

Young Lawyer Meets the Bar

Jewel White Cole

BY RACHEL ATTAL

Triple-Gator Jewel White Cole (JD 95), the youngest of four children and first in her family to graduate from college, is used to making big strides. The latest one is as president of The Florida Bar Young Lawyers Division, an office she will take in June.

Cole doesn't mind spending her nights and weekends planning for her new leadership position because of the numerous community outreach opportunities it will offer. Everything in the organization is focused on serving members or the community, she said. "It is my goal to educate current and future attorneys that The Florida Bar not only regulates but helps attorneys do meaningful things for the community."

As president, Cole's initiatives will be to continue the division's focus on student outreach to current law students at Florida's 10 law schools and working towards developing a law student division of The Florida Bar to facilitate more networking opportunities. The Florida Bar Young Lawyers Division also provides professional opportunities for current attorneys,

including sponsoring numerous continuing legal education (CLE) programs throughout the year and hosting networking activities with local bar associations.

However, these programs couldn't be implemented successfully without the division's continuous efforts to forge partnerships with other organizations, such as the Florida Bar Foundation, for grants to successful execution of the projects. "It is a way to spread money around the state for great member and community programs," she said. "Our division includes the true worker bees of The Bar."

This fifth-generation Ft. Myers native spent eight years in Gainesville, where she received a bachelor's degree in sociology, master's degree in urban and regional planning and JD. After graduating from law school, Cole moved to Clearwater, Fla., and began working as a land use attorney at the Pinellas County Attorney's Office. "Working in the public sector of land use and environmental law allows me to be part of the solution in Florida," she said. During her 12-year stint, her position has morphed into more of an in-house counsel position than litigation, including writing ordinances and helping direct



policy making at the staff level. "I'm working to truly shape the future of the county," she said. "I have become more of a jack-of-all trades." Cole is board-certified in city, county and local government law by The Florida Bar.

Although Cole grew to love Gainesville, she had a difficult time leaving her beach filled weekends behind in Ft. Myers before attending college. "I was a beach bum kid and suffered from severe separation anxiety from the beach," she said. But after one year in Gainesville, Cole appreciated the city's differences. "There is something in the air up there in Gainesville," she said. "I'm always proud to be a Gator."