

by Matthew B. Moreland



Lessons Learned

It is hard to believe that a year has passed since my term serving as president began. As my time as your national president draws to a close, I would like to share some of the many lessons I learned. The first is that I was only one member of the many amazing volunteer members nationwide. I came to view my role not that I was the national president but instead was simply serving as the national president. While this semantic difference may seem minor, I had to dedicate much time and attention to serving in the role of national president. It called for many more weekends in the office making up for the time accommodating the demanding weekly schedule of a national officer. And while many days were spent away from the office, thanks to electronic filings and email, I do not feel as though I spent many days out of the office.

However, I also learned that this welcome burden as president was eased by the support of a board of directors. Though you already may be acquainted with the governance structure of the FBA, for those less familiar, the national association has a board of directors comprised of 12 elected directors, three members of the executive committee, and three nonvoting members, all of whom work together to set policy for the association. The actions of the board are subject to review of the national counsel, with policies set by the board of directors. After having served in one capacity or another on the national board of directors or the former national executive committee for 11 years, it was a definite change to become the person whose job it is not to influence policy but instead present the board with issues raised by members and slate those issues on the agenda for discussion by the board. I went from helping develop policy to only voting in situations where the president's vote will change the outcome—for example, to break a tie in a board vote. Thus, another lesson I learned was that this switch to being an organizer and facilitator was something I learned quickly, thanks in large part to the cohesion of the board and how quickly it worked to solve problems, make decisions, and move the association forward. It was a good lesson to learn the importance of a member's role at every position in the association, as well as how critical it is to be part of a team. Needless to say, it has been a pleasure to serve!

Another point on which I was quickly educated is the great skill of our amazing staff. While the association membership has increased to more than 17,000 in the past year (a record for the association),

this number of members is still only serviced by a staff of 13 people, led by our national Executive Director Karen Silberman and Deputy Executive Director Stacy King. Their experience and support allowed for an exceptional year of programming and member benefit. I do not think we could have done it without them and the entire FBA staff. Thanks to their dedication and the creation of a new director position for membership, the association saw a 25 percent increase in law student membership in one year! During every program and every day, the entire staff pitches in when work is needed to ensure the success of the association. No matter how large or small the role, the FBA's success depends on each person's contribution.

I set many goals at the beginning of the year, and I feel I am handing over the reigns with the association even stronger than when I took it over. With the formation of the Law Student Division and the appointment of a full slate of division directors, we are setting into motion the development of one of the most energetic and expanding membership groups in the association's history. This includes a new program to follow law student members whom we successfully retain as full members post-law school. That, along with our newly developed webinars and national programs, will help our association continue to thrive and grow, as well as continue to break records like this year's attendance at the 40th Annual Indian Law Conference.

Another lesson I learned is that by making the FBA more appealing to potential members, we can not only invite and retain these members, but this growth will allow our association to provide more to the public, the practice, and the judiciary.

Mission accomplished! ☺

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Matthew B. Moreland'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'M' and 'B'.