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News You Can Use: The Younger Lawyers Division Summer Clerk Series Attracts and Informs the Next Generation of Federal Lawyers

EACH SUMMER, THE Younger Lawyers Division (YLD) sponsors a series of roundtable events during which law students clerking in the Washington, D.C., area have an opportunity to hear from attorneys working in various agencies of the federal government. During each part of the program, which consists of a series of receptions and

roundtables, several practicing attorneys with experience working for or with various agencies explain to the audience how they obtained their positions, what they liked about being federal government lawyers, and, of particular interest to attendees, how their offices go about hiring and what job candidates can do to succeed. The 2010 series was popular and successful, with approximately 200 summer clerks taking advantage of it in June and July.

This year, the program began with a kickoff event held at the U.S. Court of Federal Claims, during which attendees heard from Christopher Awad, an attorney in the U.S. Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division, who explained why federal practice has been a unique and fulfilling experience for him and his colleagues. Next, during the summer's first roundtable event, clerks heard from Hon. Andrew Effron, chief judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces, and Dick Wiley of Wiley Rein LLP regarding the practice of federal employment law.

At the next event, distinguished speakers from the U.S. Department of Defense—including Cpt. Brendan J. Gilbert, Lt. Eric J. Lobsinger, Capt. Laura DeSio, and Lt. Tara Lawlor—described their experiences as JAG attorneys. During the DOJ roundtable that followed, DOJ attorneys Russell Upton, Ethan Levisohn, John Truong, and Channah Farber offered insight into their diverse practices as attorneys for various agencies and offices within the Justice Department. The final event focused on attorneys working on Capitol Hill, with attendees hearing from T.J. Halstead, an attorney with the Congressional Research Service; Elizabeth Pugh, an attorney with the Library of Congress; Matthew McGhie, an attorney with the U.S. Senate Office of

Legislative Counsel; and Brian Hendricks, an attorney with the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

In addition to the roundtable events, 15 different federal agencies agreed to host site visits, during which clerks had the opportunity to meet agency attorneys in the buildings in which they work. These visits also allowed the summer clerks to learn about additional opportunities to serve as federal attorneys outside of the formal roundtable events.

Each roundtable included lively question-and-answer periods. The clerks, most of whom were law students working for federal agencies for the summer, posed numerous questions to panelists. Understandably, most questions involved the various agencies' hiring practices, including criteria on which the agencies place the most emphasis, how geography factors into hiring and recruiting, ways to create inroads through networking or unpaid internships, and formal versus informal hiring practices and how to take advantage of both. In addition, the summer clerks generally took full advantage of the opportunity to network with panelists following the events. Clerks remarked that the series was particularly helpful, because the anecdotal knowledge and advice panelists could provide varied a great deal from agency to agency and was not the sort of information that can be obtained from job-related publications or Internet websites. In addition, panelists found the clerks' level of interest and engagement to be refreshing. All in all, despite the lethargy-inducing heat and humidity the D.C. area had seen this summer, the events crackled with the attendees' energy and excitement over the possibility of federal service.

The YLD extends its thanks to all of the panelists who spoke and supported the series. Their willingness to take time from their busy schedules and share the knowledge and insight gained over years of public service was admirable and greatly appreciated by the attendees. The YLD further thanks FBA national staff—Adrienne Woolley in particular—who helped make the 2010 series a success. We look forward to another successful series in 2011! **TFL**

Steven D. Tibbets is a board member of the FBA Younger Lawyers Division.