

President's Message

FERN C. BOMCHILL

This is Value

I AM STILL SMILING. What a wonderful September—an energizing start to my year as president of the Federal Bar Association. First of all, I want to thank you all for your support and trust. I am both thrilled and humbled to serve as your 84th president.

To say the least, it is daunting to follow a lineup of outstanding presidents of the association. Since I joined the FBA Board of Directors in 2006, I have worked closely with each of the presidents—Bill LaForge, Jim Richardson, Juanita Sales Lee, Lawrence Baca, and Ashley Belleau. One of the strengths of our organization is demonstrated by the diversity of this group in their professional experience and their personal style as well as in their gender and race. But equally notable is their shared qualities of leadership and commitment to the FBA and its mission. Walter Lippmann said that “the final test of a leader is that he leaves behind in other men the connection and the will to carry on.” He had to be describing our past presidents. Indeed, our immediate past president, Ashley Belleau, with her energy and hard work, created the road map to move the FBA forward and show association members that they get a bang for their buck.

Last month in *The Federal Lawyer*, Ashley outlined the value available to members who choose to attend the FBA convention. That convention, held in Chicago in early September, certainly provided that value. I thank our Chicago Chapter's Board of Directors, led by Maria Vathis and Paul Freehling, for a fabulous schedule of events. We had our business meetings, and the CLEs presented by federal practitioners, members of the federal judiciary, and law professors were informative, thoughtful, and entertaining. For example, the crowd got into the mix when Professor Geoffrey Stone and Hon. Richard Posner from the Seventh Circuit sparred in point/counterpoint debate. The audience viewing the *Gideon v. Wainwright* multimedia presentation was in awe, and the attendees at the “Class Action Developments in the U.S. Supreme Court” program had an opportunity to question the presenters—Hon. James Holderman, chief judge of the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois; Hon. Gerald Rosen, chief judge of the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan; and experienced federal practitioners—after the program. There was so much enthusiasm in the room that the panelists agreed to take their show on the

road. And it was standing room only for Dean Erwin Chemerinsky's review of the Supreme Court and for the distinctive panel addressing various Ponzi schemes. Only space restrains me from describing each of the other informative and interesting programs. This is value!

Convention attendees also had the opportunity to apply for admission to the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals. More than 20 FBA members took advantage of this opportunity, and they were treated to a unique conversation with Hon. Frank Easterbrook, chief judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit. And when all the work was done, we entertained ourselves at several happy hours; an evening among the whales, dolphins, and fish at the Shedd Aquarium overlooking the lake (during which we were entertained by the Scales of Justice, a jazz band founded and led by Judge Blanche Manning, a federal judge in the Northern District of Illinois by day and a mighty saxophone player by night); an architectural boat tour down the Chicago River; a stroll through the new modern wing of the Art Institute of Chicago ending with dinner at the rooftop restaurant overlooking Millennium Park and the Lurie Gardens; and a fantastic awards and installation reception and banquet.

Our yearly convention is not the only place where FBA members can benefit from excellent programs presented by experienced practitioners, members of the judiciary, and law professors. These ongoing programs are presented by many FBA chapters and by the FBA sections and divisions and are usually easily accessible, providing opportunities to meet the local judiciary and other practitioners, to ask questions, and to discuss viewpoints. You can find the programs listed on the FBA website, along with our members-only directory and our new “Need an Attorney” public directory. This is value!

As you know, the mission of the Federal Bar Association is to strengthen the federal legal system and the administration of justice by serving the interests



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Section on Taxation

On Sept. 12, the Federal Bar Association's Section on Taxation, in partnership with the New York University School of Law, invited law students and tax attorneys to a discussion with Hon. David Gustafson of the U.S. Tax Court, in which the speaker shared his perspectives on the practice of tax law. The program was moderated by Brian Power of Mayer Brown LLP and Timothy Mulvey of White & Case LLP.

Transportation and Transportation Security Law Section

The FBA's Transportation and Transportation Security Law Section sponsored a Brown Bag Luncheon on Sept. 13, at the Department of Transportation's Headquarters West Building. The luncheon featured Cheryl T. Rose, senior attorney, Water Enforcement Division, Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance, Environmental Protection Agency, and Jim Pates, assistant chief counsel for pipeline safety law, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, Department of

Transportation. The speakers shared their perspectives on pipeline incidents, including EPA and DOT/PHMSA jurisdictional boundaries and regulatory authority regarding pipeline spills and enforcement as well as areas of collaboration between the two agencies.

Government Contracts Section

The FBA and the Public Contracting Institute hosted a networking reception with the D.C. chapter of the National Contract Management Association and the George Washington University's Law School chapter of NCMA on Thursday, Sept. 13. The reception had a great turnout and participants said they enjoyed networking with one another.

The Government Contracts Section also hosted an audio conference on Wednesday, Sept. 21. The speaker, Paul Barchie, assistant general counsel, L-3 Corporation, gave a presentation entitled "International Sales Representatives: Compliance and Management Issues." Matthew McGrath, of McGrath Law Group LLC, was the moderator for this discus-

sion. About 40 individuals called in to this audio discussion with Barchie, who spoke on his experience and gave helpful insights on key areas of compliance, typical areas of regulatory focus, and practical approaches to compliance. The topics Barchie touched on included U.S. and foreign law relating to improper payments, reporting requirements under various regulations, and cost allowability issues under U.S. rules. **TFL**

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and needs of public and private federal practitioners, members of the federal judiciary, and the public they serve. In 1954, the Foundation of the Federal Bar Association was chartered as a charitable organization to serve similar purposes. In 2002, certain FBA and Foundation leaders established the Fellows of the Foundation of the Federal Bar Association. Since the program's inception, more than 180 FBA members who have demonstrated exceptional dedication to the FBA have been invited to become Fellows and enjoy the value of giving.

On Sept. 19, 2011, at a reception held at the U.S. Supreme Court, Justice Elena Kagan was inducted as an Honorary Life Fellow of the Foundation. More than 85 FBA members from numerous chapters, sections, and divisions attended the ceremony and had the opportunity to speak personally with the justice. (Justice Kagan requested the individual meetings in lieu of formal remarks.) Justice Sonia Sotomayor, who was inducted as an Honorary Life Fellow of the Foundation in December 2009, stopped by to wish her colleague the best.

Last spring, through the efforts of our Younger Lawyers Division, all Federal Bar Association members had the opportunity to be admitted to practice before the U.S. Supreme Court. Approximately 90 FBA members took advantage of this event, and they and their guests enjoyed the ceremony as well as a chance to meet with Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg. When we say the FBA gives you access to the judiciary, we are talking about judges at all levels. This too is value. No other bar association offers such a benefit.

And as I begin my year as president of the Federal Bar Association, I want to offer you some additional value. Let me know what you are looking for in a bar association. What do you need and what do you want? Please share your thoughts and ideas as to how your FBA officers and directors can make the association more relevant, more fun, and more valuable to you. I look forward to hearing from you. **TFL**

John C. Bomchill