

Immigration Update

HON. LAWRENCE O. BURMAN

Message from the Chair of the Immigration Law Section

Writing as the chair of the FBA's Immigration Law Section, it is my pleasure to present this special issue of *The Federal Lawyer*, which focuses on immigration law. The Immigration Law Section consists of some of the best minds of the immigration bar and the immigration courts nationwide, and I am proud to be the putative leader of a group of such fine lawyers. They make me look smart.

I urge all members of the association to consider attending the section's flagship event: the Immigration Law Seminar scheduled to be held May 17–20, 2012, in



Memphis, Tenn. The list of presenters is stellar, the food will be amazing, and the social events promise to be, well, really friendly. The seminar is an opportunity to meet and dine with circuit judges, immigration judges, Department of Justice litigators, and Department of Homeland Security officials, as well as the top private immigration attorneys in the nation. If attendees can't get enough food and fun through our program, the International Barbeque Festival (known as the "Superbowl of swine") is just down the street, as are the famous Beale Street music clubs. The schedule for the event will be posted on the FBA website as soon as it's available. If you have questions in the meantime, contact Barry Frager, our seminar's "coordinator-for-life" (and my immediate predecessor as section chair), at bfrager@fragerlaw.com. Because hotel space in Memphis can be rather tight in May, I recommend that you make a reservation at the Downtown Marriott by calling (901) 527-7300 (and be sure to ask for the FBA room block at a special price of \$159 plus tax).

And don't think that the Immigration Law Seminar is just for immigration lawyers. Criminal defense attorneys, especially since *Padilla v. Kentucky*, 130 S. Ct. 1473 (2010), can't practice ethically without a substantial knowledge of the interaction of immigration law and criminal law. Corporate counsel need to understand the impact of immigration law on employee hiring; tax lawyers must be conversant with the rules applicable to resident and nonresident aliens, and so forth. All these nonimmigration needs will be met in our seminar, which will have five tracks. We even run a special program to prepare nonimmigration attorneys to litigate pro bono asylum cases, which can be immensely rewarding.

Even though the FBA was formed primarily to benefit federal lawyers, over the years attorneys who work for the executive branch agencies seem to have become less of a presence in our association. Barry Frager initiated a major effort to recruit more lawyers from the Departments of Justice and Homeland Security to the

section, and I plan to continue and augment his efforts. We need to educate attorneys in these agencies as to the important purpose and mission of the FBA, which are not inconsistent with the efficient operation of federal agencies. To the contrary, an active FBA will benefit all aspects of federal practice—immigration law included.

Another important objective is the production of a monthly newsletter that will provide a tangible benefit to all section members, including those who are unable to attend the seminar in Memphis. By the time you read this, the section's newsletter, which will be distributed to all section members via e-mail, will be well established and thriving. Although the Memphis seminar will always be the centerpiece of our activity, we also need to establish CLEs and other activities all over the country. When I attended to the FBA convention in Chicago, I became acquainted with the incredibly effective Chicago Chapter. I hope that the section can harness and augment that energy. To that end, Peggy McCormick of Chicago has joined our section's board of directors and has already started making interesting things happen, including a possible seminar in Rome devoted to international citizenship issues. I would like to see section activities spring up everywhere, whether they be brown bag lunches, CLEs, or just social dinners that bring practitioners and judges together.

The Immigration Law Section is definitely moving forward. If you would like to participate in any way—from providing news items for the newsletter, organizing or making a presentation at a CLE, finding a qualified speaker on a topic related to immigration, or just setting up a dinner in your area where immigration attorneys can meet one another—contact me at LBurman@aol.com. If you are not already a section member, please remember to check the "Immigration Law Section" box when you renew your FBA membership. We *need* you! **TFL**

Laurence O. Burman has been an immigration judge since 1998. He currently sits in Arlington, Va., after sitting on the bench in Los Angeles and Memphis. He has been the treasurer of the National Association of Immigration Judges since 2001. Prior to his appointment to the bench, he served the Immigration Naturalization Service for 10 years as a trial attorney, assistant general counsel, and acting district counsel. For 10 years before that, he practiced law in Baltimore. After graduation from the University of Maryland Law School, he worked as a legislative analyst and committee counsel for the Maryland General Assembly. He is a retired member of the U.S. Army Reserve. The above comments are his personal opinions only and not those of the Department of Justice or the Executive Office for Immigration Review.