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PRESIDENT'S PAGE

BY TIMOTHY S. TOMASIK

Charting a Course Forward



In beginning my term as the 146th President of The Chicago Bar Association, it is both fitting and proper to first recognize outgoing President E. Lynn Grayson, who has provided extraordinary leadership in navigating the CBA through the many challenges and obstacles of the second year of the pandemic.

Through her dynamic efforts, Grayson spearheaded the CBA Strategic Plan to reorient our mission toward promoting the administration of justice and the public good, as well as providing new direction for the association's future. She was also responsible for several high-profile programs, including the Judicial Redistricting and Statewide Pretrial Services program featuring Illinois Supreme Court Chief Justice Ann M. Burke, and three joint CBA/ISBA/IJA Women Leaders in the Profession programs. She also launched the CBA's 150th Anniversary 2024 Committee – chaired by Terry Murphy and Judge Nichole Patton – which is planning many wonderful events to celebrate the CBA and its contributions to our community over the past century and a half. I look forward to continuing that committee's great work this year. Grayson com-

mitted her year to "kindness, civility, and well-being" – all traits she has embodied and modeled for others throughout her distinguished career.

There is no doubt that the CBA remains one of the leading voluntary metropolitan bar associations in America. The CBA will continue its unwavering commitment to diversity and inclusion this year by aggressively promoting our DICE initiative, which originally began when Steven M. Elrod served as President and is successfully co-chaired by Justice Michael B. Hyman and Nina Fain.

I am excited for all of us to return to our fantastic CBA building for more in-person meetings and special events as we exit the pandemic. While we will continue to use remote technology for many events, including some practice committee meetings and CLE programs, in some instances there is no substitute for in-person interaction. To that end, I look forward to the CBA hosting several special in-person CLE symposiums and invited speaker events in the coming year.

The CBA will also continue to emphasize the paramount importance of civility and will work to improve the health and wellness of lawyers. We have all learned that the pandemic compounded many pre-existing mental health and wellness issues that lawyers have struggled with in Illinois and across the country. Mental health statistics reflecting the poor mental health of lawyers in our community are astounding. As part of the CBA's ongoing commitment to lawyer wellness and mindfulness, we will host a Wellness Symposium featuring a faculty of lawyers and mental health experts. We will address how we can respond to the disturbing increase in the rates of depression, anxiety, and suicide throughout the legal community. We will also explore how our ever-increasing reliance on technology

has impacted lawyers' mental health and well-being, especially given the increasing reliance on social media in the practice of law. This programing will be a benefit to all CBA members, and certainly our youngest generation of lawyers, for whom the pandemic has largely defined the beginning of their careers. It is critical that we mentor our youngest lawyers in the importance of civility and teach them the soft skills needed to be successful lawyers.

Over the past several years, we have seen our core constitutional principles and values come under attack. We all share in the sworn duty to protect our democracy and constitution, which is why my CBA presidency will place special focus on protecting the rule of law and the independence of the judiciary. To accomplish this objective, the CBA remains committed to responding to the frequent, uninformed, and unfair criticism of judges in the media. It is vital that we work to support and maintain (or perhaps regain) public confidence in the judiciary by responding to unwarranted criticisms of individual judges and of the judiciary. Our citizenry can only

have faith in our justice system if they have confidence in our courts. Supporting judicial independence remains one of my primary commitments and one of the fundamental missions of the CBA.

I am also pleased to announce that the CBA will once again travel abroad to host a CLE program. From April 16 to April 21, 2023, we will travel to Dublin, where members can enjoy an excellent CLE program focusing on the topical issues of war crimes and crimes against humanity. While we are still working on a few details, there will be many opportunities to tour Dublin, the Irish Courts, the Kilmainham Gaol jail, a Guinness Storehouse, and enjoy presentations by Irish jurists and government leaders. Our Ireland trip will also offer an extension to visit the famed harbor town of Kinsale and the Old Head Golf Links.

Personally, it is an absolute privilege and honor for me to serve as the 146th President of the Chicago Bar Association. It is one of the greatest achievements of my legal career. I am committed to dedicating all my best efforts to promote the CBA's many important mis-

sions. Having been a member since the 1990s and serving on the Judicial Evaluation Committee for over 15 years, I have enjoyed the opportunity to work closely with, and learn from, many of our great past presidents. I am especially thankful to have had the opportunity to work with my mentor, the inestimable Robert Clifford, throughout his presidency, and—of course—with my partner, Daniel Kotin during his bar year. There is no doubt that I have benefited greatly and learned from the many exceptional past presidents of this historic organization.

I enter the upcoming bar year with great love and gratitude to my wife, Jennifer, and our daughters McKenzie and Maeve for all their wonderful support. And of course, I am ever thankful for the unwavering support of my partners and the team at Tomasik Kotin Kasserman. I hope that you are enjoying a great summer as you review this issue of the CBA Record. We are going to have a great bar year at the CBA – thank you for the opportunity to serve as your CBA President! ■

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