

President's Message

WILLIAM N. LAFORGE

The Page Turns: Building a Tradition of Excellence

WITH THIS LAST column, I am happy to report to our membership that I leave office with an even greater sense of optimism and expectation for a bright future for the FBA than I had when I began my term of office a year ago. In fact, I would go

so far as to say that we are well on our way to building a tradition of excellence.

The proverbial page has turned. My successor, Jim Richardson, has been installed, and, as a result of this year's elections, the composition of the FBA Board of Directors remains the same. It is a pleasure to pass the gavel to Jim, as he assumes the privilege of presiding over a group of outstanding directors and an association that is on the move.

Paramount during my year in office has been the ongoing effort to put our organizational house in order under the new governance structure. I am pleased to report that this priority goal has been accomplished for the most part, largely thanks to the valuable contributions of scores of volunteer leaders and the association's staff, who have committed themselves to ensuring a smooth transition. Our new Board of Directors is up and running on all cylinders. There are still processes to be completed, but, by and large, all systems are "go" for Jim and the new board to take the association to greater heights. I wish them every success in accomplishing the FBA's goals.

With the privilege of the president's pen, I have had the unique opportunity to write and opine about a variety of issues in this column during my term of office. From an outline of the year's goals, mini-treatises on judicial independence and government relations, a tribute to federal judges who are involved with the FBA, and some personal perspectives on the law—to the characteristics of the new and changing FBA, advice for law graduates and new lawyers, and commentaries on our chapters, leadership training, diversity, and members' perspectives—I have sought to run the gamut in commenting on issues that I consider timely and important for the association.

I complete my term as president at an exciting time for the FBA, but there is still much for all of us to do. With the outstanding work and report of the Task Force on the Future, so ably chaired by Rob Clark of the Utah Chapter, the association has in place a superb road map that can be used to move the association forward. In the months ahead, the Board of Directors will review the report and conclusions of the task force,

formulate a plan of action, and communicate the results to the association at all levels, with an eye toward implementing new programs and policies that will provide a foundation of strength on which a productive and successful future can be built. I consider the good work of the Task Force on the Future and the application of its guidelines to be major steps in creating a tradition of excellence for the Federal Bar Association.

I extend my sincerest thanks to Executive Director Jack Lockridge and his very capable staff for all they have done to make this year the success it has been. The FBA can be very proud of Jack and the outstanding job he does each day in representing our best interests and in managing the association. I am very grateful to Dan McDonald, to whom I presented the President's Award at the recent annual meeting, and the board of the Federal Bar Building Corporation for their hard work and devotion to the association throughout the challenge of selling the former headquarters facility and locating a new home for the FBA. And I thank our outstanding inaugural Board of Directors and all our volunteer leaders around the country for their inspiration, hard work, and commitment to the FBA. All these special individuals and many more are the real reasons the FBA is on the right track to establishing a tradition of excellence.

The FBA is blessed with an outstanding talent pool that is set to guide an association that has not yet reached its full potential. Ours is a particularly bright future if we can capitalize on the foundation that has been put in place over the last several years to advance our interests and to ensure that the FBA remains a meaningful and valuable experience for its members. It has been a privilege for me to serve the FBA and its membership as national president. **TFL**



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill LaForge". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke at the beginning.