



Raising the Bar

The newsletter of the
Young Lawyers Committee

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**After 50 years,
can we keep
our edge?**

Piece of cake.

ANNIVERSARY
1970 – 2020

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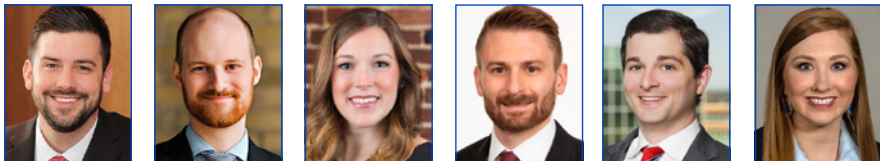
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Feature Article

2021 Vision: Minneapolis Here We Come!

By Matt Spahn, Devan Marr, Laura May Hooe, David Vaughn, John Alexander, and Torrey Peterson



Season’s Greetings from the DRI Young Lawyers State and Local Defense Organization & Sister Organizations Subcommittee (“SLDO Subcommittee”)! We swear that title gets longer every year.

To say it has been an interesting year would probably understate things. We have all had to grapple with changes in how we work, play, and see family as we head into the holiday season. With any luck, you have snagged your prizes at Black Friday, had a Zoom Thanksgiving, and are getting some matters resolved.

As we look forward to 2021, the SLDO Subcommittee has a New Year’s resolution for each and every member of the DRI Young Lawyers Committee. The SLDO Subcommittee needs every Young Lawyer to help promote the upcoming DRI Young Lawyers Seminar in Minneapolis, Minnesota in June 2021. We appreciate that this may be one more thing on an already busy plate in the middle of an unprecedented global pandemic. But as they say in the biz, the show must go on, and the SLDO Subcommittee is here to help.

What Is the SLDO Subcommittee?

The DRI Young Lawyers SLDO Subcommittee is the liaison between the DRI Young Lawyers Committee and state

and local defense bar associations. With over 65 SLDOs throughout the United States, several in Canada, and internationally like the IADC, the SLDO Subcommittee is the point of contact for each defense organization and the Young Lawyers Committee. The main functions of the SLDO Subcommittee are to: (1) encourage young lawyers in the state and local defense bar organizations to become involved in the DRI Young Lawyers Committee by participating in DRI events; (2) assist in starting a Young Lawyers section in state and local defense bar organizations where one does not already exist; and (3) relay important information and ideas between the DRI Young Lawyers Committee and SLDOs.

Don’t Have a Young Lawyers Section in Your SLDO?

Most SLDOs have a Young Lawyers section. However, numbers across voluntary defense organizations are down. Gone are the days where law firms automatically pay for their young lawyers to become members in the SLDO. If your SLDO does not have a Young Lawyers section, the SLDO Subcommittee is here to assist you in developing a strategic plan to present to your SLDO on the benefits of having a Young Lawyers section. The SLDO Subcommittee



can also put you in contact with a Young Lawyer in your region who has either started a Young Lawyers Section or served in leadership within the Young Lawyers section.

What Can You Do to Assist the SLDO Subcommittee in 2021?

Do you want to help promote the upcoming DRI Young Lawyers Seminar in Minneapolis? If you do, there is an easy way to assist. Historically, members could arrange a happy hour between their SLDO and DRI. Unfortunately, given the current global health situation, in-person happy hours may not be available in your jurisdiction. But don't worry! This means you get to be *creative*.

Members are encouraged to host an event with members from DRI and your SLDO that strikes your fancy! As a host, your task would be to coordinate an event with your SLDO to recruit new DRI members and to promote the upcoming Young Lawyers Seminar in Minneapolis. If you have a creative idea to promote DRI within your SLDO, please reach out to the SLDO Subcommittee.

Here are some initial thoughts: Zoom Trivia? Sure! Zoom ice cream eating contest? Why not?! Zoom Happy Hours? It's a new twist on an old classic! The sky is the limit!

Event Guidelines

Okay, the sky is not really the limit. There are some guidelines. The SLDO Subcommittee would encourage a Young Lawyer hosting an event to invite as many SLDO and DRI Young Lawyers from the surrounding area as possible – the more, the merrier. In planning the happy hour, consider partnering with the SLDO when appropriate. All Young Lawyers are extremely busy, so happy hours following an SLDO event have become popular the past few years. For instance, if there is a large “young lawyer” event planned online or in-person, an event following that can kill two birds with one stone. With a slew of Young Lawyers already in attendance who are usually eager to keep chatting with their new colleagues, it is a great way to leverage a captive audience. Feel free to invite relevant industry contacts to the event as well. DRI is always looking for new speakers to present at the Young Lawyers Seminar.

Now, while we did encourage you to be creative, there is some fine print attached. All requests to conduct joint networking receptions with other bar organizations, including DRI affiliated organizations, must be pre-approved. Importantly, DRI does not have funds available to support the SLDO happy hours. If a Young Lawyer wants to obtain a sponsor to pay for the happy hour, he or she

must comply with DRI guidelines. The guidelines are simple and self-explanatory. Moreover, sponsor(s) are traditionally given an opportunity to speak to the group at the outset of the happy hour.

To assist with your event, DRI will send membership applications, calendars, and Young Lawyers Seminar brochures to the happy hour to assist in the promotion, assuming you live somewhere where an in-person event is allowed. Some of our more artistic Young Lawyers will also assist you in creating an invitation to send out to your local young lawyers for the event.

In the past, we encouraged our hosts to have these events in April and May. This year, with everyone adapting to the “new normal” of socially distanced events, you can start even earlier! Who cares about trudging through the snow when you can be happily ensconced on your couch? The SLDO Subcommittee is, of course, happy to assist any Young Lawyer in coordinating an event. We are happy to provide tips, tricks, or even an extra body to MC.

Serving as a host for an SLDO event is a great way to get involved with DRI and to meet people both nationally and in your local bar association. In 2019, the SLDO Subcommittee was able to plan and host ten happy hours in eight different states. For 2021, the SLDO Subcommittee is looking to double those efforts and have at a minimum *twenty happy hours* throughout the United States and Canada. Given that the Young Lawyers Seminar will be in Minneapolis, the SLDO Subcommittee is particularly looking for Young Lawyers in that region to host an event.

If you are interested in hosting a happy hour this Spring to promote the DRI Young Lawyers Seminar, please contact any member of the SLDO Subcommittee:

Matt Spahn (maspahn@martinpringle.com),
 Devan Marr (dmarr@sbalawyers.ca),
 Laura May Hooe (lmayhooe@moranreevesconn.com),
 David Vaughn (dvaughn@sandbergphoenix.com),
 John Alexander (jalexander@mwlaw.com), or
 Torrey Peterson (TPETERSON@shb.com).

The SLDO Subcommittee is made up of young lawyers from across the U.S. and yes, even Canada. They are partners and associates at firms practicing everything from medical malpractice, employment litigation, commercial litigation, and cyber liability matters. It's an eclectic bunch and can be reached at their individual e-mails referenced above.

Article of Note

Litigating During a Pandemic

By Amber B. Barlow



More uncertainties and questions about the scope of litigation looms now than pre-pandemic times. Litigators have been reveling how trials will take form, especially jury trials. Earlier this year when the country was initially quarantined, many litigators wondered what this meant for their cases, new suits being filed, and if 2020 would even see a trial. As 2020 winds down and with more states and cities around the country loosening pandemic restrictions, we as litigators ask ourselves, what about my trial date?

Each court has its own set of standards and protocols to conduct courtrooms during the pandemic. The practices and safety procedures for each court differ. The protocols depend on whether the case is pending in federal or state court, the state, and even what city, as protocols widely vary. As a litigator, the first step is determining what those guidelines and procedures are for the court your case is pending.

Working Up to Trial During a Pandemic

As any litigator knows, the grit of a case largely takes places outside of the court room. Conducting discovery during a pandemic faces many obstacles. Let's take fact discovery. Pre-pandemic, a group of attorneys, the court reporter, and the witness would pile into a conference room for hours on hours for a fact witness deposition. During a pandemic, this is no longer the safe option. Court reporters are adapting and providing virtual deposition options. Even with social distancing guidelines and mask mandates, many depositions have become completely virtual. The concern with virtual depositions is how to monitor virtual coaching from opposing counsel. If no one is physically present with the witness, nothing prevents and/or monitors the witness from receiving virtual messages from opposing counsel or others. Parties need to establish ground rules with opposing counsel and a set of questions to explore those issues on the record if you suspect this is occurring. Professionalism and ethics are important. Do not use the pandemic as an opportunity, or any time for that matter, to be unethical.

The biggest tool litigators must possess now more than ever is professionalism. Yes, professionalism is a must and is required by the American Bar Association's Model



Rules of Professional Conduct but working a case up to trial during the pandemic will require an extra dose. So, what does that mean? Being more open to working out agreements and stipulations without court intervention. Litigators should be courteous and helpful. We are all on a learning curve. Most of the trials and case preparation during the pandemic are ones of first impression. No one has worked a case up for trial under these conditions. Be mindful. Be willing to compromise. Agree to terms that will make working the case up and trying the case easier for all parties, including the judge. Strive to settle discovery issues without court intervention. While we do not want to take advantage of the pandemic to get lax on meeting deadlines and conducting discovery, we do want to extend professional courtesies.

Thus, while virtual depositions are a practical solution for most, there are challenges. For example, sometimes counsel will insist on appearing in-person with the witness even though all others have agreed to appear virtually. Is there a pressing reason why you must appear in-person with this witness or is it just that counsel insists on doing so because he/she is able to do so? If the case has numerous parties, the alternative is to elect one counsel to appear in person with opposing counsel. But this is an example of when parties should really put professionalism first. Yes, a party may insist on appearing in-person with the witness but why. Be socially responsible and professional.

Another challenge during the pandemic is conducting fact discovery. Co-workers, bystanders, and other fact witnesses may not be as easy to find or as gracious and

willing to cooperate given all the restrictions. It will likely take more time and more effort to engage in fact discovery as people are social distancing and quarantining.

Requests for records may see longer response times. As we see hospitals and medical facilities tied down with COVID treatment concerns and capacity, seeking medical records, pathology, x-rays, etc. may take much longer to process and receive. Medical record requests are not a top priority at hospitals and many of the administrative staff are likely to be working remotely.

Record requests through government agencies, such as the social security office, will likely see longer response times than pre-pandemic. People are working remotely; they are not working in offices. Having access to records and processing requests may see much longer lag times. Being able to talk to personnel with various agencies and businesses may take longer and be much more difficult to do so. As a litigator, it is important to factor these potential lag times in your preparation of the case for trial. For example, pre-pandemic, you may have received tax return records within six weeks of submitting the request with the proper authorizations, whereas pandemic times you may not receive records for nine weeks or longer. Prepare. Be more prepared now in pandemic times.

Restrictions on travel also impacts discovery. Meeting with fact and expert witnesses will not be as easy as pre-pandemic times. Some policies remain that once you travel, you should quarantine yourself for two weeks. Evaluating what may be conducted virtually versus in-person is an important call to make. Travel is also important to consider if your case is pending in a jurisdiction you need to travel by air to attend any court hearings/trial. Know the guidelines and procedures of the court your case is pending to know if you able to attend virtually or must attend in person.

So fast forward through discovery and all pre-trial matters and you are facing a trial setting during the pandemic.

Trying a Case During a Pandemic

Some judges have tossed around the idea of conducting trials virtually rather than in-person. All parties should have access to justice, meaning access to the courts and to reasonably see their day in court; thus, virtual trials ensure that access to justice during a pandemic. Depending on the judge, you may have a virtual or in-person trial or a combination of both.

The favor of most is to have a jury assembled in-person to conduct voice dire and to be able to monitor the jury.

Having jurors participate in a trial solely by virtual means would come with difficulties. For instance, how would courts be able to monitor a juror not doing independent research on the case or communicating with parties.

Nonetheless, if a jury trial is conducted in-person, it is likely several aspects of the trial will be conducted virtually: *i.e.*, examining witnesses virtually. If a witness is elderly, immunocompromised, or would require air travel to attend an in-person trial, the witness will likely appear virtually, which requires different preparation from simply putting the witness on the stand during an in-person trial. Appearing virtually has a television like quality to it. You want to make sure your witness can connect with the jurors while appearing virtually. You also want to make you and your witness alike are comfortable and proficient using the virtual platform.

Litigators may also anticipate longer duration of trials. Given all the safety precautions, social distancing, seating a jury, and virtual aspects of trial, what may typically be a 3-day trial may become a 5-day trial.

Preparation and professionalism are key. Of course, no litigator could possibly imagine showing up for trial less than prepared (this is a loaded statement for a number of reasons). Preparation for trying a case during the pandemic requires a new set of skills and preparation tactics such as literacy of the technology and strong internet capabilities. Considering that some counsel may appear virtually as well as witness and introducing evidence electronically, knowing how to use the technology is crucial.

All aspects of pre-pandemic life have been altered, including trials. The way we prepare and litigate cases for trial have changed and are ever evolving as litigators tackle issues of first impression. Litigators or both sides of the “V” are learning and adapting to new tactics and issues, but one thing remains the need for professionalism.

Amber B. Barlow is a partner with Deutsch Kerrigan LLP in the firm's Toxic Tort and Environmental Group in New Orleans, Louisiana. As a litigator, Amber represents manufacturers, retailers, distributors, and premise owners in complex litigation matters, including environmental litigation, toxic tort litigation, and premises and products liability. She handles all phases of representation from initial case assessment, pre-trial discovery and depositions, motion practice, mediation, and negotiations, through to trial. Amber may be reached at abarlow@deutschkerrigan.com.

Staying Connected in an Increasingly Disconnected World

By Brett A. Tarver



Dear Young Lawyers Committee:

I am absolutely thrilled for my first opportunity to address you, the members of the DRI Young Lawyers Committee (“YLC”), as the incoming Second Vice Chair. Although I feel like I know so many of you, for those that I have not gotten to know yet, my name is Brett Tarver. I am an eighth-year attorney at Troutman Pepper Hamilton Sanders in the Atlanta, Georgia office. I practice pharmaceutical and medical device products liability litigation all over the country, with a heavy concentration in Georgia and Florida, where I am licensed. In my free time, I enjoy reading, baking (and watching *The Great British Baking Show*), attending performances of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, and hopping on my Peloton (@bretta5).

This is my sixth year as a member of the YLC Steering Committee. In previous years, I served as chairs and vice-chairs in the Marketing and Seminar Planning subcommittees. This past year, our YLC Seminar was set to be in Atlanta, and it sadly had to be canceled due to the pandemic. I will admit that I shed some tears when we had to cancel the Seminar that we had spent six months furiously planning and crafting. We were looking forward to Atlanta being place where young lawyers could grow their skills and knowledge while expanding their professional networks and getting to experience my hometown. Hopefully, we will be able to bring the YLC back to the ATL at some point soon!

But what I have truly been missing this year are the connections and the opportunities to catch-up with the genuine friends that I have made in the YLC over the past five years. While we have all been texting and emailing and calling and Zooming, it is hard to have the same type of connections that we have made in-person in the past. And, as we have seen across the country, we have sometimes allowed our differences in opinion to divide us further into our own echo chambers.



One year ago, YLC Chair Stephanie Wurdock challenged us all in The Chair’s Corner to “be a better you in 2020.” My challenge to the members of the YLC for 2021 is to be a better connector. The connections that you make and maintain throughout DRI, with your clients, and with friends and family around the country are enormously valuable on both personal and professional levels. Here are some tips to increase your connection skills in the next year:

- Be intentional. Like most things, making and maintaining genuine connections thrives best when you have a plan. Perhaps, identify one person per week that you will reach out to in some fashion, and carve out time in your schedule to do so. Use your calendar wisely to set reminders for your time to reach out and connect. Make it a routine. We are all deadline driven litigators, so give yourself some deadlines!
- Keep good notes. Making sure you have the details of interesting or important things going on in your connections’ lives can go a long way in building and maintaining those connections. Whether there is an important ruling pending for a client, the upcoming birth of a baby, or a marriage, your connections will appreciate that you remember those events and take the time to reach out, wish them well, and hear more about those milestones. Again, use of your calendar in keeping these dates top of mind will be key.
- Seek out one-on-one time. Although we are all “Zoomed out” for big group happy hours and gatherings, there is still incredible value in engaging with your connections one-on-one and face-to-face. Reach out to your connections and set up a time for the two of you to connect over video. Because so many of us are working from home, a video chat with clients or colleagues provides an easy way for you to learn about your connections. Is his or her wall covered in Red Socks memorabilia? Interesting album covers or books on the bookshelf? Millions of plants growing on the windowsill? Visually seeing these personal items will help you know your

connections on deeper level (make sure to jot down notes of anything you learn!). It is also a way for you to showcase interesting things about yourself to let your connections know you better.

- Try walking in someone else's shoes. Part of connection is understanding the life experiences of people that may have vastly different life experiences from your own. Take time to step outside of your own experiences and see the world through the eyes of others by reading memoirs by, and about, people who are different from you. Engage in open listening during your conversations without automatically adjusting your own lens, and seek out arts or hobbies outside your comfort zone.
- Send things by mail. I know, I know. In 2020, we've witnessed the USPS become the ultimate epitome of "snail mail," but there is still significant power in sending a handwritten card or a thoughtful gift to your

connection. For example, a friend and potential client of mine caved and bought a Peloton during the pandemic. I bought a small sticker with her Peloton name for her to put on her bike (\$5 on Etsy) and sent it to her. Small, thoughtful things like this, or even just a card, can really brighten your connections' days and strengthen those relationships.

I cannot wait for the days until we can all be together in-person. Until that time, I hope you make efforts to stay connected with your connections, especially your YLC colleagues. This committee is a special place for so many of us because of the genuine connections that are made, and I expect we will have the same in 2021!

Brett A. Tarver is an attorney at Troutman Pepper Hamilton Sanders LLP in Atlanta, Georgia. She can be reached at brett.tarver@troutman.com.

DRI Young Lawyers Member Spotlight

Olivia F. Amlung



How and why did you first get involved with DRI?

I was encouraged to get involved with DRI by a senior partner at my firm, Claire Parsons, about two years ago. The majority of my practice focuses on defense litigation.

The resources and networking opportunities provided by DRI are invaluable for a young attorney.

What DRI committees (other than Young Lawyers) are you most interested in, and why?

Other than Young Lawyers, I am most interested in the Governmental Liability and Litigation Skills committees. Governmental liability is a huge part of my practice, so naturally the corresponding DRI committee is a great fit for me. I've been a part of the Governmental Liability committee for about two years and have thoroughly appreciated the seminars and resources available through it. As for Litigation Skills, I am always looking to explore helpful ways to improve my trial advocacy skills.

What is your favorite part about being a lawyer?

Being an attorney is exciting, and every day is a new challenge. The law is always changing— no two days, or two cases, are ever the same. The excitement of problem

solving, while also helping clients in a tough situation, is my favorite part of this career.

When you are not practicing law, what do you enjoy doing?

When not practicing law, I can be found doing a variety of things. Much of my free time is spent volunteering for one of the many extracurricular charitable and political activities with which I am involved. But I also enjoy working on home renovation projects with my husband, playing music, and trying out new recipes.

What has been your biggest success in your legal career thus far?

Last year, I won my first federal jury trial. I successfully defended a police officer accused of violating 42 USC §1983 during a standard pat down.

What is most important piece of advice you have been given related to practicing law?

Do not take things personally. We work in a highly adversarial field of practice—sometimes you will win and sometimes you will lose. People are always trying to tell you that you are wrong. But, at the end of the day, the law says what it says and you have to keep pushing through even when it is not on your side. Smile, be polite, and do the best you can for your clients.

What is the greatest sporting event you've ever been to?

During the 2014 college football season, UofL football had a fantastic win at Notre Dame. It was a great game that came down to the last few minutes. The energy was amazing, and I got to spend it with my best friends. But, as great as that football game was, baseball is my favorite sport. My husband, Justin, played for UofL and then in the minor leagues for a few years. Any game where I got to watch him pitch was a great one.

What was your very first job?

When I was in middle school, my dad used to bring me to his restaurant after softball practice to clear tables and make a bit of extra spending money.

If someone is visiting your city, where is it essential that they go to eat?

Buffalo Bob's Family Restaurant in Florence, Kentucky—I may be a bit biased because my family owns the business, but they have got the best chicken wings in town!

Olivia F. Amlung is an associate attorney at Adams Law in Covington, Kentucky, in the firm's Litigation Practice Group. Licensed in Kentucky and Ohio, her practice primarily focuses on claims involving government defense, personal injury, school and special education law, and a variety of other civil litigation matters. Prior to joining the firm, Olivia worked at the Commonwealth's Attorney's Office for the 54th Judicial Circuit and as a staff attorney to Circuit Court Judge Richard Brueggemann. Olivia can be reached at oamlung@aswdlaw.com.

Membership Minute

Happy Holidays from Membership

By Thomas H. Wyatt



On behalf of everyone on the Membership Subcommittee, I hope all of you have had a happy, healthy, and safe holiday season! I also wanted to take the time to thank each of you who helped us with our Fall Recruitment Drive

to close out the year. We received great responses and awesome new members from all your efforts, and we could not have done it without you!

As we get ready for a new year filled with all things DRI, I wanted to highlight the reasons why joining this organization has become one of the best decisions that I have made in my career. I did not know about DRI until one of my firm's partners encouraged me to attend a seminar on Trial Tactics. I could not attend because I had attended a similar seminar the year before. I decided, instead, to attend the Young Lawyers Seminar that was held in Portland, Oregon, that year. I can honestly say that I would not be as involved in DRI as I am today if I did not take the leap to go.



I met a lot of you at that Seminar and many more at the other DRI events that I have attended since then. I am honored to call many of you my friends, and it is no exaggeration when I say that I have been saddened that COVID has kept many of us from visiting in person in 2020. I consider this to be a minor bump in the road, however, because eventually things will return to normal, and, with that, all the benefits that a membership in DRI brings.

As we gear up for an exciting 2021, I wanted to take the time to remind you all how much it feels to be welcomed and included in our committee. We all do a great job of making everyone feel included, but now is a great time to spend a few moments being intentional with your friends, coworkers, colleagues, and professional acquaintances to tell them all the ways that DRI has helped you in your career—or even to just say how much fun you have had being with all of us!

Every new DRI Young Lawyer that has practiced for less than five years will receive a certificate to attend a substantive DRI Seminar free of charge. I have found that

this is a great tool to recruit potential new members who might be hesitant to ask a partner for the cost to attend one. Recruiting a new member provides great benefits to you, as well, because you will be rewarded with a \$100 DRI CLE credit for every new member that you recruit. Just be sure to include your name in the “Referred By” line and to indicate Young Lawyers as the referring committee, and you are good to go!

This year has a lot planned for Young Lawyers. Be sure to mark your calendars for the following events so you do not miss out:

- June 23–25, 2021: Young Lawyers Seminar (Minneapolis, MN)
- October 12–15, 2021: Annual Meeting (Boston, MA)

Thank you for all that you do for Membership, and for your continued engagement and dedication to our great organization. Happy New Year!

Thomas H. Wyatt is a member of Quattlebaum, Grooms & Tull PLLC in Little Rock, Arkansas. Tom’s practice specializes in commercial litigation, property litigation, and products liability. Tom provides a cost-effective, trial-focused approach to cases involving breach of contract, class actions, condemnation, landlord-tenant disputes, and more. Tom has practiced before the United States Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit, the United States District Courts for the Eastern and Western Districts of Arkansas, the Arkansas Court of Appeals, and as local counsel on behalf of national companies in numerous circuit courts in the State of Arkansas. Tom can be reached by telephone at (501) 379-1730 or by email at twyatt@qgtlaw.com.

Timeout for Wellness

Take a Dose of Nature

By Darin M. Williams



Many studies tout the benefits exposure to nature has on health, but how much nature does it take to see a positive impact on health and wellbeing?

Exactly two hours, according to one study.

A study published by the University of Exeter in June of 2019 “found that people who spent two hours a week in green spaces—local parks or other natural environments, either all at once or spaced over several visits—were substantially more likely to report good health and psychological well-being than those who don’t.” Jim Robbins, *Ecopsychology: How Immersion in Nature Benefits Your Health*, Yale Environment 360, (Jan. 9, 2020).

A growing body of research has long pointed to the effect of time spent in nature on overall wellbeing, noting



that such exposure “can lower blood pressure and stress hormone levels, reduce nervous system arousal, enhance immune system function, increase self-esteem, reduce anxiety, and improve mood.” *Id.*

The Exeter study was one of the first attempts to quantify how much exposure is needed to garner a marked health benefit. Interestingly, the study found that two hours was a hard boundary, as people who did not meet that limit showed no benefits. Also notable, the Exeter study found that the reported positive effect of exposure to nature cut across a myriad of demographics, including “different occupa-

tions, ethnic groups, people from rich and poor areas, and people with chronic illnesses and disabilities.” *Id.*

Moreover, although the Exeter study focused on exposure to nature in “green spaces,” related research also

points to the benefits of time spent in and around “blue spaces”—oceans, seas, rivers, lakes, canals, and waterfalls. See Elle Hunt, *Blue Spaces: Why Time Spent Near Water Is the Secret of Happiness*, *The Guardian*, (Nov. 3, 2019), . Even fountains may be enough: “[a] 2010 study . . . found that images of built environments containing water were generally rated just as positively as those of only green space; researchers suggested that the associated soundscape and the quality of light on water might be enough to have a restorative effect.” *Id.*

And aren’t these studies telling us what we all know intuitively—that the sight of uninterrupted horizon, the feel of earth between your fingers or toes, the sound of water running or wind rustling, the saline smell of the coast, and the sensation of being dwarfed by a 100-year-old tree lend perspective to our daily stresses and connect us to the larger here and now in a powerful and uplifting way.

For me, living in Chicago, time in nature is often found in the yard—gardening, mowing, edging, raking, and yes, even shoveling snow. But if you don’t have a yard, find a park, a trail, a mountain, a river, a field, a beach, or a grassy boulevard and break the hypnosis of the screen to be there for two hours a week (even if that means braving the winter climes). For the skeptical, it may even be worthwhile to

track time spent in nature and the correlation to the sense of overall wellbeing, similarly to the way one might track the progress and results in other exercise or therapy.

Lately, it’s easy to feel stuck in the house. However, if the benefits of exposure to nature are significant and ubiquitous, if these benefits can be realized by exposure to various forms of green and blue spaces, and if it only takes two hours of exposure per week—less than 20 minutes a day—to reap these benefits, then we have all the excuses we need to get outdoors.

Stay well!

Darin M. Williams is an attorney with Laner Muchin, Ltd., in Chicago, Illinois, a firm concentrated exclusively on the representation of employers in labor relations, employment litigation, employee benefits, and business immigration matters nationwide. As a litigator, he provides creative and cost-effective defense of employment litigation for public and private sector clients. Just as importantly, he seeks to reduce the risk of employment litigation by advising clients on non-adversarial solutions that promote positive employee relations and make good business sense. Darin can be reached at dwilliams@lanermuchin.com.

News & Announcements

Have Other Good News to Share?

Do you have any announcements for DRI Young Lawyers? Have you or one of your fellow DRI Young Lawyers recently received an award, honor, promotion, or defense win?

Please contact any member of the *Raising the Bar* Subcommittee:

Carmen Weite, Chair (cweite@friedman-lawyers.com);

Ebony Morris, Vice Chair (emorris@garrisonyoung.com);

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