

# SOUTH CAROLINA younglawyer

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## Judicial Spotlight: Hon. Michael G. Nettles, Resident Judge, 12th Judicial Circuit

**Born:** 1959, Lake City, SC

**Education:** B.A., Wofford, 1981; J.D., USC School of Law, 1984

**Career:** Upon graduation from law school, Judge Nettles returned to Lake City where he joined his family's law practice. He became a partner with his father, E. LeRoy Nettles Sr.; his brother, E. LeRoy Nettles Jr.; his sister, Marian D. "Missy" Nettles Jay; Elbert K. Turbevill; and Larry G. Reddeck. Judge Nettles remained a partner in this firm until his election to the bench on February 2, 2005.

**Family:** Daughters, Megan and Lauren; Son, Jason; Granddaughter, Charlotte Rose

### 1. What would the Bar be surprised to learn about you?

Practicing law and being a judge is a sedentary endeavor and I have found it helpful to exercise on a daily basis. Although I swim laps and go to the gym, my favorite exercise is running. It is by far the most efficient way to control weight and manage the stress of daily life. Many people would be surprised to learn that I ran in the Marine Corps Marathon when I was 49 years old and have participated in it on an annual basis ever since. Although I have participated for several years, I have yet to win one. I receive some solace in the fact that the winners are quite often too small to tote the trophy home.

Many people would be surprised to



know that I participated in the Lake City Community Theater. My most notable roles are that of Sitting Bull in *Annie Get Your Gun* and Lt. Brannigan in *Guys and Dolls*.

### 2. Personal life away from the bench:

My late wife, Donna, and I had our three children within three years and three months. The next 20 years can be described as hectic, but fulfilling. Our times were spent with baseball, high school band, karate, cheerleading, competition dancing, volleyball, high school chorus, Lake City Community Theater, Boy Scouts and years of coaching recreational softball. Donna and I would often comment that our 30s and 40s were a blur and our 50s were going quickly. I am proud of all of my children. They have all graduated from college and are gainfully employed and virtually "off the payroll."

I find myself with more time to pursue my personal interests. I have always enjoyed daily exercise, traveling, hunting



A REPORT TO MEMBERS OF  
THE SOUTH CAROLINA BAR  
YOUNG LAWYERS DIVISION

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## Stars of the Quarter

**Sarah Ahmed**  
**Meggie Baker**  
**Sheila Bias**  
**Leslie Fisk**  
**Sarah Ford**  
**Sarah Fragale**  
**Elizabeth Gailey**

**Bruce Greenberg**  
**Ashley Hammack**  
**Charlie Ipock**  
**Jonathan Knicely**  
**Emily Limehouse**  
**Erica Lybrand**  
**Carmel Martin**

**Leslie McIntosh**  
**Taylor Owens**  
**Lisa Parrish**  
**Marshall Tinsley**  
**Lyndey Zwing**

and golf. Most recently, our family has acquired a place at Murrells Inlet, along with a boat. I have ordered a book entitled *Salt Water Fishing for Beginners*. I plan on spending time at the Inlet with my children and precious grandchild, Charlotte Rose.

### 3. What advice do you have for young lawyers?

- Be honest and trustworthy;
- Be present, accessible and responsive to your clients;
- Be prompt;
- Manage your personal finances in a conservative and responsible way;
- Be prepared;
- If you drink, do so responsibly;
- Treat your colleagues in a professional and courteous manner;
- Learn how to disagree without being disagreeable;
- Become involved in local civic organizations;
- Rise with the sun and engage in your daily exercise; and
- Develop a relationship with your mentor and seek his or her advice.

### 4. What is the most rewarding aspect of being a judge, and the hardest part about being a judge?

Being a trial lawyer necessarily requires that you seek to achieve the goals of your client while acting within the bounds of the law. This is exciting and stirs one's competitive spirit. However, being a judge is different. I find it most rewarding to be in a position to see that each party is heard and to do what is right and fair to ensure that justice prevails.

The most difficult task of being a circuit court judge is criminal sentencing. On a daily basis, we are called upon to discern the difference between the truly wicked and the wayward.

Of the cases that come before me, felony DUIs are by far the

most challenging. Quite often, the defendant in a felony DUI is an individual who has lived a very productive life with absolutely no criminal record. These defendants did not set out to commit a crime with malice in their hearts but their actions have taken or destroyed a life. Balancing the interests of the state, the victim and the defendant is a difficult and troubling task.

### 5. What experience has best prepared you for the bench?

Without question, practicing law with my father, law partner and mentor, E. LeRoy Nettles Sr., played the most integral part in preparing me to be a circuit court judge.

My father did his undergraduate work at The Citadel and graduated from the USC School of Law in 1953. He is a Korean War veteran, a former legislator and a true litigator in state and federal court. My father is 88 years old and is still practicing law. He is always at the office early in the

morning and rarely leaves before five in the afternoon.

My father has a wealth of experience in life and the practice of law. He is blessed with a wonderfully calm, kind and deliberate disposition. Until this day, he will stop what he is doing in order to advise me about legal and personal matters.

### 6. If you could choose one legal scholar to play golf with, who would it be and why?

I would choose to play golf with Gerry Spence. He is the world-renowned Wyoming lawyer who gained his reputation as both a plaintiff's lawyer and criminal defense lawyer. Many people do not realize that he was first a very successful insurance defense lawyer and prosecutor.

As of 2014, Spence has never lost a criminal case either as a prosecutor or defense attorney and he has not lost a civil case since 1969.

### 7. What do you see as the biggest challenge facing the South Carolina legal system?

Half of the world's prison population of about 9 million people is held in the United States, China and Russia. Prison rates in the United States are the world's highest at 724 people per 100,000. I acknowledge that this is a very complex problem that demands serious attention.

## 2016-17 President's Award

**Sheila Bias**, Fisher & Phillips LLP, Columbia

**Scott Bischoff**, Savage Law Firm, Charleston

**Aliecia Bores**, Finkel Law Firm LLC, North Charleston

**Sabrina E. Burgess ("Sable")**, Shery & Jones, PA, Lexington

**John Carroll**, Nexsen Pruet, LLC, Hilton Head Island

**Liam Duffy**, Rosen Rosen & Hagood, LLC, Charleston

**Foster Girard**, Haynsworth Sinkler Boyd, PA, Columbia

**Bruce Greenberg**, McAngus Goudelock & Courie, LLC, Columbia

**Teckla Henderson**, City of Columbia

**Lindsay Joyner**, Gallivan, White & Boyd, PA, Columbia

**Adam B. Landy**, Internal Revenue Service, San Francisco

**Perry MacLennan**, Haynsworth Sinkler Boyd, PA, Charleston

**Julie Moore**, Duffy & Young, LLC, Charleston

**Chisa J. Putman**, Moss Justice Center, Rock Hill

**Jasmine Smith**, Sowell Gray Robinson Stepp & Laffitte, LLC, Columbia

**Kim Snipes**, Membership Services Coordinator, SC Bar

**Johanna Valenzuela**, S.C. Senate Judiciary Committee, Columbia

**Ashleigh Wilson**, Bowman & Brooke, LLP, Columbia

**Patrick Wooten**, Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough, LLP, Charleston

**Lyndey Zwing**, Adams and Reese LLP, Columbia



# What's Been Happening

## Charlotte Happy Hour

On March 2, the YLD Out-of-State Representative Grayson Lambert hosted a YLD Happy Hour for members in Charlotte at Vida Vida. This was the first out-of-state event in a long time. The event was advertised with targeted emails over a three-week period and in the YLD email blasts. Eighteen people ultimately attended the event. Some people knew each other, but for many it was a chance to meet other young lawyers with a South Carolina license. There was enthusiasm for a South Carolina Bar event in Charlotte, with some noting that they have to go to York County for events. There is excitement about more events in the future.



## Spartanburg Color of Justice Program

The Spartanburg Color of Justice Program hosted by USC Upstate on March 11 was a success! Over 30 middle and high school students took advantage of the opportunity to meet and learn from diverse law students, attorneys and judges, including Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of South Carolina Donald W. Beatty. Committee members include Katherine Myers, David Paavola, Jamie Foster and Jasmine Smith. Thank you to all the lawyers who helped make this event a memorable one, and a special thank you to Kimberly Snipes for supporting the program.

## Columbia Color of Justice Program

The Color of Justice Columbia Program was a huge success this year. The Color of Justice Committee set a goal to have 100 students attend the event. We increased outreach and visited schools in Lexington-Richland 5 and Richland One and Two. Although we had 100 students register for the

event, 65 students actually attended the program, three times the number who attended last year.



The program consisted of four panel discussions in question-and-answer format, along with a lunch break-out session, which allowed the students to meet even more lawyers in our profession. This lunch session afforded the students the opportunity to interact with the attorneys in a smaller setting, get their questions answered and practice their networking skills. We even had a group of students attend the program all the way from Kingstree, South Carolina.

The first panel discussion consisted of a family court judge and a magistrate court judge. The second panel consisted of four attorneys from different practice areas. The third panel consisted of three law students. This year we added a fourth panel discussion to the Columbia program. This new panel consisted of a circuit court judge, prosecutor, defense attorney and a law enforcement officer (although the officer was unfortunately unable to attend as he was called to an urgent work matter). This panel focused on the criminal justice aspect of our profession and was well received. The students were engaged during the entire program and continuously asked questions. Thank you to the countless volunteers who made this event possible, especially Hon. Clifton Newman, Hon. Michelle Hurley and Hon. Josef Robinson.

## Cinderella Project

The Cinderella Project involves

gathering donations of gently worn formal gowns, shoes and accessories to benefit high school students across South Carolina. During prom season, the Cinderella Project is in full swing, and the committee hosts events across the state. This year the Cinderella Project celebrates its 16th year and hosted events in Aiken, Anderson, Charleston, Columbia, Greenville, Greenwood and Orangeburg. The events are always well attended, with students often arriving hours before the doors open. Most students are able to leave with something, and the volunteers often help the students make their selections. For more information on the Cinderella Project, please visit [www.cinderellaprojectsc.com](http://www.cinderellaprojectsc.com). Thanks to the numerous volunteers at each location who made these events possible. Your generous donations of various clothing items, venue space and time are greatly appreciated.



*Anderson Cinderella Project*



*Orangeburg Cinderella Project*

## CLE: Providing Legal Assistance After a Natural Disaster

On April 20, the Disaster Legal Services Committee hosted the CLE "Providing Legal Assistance After a Natural Disaster" at the Florence Country Club. Ryan Neville, Stephen Blevins, Jack Cohoon and Clifford McBride educated attorneys from across the state on landlord-tenant law, the FEMA claims process and representing indigent clients. The four speakers provided handouts and answered questions from the attendees.



### Birdies for Belief

On April 21 YLD hosted its first “Birdies for Belief” golf tournament, raising over \$10,000 for the South Carolina Make-A-Wish Foundation. All of the money raised will be used to grant the wishes of children in South Carolina battling terminal illnesses. Thank you to all the sponsors, players and donors! Your contributions to this great cause will make a huge impact on the lives of these

children and their families. Special thanks to The Windermere Club for hosting the event.

Sponsors: A.W.R Court Reporting; Bluestein, Nichols, Thompson & Delgado, LLC; Fifth Circuit Solicitor’s Office; Gallivan, White & Boyd, P.A.; Goings Law Firm, LLC; Haynsworth Sinkler Boyd, P.A.; McAngus Goude-lock & Courie, LLC; Moore Taylor Law Firm, P.A.; Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough, LLP; Nexsen Pruet; Thomason & Pracht, LLP; Thurmond Kirchner & Timbes; Wills Massalon & Allen, LLC; Whetstone Perkins & Fulda, LLC; Granger Owings.

### Cocky’s Reading Express: 8th Circuit

Young lawyers in the 8th Circuit, through the Community Law Week Committee, participated in Cocky’s Reading Express, which allows young



lawyers to join Cocky in reading to elementary school students in an effort to promote childhood literacy. They visited Joanna Woodson Elementary on April 25 and Boundary Street Elementary on April 26. The children at both schools really appreciated the experience and could not wait to start reading their new books!

## Letter from the President



Dear South Carolina Young Lawyers:

With the Bar’s fiscal year coming to a close on June 30, there are many things to be thankful for over the past 12 months. There is thankfulness that, at least as I pen this letter, there has not been a huge scandal, and in all seriousness, there is even more thankfulness to all the members of the 2016-17 YLD leadership team who truly carried the load, delivering high quality member benefits and providing heartwarming public service events throughout the year. I wish I had space to thank them all, but that would send printing costs through the roof. Still, I would like to say a special thank you to four amazing people that played an extra special role this year in helping the YLD stay the course, and those are President-Elect Lindsay Joyner, Secretary-Treasurer Ashleigh Wilson, Immediate Past President Patrick Wooten and Bar Staff Extraordinaire Kimberly Snipes. You all have become family to me over the past several years, and I am beyond grateful for it.

There is a lot to be proud of that the YLD accomplished this Bar year. There are too many wonderful public service events and member benefit programs to list here, but you all have seen these countless events announced every other Tuesday in our E-Blasts, which I encourage you to read and get involved in something that interests you. The YLD did everything from putting on CLEs and social events to helping Hurricane Matthew survivors and granting wishes for Make-A-Wish kids. It was truly both a fun and worthwhile Bar year.

If there was only one thing that I could impress upon each of you, it would be to get involved in the YLD. As I have stated in each letter, this is your organization, and you will be a better person and a better lawyer through involvement in it. Whether it be learning a practice tip from a respected judge at a Courthouse Keys event or helping a Habitat for Humanity home recipient with an estate plan, you will professionally and personally benefit from it. Join a committee and get involved.

Although it is bittersweet letting go of the YLD’s reins, this fine organization is truly in better hands come July 1 when Lindsay Joyner of Galli-

van, White & Boyd P.A. assumes the presidency. She, along with Ashleigh Wilson and Sheila Bias, will no doubt keep our YLD on track as one of the best and brightest in the country. I look forward to the YLD’s continued success, and although I might be aging out in a year or two, please do not ever hesitate to reach out if I can be of assistance to you.

In closing, and on a personal note, I will never be able to put into words how much the love of my wife, Lauren, and our daughters, Anna Clare and Waller, mean to me. They have sacrificed this past year by graciously supporting my increased involvement in the YLD. They have done it so selflessly, and for that I am truly and eternally grateful. To my girls, I love you with all my heart and soul more than you will ever know. Thank you. Love, Ryan a/k/a Daddy.

Sincerely,

Irish “Ryan” Neville  
Wills Massalon & Allen LLC



# Member Spotlight: Hon. Chisa J. Putman

Chisa J. Putman is a newly minted magistrate judge in York County and a proud member of the South Carolina Bar Young Lawyers Division. Judge Putman graduated from Winthrop University in 2003 with a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and Mass Communications. In 2008, she graduated from the Charleston School of Law. Since graduating from law school, Judge Putman has worked in private practice and as a staff attorney for South Carolina Legal Services. She also served as an assistant solicitor for the City of Rock Hill and teaches in the Business Law Program and the AOT Program at York Technical College as an adjunct instructor.

## **What inspired you to attend law school and become a lawyer?**

I've wanted to be an attorney since I was in the 4th grade. The desire was two-fold, in part due to personal family reasons and in part due to my admiration of Perry Mason.

## **How have you been involved in the YLD? In what capacities have you served?**

I was sworn in as a lawyer in November 2009, and I have been involved in YLD since 2010. I have served in the following capacities: Color of Justice Chair/Co-Chair: 2010-16; 16th Circuit Representative: 2010-16; Membership Co-Chair: 2016-17.

## **You spent some time practicing as a sole practitioner. What advice do you have for a young lawyer who is thinking about starting his/her own firm?**

My advice is to make sure you utilize your mentor. Don't just communicate with the mentor you're assigned, but also find mentors in various areas. Also, it would be helpful to take a basic business class. As a sole practitioner, you wear two hats - the business/office manager and the attorney. Both require a significant amount of time. You have the training to practice law so you should make sure that you have the knowledge to operate a business.

## **You have worked in both the public**



## **and private sector. How do the two compare? What are some of the advantages and disadvantages of each?**

While working in the private sector, I had the luxury and flexibility of choosing what cases I wanted to take and when I wanted to work. Working in the public sector I never had a shortage of work, but I also did not have any flexibility. It was disheartening to realize how many people had a legitimate need for assistance, but we were unable to assist.

## **Did you ever imagine that you would become a judge? What persuaded you to make this change in your career?**

I think at some point every attorney has thought about the possibility of being a judge, but taking the intentional additional steps to make it happen is another story. With that being said, I had a fleeting thought of it at one time but had put it out of my head. I had actually considered leaving the practice of law at one time. In regards to this career change, I was trying to figure out my next move following the end of my contract at the City Solicitor's Office. When I was contacted by then-Senator Wes Hayes about the opportunity, I was shocked but took it as a sign that it should be my next step.

## **How has your participation in the YLD impacted your career?**

I believe my participation in YLD has significantly impacted my career by way of the connections that I've made, but more importantly, the relationships that I have built and have continued to foster. I am also confi-

dent that my work through the YLD has made a significant impact on my local and state community, and my work and reputation shows my legitimate concern for those I serve.

## **How do you balance your community involvement, professional responsibilities and personal life? Do you have any advice for a young lawyer who may be struggling to find a good work/life balance?**

My life is a definite balancing act, but I have learned to prioritize. My children always come first, but I enjoy allowing them to see and participate with community activities, so I try to let them participate and/or observe whenever possible. In regards to my professional responsibilities, scheduling is extremely important. Make sure that your schedule allows you the time you need to be active and not just sign your name to the roster. For those who are struggling with the balance, make sure that you prioritize and understand that it is okay to say "no." You also have to make sure not to place so much on your plate that you lose time for yourself.

## **What are some mistakes that you have made or seen other young lawyers make? What should young lawyers do to avoid these mistakes?**

The two main mistakes I have seen other young lawyers make are that they are afraid to ask for help and they take on too much. I firmly believe in asking for help - whether it is with clients or with personal matters. It is better to be proactive rather than reactive. In regards to taking on too much, I have seen lawyers take on more cases than they can handle, which causes them to neglect their clients, which in turn leads to a grievance being filed. It is okay to reject a case; there will be more.

## **Is there anything else you would like to share?**

Take advantage of all of the opportunities offered through YLD. Being an active member in YLD has truly been one of the highlights of my career.



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## Committee Feature: Professional Development

The Professional Development Committee has been active during 2016-17. The purpose of the committee is to assist young lawyers in becoming successful in the profession by facilitating networking opportunities with other young professionals as well as educational opportunities for young lawyers, focusing on relevant issues to the profession.

In that spirit, the committee is rounding out its first full year implementing the Secrets to Success video series – interviews with prominent South Carolina legal practitioners. The idea for Secrets to Success was borrowed from a similar concept in Texas, but the South Carolina Bar YLD put its own spin on it. Instead of producing a booklet of interviews, we have videotaped the interviews and they are accessible on the Bar's website and Vimeo channel. Some of the inter-



*Tour & Talk at Boeing South Carolina*

view subjects include former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of South Carolina Jean Toal, Gedney Howe and former Columbia Mayor Bob Coble.

The committee has also continued its legacy of planning great networking events with other young professionals. In Charleston, the committee teamed up with young bankers and young entrepreneurs for an event at the new Harbor Entrepreneur Center, and in Columbia and Greenville, there have been several happy hours

for networking with young bankers and CPAs.

Finally, the committee has designed a few events that are unique to this Bar year. For instance, in late March, approximately 50 young lawyers in Charleston were invited to Boeing for a tour of the facility, a presentation from General Counsel Mark Fava and networking with Mark and other in-house Boeing lawyers. The event was a

great success and we hope to replicate this event with other companies throughout South Carolina.

Please be on the lookout for a couple of upcoming events to round out 2016-17, all of which will be announced through the YLD email listserv. We are already getting started on brainstorming for 2017-18 bar year, and if you have ideas for a great professional development event, please do not hesitate to reach out to any of the committee chairs.