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It was another stellar year for the UB Law Alumni Association’s GOLD (Graduates of the Last Decade) Group. Offering fresh and innovative programs, the GOLD Group strives to provide social and professional activities geared toward attorneys who have recently embarked on their legal careers.

“The GOLD Group provides wonderful social and educational events for newly admitted attorneys,” explains Natalie Schaffer ’93, an attorney with the Buffalo law firm Harrington & Mahoney, and this year’s GOLD Group president. “What many UB Law alumni do not realize is that they automatically become members of the GOLD Group upon graduating.”

To kick off another exciting season, the GOLD Group board of directors hosted a happy hour at The Shebeen, a popular Irish pub in downtown Buffalo. Alumni were invited as guests of the GOLD Group to mingle with friends, network with other attorneys, and discuss everything from law to the weather.

“The social events are a great opportunity to meet our colleagues. We are encouraged by the increasing attendance at our events,” says Amy Wendt Fitch ’96, chair of the GOLD Group’s social committee. A spring social is already in the works, and promises to deliver another evening of fun and entertainment.

Also growing in popularity is the GOLD Group’s UB Law Downtown CLE series. Providing quality educational programs to attorneys at all stages of their career, the series is composed of four morning lectures held at the Midday Club in downtown Buffalo. Attendees can start their morning right with a Continental breakfast and a one-hour presentation on varying hot topics in law. This year the program has been particularly successful, as each lecture in the series is eligible for CLE accreditation.

A full room of attendees assembled for “The Facts About Long Term Care Coverage,” the first of the series which began in November. The lecture was presented by law Professor Anthony Szczypiel, who is chair of the Coalition of Medical Advocates. Hearing Examiner John J. Aman, of Erie County Family Court, and president of the New York State Hearing Examiners Association, brought in the new year with “1999 Child Support Resolutions ... and How to Keep Them.” Christopher K. Reed, assistant U.S. trustee, spoke to an attentive audience on Chapter 7 and Chapter 13 bankruptcy proceedings. The final lecture in this year’s series will be presented this spring by Douglas Dimitroff, an attorney with the Buffalo-based law firm Hodgson, Russ, Andrews, Woods & Goodyear. Dimitroff
will speak on real estate issues and land title surveys.

Gretchen Aylward '95, a member of the GOLD Group's Education Committee, commented, "These programs have become even more valuable with the arrival of mandatory CLE, and are an excellent way for practitioners to obtain CLE credit. We expect the programs to be even more successful in 1999."

In addition to its usual activities, the GOLD Group heightened its commitment to the Law School by offering to assist in the recruitment of top students. Wendy Irving '91 will co-chair the new Recruitment Committee.

"The GOLD Group Board is looking forward to actively participating in the Law School's recruitment effort by establishing one-on-one relationships with some of the nation's brightest students who are considering UB Law," says Irving. "Our goal is to assist the recruitment professionals in spreading the word about the amazing resources and opportunities at UB Law, while at the same time to provide a friendly and objective ear to top students making one of the most important decisions of their lives."

Officers of this year's GOLD Group include: Natalie Schaffer '93, of Harrington & Mahoney, as president; Stephen L. Yonaty '94, of Nesper, Ferber & DiGiacomo, as immediate past president; Wendy Irving '91, associate director of planned giving, University at Buffalo, as secretary; Amy Fitch '96, of Hodgson, Russ, Andrews, Woods & Goodyear, as social chair; Eileen Kennedy '94, of Seperston & Day, PC, as membership chair; Andrew Isenberg '92, of Gresens & Gillen, LLP, as communications chair; and Chris Marks '93, of Buffalo Financial Associates, as finance chair.

Additional board members include: Hilary Banker '96, of Burgio, Kita & Curvin, as social chair elect; Gretchen Aylward '95, of Griffith & Yost, as education chair elect; David Pfalzgraf '97, of Hodgson, Russ, Andrews, Woods & Goodyear, as social chair elect; and Joseph N. Del Vecchio '96, of National Fuel Gas, as communications chair elect.

Also, Jean Brenner '95, of Phillips, Lytle, Hitchcock, Blaine & Huber; Carlton Brownell '89, of the Law Office of Kevin D. Walsh; Colleen Dietrich '92, of the Attorney Grievance Committee; Douglas Dimitroff '89, of Phillips, Lytle, Hitchcock, Blaine & Huber; Julie Falvey '90, of the Law Office of Julie Falvey; Kenneth Gossel '91, of National Fuel Gas; Daniel Khalea '97, of the Erie County District Attorney's Office; Richard Krieger '90, of Gossel, Krieger & Newcomb; Marianne Mariano '94, of the Federal Public Defender's Office; Joseph Marris '93, of Albrect, Maguire, Heffern & Gregg; Paula Eade Newcomb '90, of Volgenau & Bosse; and Christine Uba '94, of the Law Office of Christine Uba.

The GOLD Group eagerly invites interested alumni graduating within the past 10 years to contact them with ideas and become involved with the organization. "We welcome suggestions and comments from the entire membership and encourage new attorneys who want to become more involved in the group to contact one of the board members," says Schaffer. "The influx of new attorneys on the board keeps our programs and events fresh and interesting."

If you are interested in becoming a member of the GOLD Group board of directors and contributing to its success, contact Natalie Schaffer at (716) 853-3700. It's a golden opportunity!