

PRESIDENT'S PAGE

BY KEVIN P. DURKIN

The Rewards of Service

It is a great honor and privilege for me to serve as the 130th president of our Association. In this stewardship capacity, I will work to fulfill the worthy missions and goals of our Association. I have been active in the CBA since my admission to the bar and have marveled at the extraordinary work and contributions of our members. Year in and year out, thousands of members work on committees; organize and speak at Continuing Legal Education seminars; provide volunteer services to the community; draft and comment on state and federal legislation and rule changes; testify at local, state, and federal hearings; serve as tutors/mentors for inner city children; and contribute clothes, toiletries, children's books, and children's gifts through the YLS. I could go on and on but the bottom line is that each of you, through your time, talent, and incredible generosity, makes this the best metropolitan bar association in the United States. You have the heartfelt thanks and appreciation of myself, my predecessor, Michael B. Hyman, and the Officers and Board of Managers, for your participation and support of the important work of the Association.

We have a great year planned and I welcome your help and participation in any and all of our projects, on our committees, and with our programs. Here are some of the CBA's programs and projects for the coming year.

Conference of World City Bar Leaders

This year, we will host the fourth annual Conference of World City Bar Leaders, September 14-16, in Chicago. We have put together an outstanding program for the 60 to 75 bar leaders from the world's largest cities who are expected to be in attendance at the conference. The conference's outstanding array of speakers will cover



such topics as: International Arbitration, International Trade/Update on GATS, Human Rights, Investments in Europe, Remaking Global Transport: The Clash of Law, Politics and Business in the Battle for a Transatlantic Aviation Treaty, International Money Laundering/Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, as well as a special segment on Guantanamo. Bar leaders from London, Paris, Tokyo, Shanghai, Milan, Mexico City, Rome, Madrid, Hamburg, Brussels, Seoul, Hong Kong, Perth, New York, L.A., and many other cities will be attending the three-day conference.

YLS/CBA Mentoring Project

Another important new program this year will be the establishment of a joint YLS/CBA mentoring program for young lawyers. Working with the YLS's Chair, Megan Healy McClung and our Mentoring Committee, led by among others, Judge Edward R. Burr, we will establish a program to mentor our younger members. As a young lawyer, I had the good fortune to have had mentors both in the State's Attorney's Office and in private practice. We need to do a better job in providing guidance and assistance to our young lawyers.

The future of the legal profession and our Association depends on how successful we are in this effort.

Each of us has had help in our career and, in our quest for success, we have stood on the shoulders of others who have guided and helped us navigate the often unpredictable waters of the legal profession. In the Cook County State's Attorney's office, the late Michael Angarola was my mentor. In private practice, my partner and dear friend Bob Clifford has been and continues to be my mentor. These two extraordinary lawyers and friends have shaped my career and made me a better lawyer. The new mentoring program will help ensure that young lawyers will have the same opportunities that many of us have already enjoyed as we have developed our careers.

Volunteerism/Pro Bono Services

Much has been said and, unfortunately, most of it is not complimentary about the impersonal nature of today's high-tech practice of law, which is more than ever centered on the billable hour. We should not condemn this growing dependency on the billable hour because it drives the business model for all successful law firms. However, we must guard against it becoming the "golden calf" of our profession. The billable hour is a means toward an end, but we cannot let it foreclose opportunities for each of us to answer the higher calling of service to our profession and to helping the public. This year's Pro Bono and Public Service Fair will be held on Thursday, October 19, at Jenner & Block, as part of Pro Bono Week. I will continue to ask our members to do some small service to help the poor and needy in our city.

Public Education

Regrettably, lawyers continue to be held in low esteem by the public. Whether it's the portrayal of lawyers on television, or in the John Grisham novels and characterizations of lawyers, the public's view of our profession continues to be skewed. I intend to work with the media and school children to help explain the important role of lawyers and the courts in our society. To say that lawyers are misunderstood and mistrusted

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is an understatement. We can help change public opinion by doing a better job in educating people about the role that lawyers and judges play in a free society. We need to begin with our school children and I will welcome your help and support in this effort.

Mandatory Continuing Legal Education

Since its inception, the CBA has been a leader in providing high quality Continuing Legal Education programs for our members. Our CLE programming is strong and I am committed to making it stronger. We will add a number of new all-day CLE seminars this year that will feature some of our leading lawyers. These programs will focus on skills training and professionalism. In addition, I will continue to encourage all of our members to enroll in the Association's CLE Advantage Program. For the low price of \$125 per year, our members can attend any of our 150 three-hour CLE seminars – a real bargain! Sign up today for the CLE Advantage Program.

Membership

While our membership grew last year, I am committed to working with our Membership Committee and Chicago area law firms to encourage greater participation in the Association. I have always maintained that lawyers who practice and earn their living in a community should support their local bar association. The organized bar is an effective spokesperson for the profession and represents the general interests of each of us at the city, state and federal level. We have a professional obligation to support the

bar and we do this in three important ways: 1) through our membership; 2) through our participation; and 3) through our generosity. If enough of us care about an issue or a problem, we can solve that problem. Your membership in the CBA helps ensure that our profession will effectively address the important issues facing the legal profession now and in the future.

**Abraham Lincoln Marovitz
Lend-A-Hand Program**

This wonderful program provides financial support through grants to outstanding tutor/mentor programs in Chicago. The literacy rates for Chicago's school children is appallingly low, and the high school dropout rate is high. The Abraham Lincoln Marovitz Lend-A-Hand Program is our newest foundation and is critically impor-

tant to the future of our city. The program allows attorneys to become involved with at-risk children in the Chicagoland area. We share a responsibility with all Chicago businesses and professions to do our part to help ensure the educational fitness of our future. I will be making an appeal to our members this fall to support Lend-A-Hand. We are planning an exciting program to help children in the Englewood community, which you will hear more about in the coming months. With your help and support, I know that we can make a difference in the lives of many of these kids .

I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible during the coming year and welcome your ideas, suggestions, and, yes, even criticism. Thank you again for your continued service to and support of our Association. ■



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