

WHO WILL LEAD?

Kathleen Guthrie Woods

Whether they're from red states or blue states, our leaders are turning gray. We currently have the oldest Congress in history, Sarah Sladek, CEO of market research and consulting firm XYZ University, reveals in a recent blog post, "Is Democracy Dead?" According to the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), the average age of state legislators is fifty-six, nearly one quarter of our legislators are over sixty-five, and a mere 3.8 percent are between twenty and thirty-four. "Most elected officials in office now were in some type of office by the time they were thirty-one," Sladek reports, and asks "Doesn't it make you wonder who will be running our country in the future?"

Yolanda Jackson, BASF's deputy executive director and diversity director, says this "shocking" trend came to her attention when representatives from BASF went to Sacramento to address the court funding crisis. Of the number of legislators the group spoke to, "maybe two" were attorneys. For the others, "We had to educate them, explain to them what we do," she says, "explain to them that the judicial branch is the *third branch* of our government, not just an agency," and therefore should not be considered in the same class when it came to budget-cutting decisions. "Attorneys need to be at the table," says Jackson. "We bring a certain skill set that includes critical thinking and a broader perspective of the issues."

How can BASF's Boomers (see page 17) and Gen Xers inspire and equip the Millennials to step into public service roles and lay a succession plan for Generation Z?

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It does. What also concerns leaders of The Bar Association of San Francisco (BASF) is the significant decline in the number of attorneys serving in the California legislature. Once the largest occupational group, in 2007, attorneys made up only .08 percent of California's legislators.

The New York State Bar Association reaches out to future leaders through a nonpartisan, half-day seminar it presents in six cities. Nearly four hundred attendees earn CLE credits while learning about topics ranging from getting on the ballot to campaign financing to postelection court challenges. The seminar offers discussions on the

impact of the Supreme Court's *Citizens United* decision, including political perspectives and the enforceability of current state and federal laws, and "The Challenges of 'Dirty' Election Tactics," hot topics sure to be big draws.

When young people approach Clothilde Hewlett to ask advice for starting their political careers, "I talk about the path for how to get involved," she says, "not just how to run for public office." A partner at Nossaman who is widely recognized for her public service, Hewlett meets frequently with young people, hears the same desires that she expressed when she got her start at age fifteen, and encourages them to explore opportunities through board or commission appointments. "You get to keep your day job," she says, and "you get so much exposure to what's happening in legislation."

The Leadership Development Committee of the Lawyers Club of San Diego strives to connect members with such opportunities. It was originally formed as the Boards and Commissions Committee, and for the group's monthly newsletter, cochairs Jodi Cleesattle and Johanna Schiavoni continue to compile a list of opportunities that include county and city commissions, as well as open seats on local nonprofit boards.

Each year, the committee also sponsors one event. At "Political Boot Camp," a day-long, Saturday event, panelists—which in 2011 included a state senator, city council member, and school district board member—share realities of managing a staff, embracing the learning curve, sponsoring legislation, campaigning for reelection, and adjusting to your private life becoming public. In afternoon breakout sessions, discussions include campaign management, judicial elections, and rules and ethics issues.

On alternate years, the committee cohosts a "Pipeline to Leadership: Securing Spots on Boards and Commissions" panel. An evening networking reception is followed by a one-hour panel discussion about where to find information, what skills are needed, and how to get started. Attendees leave with a packet of resources that includes a directory of boards and commissions and tips on how to determine whether a position is the right fit.

"There are so many ways to get involved," Schiavoni says. "Network, give back to your community, follow your interests, such as arts and children's programs." Hewlett agrees, and says, "through the process of being passionate, [young attorneys] learn how the legislative process works, they learn how to communicate."



Clothilde Hewlett

Who's Who

Baby Boomer
Generation or
"Boomers"
1946–1964

Generation X or
"Gen X"
1965–1981

Generation Y or
"Millennials"
1982–1995

Generation Z or
the "Internet/Net Generation"
1996–present

Dyanna Quizon, a Millennial attorney and currently a policy advisor on public safety in San Francisco Mayor Ed Lee's office, saw this demonstrated during the 2008 presidential campaign. Young people worked to help get out the vote, she says, because they "saw that their issues were at stake." She became involved with Filipinos for Obama, not only representing her peers but also representing her culture, and has since become more involved through KAYA/Filipino Americans for Progress because "it seems like an important thing to do." As part of her involvement, she's exposed to how constituencies work, how the legislature works. "This is how you have a voice," she says.

Jermain Jones's path took an interesting turn during his sophomore year in college. As a biology major, he did an internship at a lab and was introduced to bioethics. "There are laws and rules about working with living organisms," he says. "Caterpillars—there are rules about how you can work with them, dispose of them." This inspired a desire to learn more about biopolicy. Now, while preparing to take the LSAT, Jones is a legislative aide to Mayor Lee, working on policy issues and contributing to the mayor's introduction of legislation. He's learned that "it's less about going into big political drama, and more about the little things we can do . . . the everyday work we do to make things better."

While some believe Millennials lack interest in service because of the rocky economy and difficult job market, Sladek disagrees. "Look at the movements they've created—Facebook, Teachers for Life, the growth of Habitat for Humanity!" she says. "Each generation comes better educated, with different skills and perspectives," skills and perspectives that need to be tapped. Furthermore, their power comes from their sheer numbers. The 80 million Millennials will outnumber Boomers in the workforce in 2015, *just three years from now*. "Shame on us for not engaging them in our succession plans," Sladek says.

The question is "How do we engage them?"

"Anything we create has to be transparent and authentic," says Sladek, whose company teaches organizations how

to bridge gaps in the workforce and be relevant to future generations. Younger generations, she says, "are skeptical, elusive. It's going to take more effort and time to engage them, to build relationships of trust." Organizations need to "share a lot of information about how decisions are made, how organizations are run. Nothing should be behind closed doors."

One of the first steps is to develop an outreach program, she says, to invite them to the table and empower them to be active participants. "Once they agree to engage," she says, we need to "provide equal opportunity, allow them to voice their opinions and to lead." We also need to be open to change, to not get stuck on how things have been done in the past. The final step, Sladek says, is to put words into action, to see progress, to see that everyone is winning.

And everyone can win, sometimes through side benefits of public service. Although they don't track the success of their attendees in San Diego, Schiavoni hears informally how much the programs are appreciated, and she emphasizes how service can pay dividends in career success, giving individuals advantages in this economy. "You gain networking opportunities, develop leadership skills, and gain confidence," she says, while also helping your community.

Hewlett, Jones, and Alex D'Ull all speak to the benefits of connections made between young attorneys and their role models. "I'm trying to find my path," says D'Ull, a rising third year at UC Hastings College of the Law, so he seeks out people he admires. "I ask them to sit down and talk," he says, "and I ask, 'What would you do if you were me?'" While their paths may diverge, he still learns from their experiences. Jones also recalls the impact of individuals who came to his undergraduate constitutional law class and talked to the students. Hearing about diverse backgrounds and challenges overcome can be highly motivating to a young attorney at the start of his or her career.

What Schiavoni finds particularly exciting is that "there's continually a new audience." About a year ago, Hewlett, along with Black Women Lawyers of Northern California and Emerge, created a forum for African

American women to ask panelists about how to pursue political appointments and run for office. Expecting a small turnout, she agreed to host it in her home. More than a hundred women showed up. Clearly there is a demand for information, a desire for guidance. “People come up to me all the time, asking how to get involved,” she says. We now have the opportunity to introduce programs that will get them started on their paths, to lead them to success,

and this can be our legacy of service. “Our generation has incredible capacity,” says D’Ull. “We need help, but once we get our feet on the ground, I believe we’re going to do amazing things.”

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BASF OFFERS POLITICAL LEADERSHIP WORKSHOPS

In early 2013, The Bar Association of San Francisco will launch a series of workshops geared to attorneys who seek to enter the world of politics as an enhancement to their practice of law or as a service to their community.

Political Opportunities for Leadership by Lawyers (POLL): A Bootcamp Series will be a four-part series that provides practical advice, training and inspiration from attorneys who serve on boards and commissions, and from those who practice political law. And each workshop will provide ample time for networking and business card swapping.

Mark these dates on your calendar and plan to attend one or all. Details will be announced in October; check www.sfbar.org/calendar.

SAVE THE DATES

January 29, 2013

**Preparing Yourself for Leadership:
Boards & Commissions**

February 26, 2013

Day in the Life of a Politician

March 26, 2013

Running for Political Office

April 23, 2013

**Consultants, Lobbyists and
Election Law Lawyers**