

ABA YOUNG LAWYERS DIVISION SURVEY: CAREER SATISFACTION

This report is based on the results from a random survey that the American Bar Foundation undertook among more than two thousand members of the American Bar Association Young Lawyers Division. Using a questionnaire modeled after a similar survey in 1995,¹ this survey collected information about various aspects of young lawyers' practices and satisfaction with their careers.

Please note the following highlights:

- The median billable year is 1860 hours.
- Half of young lawyers spend more than fifty hours per week on legal work.
- Most young lawyers are at least somewhat satisfied both with their current job and with the practice of law generally.
- More than seven out of ten are at least somewhat satisfied with the balance between their professional and personal lives.
- Among those in private practice, small-firm practitioners are likelier than those in larger firms to find that their expectations are being met with regard to their ability to contribute to the social good, help others, and enjoy a certain quality of life. On the other hand, larger-firm practitioners are likelier to experience greater financial rewards and significant potential for advancement.
- Despite a high level of overall satisfaction with current position and the practice of law generally, more than sixty-five percent indicated that they would consider switching jobs within two years.

This survey's primary goal is to help the Association and the Division better understand the needs and concerns of young lawyers in America, and thereby deliver programs and services that meet those needs and concerns.

Let me especially thank the ABF Assistant Director, Joanne Martin, for her significant help with this report.

Brian Melendez, Chair
ABA Young Lawyers Division

¹ The Young Lawyers Division undertook career-satisfaction/dissatisfaction surveys in 1984 and 1990, in which the survey pool included lawyers of all ages. Both the 1995 survey and the instant survey are based on a pool within the Division, whose membership consists of those members of the Association who have been admitted to practice in their first bar within the past five years, or are less than thirty-six years old.

Career Satisfaction Among Young Lawyers

In 1995 a survey of the YLD membership was conducted and the focus of that effort was on career satisfaction. That survey was replicated in 2000, utilizing a written questionnaire that was mailed to a random sample of 2136 YLD members. A total of 842 useable questionnaires were returned for an overall response rate of 40.9%.¹ The results of this effort are described in the following report. Data from the earlier survey are used for comparison purposes where appropriate.

A substantial component of this report is devoted to describing the practice demographics of the YLD membership. The link between various aspects of career satisfaction and practice setting is quite strong. Among private practitioners, for example, firm size is a very good predictor of satisfaction with regard to financial reward. It is important then to use these practice demographics to provide context for the examination of career satisfaction among the members of the Young Lawyers Division.

I. General Practice Demographics

As shown in Table 1, almost three quarters of the respondents to the current survey are private practitioners and 9.6% are working in government settings. About three percent of the YLD respondent pool is currently working in non-legal positions or are unemployed. (These respondents are removed in the analysis of career satisfaction

¹The sample included 76 individuals for whom no current address was available. They were dropped from the sample. For more detail on the survey methodology, see Appendix B.

elements of this report.) It is interesting to note that a higher percentage of female respondents are employed in government, corporate settings, law school positions, and judicial clerkships/support positions than are their male counterparts. A higher proportion of the male respondents are in private practice compared to the female respondent population.

Table 1				
Distribution of Respondents by Setting of Current Position*				
	<i>Percent</i>			
	<i>All Respondents</i>			
<i>Setting</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i>1995</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>
Private practice	72.0%	69.8%	66.1%	76.4%
Government	9.6	11.7	11.5	8.3
For-profit corporations	7.9	6.8	8.7	7.2
Judiciary	2.9	4.5	3.6	2.3
Law school	0.8	1.0	1.4	0.4
Other non-profit organizations	2.5	1.5	2.5	2.5
Non-legal positions	1.8	1.8	2.8	1.0
Unemployed	1.0	1.3	1.4	0.6
Other	1.5	1.7	2.0	1.2

*Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

The comparison between the two respondent pools shows an increase over the interval between surveys in the percentage of the YLD membership employed in private practice and in for-profit corporations and a decrease in the percentage working in government settings. There is only a small variation between respondent pools in the percentage of YLD members who were unemployed at the time of the respective

surveys. The same percentage of respondents from each survey reported being in non-legal positions.

As shown in Table 2, most of the respondents who are employed in legal positions have not been working for very long in the firm or organization in which they are currently located. The median number of years of employment in the firm or organization in which the respondents currently find themselves is two. The two year median also holds among those survey respondents who are engaged in private practice.

Table 2		
Duration of Employment in Current Firm or Organization*		
<i>Time in Current Position</i>	<i>Percent</i>	
	<i>Respondents in Legal Positions (N=796)</i>	<i>Private Practitioners (N=602)</i>
Less than 12 months	16.3%	14.2%
12 months	22.2	21.0
13 to 24 months	21.4	22.3
25 to 59 months	22.2	23.6
60 or more months	17.8	18.8

*Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

This short career history is not unexpected given the “newness” of the YLD members to the practice of law. As the data in Table 3 show, about a quarter of the survey respondents were admitted only a year before the survey was conducted. Over half have only been practicing law or eligible to practice law for three or fewer years.

Table 3	
Date of First Admission to Practice* (N=809)	
<i>Year</i>	<i>Percent</i>
1993 or earlier	18.5%
1994 – 1996	23.1
1997	15.1
1998	19.0
1999 – 2000	24.2

*Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

About 8% of the YLD members responding to the survey who are in private practice are sole practitioners. As detailed in Table 4, almost three-quarters of the private practitioner respondents are associates in their firms and 14.4% are partners. Table 4 also shows the distribution by gender of YLD private practitioner members across various positions. A lower percentage of females than males are partners or shareholders in their firms or are in sole practice. The male private practitioner respondents are less likely than their female counterparts to be associates in their firms.

Table 4			
Current Position in Private Practice*			
	<i>Percent</i>		
	<i>All Respondents (N=604)</i>	<i>Female (N=236)</i>	<i>Male (N=368)</i>
Sole practice	7.8%	5.5%	9.2%
Partner or shareholder in firm	14.4	9.7	17.4
Associate	74.9	82.2	70.1
Of counsel	1.0	0.4	1.4
Other salaried position	0.3	0.4	0.3
Other	1.7	1.7	1.6

*Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

The respondents who are currently associates were asked to assess when they would be considered for partnership. Table 5 shows the distribution of the responses to this inquiry, with time estimates converted to months. Almost half of the responding associates report that they will be considered for partnership within four years after the survey. One-fifth do not expect to be considered for more than six years hence.

Table 5	
Time Until Partnership Consideration (N=379)	
<i>Time</i>	<i>Percent</i>
24 months	21.4%
25 to 48 months	25.3
49 to 60 months	18.2
61 to 72 months	14.5
More than 72 months	20.6

There is a statistically significant relationship between the size of firm in which an associate is employed and the length of time that will elapse before the partnership decision. The YLD members who are associates in smaller firms expect this process to occur more quickly than those in larger firms. This relationship is shown in Table 6. Over a third of the respondents in firms of 200 or more lawyers expect to wait more than six years for consideration while only 3% of the associates in the smallest firms will wait that long.

Table 6						
Time Until Partnership Decision by Firm Size*						
<i>Size of Firm</i>	<i>Number of Months</i>					
	<i>24 or fewer</i>	<i>25[]48</i>	<i>49[]60</i>	<i>61[]72</i>	<i>More than 72</i>	<i>(Ns)</i>
1 to 4 lawyers	39.4%	18.2%	30.3%	9.1%	3.0%	(33)
5 to 15 lawyers	34.7	36.1	15.3	2.8	11.1	(72)
16 to 50 lawyers	19.2	21.8	21.8	21.8	15.4	(78)
51 to 200 lawyers	17.6	25.3	16.5	17.6	23.1	(91)
More than 200 lawyers	11.7	22.3	14.6	16.5	35.0	(103)

*Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

The private practitioner respondents provided detailed information on the size of firms in which they are employed. Table 7 presents this information. Half of the private practitioner respondents are working in firms of more than 25 lawyers. It is interesting to note that although the median size firm was the same among both the male and female young lawyers responding to the survey, the overall distribution of firm size when analyzed by gender was different. YLD private practitioner members who are male are slightly more likely to be in larger firms than the female YLD members.

Table 7			
Distribution of YLD Members by Firm Size*			
<i>Firm Size</i>	<i>All Respondents (N=600)</i>	<i>Female (N=233)</i>	<i>Male (N=367)</i>
1 to 4 lawyers	23.5%	23.2%	23.7%
5 to 15 lawyers	19.2	20.6	18.3
16 to 50 lawyers	17.3	18.9	16.1
51 to 200 lawyers	19.3	18.9	19.6
More than 200 lawyers	20.8	18.5	22.3

*Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

The comparison between the distribution of private practitioner respondents to the 1995 survey and those from the 2000 survey across firm size shown in Table 8 indicates that there has been a shift over that time interval toward larger firms. In 1995, two-fifths of the YLD private practitioners were in firms of six or fewer lawyers and about another two-fifths were employed in firms of 26 or more lawyers. In 2000, about 30% of the private practitioner respondents are working in firms of six or fewer lawyers while about half are in firms of twenty or more lawyers. It is more likely that the drift toward larger firms reflects a shift in YLD member demographics than a change across the nationwide population of [young lawyers].

Table 8		
Comparative Look at Firm Size Demographics*		
<i>Number of Lawyers</i>	<i>Percent</i>	
	<i>1995 (N=495)</i>	<i>2000 (N=600)</i>
1 to 2 lawyers	19.6%	13.7%
3 to 6 lawyers	21.3	16.0
7 to 25 lawyers	19.6	20.8
26 to 150 lawyers	20.2	24.7
More than 150 lawyers	19.2	24.8

*Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

The number of billable hours generated by individual lawyers is considered an important productivity measurement in many firms. In others, plaintiffs' practice, for instance, billable hours are irrelevant because fees are generated through other methods such as the contingency fee. For this reason in part, many private practitioners could not respond to an inquiry about the number of hours charged to clients during the fiscal year immediately preceding the survey. Table 9 displays the distribution of responses from those who could provide such information.

Table 9	
Annual Number of Billable Hours (N=403)	
<i>Number of Hours</i>	<i>Percent</i>
1500 or fewer	21.8%
1501 to 1800	21.6
1801 to 1950	18.6
1951 to 2050	17.6
More than 2050	20.4

As might be expected, the relationship between firm size and number of hours billed is statistically significant. As demonstrated in Table 10, respondents working in larger firms are more likely to report higher billable hours than are those young lawyers working in smaller firms.

Table 10						
Billable Hours by Firm Size*						
<i>Firm Size</i>	<i>Billable Hours</i>					<i>(Ns)</i>
	<i>1500 or fewer</i>	<i>1501[] 1800</i>	<i>1801[] 1950</i>	<i>1951[] 2050</i>	<i>More than 2050</i>	
1 to 4 lawyers	64.2%	17.0%	3.8%	9.4%	5.7%	(53)
5 to 15 lawyers	33.3	36.2	7.2	11.6	11.6	(69)
16 to 50 lawyers	15.1	26.0	17.8	21.9	19.2	(73)
51 to 200 lawyers	7.4	21.1	36.8	17.9	16.8	(95)
More than 200 lawyers	11.0	11.9	17.4	22.9	36.7	(109)

*Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

II. Substantive Areas of Practice and Litigation-Related Activity

As the common bonds within the YLD membership are age and experience rather than substantive focus, the diversity among its members in terms of areas of practice is not surprising. Table 11 highlights this diversity. There are only two areas where as many as a quarter of the respondents spend at least 5% of their time □ general corporate and commercial law. This focus is again not terribly surprising, given the large number of large firm lawyers in the YLD membership.

Table 11 Substantive Fields of Practice (N=817)			
Area	<i>Percent of Time</i>		
	5 □ 24%	25 □ 49%	50 □ 100%
Antitrust	4.2%	1.6%	1.3%
Banking	5.6	1.2	1.5
Bankruptcy: business	7.2	1.1	1.1
Bankruptcy: consumer	4.9	1.0	0.9
General corporate	17.1	8.9	5.1
Commercial law	11.9	8.0	5.5
Civil rights and liberties	5.6	2.0	1.8
Criminal defense	6.7	4.0	2.9
Criminal prosecution	1.7	1.1	3.9
Domestic relations	6.2	3.5	4.5
Employment benefits	7.7	2.2	1.6
Environmental law	4.2	1.6	2.1
Immigration law	2.4	1.0	0.6
Insurance (not torts)	7.5	1.3	2.8
Intellectual property	8.8	1.7	4.3
International	2.1	1.6	0.6
Natural resources law	1.8	0.6	0.4
Personal injury: plaintiffs	10.0	3.4	2.8
Personal injury: defense	6.2	4.0	5.9
Probate	8.4	3.3	2.1
Public utilities	1.7	0.9	0.2
Real estate: commercial	8.8	3.8	2.7
Real estate: residential	10.3	3.3	1.8
Land use, zoning, and/or condemnation	5.6	2.4	0.1
Securities / financing	4.3	3.7	3.8
Tax	4.5	3.3	3.2
Other administrative law and government agency matters	7.5	4.7	2.7
Other	4.0	6.9	11.4

Among the YLD survey respondents, other than those in non-legal positions or who are currently unemployed, the median number of hours per week devoted to legal work is 50. Table 12 shows the distribution of the full respondent pool and of the respondents who are private practitioners across the number of hours devoted to legal work.

Table 12		
Average Number of Hours Devoted to Legal Work*		
<i>Average Hours / Week</i>	<i>Percent</i>	
	<i>All Respondents (N=782)</i>	<i>Private Practitioners (N=597)</i>
40 or fewer	25.3%	18.9%
41 to 49	13.8	12.7
50	26.2	28.1
51 to 59	12.2	14.1
60 or more	22.5	26.1

*Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Among the private practitioners there is a statistically significant correlation between size of firm and the average number of hours devoted to legal work on a weekly basis. Those lawyers in larger firms spend more hours per week on legal work than do those in smaller firms. Table 13 sets out this relationship.

Table 13						
Average Number of Hours / Week Devoted to Legal Work Among Lawyers in Firms of Various Sizes*						
<i>Firm Size</i>	<i>Average Number of Hours</i>					
	<i>40 or fewer</i>	<i>41-49</i>	<i>50</i>	<i>51-59</i>	<i>60 or more</i>	<i>(Ns)</i>
1 to 4 lawyers	38.7%	13.1%	24.8%	7.3%	16.1%	(137)
5 to 15 lawyers	17.5	16.7	32.5	14.0	19.3	(174)
16 to 50 lawyers	9.7	20.4	33.0	17.5	19.4	(103)
51 to 200 lawyers	17.5	9.6	26.3	19.3	27.2	(114)
More than 200 lawyers	8.1	4.8	25.8	14.5	46.8	(124)

*Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

While slightly over a fifth (23.6%) of the YLD members responding to the survey spent no time on litigation activities during the 12 months preceding the survey, just less than a fifth (18.2%) devote 100% of their practice time to this type of work. About half of the respondents focus 40% or more of their effort on litigation activities during this time.

It might be expected that private practitioners would be more likely than the respondent pool as a whole to engage in litigation work. Indeed, among the private practitioners, while 17.9% undertook no litigation-related tasks during the 12 months preceding the survey, the median percentage of time devoted to litigation activities by this respondent group was 70%. Among the private practitioner respondents there was a significant relationship between the percent of time spent on litigation activities and firm size.

Those YLD members in smaller firms were more likely than those in large firms to do

some litigation work. However, it is more likely that those who spend all of their time on litigation matters are in large, rather than small, firms.

The survey respondents for the most part appear to be relatively satisfied with the level of litigation activity they are currently experiencing . Only 16.1% (or 31 respondents) of those who spent none of their practice time on litigation would like to increase their experience in this area. A similar percentage (17.2%) of those YLD members who do devote some time to litigation activities would like to increase that focus; alternatively 24.5% of these respondents would like to decrease the level of litigation activity in their practices.

III. Career Satisfaction

This section of the report will begin with a look at overall satisfaction patterns and proceed to examine in detail various issues and factors that may contribute to dissatisfaction with an individual's particular practice setting or with the practice of law generally. This part of the report will conclude with a look at anticipated transition patterns which young lawyers might leave their current firm or organization within the next two years.

The young lawyers responding to the survey provided an evaluation of their overall satisfaction with their current position and with the practice of law generally. The data shown in Table 14 indicate that the majority of the respondents are at least

somewhat satisfied with both their current position and the practice of law generally. There are no significant differences among the respondents based on length of time in practice or between the female respondents and their male counterparts with regard to either of these issues. Additionally, there are no differences among private practitioners in firms of various sizes.

These data also suggest that the respondents to the current study are generally more satisfied with their own practice situations than they are with the practice of law more generally – as was the case with the 1995 respondents. Less than seven percent of the respondents to either survey expressed great dissatisfaction with either their career or the practice of law. The young lawyers responding to the current survey appear to be slightly more satisfied with both their current positions and the practice of law than were the respondents to the earlier survey.

Table 14				
Satisfaction with Current Position and Practice of Law*				
<i>Level of Satisfaction</i>	<i>Current Position</i>		<i>Practice of Law</i>	
	<i>2000 (N=806)</i>	<i>1995 (N=696)</i>	<i>2000 (N=787)</i>	<i>1995 (N=664)</i>
Very satisfied	40.1%	36.8%	26.9%	21.2%
Somewhat satisfied	40.2	40.4	48.2	51.2
Somewhat dissatisfied	14.1	16.4	19.2	20.6
Very dissatisfied	5.6	6.5	5.7	6.9

*Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

There are many factors that may contribute to an individual's satisfaction with his or her situation with regard to practice setting or the practice of law generally. The majority of the respondents who are employed in legal positions (86.5%) report that they are currently practicing in substantive areas of law which they enjoy. Only 13.5% of the young lawyers do not appear to be satisfied with this aspect of their careers. This pattern is strikingly similar to the percentage of respondents to the 1995 survey who reported discontent with the substantive focus of their practice. At that time 13.4% of the young lawyers indicated that they were not practicing in a substantive area that they enjoyed.

The level of satisfaction an individual derives from his or her career may turn in part on the degree to which one's expectations ultimately mesh with one's experience. The survey recipients were asked to assess how well their expectations with regard to various attributes of practice comport with their experiences. Table 15 sets out the responses to this inquiry and also compares them to those from the 1995 survey. While some minor variations exist between the results from the two surveys, there are no significant shifts.

The alignment of expectations and experience with regard to intellectual challenge is the strongest of those tested, as it was in 1995. About 70% of the young lawyers responding to the current survey feel that their actual experience has lived up very well to their expectations regarding the level of intellectual challenge involved in the

practice of law. Only 2.6% report that their expectations have been completely disappointed with regard to this aspect of practice. With regard to financial remuneration, career satisfaction, the ability to help others, and quality of life, the majority of the respondents working in legal positions appear to be at least somewhat satisfied with the convergence between their expectations and experience. The inability to make a contribution to social good is the aspect of practice that seems to disappoint young lawyers the most. A quarter of the responding young lawyers feel that their expectations with regard to their ability to make a contribution to social good through the practice of law have not been met, a situation which has not improved in the interval between surveys. While there are no significant differences between the perceptions of the female and male respondents, length of time in practice was related to notions about the harmony between expectation and experience regarding financial remuneration. The respondents who had been in practice for a longer period of time (keeping in mind the constraints of Division membership) are more likely than those newer to practice to be satisfied that their expectations are being met by their experience.

<p align="center">Table 15</p> <p align="center">Experience vs. Expectations With Regard to Various Aspects of Practice*</p>								
<i>Practice Aspects</i>	<i>Level of Convergence</i>							
	<i>Very Well</i>		<i>Somewhat</i>		<i>Not at All</i>		<i>(Ns)</i>	
	<i>2000</i>	<i>1995</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i>1995</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i>1995</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i>1995</i>
Intellectual challenge	69.1%	67.9%	28.3%	30.2%	2.6%	1.9%	(808)	(702)
Financial remuneration	34.4	31.9	51.5	49.7	14.1	18.4	(808)	(702)
Career satisfaction	30.0	27.2	58.6	62.9	11.4	9.9	(804)	(699)
Ability to help others	22.9	26.3	60.7	58.7	16.4	15.0	(804)	(699)
Quality of life	19.4	20.3	64.6	61.7	16.0	18.0	(805)	(699)
Contribution to social good	15.7	16.9	59.8	58.1	24.6	25.0	(805)	(699)

*Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Among private practitioners in firms of various sizes, there are some significant differences with regard to the convergence of expectations and experience. Small firm lawyers are less likely than those in large firms to find that their expectations with regard to financial remuneration are being met. Conversely, private practitioners in large firms are less pleased with their ability to make a contribution to social good, their quality of life, and the ability to help others than are those in smaller firms. Table 16 highlights these differences.

Table 16				
Experience vs. Expectations by Firm Size*				
	<i>Level of Convergence</i>			
	<i>Very Well</i>	<i>Somewhat</i>	<i>Not at All</i>	<i>(Ns)</i>
<i>Financial Remuneration</i>				
<i>Firm Size</i>				
1-4 lawyers	10.0%	65.7%	24.3%	(140)
5-12 lawyers	13.3	68.4	18.4	(98)
13-50 lawyers	35.8	55.8	8.3	(120)
51-200 lawyers	60.0	35.7	4.3	(115)
More than 200 lawyers	76.0	23.2	0.8	(125)
<i>Contribution to Social Good</i>				
<i>Firm Size</i>				
1-4 lawyers	21.3%	61.0%	17.7%	(141)
5-12 lawyers	17.3	68.4	14.3	(98)
13-50 lawyers	9.2	65.5	25.2	(119)
51-200 lawyers	7.0	61.4	31.6	(114)
More than 200 lawyers	8.0	60.0	32.0	(125)
<i>Quality of Life</i>				
<i>Firm Size</i>				
1-4 lawyers	24.3%	60.7%	15.0%	(140)
5-12 lawyers	23.5	67.3	9.2	(98)
13-50 lawyers	10.8	69.2	20.0	(120)
51-200 lawyers	10.5	73.7	15.8	(114)
More than 200 lawyers	6.4	76.8	16.8	(125)
<i>Ability to Help Others</i>				
<i>Firm Size</i>				
1-4 lawyers	35.7%	53.6%	10.7%	(140)
5-12 lawyers	29.6	58.2	12.2	(98)
13-50 lawyers	14.4	72.0	13.6	(118)
51-200 lawyers	10.5	68.4	21.1	(114)
More than 200 lawyers	10.4	64.0	25.6	(125)

*Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

To focus more specifically on characteristics of the respondents' current positions, the questionnaire asked for an assessment of their level of agreement with a number of specific statements. As shown in Table 17, the young lawyers were very unlikely to agree with the suggestions that the level of pressure or tension on the job is low or that the financial rewards are disproportionately high. The respondents do seem to feel that they have substantial control over their work, that their work is challenging, and that the level of collegiality in their work setting is quite high.

Table 17
Level of Agreement With Various Practice Descriptions*

<i>Descriptions</i>	<i>Level of Agreement</i>							
	<i>Very</i>		<i>Somewhat</i>		<i>Not at All</i>		<i>(Ns)</i>	
	<i>2000</i>	<i>1995</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i>1995</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i>1995</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i>1995</i>
Type of work is challenging	57.2%	57.9%	40.1%	39.4%	2.6%	2.7%	(802)	(696)
Level of collegiality is high	50.3	42.9	40.1	45.2	9.6	12.0	(799)	(686)
I have substantial control over my work	45.1	48.9	43.3	41.9	11.6	9.2	(803)	(697)
There is substantial potential for advancement/professional development	31.6	26.3	51.9	51.2	16.5	22.4	(800)	(691)
The balance between the time spent on work and on family responsibility is satisfying	26.7	24.8	55.3	53.0	18.0	22.2	(805)	(690)
Financial rewards are great	18.7	13.5	49.9	52.4	31.5	34.2	(798)	(691)
Level of pressure/tension on the job is low	9.8	10.6	46.1	40.1	44.1	49.3	(800)	(696)

*Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Perceptions with regard to the veracity of this set of assertions have changed somewhat in the intervening years between the two surveys. The respondents to the current survey feel that they have somewhat less control over their work than did the respondents to the 1995 survey. On the more positive side, the current respondents are more likely to agree with the assertions that financial rewards are high, that potential for advancement is substantial, that collegiality is high, and the balance between work and family responsibilities is satisfying.

The survey respondents who have been in practice longer are more likely than newer lawyers to feel that they have substantial control over their work and that the financial rewards are great. The newer lawyers, on the other hand, are more likely to report that job pressure is low and that the balance between time spent on work and on family is satisfactory. Only with regard to one aspect was there a significant difference between male and female respondents. Female lawyers responding to the survey were more likely than their male counterparts to agree with the assertion that the level of tension/pressure on the job is low.

Among private practitioners, firm size is an important factor in the evaluation of these practice descriptors. As shown in Table 18, smaller firm practitioners are significantly more likely than those in larger firms to report that they have substantial control over their work, that they experience a lower level of job tension/pressure, and that the balance between time spent on work and family responsibilities is satisfactory. The price paid for these benefits is that larger firm lawyers are more likely than those in smaller firms to report that the financial reward is great and that there is substantial potential for advancement. This pattern mirrors the 1995 survey results.

Table 18				
Accuracy of Descriptive Statements by Firm Size*				
	<i>Level of Agreement</i>			
	<i>Very</i>	<i>Somewhat</i>	<i>Not at All</i>	<i>(Ns)</i>
Substantial Control				
<i>Firm Size</i>				
1-4 lawyers	65.7%	30.0%	4.3%	(140)
5-15 lawyers	40.0	46.1	13.9	(115)
16-50 lawyers	36.3	48.0	15.7	(102)
51-200 lawyers	30.2	56.0	13.8	(116)
More than 200 lawyers	28.5	52.8	18.7	(123)
Low Job Pressure				
<i>Firm Size</i>				
1-4 lawyers	10.8%	52.5%	36.7%	(139)
5-15 lawyers	9.6	53.5	36.8	(114)
16-50 lawyers	1.9	44.7	53.4	(103)
51-200 lawyers	3.4	43.1	53.4	(116)
More than 200 lawyers	4.1	35.0	61.0	(123)
Satisfactory Balance Work/Family				
<i>Firm Size</i>				
1-4 lawyers	36.2%	51.8%	12.1%	(141)
5-15 lawyers	31.3	53.0	15.7	(115)
16-50 lawyers	9.7	73.8	16.5	(103)
51-200 lawyers	10.3	69.0	20.7	(116)
More than 200 lawyers	4.9	61.8	33.3	(123)
Financial Reward Great				
<i>Firm Size</i>				
1-4 lawyers	7.2%	50.0%	42.8%	(138)
5-15 lawyers	5.3	55.8	38.9	(113)
16-50 lawyers	16.7	55.9	27.5	(102)
51-200 lawyers	29.3	60.3	10.3	(116)
More than 200 lawyers	52.8	43.9	3.3	(123)
Substantial Potential for Advancement				
<i>Firm Size</i>				
1-4 lawyers	31.4%	47.9%	20.7%	(140)
5-15 lawyers	25.4	57.0	17.5	(114)
16-50 lawyers	36.3	52.9	10.8	(102)
51-200 lawyers	41.4	50.9	7.8	(116)
More than 200 lawyers	43.1	50.4	6.5	(123)

*Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Another potential cause of career discontent may be found in the mix of activities encountered over some period of time in one’s work setting. As set out in Table 19, the young lawyers responding to the survey allocate their time across many activities – drafting instruments and client contact being predominant across those tested in this survey. There have been some shifts between surveys in how time is allocated, but these shifts have occurred at the lower end of activity, e.g., the current respondents are spending less time on internal administration and clerical work than was the case in 1995. These patterns may be a reflection of the increase in large firm lawyers in the respondent pool.

**Table 19
Allocation of Time Across Various Activities***

Activity / Task	Percent of Time									
	0 – 20		21 – 49		50 – 75		More than 75		(Ns)	
	2000	1995	2000	1995	2000	1995	2000	1995	2000	1995
Drafting instruments	26.7%	32.0%	37.6%	38.4%	23.4%	21.1%	12.3%	8.5%	(779)	(659)
Client contact	48.8	50.8	36.1	37.3	10.0	8.9	5.1	3.1	(772)	(644)
Negotiation	70.8	67.0	22.2	25.5	4.8	6.5	2.2	1.1	(720)	(648)
Written discovery	74.5	N/A	21.4	N/A	3.0	N/A	1.2	N/A	(743)	
Trial/court/administrative appearances	76.6	68.1	16.7	22.5	4.5	5.8	2.1	3.5	(753)	(653)
Internal administration	83.5	80.3	12.4	14.4	2.3	3.6	1.9	1.7	(752)	(646)
Clerical work	86.3	80.9	10.4	13.7	2.0	4.2	1.3	1.2	(743)	(643)
Depositions	87.9	83.9	10.5	12.2	1.5	3.1	0.1	0.8	(741)	(638)
Transactional closings	87.3	N/A	8.9	N/A	2.3	N/A	1.5	N/A	(741)	
Client development	90.1	90.9	7.6	7.4	1.3	0.9	0.9	0.8	(761)	(639)
In-house CLE	97.4	98.1	1.9	1.1	0.7	0.5	0.0	0.3	(731)	(616)

*Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Only 16.8% of the young lawyers responding to the current survey indicate that they are dissatisfied with the mix of activities in their current position. About 18.5% of the 1995 respondent pool reported some dissatisfaction with the balance of tasks they were exposed to. Female respondents are somewhat more likely to be happy with the mix of activities in their position than their male counterparts, but not significantly so. There were also no significant variations among private practitioners in firms of various sizes or among all respondents employed in legal positions based on years in practice with regard to their satisfaction with this aspect of practice.

As shown in Table 17, the survey respondents express some concern about the balance between time spent on work and the time available for personal life. To focus on this concern in a bit more detail, the respondents were asked to identify their level of satisfaction with this balance. Only about 27% of the respondents express some level of dissatisfaction, while, as shown in Table 20, about a fifth are very satisfied with the balance between work and their personal life and almost three quarters (72.7%) are at least somewhat satisfied. Among the 222 respondents who indicated some level of dissatisfaction, 29% reported that they felt that the situation would change for the better in the near future.

Table 20		
Level of Satisfaction With Allocation of Time Between Work and Personal Life		
	<i>Percent</i>	
	<i>2000</i>	<i>1995</i>
<i>Level of Satisfaction</i>	<i>(N=812)</i>	<i>(N=700)</i>
Very satisfied	21.6%	21.3%
Somewhat satisfied	51.1	48.3
Somewhat dissatisfied	21.9	23.7
Very dissatisfied	5.4	6.7

While gender is not significantly related to these assessments of the appropriateness of the allocation of time between work and personal life, firm size among the private practitioners is. The private practitioner respondents in larger firms are more likely than those in small firms to express some level of dissatisfaction with the allocation of time between work and their personal lives. For example, 39.5% of the lawyers in firms of more than 200 lawyers say that they are at least somewhat dissatisfied, compared to 19.1% of those in firms with one to four lawyers, or 24.5% of those in firms of three to six lawyers. Also, the respondents who are newer to practice are significantly more likely to express a high level of satisfaction with the balance of work and personal life than those who have been in practice longer.

The data in Table 21 present a slightly different look at the issue of the balance between work and personal life. Only about a fifth (23.1%) of the respondents disagree with the assertion that they spend too much time on work-related activities, and about a quarter (25.2%) feel that they allocate enough time to their personal life. On the other hand, a substantial proportion of the respondents place the burden for the lack of balance between work and home somewhat on their own shoulders by recognizing that they spend more time than necessary on work-related activities.

Table 21						
Balance Between Work and Personal Life*						
	<i>Strongly Agree</i>				<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	
	1		3		5	(Ns)
I spend too much time on work-related activities	15.4%	32.0%	31.6%	15.7%	5.4%	(801)
I do not allocate sufficient time to my personal life	15.4	29.5	30.0	18.2	7.0	(801)
I spend more time than necessary on work-related activities	9.0	22.1	32.6	26.6	9.7	(797)

*Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

The respondents who have been in practice longest are more likely than the newer attorneys to agree that they spend too much time on work-related activities. Female respondents are less likely than the males to feel that they spend more time

than necessary on work-related activities. Following patterns seen previously, among the private practitioner respondents, those in larger firms are significantly more likely than those in smaller firms to feel that they spend too much time on work-related activities and do not allocate sufficient time to their personal lives. The large firm respondents are also more likely than the young lawyers working in smaller firms to agree that they spend more time than necessary on work-related activities.

In the face of what appears to be a high level of general satisfaction among the young lawyers generally regarding their current position and the practice of law, it is interesting to note that 30.1% of those who responded to a question about the likelihood of their leaving the firm or organization where they are currently employed in the next two years said that they would strongly consider doing so. Another 37.2% reported that they might consider doing so. Only 9.5% of the responding YLD members would definitely not consider changing firms or organizations. (In 1995, 32.8% indicated that they would strongly consider a move within two years of the survey and 31% reported that they might consider doing so.) There were no significant differences between the female and male respondents with regard to their willingness to change positions. Newer lawyers are significantly more likely than those who have been in practice for a while to be strongly considering leaving their current firm or organization within the next two years. For example, 38.8% of the respondents admitted to practice in 1999 or 2000 are strongly considering such a move compared to 16.1% of the lawyers admitted in 1993 or earlier. There were also significant differences among private practitioners in firms of various sizes.

As displayed in Table 22, young lawyers in private practice in larger firms are significantly more likely to be contemplating a move from their current firm or organization and less likely than those in smaller firms to report that they would definitely not consider changing their current employment setting in the next two years. About 80.7% of the private practitioners in firms of more than 200 lawyers indicated that they might at least consider such action.

Table 22					
Willingness to Consider Change in Employment Situation Among Private Practitioners in Firms of Various Sizes					
<i>Firm Size</i>	<i>Level of interest in Job Change</i>				
	<i>Strongly Consider</i>	<i>Might Consider</i>	<i>Probably Would Not Consider</i>	<i>Would Definitely Not Consider</i>	<i>Ns</i>
1-4 lawyers	23.4%	34.3%	20.4%	21.9%	(137)
5-12 lawyers	30.9	30.9	25.8	12.4	(97)
13-50 lawyers	31.1	31.9	33.6	3.4	(119)
51-200 lawyers	29.6	34.8	31.3	4.3	(115)
More than 200 lawyers	33.1	47.6	15.3	4.0	(124)

*Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

The respondents who expressed some willingness to consider a move from the firm or organization in which they are currently employed were asked about the degree of importance of various issues in such a decision. As shown in Table 23, general job

dissatisfaction and the desire for a greater financial reward were assessed as the strongest motivations for such a change. Other issues deemed very important in such a decision by at least a third of this subset of respondents were limited advancement potential and the desire for more time for family.

Table 23				
Importance of Various Issues In Willingness to Consider Leaving Current Firm or Organization				
<i>Issue</i>	<i>Importance</i>			
	<i>Very</i>	<i>Somewhat</i>	<i>Not at All</i>	<i>(Ns)</i>
General job dissatisfaction	62.3%	24.9%	12.8%	(506)
Desire more financial reward	49.7	33.3	17.0	(517)
Limited advancement potential	43.3	32.5	24.2	(499)
Want more time for family	38.6	31.8	29.7	(485)
Job tensions/ personalities	29.4	34.7	35.9	(493)
Want more time for self	29.7	38.2	32.1	(489)
Substantive area of law currently practiced	25.5	34.8	39.8	(483)
Pressure to bill hours	18.8	31.0	50.2	(484)
Desire to leave practice of law	15.7	34.4	49.9	(477)
Experienced race or gender bias	5.3	11.9	82.8	(471)
Pro bono/public service work discouraged	3.0	17.4	79.7	(472)
Bar activities discouraged	3.6	12.1	84.3	(472)

IV. Personal Background

Membership in the YLD is determined primarily by age and secondarily by number of years from bar admission. The age distribution of the respondent pool is, as a result, tight and skewed toward lawyers 36 years or younger. Table 24 displays this distribution. Also shown in this table is a comparison between the female and male respondents which indicates that the male respondents are slightly older than their female counterparts. The median age of the two groups varies by one year. The median age of the female respondents is 31 and for males it is 32.

Table 24			
Distribution of Respondents by Age*			
<i>Age</i>	<i>All Respondents (N=830)</i>	<i>Females (N=351)</i>	<i>Males (N=479)</i>
28 and under	21.6%	25.6%	18.6%
29 – 30	21.6	24.2	19.6
31 – 32	17.1	16.0	18.0
33 – 35	23.8	18.5	27.8
36 and older	15.9	15.7	16.1

*Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Slightly over two-fifths of the survey respondents (42.4%) are female. With regard to ethnicity, 86% of the YLD members who indicated their ethnicity are Caucasian; 4.2% are African American; 4.3% are Asian American; 2.5% are Hispanic or Mexican American; and 0.3% are Native American. About 2.8% of the respondents placed themselves in an "Other" category.

About 58.7% of the YLD members who provided information on marital status are married; 36.3% are single and have never been married; 4.7% are divorced and single; and 0.4% are currently separated. Slightly over half of the survey respondents (54%) are members of two career families. A quarter of those respondents report that their spouse or significant other is also a lawyer.

The survey respondents reported their personal income from all sources in 1999. Table 25 shows the distribution of income levels among the YLD members. The median income fell between \$60,000 and \$69,999. The difference in the median income levels between female and male respondents is in some part attributable to the fact that the female YLD members are less likely than the males to be employed in private practice, and among private practitioners, women are less likely to be working in large law firms than are their male counterparts.

Table 25	
Income Levels*	
(N=806)	
<i>Income Level</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Under \$30,000	10.0%
\$30,000 - \$39,999	11.2
\$40,000 - \$49,999	13.3
\$50,000 - \$59,999	14.4
\$60,000 - \$69,999	9.1
\$70,000 - \$79,999	9.1
\$80,000 - \$89,999	5.8
\$90,000 - \$99,999	6.8
\$100,000 - \$124,999	10.4
\$125,000 - \$149,999	5.5
\$150,000 - \$199,999	4.1
\$200,000 - \$249,999	1.9
\$250,000 or more	1.5
Overall median = \$60,000 - \$69,999	
Female respondents median = \$50,000 - \$59,999	
Male respondents median = \$70,000 - \$79,999	
Private practitioners median = \$70,000 - \$79,999	

*Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Appendix B

The YLD membership survey was sent to a scientifically selected random sample of regular Division members. As the sample was drawn following standard sampling procedures, it was an accurate representation of the entire Division membership. Available information on two variables – geographical region of practice and age – was extracted from the ABA’s database for the Division members in the sample. These two variables were used to compare the sample with the pool of survey respondents to determine whether the respondent pool mirrors the sample and therefore the Division membership as a whole, at least as to the two variables available to use in this evaluation.

Table B.1 presents the geographical distribution of the sample and the respondent pool. The comparison of these two groups shows that while there are differences, they are small and not significant.

Table B.1			
Comparison of Survey Respondents to Sample by Region			
<i>Region</i>	<i>Sample (N=2135)</i>	<i>Respondents (N=842)</i>	<i>Difference</i>
New England	5.8%	5.1%	-0.7%
Middle Atlantic	16.9	16.2	-0.7
South Atlantic	21.7	20.9	-0.8
East South Central	5.7	6.7	+1.0
West South Central	9.5	10.2	+0.7
East North Central	13.6	14.5	+0.9
West North Central	5.6	7.0	+1.4
Mountain	4.9	4.0	-0.9
Pacific	15.8	15.0	-0.8
Puerto Rico	0.6	0.5	-0.1

*Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

The respondent pool was also compared to the sample in terms of age. As seen in Table B.2, there were again differences but in this instance they might be deemed significant. Younger lawyers are over represented in the respondent pool as compared to the sample. However, data on age were missing for almost a third (30.1%) of the sample. The distribution of age across the sample may therefore be considered unreliable for comparative purposes, especially given the tightness of the age range dictated by the requirements of Division membership.

Table B.2			
Comparison of Survey Respondents to Sample by Age*			
<i>Age</i>	<i>Sample (N=1492)</i>	<i>Respondents (N=830)</i>	<i>Difference</i>
28 and under	17.3%	21.6%	+4.3%
29 - 30	18.0	21.6	+3.6
31 - 32	18.4	17.1	-1.3
33 - 35	28.4	23.8	-4.6
36 and older	17.9	15.9	-2.0

*Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Unfortunately, we have only two variables common to the sample and the respondent pool to use for comparative purposes to evaluate possible non-respondent bias. The geographical distribution of the two groups are satisfactorily comparable. The analysis of the age variable suggests a respondent bias toward younger members of the Division, but as noted above these data are missing for 30.1% of the sample, compromising this analysis. Given that the variables that affect opinions about career satisfaction are predominantly position-related, and the fact of the tight age range across the Division membership, even if the variations between sample and respondent pool on the age variable were reliable, in my opinion the survey results may be relied upon as representative of the Division membership.