

# Young Lawyers

BY JEFF CONNOR, ESQ., YOUNG LAWYERS CHAIR



## 2016 TRIAL ACADEMY A SUCCESS

The craft of trial advocacy is not something that comes naturally to most lawyers and can take years to develop. Meanwhile the practice of law continues to change in ways that limit opportunities for lawyers to sharpen their trial skills, in spite of the fact that there remains a desperate need for attorneys able to take cases to trial.

The Young Lawyers Section Trial Academy was born from a desire to help fill that gap, giving Nevada lawyers an opportunity to learn, develop and polish the skills critical to presenting a case at trial. The 2016 Trial Academy was no exception. From Paola Armeni and Raquel Lazo's opening session on themes and theories, through to Dominic Gentile and Larry Digesti's discussion regarding closing arguments, this year's Trial Academy was a resounding success. For three days, 15 Nevada lawyers went through an intensive training—led by some of Nevada's most respected members of the bench and the bar. Instruction also covered the topics of voir dire and opening statements, direct and cross-examination, and the use of jury instructions.

After each relevant general session, the participants broke out into smaller groups where, using mock trial case-files, they presented opening statements, conducted witness examinations on direct and cross, and presented closing arguments, all while being critiqued and mentored by our dedicated instructors.

This in mind, I want to take this opportunity to sincerely thank everyone involved in making this year's Trial Academy a success. In particular, to all of our instructors, including Hon. James Hardesty, Hon. Michael Cherry, Hon. Richard Boulware, Hon. Elissa Cadish, Hon. Kathleen Delaney, Hon. Linda Bell, Paola Armeni, Raquel Lazo, Brenda Weksler, Scott Coffee, Larry Digesti, Dominic Gentile, and anyone else who joined in to help with the small group sessions: the Trial Academy would not be what it has become without your time and commitment to the improvement of our profession. This is especially true in the case of those of instructors who have made taking on the role of Trial Academy instructor an annual tradition; for those people, we are very grateful. An extra-special thank you goes to Judge Boulware for putting on a two-day bonus CLE program for our early registrants.



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Additionally, the YLS would like to thank the State Bar of Nevada's Business Law and Litigation Sections, Laura Fitzsimmons, and the law firm of Wright, Standish and Winckler for joining the YLS in providing financial support to the Trial Academy, in the form of scholarships that helped eight of our participants to cover the cost of their Trial Academy attendance. As with any bar-sponsored event, the YLS is very thankful for the support of the bar staff, CLE Coordinator Marchelle Hedrick in particular, for going above and beyond the call of duty in helping make sure the Trial Academy went off without a hitch.

Last, but most certainly not least, the biggest thank you of all goes to YLS Trial Academy Chair Margaret Lambrose. Known to her colleagues on the YLS as "Maggie," she has done an incredible job with putting the Trial Academy together for the YLS year after year; we are incredibly grateful for her hard work and dedication to helping members of the bar to become better trial lawyers and advocates. While opportunities to develop trial skills may be limited, Maggie has been a strong force for ensuring that the trial lawyer does not become a dying breed here in Nevada! **NL**