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Leadership Opportunities for Young Lawyers

“The main characteristics of effective leadership are intelligence, integrity, loyalty, mystique, humor, discipline, courage, self sufficiency and confidence.”

James L. Fisher¹

I. Introduction

Many believe that leadership is reserved for older generations. In many circles, the characteristics or qualities of a strong leader are thought to become more apparent – and more robust – with age. Consequently, in many instances younger people are overlooked when the search for a leader commences. However, there is one characteristic that is conspicuously absent from Fisher’s list of the attributes one needs to be a strong leader, and that attribute is age.

Indeed, the notion that leadership is reserved for the more experienced becomes more archaic by the day. As Kouzes & Posner state, leadership is for *everyone*, regardless of whether you are a student or parent, an employee or volunteer.² Leadership is not some innate ability that can only be obtained through lineage or birth. Instead, the ability to lead is comprised of a group of traits that can be cultivated in a manner which allows a person who has never led to become the focal point of a movement or group.³ These characteristics include, but are not limited to:

¹ James L. Fisher holds a Ph.D. in psychology from Northwestern University. He is President Emeritus of the Council for Advancement & Support of Education (CASE) and President Emeritus of Towson University.

² James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner, *The Leadership Challenge*, pp. xiii (Jossey-Bass 4th Ed. 2007).

³ Prof. Robert Cullen, Santa Clara University School of Law, Leadership for Lawyers: Lecture 1/14/2008.

credibility, creativity, visionary thinking, and trustworthiness.⁴ Older generations do not have a monopoly on these characteristics, or any of the other traits that comprise a strong leader.

In fact, a forceful argument could be made that many of these qualities would be enhanced or positively augmented by younger leadership. As Kouzes and Posner point out, “We need more exemplary leaders, and we need them now more than ever. There is so much extraordinary work that needs to be done. We need leaders who can unite us and ignite us.”⁵ Who better to take up this call than young attorneys who are in a position, by virtue of their profession, to unify and inspire those with whom they come into contact?

Despite their unique position, young attorneys oftentimes do not know where to look in order to exploit the leadership attributes that they have learned or are attempting to cultivate.⁶ This paper attempts to provide a guide for young lawyers, as well as law students, who desire to take on leadership positions, be it in law school, law firms, non-profit organizations, or in their communities. The authors hope to expose a number of opportunities for young attorneys that will offer them a chance to both take on leadership positions and hone leadership skills.

Part II of this paper will examine the opportunities that law students have to take up leadership roles while in law school. Law school is an excellent place for aspiring attorneys to begin to grow and refine their leadership skills, and it offers a unique opportunity to encounter the difficult task of leading one’s peers.⁷ Additionally, it affords aspiring attorneys the ability to commingle their leadership skills and their legal skills for perhaps the first time.⁸ Consequently, this section is a necessary component to any paper discussing young lawyers and leadership.

⁴ Kouzes and Posner, *supra* note 2 at 26.

⁵ *Id.* at xvi.

⁶ Interview with Marlene Bennett, 3d Year Law Student, Santa Clara University School of Law, in Mountain View, Cal. (Mar. 10, 2008).

⁷ Interview with Michelle Griffith-Jones, 3d Year Law Student and President of Women and Law, Santa Clara University School of Law, in Mountain View, Cal. (Mar. 16, 2008).

⁸ *Id.*

Part III of this paper will discuss the various opportunities to lead that young associates can find in their respective law firms. This is where the majority of young attorneys will hone their craft,⁹ and thus it is where the majority of young lawyers will develop their leadership skills.

Part IV of this paper will examine the same opportunities for young lawyers, but in terms of community service. While it may seem self-evident that community service offers people, particularly young people a strong opportunity to lead, many young attorneys may be unaware of the vast number of opportunities that surround them in their own communities. This paper will guide them towards various non-legal or quasi-legal¹⁰ community organizations that offer them leadership opportunities.

Part V will look at the unique leadership opportunities for young attorneys who choose to begin their careers in legal non-profit organizations. As opposed to community service, which lawyers engage in outside of their practice, this section will focus on the leadership opportunities that present themselves to young lawyers who choose non-profit work as their career calling.

Before concluding, the authors will examine the various obstacles that exist for young lawyers who want to become leaders. These obstacles may include such things as self-doubt, lack of knowledge regarding the existence of various leadership positions, and a refusal on the part of others to afford young attorneys a chance to lead in any given circumstance. Following this discussion, the paper will briefly conclude.

⁹ Available at http://www.nalpfoundation.org/webmodules/articles/articlefiles/87-After_JD_2004_web.pdf, pp. 26 (last viewed, 3/19/08).

¹⁰ Non-legal or quasi-legal organizations are defined by the authors as those organizations that do not constitute legal non-profit organizations

II. Opportunities for Young Lawyers to Lead: Law School

Santa Clara University School of Law takes pride in its alumni as being “*lawyers who lead* – in private practice, public service, business, government, and more.”¹¹ Why is it important for law students to become leaders, and moreover, how do they become leaders?

Dean Donald Polden of Santa Clara University School of Law describes the “Leadership Initiative” at Santa Clara Law:¹²

Here at Santa Clara Law, we recognize the key roles that lawyers play in the profession, the community, and in government and public service, and we expect our students to make a personal and professional commitment to leadership.

To that end, we are striving to be a national leader in empowering future lawyers with the skills and experience they need for leadership.

Leadership training is integral to the law school’s mission,¹³ as well as its curriculum. As Dean Polden states:

Lawyers are abundant in leadership positions, in political bodies, community support groups, and many other places. We were interested in developing our curriculum to look at how lawyers use leadership skills. We need to take a look at what law schools offer and what they should offer in this vein. Lawyers have an obligation to serve others, and we’re very interested in learning about the skills lawyers use and need to fulfill their ethical duties and responsibilities. By encouraging leadership, we’re making the law profession stronger. Leadership training is in line with SCU’s mission to train lawyers of competence, conscience, and compassion.¹⁴

It is one thing to offer leadership seminars and courses in law school so students can acquire leadership skills, but how do the students actually get involved?

¹¹ Santa Clara Law – Lawyers Who Lead, <http://www.scu.edu/law/lawyerswholead/index.cfm> (last visited April 8, 2008)

¹² *Id.* (follow “Our Leadership Initiative” hyperlink) (last visited April 8, 2008)

¹³ The law school’s mission statement provides: “Santa Clara University School of Law will educate its students to meet the challenges of a legal profession and society that are increasingly global, technologically sophisticated, and diverse. In fulfilling this vision, the Law School will educate its students to become lawyers of competence, conscience, and compassion. The Law School will also advance knowledge and justice through scholarship and service,” <http://www.scu.edu/law/about/mission-statement.cfm> (last visited April 8, 2008).

¹⁴ *Id.* (follow “Our Leadership Initiative” hyperlink, then follow “Article on Leadership for Lawyers course” hyperlink) (last visited April 8, 2008)

Leon Panetta, former White House Chief of Staff to President Clinton and a Santa Clara Law graduate, says that law students must realize that there is more to law school than just getting good grades. Law students have a higher purpose – to contribute to the legal system and to be advocates for their communities. Panetta says:

I believe what too often missing in law school is the transition to that larger role that's out there. How *do* you deal with clients? How do you best represent those interests? I've often thought that the reason some lawyers, some law students, who get all As in all their courses, yet sometimes turn out to be lousy lawyers, is because they don't see that bigger picture. As a lawyer, you're getting a license, not only to practice law; you're getting a license to be a leader. When you go into the courtroom, there's a judge, there are two lawyers representing clients, and you have a responsibility to represent the interests of the client, but you have a greater responsibility to our system of justice to ensure that it is working to promote justice, and so that means you're more than just an advocate. You really have a larger responsibility to make sure that, in the end, whatever comes out of that courtroom represents an example of the best of our judicial system.¹⁵

Panetta adds,

I believe that [we can teach lawyers to think like lawyers and think like a value driven leader]. I really do. I believe that you can in fact, teach law students that it isn't just about passing the bar. It's not just about taking your required courses, and it isn't just about advocacy. That when you go to law school, and you get a law degree, there is a higher responsibility, and it isn't just Judges, and it's not just Supreme Court Justices, but it's lawyers that play the major role in our system. Particularly, in today's world, where there are so many confusing signals, and so many confusing values, I believe you can get back to these basic values of leadership.¹⁶

Leadership skills are among the important lawyering skills that students must know. Law schools should be educating their students for the leadership roles they will be playing in an increasingly complicated, global profession because our communities and societies need greater

¹⁵ Interview with Leon Panetta, Director, Panetta Institute for Public Policy in Monterey, CA (October 9, 2006) available at <http://www.leadership4lawyers.com/interviews/panetta.htm> (last visited April 8, 2008).

¹⁶ *Id.*

leadership manifested in business, government, public policy, and the legal profession.¹⁷ Indeed, several of the contemporary perspectives on legal education suggest that not enough attention is being given to a full range of fundamental skills necessary to serve clients' needs and that leadership skills are increasingly an integral part of a modern professional education.¹⁸

Law schools have the responsibility to integrate leadership principles in its courses so that law students can learn about the essential skills they must develop in order to become an effective leader, but leadership is already inherent in extracurricular activities, and within these groups, law students can put what they have learned into practice. Law students express their individual leadership by serving the community or by serving as mentors through law student groups. Law students have the opportunity to serve as role models for their classmates, their colleagues, their peers, and their community.

Within law student groups such as the Student Bar Association (SBA), the Asian Pacific American Law Students Association (APALSA), and the Black Law Students Association (BLSA), law students serving as board members take on leadership roles. As board members, they value the purpose of the group, recognize issues within their communities, encourage participation from other students, build common goals through consensus, anticipate and resolve challenges, and keep other board members on task. With so much pressure in law school, how are law students motivated and encouraged to seek out these leadership positions?

Jennifer Leung, current SBA President at Santa Clara Law, says that she chose to be a leader because she knew she could make a real difference as President.¹⁹ Leung says, "I knew I could increase the level of community service and the level of communication between the

¹⁷ Donald J. Polden, *Educating Law Students for Professional and Community Leadership*, THE COMPLETE LAWYER, Volume 3, Issue 5, Article 2, available at <http://ohio.thecompletelawyer.com/volume3/issue5/article.php?ppaid=4016> (last visited April 8, 2008).

¹⁸ *Id.*

¹⁹ Email interview with Jennifer Leung, Santa Clara Law SBA President (March 24, 2008).

students and the administration.”²⁰ Leung’s vision is apparent in SBA activities that occurred this past year at Santa Clara Law.

In terms of community service, there was increased participation in what the SBA dubbed the “Alternative Spring Break,” where law students flew to New Orleans and volunteered with local organizations to tackle the backlog of work in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. In terms of communication between students and the administration, Leung set up a “Meet the Deans” event, where law students were given the chance to engage the school’s deans. Leung sees the importance of getting involved. “Law students need to get out of the library. Besides just attending the events, students should get more involved as leaders in different organizations, especially the student organizations. These organizations don’t take up a lot of time and it’s a chance for people to make some new friends.”²¹ Leung thinks that the law school can do a better job in facilitating leadership. She says, “The law school can foster more opportunities for leadership, possibly through leadership retreats.”²²

Carla Rabuy, co-President of APALSA at Santa Clara Law, says that she took on a leadership position because she likes the advising and managing aspects of her role.²³ She says, “I chose to be a leader because I liked what APALSA was doing and thought I could contribute or even make improvements. I thought it was a good opportunity to make connections with other law students, provide services, and meet more people.”²⁴ On the importance of getting law students involved as leaders in these groups, Rabuy states:

It’s a way to have a voice. As a leader, I think I have had more connections to the administration and was given other opportunities to find out about committees or give opinions about the school. Even from a professional standpoint, networking

²⁰ *Id.*

²¹ *Id.*

²² *Id.*

²³ Email interview with Carla Rabuy, Santa Clara Law APALSA co-President (April 5, 2008).

²⁴ *Id.*

is key. Groups like APALSA provide networking opportunities with attorneys and members of the community. APALSA also provides an opportunity to create a social and support network, which is equally important to the law school experience. As a leader, I have been able to facilitate these networking and social events and have been able to meet and interact with more people because of my leadership position.²⁵

To encourage more students to take on leadership roles, Rabuy suggests that the law school give credit to these vital organizations so that students actually see the fruits of their labor.²⁶

Jennifer Tse, also co-President of APALSA at Santa Clara Law and Senior Comments Editor of the Law Review, pursued her leadership position in order to maintain the work and services the organizations provide to the student body.²⁷ She says, “I tend to align my experiences and skills with particular leadership positions. For example, my position as Senior Comments Editor on the Law review allows me to exploit my fixation with proper grammar, as well as my enjoyment in mentoring and shepherding lowerclassmen.”²⁸

It’s important for Tse to be an active leader because it gives her the opportunity to be a mentor to other students.²⁹ She says, “I believe that ‘leadership’ is synonymous with ‘mentorship.’ Law school tends to foster competition and opposition, and it is crucial to the welfare of law students for them to be able to turn to other peers who are best able to provide support and guidance. I am a firm believer in imparting as much advice as I can onto others so that their experiences in law school can be that much easier.”³⁰ To get more students involved, Tse suggests that it is not really the administration that must encourage participation, but rather, the students who must be self-motivated and self-disciplined.³¹ “It is ultimately up to a

²⁵ *Id.*

²⁶ *Id.*

²⁷ Email interview with Jennifer Tse, Santa Clara Law APALSA co-President, Law Review Senior Comments Editor (March 30, 2008).

²⁸ *Id.*

²⁹ *Id.*

³⁰ *Id.*

³¹ *Id.*

particular individual to decide to become a leader. However, encouragement from current leaders, setting examples of how being a leader can be very beneficial, and simply befriending other law students will facilitate increased involvement from the student body.”³²

Katrina Logan, president of BLSA at SCU Law, says that aside from having past leadership experience, the main reason she chose to be a leader was because BLSA was an important organization to the school and the students.³³ “BLSA shows that there is diversity, that the school supports those diverse students, and that there are some students who are interested in issues and events that especially pertain to the African-American audience.”³⁴

Logan adds, “I don’t really see my role as a leader. I’m more of a *doer* and *facilitator*. I just do what needs to be done and facilitate what others can also do. There are so few of us here, and it is important to have some form of representation and some voice at our school or else we won’t be heard at all.”³⁵ Logan notes that involvement in any student organization, whether or not you are a leader, is a good way to develop social skills and other skills necessary in the workplace and beyond.³⁶ She also says, “It is pretty apparent when leadership is effective or ineffective, consistent or not, because it reflects in the membership and the board members. When leadership is ineffective or inconsistent, meetings are vague, unorganized, and a waste of time. On the other hand, when leadership is effective and communicative, things get done and everyone involved benefits.”³⁷ Logan suggests that the most important reason students should get involved is to be active and to participate in the workings of the law school.³⁸ “It adds to the

³² *Id.*

³³ Email interview with Katrina Logan, Santa Clara Law BLSA President (March 24, 2008).

³⁴ *Id.*

³⁵ *Id.*

³⁶ *Id.*

³⁷ *Id.*

³⁸ *Id.*

overall experience, it helps you meet more people and develop long-lasting relationships. Also, getting involved helps you forget about the awfulness of law school!”³⁹

Law school prepares students for the practice of law, but it is also a place where students can learn key leadership skills that will allow them to succeed and become effective leaders. While students can learn these skills in classes or seminars offered in school, they must seek out opportunities to put these skills into action. There are many opportunities through student organizations, which afford students the benefits of making new friends, developing networks, and the gratification of mentoring others. Though law schools can encourage participation in these organizations, it is really up to the individual. There are born leaders, and there are leaders who are developed. For those who are developed leaders, they may find their calling while in law school and decide to become a leader. The same people who are leaders in law school will probably become involved in directing committees, boards, and non-profit groups because those people are the ones that care about the bigger picture and are willing to put in a little more work to make the world, workplace, or community stronger.

III. Opportunities for Young Lawyers to Lead: Law Firms

As opposed to taking advantage of leadership opportunities in law school, leadership is probably the last thing on the minds of young attorneys when they join a law firm. The most important thing to young attorneys, especially new associates, is billable hours. With billable hours and deadlines looming, it is easy for young attorneys to mindlessly fall into the daily grind of working long hours, swallowing a quick bite to eat, working into the night, and then waking up the next morning with several cups of coffee. Many young lawyers do this day after day, keeping their heads down in the papers, thinking that this is the best way to please the partners and eventually make partner themselves. This may be the reason there is an extremely low rate

³⁹ *Id.*

of job satisfaction for attorneys in law firms. An American Bar Association survey conducted in 2006 found that only four out of ten lawyers with six to nine years experience were satisfied with their careers.⁴⁰

However, there is a way for young lawyers to be happy *and* move up in their firms: by finding opportunities to lead in their law firms. Leadership is a very important skill for anyone to have, especially young lawyers. Jeffrey Lutsky, managing partner of Stradley Ronon Stevens & Young, has said that one of the most common complaints from managing partners in large law firms is a perceived lack of future leaders within their firms.⁴¹ Thus, even the ambitious young attorney who wishes only to please the firm partners, would benefit from engaging in leadership opportunities at her firm.

Garner Weng, a partner at Hanson Bridgett Marcus Vlahos, LLP, exemplifies the benefits that young attorneys receive from taking on leadership roles in law firms. By taking on leadership roles during his first years at the firm, Garner was able to attain job satisfaction, and at the same time earn the credibility and respect of the seniors in his law firm. Garner started as an associate at Hanson Bridgett after graduating from law school, but quickly moved up the ranks, and became partner in only five years, a feat never attained before at the firm. Not only is Garner a partner, but he is also one of the youngest attorneys ever to serve as a chair on the firm's practice group, and was voted one of the "Best Lawyers Under 40" by the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association in 2007. Garner's success story demonstrates the benefits that young lawyers can reap from taking on leadership roles in their law firms.

⁴⁰ Stephanie Ward, "Pulse of the Legal Profession," *ABA Journal*, October 2007 (http://www.abajournal.com/magazine/pulse_of_the_legal_profession/).

⁴¹ Gina Pasarella, "Leadership Programs Born from Lack of Born Leaders," November 16, 2007, *Law.com* (<http://www.law.com/jsp/llf/PubArticleLLF.jsp?id=1195121055535>)

In an interview with Garner, I asked him about leadership opportunities at his law firm and at law firms in general, and how he was able to put himself in a leadership position at such a young age in a law firm of 150-200 attorneys. Were opportunities readily available to him or did he have to go out and search or create for them, or create for himself? How can a young, new attorney take on leadership roles in law firms?

Garner asserted that if one wants leadership opportunities in a firm, it is critical to first build credibility and demonstrate an ability to lead.⁴² Garner says that this comes as a result of doing solid work for your firm and demonstrating that you can take charge. Garner found that the greatest opportunities to show these skills were when he was working on a case in which only one or two other attorneys or partners were working with him. He found that these were the situations which allowed him to “really show how [he] could manage and how [he] could lead.”⁴³ Garner believes that when there are more than five to ten lawyers on the case, it can be more difficult for a young attorney to stand out, and therefore more difficult to demonstrate your credibility and capacity to lead.⁴⁴

Once you have developed credibility and have demonstrated your ability to take charge in these situations, then you can look for opportunities to lead in other areas of your firm. Garner says that leadership opportunities are not always apparent in law firms, and therefore he proactively sought them out as a young attorney at Hanson Bridgett. For example, shortly after settling in at the firm, Garner became a leader of the firm’s diversity recruiting program. Garner said that “the firm already expressed its own positions in diversity, and I knew I was the right person.” However, Garner proceeded cautiously. “I did it incrementally,” he stated. “I went to

⁴² Interview with Garner Weng, April 3, 2008.

⁴³ *Id.*

⁴⁴ *Id.*

talk to the chair of the recruiting committee and asked how we could be more effective in increasing the diversity of our law firm.”

Garner also said that a young attorney should “go do something they care about because you are always going to do a better job at something you care about,” and “pick an area in which you have expertise, which will allow you to shine.” As an Asian-American, and someone that had a history of working for diversity in law school and the general community, it was almost natural for Garner to take on a leadership position in firm’s diversity recruitment activities. Young attorneys should look for leadership opportunities in their firms that fit into their interests and expertise.

What if no leadership opportunities are apparent to you in your law firm? Perhaps you can take on the biggest leadership role of all, and create opportunities for leadership in the areas you think must be improved in the law firm. James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner, authors of *The Leadership Challenge*, also offer some suggestions for finding opportunities to lead change in your organization. First, they suggest that you *treat every job as an adventure* and ask yourself, “If I were just starting this job, what would I do?”⁴⁵ Another suggestion is to *question the status quo*, question the practices in your organization.⁴⁶ Another relevant suggestion for young attorneys in a rut is to *break free of the routine*, as some routines may actually smother creative planning and slow advancement.⁴⁷ These tips can help young attorneys create their own leadership opportunities, and by doing so they are exemplifying leadership.

Additionally, many law firms encourage their associates to take up leadership roles. Many law firms are willing to foot the bill for leadership seminars and training. For example,

⁴⁵ James M. Kouzes & Barry Z. Posner, *The Leadership Challenge*, pp. 51-53

⁴⁶ *Id.*

⁴⁷ *Id.* at 49.

DLA Piper offers a weeklong stay and training at Harvard Business School's leadership training program for their attorneys, which costs the firm over \$400,000 annually.⁴⁸

In a recent interview with William Lee, the co-managing partner at Wilmer Hale, Lee told the *National Law Journal* that the attorneys at his firm receive some form of leadership training, and that even new associates have responsibilities that require such skills.⁴⁹ These law firms and many others, realize that cultivating leadership is good for the firm's success.

According to Mark Beese, who believes that leadership is essential, "creating an environment that attracts and retains talent is a key responsibility of leaders, particularly because in most firms, these skills and attitudes are not naturally found."⁵⁰ Beese believes that "[m]ost students choose a firm knowing that they might leave within three or four years." Because leadership roles may make an attorney feel more connected to the firm, providing young attorneys with leadership training may increase the firm's ability to retain attorneys. Thus, law firms have a strong incentive to provide young associates with leadership training.

In conclusion, young attorneys should seek leadership opportunities at their law firms because it is beneficial for them, as well as their firms. Leadership opportunities may not be handed out freely at these firms, but with a little effort, young attorneys can carve out leadership opportunities for themselves. As the need for leaders becomes more pressing, firms will begin to see the potential for increased attorney retention by providing their attorneys with leadership opportunities, which will lead to greater job satisfaction in the legal field.

⁴⁸ Jones.

⁴⁹ *Id.*

⁵⁰ Posted by Mark Beese on May 12, 2006 (http://leadershipforlawyers.typepad.com/leadership_for_Lawyers/2006/05/another_case_fo.html).

IV. Opportunities for Young Lawyers to Lead: Community Service

While leadership opportunities in law firms may be difficult to come by, community service opportunities offer an abundance of these opportunities. As a result, attorneys frustrated with a seemingly barren landscape of leadership in their firm can always turn to the surrounding community in order to satisfy their leadership desires.

A. Why Lead in the Community?

Before discussing the various opportunities for attorney leadership through community service, it is worth noting the reasons why attorneys should get involved with their communities. Leadership aside, there are a number of incentives for community involvement. Many attorneys give back because they can use their skills to improve social welfare. Some find typical lawyering unfulfilling, and their passion lies in affecting positive change in more meaningful ways. For example, Bob Whitley of Whitley, Rodgman and Whitley, started a program at his own firm called, "Arrive Alive," which educates young adults on the dangers of drunk driving.⁵¹ In addition to the program, the firm gives scholarships to high school students who write essays on underage drinking.⁵² Whitley states, "I feel confident that at least one teenager has made a decision not to drink and drive because of us, and that single act, frankly, makes it worthwhile."⁵³ Others, like Wisconsin attorney Jennifer Kopp, offer pro bono legal services simply because of the personal connections that develop through helping people in the community.⁵⁴ Some attorneys may even do it for the added exposure and enhanced image

⁵¹ Michael Coffield et al., *Lawyer Dreams*, LAW PRACTICE, Volume 30 Number 5, July/Aug 2003, available at <http://www.wrwlaw.com/CM/Custom/article-lawyer-dreams.pdf>.

⁵² Coffield et al., *supra* note 1.

⁵³ Coffield et al., *supra* note 1.

⁵⁴ Anne Raci, "Unnamed Jones" Finds a Name, WISCONSIN LAWYER, Vol. 76, No. 3, March 2003, available at http://www.wisbar.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Wisconsin_Lawyer&template=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm&contentid=47676 ("It's nice to do pro bono work and get a more personal case I think it's important for people to get involved and do things when they can.").

community services carries with it.⁵⁵ While anyone who possesses the desire can get involved and become a leader in his or her community, this section focuses on using an attorney's special skill-set, knowledge, and services to help the community.

B. Community Leadership Through the Law Firm

Often the most practical and obvious opportunity for a junior associate to help the community is by offering pro bono legal services. For junior associates, leadership within a large firm may not be immediately possible. Given the competitive environment within the legal field, breaking through the ranks of a firm's tenure system to gain a leadership role is often a function of time, not ability. Thus, while leadership *within* the firm may not always be possible, community service and pro bono work is a way to become a community participant, while building leadership skills as a lawyer and citizen.

Although a good number of firms offer pro bono opportunities to associates, most of the opportunities are found at larger firms.⁵⁶ Whether the firm is large or small, one truth remains: leadership is required to initiate and effectively facilitate community service.⁵⁷ According to Barbara King of Gordon, Siegel, Mastro, Mullaney, “[i]f there's no leadership from the management of the firm on a commitment to pro bono, we can't expect our associates to do it.”⁵⁸ While a firm's management may initiate pro bono efforts, the opportunity for junior associates to lead and develop leadership skills is plentiful. This is largely due to the nature of pro bono work

⁵⁵ See Sharon Goldmacher, *Small PR Firms: Balancing profitability and pro bono clients*, PUBLIC RELATIONS QUARTERLY, Summer 2001, available at http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa5515/is_200107/ai_n21475312 (“Giving back to the community is the primary reason most PR firms take on pro bono work. However, added exposure can be a great benefit of donating time, and who better understands the value of such exposure than public relations professionals?”).

⁵⁶ See Elizabeth Stull, *Small Firm Makes Pro Bono Mandatory*, NEW YORK LAW JOURNAL, Dec. 13, 2004, available at <http://www.law.com/jsp/article.jsp?id=1102543079833> (“Pro bono programs are not uncommon among large New York City firms, but few smaller firms have such policies and most exclude partners.”).

⁵⁷ See *Developing Talent - Pro Bono Style*, Pro Bono Awards, available at http://www.taprootfoundation.org/events/probono/articles_leadership.shtml (last visited March 28, 2008) (“Team-based pro bono service provides an excellent and challenging way for managers to explore and expand their leadership skills.”).

⁵⁸ Stull, *supra* note 6.

itself, says Amanda Smith⁵⁹ of Morgan Lewis. She promotes pro bono opportunities as being *the* place to hone a junior associate's leadership skills in lawyering. Because of the demands that high profile clients place on partners, the pro bono arena is the place where junior associates are able to take the lead in directly managing a case as a senior associate would.⁶⁰ "Our pro bono program, like at most firms, provides an opportunity for junior lawyers to hit the ground running. You're running the case; you're the primary point of client contact."⁶¹ Thus, an eager associate looking to take on leadership roles should look to pro bono and community involvement as an outlet for building up experience.

While many leadership opportunities for young attorneys exist, finding them often takes effort. Young attorneys wanting to become leaders in their communities must first demonstrate the initiative and show interest in contributing to the community. For example, every year the Boston Bar Association (BBA) names several "Public Interest Leaders."⁶² The BBA leadership training program is highly selective and only seeks out junior attorneys⁶³ who have demonstrated a commitment to public service. Selected attorneys participate in a leadership training program:

Public Interest Leaders will be provided with an insider's view of a large scope of civic and charitable opportunities in Greater Boston. Participants will spend approximately 200 hours in meetings and workshops throughout the year, learning from prominent community leaders and Public Interest Leadership alums, developing insight into local organizations, and inspiring their peers to become more active in the civic arena.⁶⁴

According to Boston Bar Association President Tony Doniger, "[t]he Public Interest Leadership Program helps Boston's brightest young lawyers become the leaders of tomorrow.

⁵⁹ Telephone Interview with Amanda Smith, Pro Bono Counsel, Morgan Lewis, in New York, NY (March 24, 2008).

⁶⁰ Telephone Interview with Amanda Smith, *supra* note 8.

⁶¹ Telephone Interview with Amanda Smith, *supra* note 8.

⁶² BBA News Release (Sept. 19, 2007), *available at* http://www.bostonbar.org/prs/nr_0708/pilp091907.htm.

⁶³ BBA News Release, (Sept. 15, 2005), *available at* <http://www.bostonbar.org/prs/pilp0905.htm> ("One criteria for selection is that the attorneys must have been practicing for *fewer* than 10 years.").

⁶⁴ BBA News Release, *supra* note 11.

This program is having a resounding impact on the entire city, while providing the lawyers with a sense of professional fulfillment – reminding them why they went to law school in the first place.”⁶⁵

C. Community Leadership Outside the Law Firm

Although lawyers are always free to get involved with the community on their own time, law firms draw a clear line between pro bono work and other community work. To be pro bono, “the work has to constitute the delivery of legal services,”⁶⁶ and community service is any work that falls outside of that definition. The difference between pro bono and community service is, for example, the difference between a law firm taking on Habitat for Humanity as a pro bono client to represent indigent home owners, versus, the same firm providing volunteer labor to Habitat for Humanity to build a new home.⁶⁷ And, while most firms probably will not offer billable hour credit for community service, the same incentives for doing pro bono work discussed above apply to leadership in the community outside the pro bono context.⁶⁸

If a firm does not acknowledge pro bono efforts or such work is scarce, there are many opportunities to become a community leader outside of the law firm. One example is the Young Lawyer’s Division of the ABA.⁶⁹ This and other local young lawyer’s associations endorse leadership among young lawyers in the community and offer leadership opportunities.⁷⁰ Within the associations are opportunities to lead, as well as volunteer in the community. The Utah State

⁶⁵ BBA News Release, *supra* note 11.

⁶⁶ Telephone Interview with Amanda Smith, *supra* note 8.

⁶⁷ Telephone Interview with Amanda Smith, *supra* note 8.

⁶⁸ *See supra*, Part I.

⁶⁹ ABA Young Lawyer’s Division, *Who Are We?*, available at <http://www.abanet.org/yld/whoarewe.html> (last visited Apr. 1, 2008) (“The YLD, as the national organization of young lawyers, works to provide leadership in serving the public and the profession, and to promote excellence and fulfillment in the practice of law.”).

⁷⁰ *See* Houston Young Lawyers Association, available at http://www.hyla.org/hyla/Default_EN.asp (last visited Apr. 1, 2008) (“People join HYL A for a variety of reasons: to network, to make friends, to be leaders.”); *see also* Cincinnati Bar Association, Young Lawyers Section, available at <http://www.cincybar.org/member/younglawyers.asp> (last visited Apr. 1, 2008) ([In the association] “[y]ou’ll develop valuable leadership skills, receive the opportunity to network with those in the legal community and beyond, and make a lasting difference in our community.”).

Bar sponsors a “Tuesday Night Bar.”⁷¹ Attorneys who volunteer meet with local community members and give free one-on-one legal advice. The program helps approximately 1,100 individuals each year.⁷² By inquiring at the local bar, other leadership opportunities may be available. For example, local high school moot court programs often seek attorney-volunteers.⁷³

Another opportunity for young lawyers to lead in the community is by volunteering at pro se clinics.⁷⁴ Due to the ever-rising cost of legal services, many individuals cannot afford an attorney and are forced to represent themselves.⁷⁵ Offering pro se assistance to those who cannot afford an attorney is an opportunity to lead *and* make a difference in the community. In Wisconsin, where pro se representation is also on the rise,⁷⁶ the state bar promotes attorney volunteerism and is taking strides to encourage attorneys to provide pro se assistance:

As a State Bar volunteer, you serve a vital role in providing member and public services while gaining the personal and professional satisfaction of making a difference in the profession and the legal system. At the same time, you can gain one of the most valuable skills needed today ... *leadership*.⁷⁷

⁷¹ Young Lawyers Division of the Utah State Bar, *available at* http://www.utahbar.org/sections/yld/pro_bono.html (last visited March 31, 2008).

⁷² Young Lawyers Division, *supra note* 21. (“Approximately 1,100 individuals meet with a volunteer attorney each year for a brief one-on-one consultation at no cost. The purpose of this program is to assist the public in determining their legal rights.”).

⁷³ See Sacramento Lawyer – *Volunteers Sought For Mock Trial And Moot Court Competition*, Sept/Oct 2004, *available at* http://www.sacbar.org/members/saclawyer/sept_oct2004/moot_court.html.

⁷⁴ See The Pro Se Law Center, *available at* <http://www.pro-selaw.org/pro-selaw/index.asp> (last visited Apr. 1, 2008) (defining pro se representation as self-representation).

⁷⁵ Paul L. Hannaford-Agor, *Helping the Pro Se Litigant*, Winter 2003, *available at* http://aja.ncsc.dni.us/courtrv/cr39_4/CR39-4Hannaford.pdf (“The major factor contributing to the increase in self-represented litigation is [affordability].”).

⁷⁶ See Ann M. Zimmerman, *Going Pro Se*, WISCONSIN LAWYER, Vol. 73, No. 12, Dec. 2000, *available at* http://www.wisbar.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Wisconsin_Lawyer&template=/cm/contentDisplay.cfm&contentid=35485 (“In a 1999 statewide [Wisconsin] survey of clerks of court, 98 percent of the respondents noted increases in the number of self-represented litigants over the preceding five years.”).

⁷⁷ See State Bar of Wisconsin Leadership Opportunities, *available at* http://www.wisbar.org/am/template.cfm?section=leadership_opportunities&template=/customsource/sbw/leadership_opps.cfm (emphasis added).

Likewise, in Maryland, the Department of Family Administration organizes numerous pro se clinics with services offered by local private attorneys.⁷⁸ Some of their services include helping clients fill out domestic relations court forms, monthly training sessions for pro se litigants on the techniques of litigation, and other general legal information.⁷⁹ Other notable examples include, the Self-Service Center in Maricopa County, Arizona and the Family Law Pro Per Clinic in Ventura, California.⁸⁰ Because these opportunities are predominantly community-based, the best way to find out about them is through the local bar association or by asking about such opportunities in the immediate legal community.

Young attorneys wanting to become community leaders must look to their law firms as well as their passions. Whether volunteering through pro bono work at the law firm, pro se assistance, or in a field of personal interest, young attorneys can and should find ample opportunities to act as leaders in the community.

V. Opportunities for Young Lawyers to Lead: Non-Profit Organizations

Outside of law school, law firms, and community service, non-profit organizations⁸¹ offer young attorneys more great opportunities to lead. According to the National Association for Law Placement (“NALP”), only 4% of young attorneys begin their careers in non-profit organizations.⁸² Additionally, the geographic concentration of these lawyers is staggering, with 42% of those beginning their careers with non-profits settling in New York City, Chicago, or Washington D.C.⁸³ Despite these statistics, a discussion of leadership within non-profits remains

⁷⁸ Maryland Judiciary, Department of Family Administration, *available at* <http://www.courts.state.md.us/family/proseprojects.html> (last visited Apr. 1, 2008).

⁷⁹ Maryland Judiciary, *supra* note 29.

⁸⁰ Zimmerman, *supra* note 26.

⁸¹ For purposes of this paper, “non-profit organizations” will be defined as “legal non-profit organizations” only. Other non-profit organizations will be discussed in the “Community Service” portion of the paper.

⁸² Available at http://www.nalpfoundation.org/webmodules/articles/articlefiles/87-After_JD_2004_web.pdf, pp. 26 (last viewed, 3/19/08).

⁸³ *Id.*

crucial because these opportunities are available to both young attorneys who work for non-profits, as well as young associates from law firms who attempt to engage in pro bono work.⁸⁴

The pursuit of leadership possibilities is important not only to those whom the attorney serves, but also to the attorney herself. Opportunities to experience diverse perspectives, step out of one's usual comfort zone, and lend leadership skills to those in need are valuable in both professional and personal realms.⁸⁵ New leadership perspectives can foster sympathy between a young attorney and others (both clients and colleagues).⁸⁶ Additionally, the ability to help the underrepresented while leading colleagues enhances the sense of self-worth on which many attorneys rely.⁸⁷ These affirming feelings can help those in the legal profession de-stress, keep things in perspective, and remember concerns beyond the brief due next week.⁸⁸

Gaining the advantages of these opportunities depends in large part on the attorney. As Marlene Bennett, a member of the Public Interest Law Foundation, states, “There are plenty of chances for young attorneys to work with non-profits, *if they choose to pursue them.*”⁸⁹ While pursuing them may be easy, finding these opportunities may appear to be a bit more daunting.⁹⁰ These leadership possibilities break down into three main categories: 1) Inter-organization training; 2) Intern guidance programs; and 3) Fundraising Committees.⁹¹

⁸⁴ An examination of the Public Interest Law Foundation’s associations accentuates this point. This well-renowned legal non-profit organization combines with private sector attorneys to form attorney teams that are assigned to specific cases. Thus, both non-profit and private sector attorneys are working under the PILF umbrella on every issue. Interview with Benjamin Procter, 3d Year Law Student, Santa Clara University School of Law, in Santa Clara, Cal. (Mar. 16, 2008).

⁸⁵ *Id.*

⁸⁶ Interview with Michelle Griffith-Jones, 3d Year Law Student and President of Women and Law, Santa Clara University School of Law, in Mountain View, Cal. (Mar. 16, 2008).

⁸⁷ Interview with Benjamin Procter, *supra* note 14.

⁸⁸ Interview with Marlene Bennett, *supra* note 15.

⁸⁹ Interview with Marlene Bennett, *supra* note 6.

⁹⁰ *See infra*, Part IV.

⁹¹ *See* Interview with Bennett, *supra* note 11.

A. Inter-Organization Training

Many legal non-profit organizations are comprised of a variety of divisions, which focus specifically on a distinct area of law.⁹² Such a situation creates excellent leadership opportunities for young lawyers. Due to the area-specific nature of each department in legal non-profits, attorneys are dependent on other lawyers to teach them about their area of expertise.⁹³ As a result, young attorneys often find themselves the lead authority on a given area of law.

At the Silicon Valley Law Foundation, attorneys teach a variety of classes designed to educate other members of the Law Foundation so as to expand the knowledge base of each individual attorney. Teaching seminars at the Law Foundation, in which attorneys discuss their area of legal focus and its impact on various cases undertaken by the organization, occur quite frequently and are attended by many of the attorneys employed by the organization.⁹⁴

Consequently, young lawyers who begin their careers at the Law Foundation discover that leadership in this non-profit is all but inevitable. “If the law foundation is typical of other places,” says Bennett, “many of the lawyers are young and have no option but to lead. There are a lot of jobs to be done and simply not enough seasoned lawyers to go around. In many instances, newcomers do not have much of a choice but to take on a leadership role in some capacity.”⁹⁵

Such a situation is a perfect opportunity for a young lawyer to take up the reins of leadership. Teaching one’s area of specialty allows the person to display competence, which in

⁹² See <http://www.lawfoundation.org/partners.asp> (last visited 3/21/08).

⁹³ See interview with Benjamin Procter, *supra* note 14.

⁹⁴ See Interview with Elizabeth Tietjen, 3d Year Law Student and facilitator of FLY Program, Santa Clara University School of Law, in Santa Clara, Cal. (Mar. 13, 2008).

⁹⁵ Interview with Marlene Bennett, *supra* note 6.

turn allows the attorney to enhance her own credibility.⁹⁶ In fact, the most effective way to build credibility in the eyes of others is to become an expert in your field.⁹⁷ Therefore, a young lawyer who has the opportunity to educate those around her will have the opportunity to lead and be viewed among colleagues as a leader.

Beyond this benefit, however, educating one's colleagues offers a number of downstream leadership opportunities. For example, in many instances a single case can bring with it a multitude of issues that span a number of different areas of law. Thus, if a young lawyer has displayed competence and credibility in teaching others that area of law, the young attorney will likely be recruited to lead the legal team with respect to that issue.⁹⁸ As a result, at many non-profit organizations, young lawyers are not only able to take on leadership roles by educating others, but also by applying their expertise to a given case, which is an opportunity that may never be extended to a young lawyer in a private firm.⁹⁹ Thus, the young attorney has the chance to foster collaboration among the legal team,¹⁰⁰ create a climate of trust,¹⁰¹ and facilitate relationships among team members,¹⁰² all of which are crucial aspects of leadership.

B. Intern Guidance Programs

Intern Guidance Programs offer young attorneys another opportunity to lead. Many legal non-profit organizations are short-staffed and maintain few resources.¹⁰³ Consequently, these organizations are dependent on output from legal interns in order to meet the enormous demands of the organization's caseload.¹⁰⁴ Many schools, Santa Clara University included, help facilitate

⁹⁶ See Kouzes and Posner, *supra* note 2, pp. 35.

⁹⁷ Prof. Robert Cullen, Santa Clara University School of Law, Leadership for Lawyers: Lecture 1/28/2008.

⁹⁸ Interview with Marlene Bennett, *supra* note 6.

⁹⁹ *Id.*

¹⁰⁰ See Kouzes and Posner, *supra* note 2, pp. 224

¹⁰¹ *Id.* at 228.

¹⁰² *Id.* at 230.

¹⁰³ See Interview with Bennett, *supra* note 6.

¹⁰⁴ *Id.*

the relationship between student and non-profit group by offering credit units to their students in return for taking on an internship at a legal non-profit.¹⁰⁵ As a result, a young group of law students, ready to be directed, will emerge at many non-profits with the start of each new semester.¹⁰⁶

With this biannual influx of newcomers comes the chance for young attorneys to guide these interns throughout their experience. In fact, the intern guidance programs at many non-profits will match two or three interns with a young lawyer who can answer any questions the interns may have, direct their research and writing efforts, and help the interns resolve any problems they may be having at the organization.¹⁰⁷ Furthermore, law students who find themselves interning for non-profit organizations are typically surprised by the amount of case exposure they receive;¹⁰⁸ so, it is incumbent upon the young attorney to work closely with the intern both to ensure that their work is satisfactory and that their experience is positive.

In fact, oftentimes a young lawyer will find herself with a legal team that she must direct and collaborate with in order to be successful.¹⁰⁹ Thus, young lawyers in charge of law students must engage the law students on many levels described by Kouzes and Posner. In order to be successful, these young attorneys must foster collaboration among their team members.¹¹⁰ In order to foster collaboration, young lawyers must create a climate of trust and facilitate relationships between themselves and their interns, as well as among the interns themselves.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁵ See Robert H. Miller, *Law School Confidential: A Complete Guide to the Law School Experience*, pp. 325 (St. Martin's Press, New York, 2004). Interesting to note is the reciprocal leadership opportunities that exist in this context. On the one hand, young attorneys have the opportunity to cultivate their own leadership skills by taking a group of law students under their wings. However, on the other hand, law students have the ability, at least to a limited extent, to expand their leadership experience by undertaking a non-profit internship. See *supra* Part II.

¹⁰⁶ See Interview with Procter, *supra* note 14.

¹⁰⁷ See Interview with Procter, *supra* note 14; See also Interview with Bennett, *supra* note 6.

¹⁰⁸ *Id.*

¹⁰⁹ *Id.*

¹¹⁰ See Kouzes and Posner, *supra* note 2, pp. 224.

¹¹¹ *Id.*

These goals can be accomplished by young lawyers communicating in a positive way, sharing resources available to the young lawyer and the organization with the interns, and working with the young law students to develop cooperative goals that each group can strive to achieve.¹¹²

C. Fundraising

Leadership opportunities for young lawyers in non-profits also exist in the context of fundraising.¹¹³ It is crucial that young lawyers interested in non-profit work recognize that the reality of business – even in so-called non-profit organizations – demands that wealth be generated in order to perpetuate the organization’s mission.¹¹⁴ Indeed, many non-profit organizations maintain a number of fundraising committees designed to solicit donations from outside sources, formulate fundraising strategies, and organize various events designed to raise money for the non-profit.¹¹⁵

Young attorneys can play a vital role on these committees if they choose to spearhead a fundraising effort on behalf of their organization. Oftentimes, young attorneys are the first people that organizational representatives turn to when crafting a fundraising plan. Their youthful energy, creativity, and innovation are crucial components to a successful fundraising effort.¹¹⁶ As a result, young attorneys who are interested in assuming a leadership role at a legal non-profit should reach out to the fundraising arm of their organization and make it known that this is one place¹¹⁷ where they would like to exercise their leadership skills.

Additionally, leadership opportunities in the context of fundraising lend themselves to the type of positive social entrepreneurship discussed by Sarah H. Alvord, L. David Brown, and

¹¹² See *id.* at 230 – 233.

¹¹³ Interview with Bennett, *supra* note 11.

¹¹⁴ See Prof. Robert Cullen, Santa Clara University School of Law, Leadership for Lawyers: Lecture 3/2408.

¹¹⁵ See http://nonprofit.about.com/od/fundraising/Fundraising_Tips_and_Tools.htm (stating that fundraising is the lifeblood of any non-profit organization).

¹¹⁶ See *supra* note 6.

¹¹⁷ See Interview with Bennett, *supra* note 11.

Christine W. Letts in their piece, *Social Entrepreneurship: Leadership that Facilitates Societal Transformation*. In this article, these authors assert that using business and business models to accomplish social objectives can act as a catalyst for social transformation.¹¹⁸ However, this social transformation demands adequate funding through commercial efforts.¹¹⁹ This is where the innovation, energy, and vision of young attorneys become useful to legal non-profits in the context of fundraising. These opportunities allow young lawyers to expand their ability to appeal to common ideals, as well as animate a shared vision among the group they lead, both of which are central to effective leadership.¹²⁰ These non-profit organizations, particularly in the youth-driven Silicon Valley, need young attorneys with fresh ideas that can appeal to donors who share the organization's commitment to positive social transformation. Thus, fundraising on behalf of a non-profit organization presents an excellent opportunity for young attorneys to lead.

D. The Inevitability of Leadership in Legal Non-Profit Organizations

In many ways, legal non-profit organizations are the perfect training ground for young lawyers who seek to lead. The nature of legal non-profit organizations makes it all but inevitable that young lawyers will be forced into leadership positions early in their careers, if not immediately upon their arrival.¹²¹ The majority of non-profit organizations believe that they are understaffed and underfunded.¹²² For example, one local non-profit organization is typically staffed with between two and three attorneys per department, when the ideal number of attorneys

¹¹⁸ See Sarah H. Alvord, L. David Brown, and Christine W. Letts, *Social Entrepreneurship: Leadership that Facilitates Societal Transformation* pp. 1-3.

¹¹⁹ *Id.*

¹²⁰ See Kouzes and Posner, *supra* note 2, pp. 133 – 156.

¹²¹ Interview with Marlene Bennett, 3d Year Law Student and Legal Intern with the Public Interest Law Foundation, Santa Clara University School of Law, in Mountain View, Cal. (Mar. 23, 2008).

¹²² <http://www.nten.org/research/itstaffing> (last visited March 25, 2008).

per department is between six and eight.¹²³ As a result, legal non-profit organizations become highly dependent on young attorneys to take on leadership roles in areas such as intra-office education, intern guidance, and fundraising.¹²⁴

Beyond the inevitability of leadership, however, there is also a certain expectation of leadership bestowed upon young attorneys at legal non-profit organizations. “A common misperception among law students is that, should you choose to work at a public-service organization, you’ll have your choice of places and can wait until the last minute to make the arrangements. Think again.”¹²⁵ Non-profit organizations will not indiscriminately settle for any attorney who is willing to work for the entity. Rather, non-profit organizations seek out young lawyers who will fit into the organizational environment, work constructively with others, and be willing to take on leadership roles immediately upon their arrival.¹²⁶ In essence, legal non-profits look for young attorneys who have demonstrated their capacity to lead through previous experiences. Thus, a young attorney who seeks to work for a non-profit organization must be ready and willing to cultivate their leadership skills, which underscores the importance of exploiting the leadership opportunities described in section II.

The legal community must take proactive steps in creating young attorneys who are ready and willing to lead. The legal community can facilitate the increased involvement of young attorneys with non-profit organizations first by setting an example. If elders in the profession give their time to non-profits, up and coming members will likely follow suit.¹²⁷ This notion simply underscores the argument that leadership breeds leadership. Additionally, law offices and

¹²³ See *supra* note 45 and accompanying text.

¹²⁴ *Id.*

¹²⁵ Robert H. Miller, *Law School Confidential: A Complete Guide to the Law School Experience*, pp. 177 (St. Martin’s Press, New York, 2004).

¹²⁶ See Interview with Bennett, *supra* note 45.

¹²⁷ See Interview with Bennett, *supra* note 6.

law schools with adequate resources could organize volunteer opportunities with non-profits in which young attorneys and law students can participate. These efforts will create an environment rich with leadership opportunities for young attorneys.

VI. Overcoming Obstacles to Leadership

Despite aspirations and encouragement to exercise leadership, young lawyers face a variety of obstacles to developing their leadership skills. All leaders face obstacles. Indeed, a willingness to challenge the status quo is part and parcel of leadership.¹²⁸ Here, however, we focus on the obstacles specific to young lawyers early in their careers.

In this context, obstacles mean external forces or conditions that impede the exercise of leadership or reduce the opportunities to lead. While internal hindrances (e.g., a lack of maturity, anger management issues, or depression) could arguably be deemed as "obstacles" to leadership, repairs or improvements in the deep recesses of psyche and soul are beyond the scope of this paper. Any problems in mental, emotional, or social health should be addressed as part of one's overall commitment to personal effectiveness. Otherwise, even poor diet and lack of exercise could be deemed obstacles to leadership.¹²⁹ Indeed, maintenance of a healthy self is clearly useful for life in general,¹³⁰ and not just for developing leadership skills in young lawyers.

¹²⁸ Kouzes & Posner, *supra*, at 18.

¹²⁹ Stephen R. Covey, *Principle-Centered Leadership*, Quality Digest (November 1995), available at <http://www.qualitydigest.com/nov95/html/prin-cnt.html> (last visited March 24, 2008) ("The same principles that govern our personal quality performance also lead to increased professional and organizational effectiveness. For instance, what if your organization systemically encouraged everyone to sharpen the saw -- to practice habit seven of the Seven Habits of Highly Effective People? The name comes from the story of a woodcutter charged to cut a huge amount of timber, working hard from dawn to dusk at his task -- but never getting past the first tree. When asked by a passerby who observes the woodcutter wearing himself out with no apparent progress, "Why don't you sharpen the saw?" he replies with determination, "I can't -- too busy sawing."").

¹³⁰ Of course, if a leader attempts to lead a group toward better health, proper self-care would be an intrinsic part of leadership by example.

Hence, we now turn to the external obstacles to leadership specifically faced by young lawyers. These can be loosely classified as obstacles to developing skills or obstacles to finding leadership opportunities.

A. Obstacles to Developing Leadership Skill

According to business coach Anthony Mullins, one common obstacle is feeling guilty when delegating tasks. This guilt causes a leader to fail to delegate adequately, resulting in the leader "spend[ing] too much time on tasks that would better serve the organization if they were delegated."¹³¹ Thus, the leader does not make as much impact as he or she otherwise might. To overcome this obstacle, Mullins recommends bearing in mind that (1) some individuals may be eager to accept the tasks one feels reluctant to delegate, and (2) the entire organization benefits from delegating tasks outside one's core strengths.¹³²

Another common problem in skill development is a loss of confidence or motivation. Lisa Sansom, an organizational effectiveness coach and consultant, gives a classic example of this:

The biggest obstacle I have seen is a [young professional] who is very energetic and comes into an organization, teeming with new ideas. The [young professional] is told "you don't understand how things work around here" and the only way to prove that they do, in fact, understand how things work, is to do things the way they have always been done. After a few beatings like that, the [young professional] has all the initiative, drive and new ideas drained out of them and then the organization has lost a valuable asset.¹³³

¹³¹ Anthony Mullins, *Four Obstacles to Exceptional Leadership -- Part 1*, Ezine Articles, <http://ezinearticles.com/?Four-Obstacles-to-Exceptional-Leadership--Part-1&id=62142> (last visited March 25, 2008) ("Often times it is both natural and necessary for young leaders to try to prove their worth by doing too much themselves. They want to set the pace, be a team player, and show that they can contribute in many areas. While it is true that they can show leadership by performing tasks that are outside their position, they are not truly impacting the organization in the best and most productive way.").

¹³² *Id.*

¹³³ Interview with Lisa Sansom, Organizational Effectiveness Coach and Consultant, in LinkedIn Answers (March 17, 2008), *available at* http://www.linkedin.com/answers/career-education/career-development/CAR_CRD/191505-1500084?browseIdx=0&sik=1206122405768&goback=%2Eamq (last visited March 25, 2008).

In such a situation, it would become crucial to self-validate and restore one's confidence and motivation without looking to others. Jessy Geary, manager of product quality for The Sports Authority, recommends that young lawyers "truly believ[e] they have what it takes, while at the same time being grounded and centered."¹³⁴

Related to loss of confidence is the problem of over-conformity. Richard Nicholls, a voice and data engineer, says organizations can discourage young professionals from challenging the status quo by saying, "We've always done it this way," or "No one has told us what they want."¹³⁵ Amy J. Good, an executive assistant, echoes, "I would say the most common obstacle is simply blending in with the crowd. Someone who wants to be a leader needs to show a willingness to learn, take some risks, and show leadership and teamwork skills."¹³⁶ Over-conformity is more likely when undergoing heavy training by more senior personnel. Fortunately, well-researched risk-taking can overcome this obstacle, especially if a mentor is available to help with research and communication of new ideas.¹³⁷

A lack of credibility among young lawyers is almost universally ubiquitous. Business owner Peter Denman tells young professionals that they must "develop credibility within the

¹³⁴ Interview with Jessy Geary, Manager of Product Quality for The Sports Authority, in LinkedIn Answers (March 17, 2008), *available at* http://www.linkedin.com/answers/career-education/career-development/CAR_CRD/191505-1500084?browseIdx=0&sik=1206122405768&goback=%2Eamq (last visited March 25, 2008).

¹³⁵ Interview with Richard Nicholls, Voice and Data Engineer at City of Ryde, in LinkedIn Answers (March 17, 2008), *available at* http://www.linkedin.com/answers/career-education/career-development/CAR_CRD/191505-1500084?browseIdx=0&sik=1206122405768&goback=%2Eamq (last visited March 25, 2008).

¹³⁶ Interview with Amy J. Good (Schave), Executive Assistant to the President & CEO at Urban League of Greater Madison, in LinkedIn Answers (March 17, 2008), *available at* http://www.linkedin.com/answers/career-education/career-development/CAR_CRD/191505-1500084?browseIdx=0&sik=1206122405768&goback=%2Eamq (last visited March 25, 2008).

¹³⁷ Interview with Richard Nicholls, *supra* ("Best advise, if you're starting out, do some research find out why it's done that way, then find ways to do it better and in the absence of a good mentor be prepared to take a risk and accept responsibility for a decision to achieve something for the greater good. Present your ideas in what ever way works, Presentation, memo, email, or just a chat....corridor conversation are great for seeding ideas. Training on effective and assertive communication will go a long way to help.").

organisation [sic] before people with more experience will listen."¹³⁸ To build credibility, Peter recommends focusing within one's sphere of influence:

There are problems within any business, the key is to spot ones that you can directly influence and improve quickly. Senior Management will listen to you if you have a track-record of achievement. It is easy to talk a good game but if you have the achievements to back it up then you are on the road to winning credibility.¹³⁹

Human development coach and writer, Holly Garnell urges young professionals to work on their own listening skills to quickly learn "what's being said and the undercurrents that aren't so obvious," as well as "being able to accept and work with constructive (and sometimes negative) feedback."¹⁴⁰ One should also recognize that, in some situations, there is simply no substitute for experience. Pete "NetDoc" Murray, owner of ScubaBoard.com, stresses the importance of not trying to lead too early, as forcing oneself into a role without proper preparation can backfire and set oneself up for demoralizing failure.¹⁴¹ In this sense, knowing when not to lead can itself contribute to developing one's leadership skills.

B. Obstacles to Finding Leadership Opportunities

When formal leadership opportunities are scarce, a young lawyer need not wait passively for new opportunities to chance by. Author and motivational speaker, Mohamed Tohami notes,

¹³⁸ Interview with Peter Denman, Owner of Learner Dad - Coaching for First-Time Dads, in LinkedIn Answers (March 17, 2008), *available at* http://www.linkedin.com/answers/career-education/career-development/CAR_CRD/191505-1500084?browseIdx=0&sik=1206122405768&goback=%2Eamq (last visited March 25, 2008).

¹³⁹ *Id.*

¹⁴⁰ Interview with Holly Garnell, Educator, Counselor, Human Development Coach and Writer, in LinkedIn Answers (March 17, 2008), *available at* http://www.linkedin.com/answers/career-education/career-development/CAR_CRD/191505-1500084?browseIdx=0&sik=1206122405768&goback=%2Eamq (last visited March 25, 2008).

¹⁴¹ Interview with Pete "NetDoc" Murray, Owner and Visionary for www.ScubaBoard.com, in LinkedIn Answers (March 17, 2008), *available at* http://www.linkedin.com/answers/career-education/career-development/CAR_CRD/191505-1500084?browseIdx=0&sik=1206122405768&goback=%2Eamq (last visited March 25, 2008) ("There is no need to take unnecessary risks in order to prove something. Rather, learn to ENJOY yourself where you are. Work on those basic skills, and at some point you will get the chance to extend a bit. Hopefully, this will be around a professional who can help to train you BEFORE you undergo a baptism of fire.").

"True leadership is not related to and shouldn't wait for a position."¹⁴² In "Leading the Pack From the Back," business and motivational speaker Tommy Yan writes, "True leaders do deeds. . . that meet all needs. . . so everyone succeeds."¹⁴³ Yan encourages selflessly and generously being a team player.¹⁴⁴ For young lawyers, being a team player often means being a "first follower" who contributes ideas and influence to a team.¹⁴⁵ As author Benjamin Zander, in his book "The Art of Possibility," states, one can "[Lead] from Any Chair [in the orchestra]."¹⁴⁶ Kouzes and Posner devote an entire chapter in their book to the notion that leadership is for everyone.¹⁴⁷ In light of these ideas, it seems immaterial whether one is actually leading or merely demonstrating leadership capacity. In all cases, there is an opportunity to exercise leadership skills.

One special scenario is where one's own boss is lacking in leadership skills. Therapist, coach, and consultant Richard Hamon advises young professionals to stay calm despite the frustrations and work positively on one's own leadership to fill the void in the organization:

When faced with an uncomfortable leadership situation, it is wise to avoid hitting the panic button. Try and figure a way to overcome. Give it time and don't quit.

What you learn in the process can set you up for success in many future positions. Plus, you will grow in wisdom and skill, by increasing your comfort zone with adversity! You will become more valuable to yourself and others by learning

¹⁴² Interview with Mohamed Tohami, Author and Motivational Speaker, in LinkedIn Answers (March 17, 2008), available at http://www.linkedin.com/answers/career-education/career-development/CAR_CRD/191505-1500084?browseIdx=0&sik=1206122405768&goback=%2Eamq (last visited March 25, 2008).

¹⁴³ Tommy Yan, *Leading the Pack From the Back*, Ezine Articles, <http://ezinearticles.com/?Leading-the-Pack-From-the-Back&id=877346> (last visited March 26, 2008).

¹⁴⁴ *Id.*

¹⁴⁵ Interview with Susan R. Symington, Human Resources Executive at Central Intelligence Agency and Newfield-Trained Coach, in LinkedIn Answers (March 17, 2008), available at http://www.linkedin.com/answers/career-education/career-development/CAR_CRD/191505-1500084?browseIdx=0&sik=1206122405768&goback=%2Eamq (last visited March 25, 2008) ("I think the biggest obstacle for anyone (young or old) who is not in a "position of leadership" is an overly narrow definition of leadership. The only thing one needs to have to be a leader is . . . followers. So any type of influence a person wields, through suggestion, role-modeling, etc. is an opportunity for leadership.").

¹⁴⁶ Benjamin Zander, *THE ART OF POSSIBILITY: TRANSFORMING PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL LIFE* 66 (Harvard Business School Press 2000).

¹⁴⁷ Kouzes & Posner, *supra*, at 337.

how to negotiate tough situations, without allowing anyone to compromise your own mental attitude and/or damage your leadership efforts.

Becoming a strong leader is a never ending task. Wherever you find a vacuum of leadership, step up to the plate and provide the real thing. Not by opposing others but by showing them a different way.¹⁴⁸

Additionally, more formal opportunities to lead can be found external to one's employer. Amy J. Good suggests "join[ing] a professional organization related to [one's] position, or the position [one hopes] to have in the next few years."¹⁴⁹ Entrepreneur Colin Jensen says, "If you are a well-rounded person, you will be in circles where you're the leader--whether organizing volunteers for a scout troop, volunteer church leadership positions, substitute teaching, or coaxing clients to obey your advice."¹⁵⁰

Consumer services consultant Justyna Jarosz, however, cautions that one must not allow oneself to become pigeonholed.¹⁵¹ While it is important for credibility reasons to be seen as good at one's job, appearing good at only one job and nothing else would naturally stifle one's growth as a leader. To overcome this obstacle, young lawyers should take advantage of the Pareto Principle, also known as the 80-20 rule, which posits that 80 percent of one's gains come from only 20 percent of one's efforts.¹⁵² If one can identify the efforts which will not result in

¹⁴⁸ Richard Hamon, Toxic Leadership – How To Win With A Toxic Leader, Ezine Articles, <http://ezinearticles.com/?Toxic-Leadership---How-To-Win-With-A-Toxic-Leader&id=862048> (last visited March 27, 2008).

¹⁴⁹ Interview with Amy J. Good, *supra*.

¹⁵⁰ Interview with Colin Jensen, Educator, Leadership Generalist, ENFP Idea-Generator, Entrepreneur, MBA, in LinkedIn Answers (March 17, 2008), *available at* http://www.linkedin.com/answers/career-education/career-development/CAR_CRD/191505-1500084?browseIdx=0&sik=1206122405768&goback=%2Eamq (last visited March 25, 2008).

¹⁵¹ Interview with Justyna Jarosz, Consumer Services Consultant and Professional, in LinkedIn Answers (March 17, 2008), *available at* http://www.linkedin.com/answers/career-education/career-development/CAR_CRD/191505-1500084?browseIdx=0&sik=1206122405768&goback=%2Eamq (last visited March 25, 2008).

¹⁵² See, e.g., F. Jon Reh, *Pareto's Principle - The 80-20 Rule*, About.com, <http://management.about.com/cs/generalmanagement/a/Pareto081202.htm> (last visited March 26, 2008) ("Of the things you do during your day, only 20 percent really matter. Those 20 percent produce 80 percent of your results. Identify and focus on those things. When the fire drills of the day begin to sap your time, remind yourself of the 20 percent you need to focus on. If something in the schedule has to slip, if something isn't going to get done, make sure it's not part of that 20 percent.").

significant gains, one should redirect time and energy toward other goals. This may be uncomfortable for many young lawyers taught in law school to compete by maximizing all efforts. With some courage and insight, however, even the most zealous young lawyer can recognize the benefits to self, employer, and client in devoting a portion of one's efforts to long-term developmental gains.

VII. Conclusion

Leadership can happen anywhere, at anytime.¹⁵³ As a result, it is important to recognize that leadership characteristics can be exploited and cultivated by both young and old.¹⁵⁴ While these characteristics are available, to many young attorneys it may seem as though the opportunities to practice and develop these characteristics are few and far between. As this paper indicates, this is simply not the case.

Leadership opportunities are available to young attorneys in a multitude of respects. They exist in law school, law firms, community service, and non-profit organizations. Each of these contexts affords young lawyers the ability and opportunity to model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act, and encourage the heart.¹⁵⁵ Consequently, these different frameworks allow young lawyers to practice the qualities and practices that make a great leader. While this is the case, it is important for young lawyers to actively seek out these opportunities, as chances to direct and manage do not typically suddenly appear.¹⁵⁶ Rather, it is the leader who seeks out the opportunity to guide and lead.¹⁵⁷

In their efforts, young attorneys will inevitably be faced with numerous obstacles. In fact, overcoming these obstacles is oftentimes what makes a strong leader. By facing these

¹⁵³ Kouzes and Posner, *supra* note 2, pp. 8.

¹⁵⁴ See Cullen, *supra* note 3.

¹⁵⁵ See Kouzes and Posner, *supra* note 2, pp. 14 (outlining the five practices of exemplary leadership).

¹⁵⁶ See Prof. Robert Cullen, Santa Clara University School of Law, Leadership for Lawyers: Lecture 3/10/2008.

¹⁵⁷ *Id.*

obstacles directly, young lawyers can improve both themselves and their standing in the eyes of others, which are equally crucial to the development of a strong leader. By actively seeking out leadership opportunities and engaging leadership roles, while at the same time effectively attacking obstacles that attempt to inhibit their ability to become leaders, young attorneys can affect positive change in their schools, firms, organizations, and communities that many of them never thought possible.