where you can work remotely. The visitors' lounge has lots of seating and free coffee. And, NJSBA members can reserve rooms for free for depositions or meetings. Call the Meetings Department to find out more at 732-249-5000.

Fastcase

NJSBA members can do free legal research on Fastcase by logging into the service via the state bar's website.

Student Loans

NJSBA members can refinance student loans with SoFi, and can get unemployment protection and a \$300 welcome bonus. Some lawyers may also get their loans forgiven through the federal public service loan forgiveness program.

If your federal student loan payments are high compared to your income, you may want to repay your loans under an income-driven repayment plan.

COOL STUFF NOBODY TELLS YOU ABOUT

Discounts

If you log into njsba.com, under the members tab there is information on member benefits where various discount codes and referral links are listed.

The Art Show

Each year, the New Jersey State Bar Foundation hosts an art show. It's easy to participate and the reception is fun (and free).

Speaking Gigs that Count as CLE Credit

The NJSBA will train you to give presentations to local groups about the importance of the legal system and civics in our democracy. Participating in this program counts as CLE.

It's Kickoff Time

by Emily Kelchen

As I write this, the first week of the NFL season is underway and the first meeting of the New Jersey State Bar Association's 2017-18 Leadership Academy class has just taken place. I am humbled to be participating in the latter this year, and as I revealed during the academy's two truths and a lie icebreaker, I am an NFL team owner (Go Pack Go!), so the former is important to me as well. Some of the commentary during the Packers win against the Seahawks on Sunday got me thinking about a few of the things that were mentioned during the Leadership Academy meeting held earlier in the week, so I'm jotting them down to share with you.

Green 18!

One of the things I like hearing about during the first game of the season is what the players did in the offseason and preseason. For example, I love that Packers safety Ha Ha Clinton-Dix interned for a judge in Green Bay over the summer.

The Leadership Academy fellows in my cohort have stories about where they come from and what made them want to participate in the academy that are just as interesting as the NFL players' backstories and offseason exploits.

For me, the impetus for getting involved with the bar started when I was still a law student. The founder of the firm I was interning for sat me down and told me it was my responsibility to get involved. He said the bar is one of the last self-regulating professions. If you choose not to get involved with the bar, you are coming pretty close to violating a fiduciary duty you owe yourself and your colleagues. I believe this. And I believe that if we abdicate our duties, those who are anti-lawyer, or those who want to weaken the rule of law, will be happy to step up and tell us what to do.

I'm a Man! I'm 40!

The presentation we heard on the bar's legislative priorities was a good reminder of the importance of engaging when there are policy debates related to the

practice of law. Passing A-1982, which would standardize the statute of limitations in professional malpractice suits, is something the bar and my employer have both been working on. Attorneys can be sued for malpractice that was discovered up to six years ago, when memories have faded and records may have been lost. Suits against some other professionals must be brought within two years of discovery. It would be fairer, and make much more sense, to have more uniform statutes of limitations for professional malpractice.

Hearing about the bar's legislative priorities was just one part of a jam-packed morning session on all the parts and people that make up the bar, the New Jersey State Bar Foundation, and the New Jersey Institute for Continuing Legal Education. Much like a rookie recruit, I thought I was pretty well versed in the topics at hand, but the hefty playbook I was handed suggested otherwise.

I was blown away by the services the bar offers that I had no idea existed. For example, did you know that the bar will help you with media relations if you are on a high-profile case? Or that the bar foundation publishes materials and does trainings for teachers on subjects like the Holocaust?

I'm Just Here So I Won't Get Fined

In the afternoon, we were challenged to improve our leadership skills over the next year and beyond by Herb Rubenstein, author of *Leadership for Lawyers*.

He reminded us that our participation in the Leadership Academy actually started well before the first class. You had to want to participate, and convince a selection panel that you deserved to do so. Doing so is evidence of a leadership mindset.

He also emphasized that what we are learning is worthless unless we apply it going forward. In order to participate in the academy, we all pledged to take on a leadership role in the bar and to mentor those who come behind us, but I also think it is important for lawyers to think about leadership beyond our profession. Traditionally, lawyers have been leaders in their own communities and in the highest branches of government. There

are few other professions that the public identifies so closely with leadership, despite (hopefully not because of) the generally low popularity of our profession as a whole. This historic honor/accident is something we should be prepared to embrace if we are called to serve.

You Play to Win the Game!

In order to be an effective leader, Rubenstein stressed the importance of taking an inventory of your leadership skills and goals.

He asked us to set some goals, assess our strengths and weaknesses, and then rate ourselves on a scale of one to five on the following factors:

- Leadership ability
- Ability to successfully mentor others
- Success rate when seeking to be a leader
- Opportunity to exercise ability as a leader in the profession
- Leadership ability of fellow lawyers
- Leadership ability of superiors in your practice
- Willingness to act as a leader
- Interest in acting as a leader
- How others would rate your leadership ability

I think it will be really interesting to compare my current answers to those I give at the end of the program, and then to do so again every couple of years. And I would love to hear from any of you on that last one!

I look forward to putting in the work on this program along with the rest of my cohort, because I know it is important. As coach Vince Lombardi once said, “Leadership is not just one quality, but rather a blend of many qualities; and while no one individual possesses all of the needed talents that go into leadership, each man can develop a combination to make him a leader.” ■

In addition to being the editor of Dictum, Emily Kelchen is participating in this year’s NJSBA Leadership Academy. This article originally appeared in the Diversity Committee Newsletter.