

## ADVICE TO YOUNG LAWYERS ABOUT PRACTICING SOLO

Over the past year, I have learned many things about running a law practice as a sole practitioner. I have discovered that in addition to being an attorney, I am now an accountant, office manager, marketing executive, and so on and so forth. Many of my lessons have been learned by trial and error, but as I have alluded to in prior articles, I have also benefitted a great deal from the knowledge and experience of my colleagues.

There are many books out there written about how to effectively run a law practice as a sole practitioner. Unfortunately, finding the time to read anything, but legal journals, emails and new court opinions, seems impossible. So, for those of us who need cliff notes, I have gathered a few tips from some of Macomb County's sole practitioners:

- Make phone calls timely (that goes for clerks and clients). Obviously, you cannot be in two places at once, so if you are going to be late for court, call the clerks and let them know. Return client phone calls (even court appointed ones) within 24 hours. *Mark Pellecchia*
- Educate your secretary about court schedules (i.e. motion/case evaluation days). This will reduce scheduling conflicts. *George Parish*
- Get your attorney fee agreement in writing. This will protect you from client complaints and will reduce the likelihood of grievances and potential sanctions. *Brian Legghio*
- Get your money up front! *Lynn Eastin*
- Become familiar with software programs and research tools that will significantly speed up the preparation of form documents and letters. This is especially helpful for those practitioners who do not have a secretary. *Lynn Eastin*
- "Concentrate on being a good lawyer and everything else will fall in line." If you work hard, you will build a good base of referrals. *Sebastian Lucido*
- My advice, as a relatively new sole practitioner, is, do not be afraid to ask questions. Every attorney I have ever consulted has been more than willing to give suggestions and guidance to legal and procedural conundrums us young attorneys frequently encounter.

Interestingly, each attorney I solicited advice from gave me a different tip about how to effectively and efficiently run a solo law practice. However, most of the sole practitioners I spoke with emphasized the importance of having at least one person to consult when they needed help. Networking is by and large the key to a successful law practice regardless of whether you are part of a firm or practicing on your own.

Attending the events hosted by the YLS and the MCBA is the easiest way to network with Macomb County lawyers and judges. The next event hosted by the MCBA is the Fall General Membership Meeting on October 14<sup>th</sup> at Gowanie Country Club.