

President's Message

ROBERT J. DESOUSA

A Bargain

AS A YOUNG man, I lived in New Jersey along the old Central New Jersey Railroad line, and my buddies and I would take the train into New York City for a day trip and often try to catch a play. We would always start out looking for discount tickets at Times Square,

where you could sometimes get a “two-fer”—a ticket that allowed you to see two shows for the price of one. Well, old habits are hard to break: when searching for a bar association as a young professional, I came upon the FBA—not a “two-fer,” but a “three-fer!” Wow!

First, I get to join a national bar well known by key players in our nation's capital. Our association has been called upon to testify at Congress, produced “white papers” on key issues of interest to the federal bench and bar, and is widely respected by judges on the district and circuit courts as well as the Supreme Court. Indeed, 90 percent of all current Supreme Court justices are honorary members of the Foundation of the Federal Bar, the charitable and educational entity of the Federal Bar Association. We are the key bar association promoting federal practice and the federal practitioner and jurist. There is none better than the FBA!

Second, I get to join a local bar—my FBA chapter. The FBA is, of course, federal not only in its vision and scope but also in its makeup. We, like the federal government, have a national body, but unlike many national bar associations we also have local chapters with awesome and vibrant autonomy—each chapter has a flavor of its own. Chapters allow a member to serve and grow, and they are the key component of the FBA! The chapters, like states in the union, have a two-fold voice in the national FBA: Members of our

chapters elect both chapter officers and national members of the Board of Directors, and they get to send their president and a delegate to the National Council, which meets twice a year. The National Council, which is the general voice of the members, can pass resolutions and urge action by the board. This local relationship gives local practitioners a national voice—something no city, county, or even state bar can do. Moreover, the chapter system allows the FBA to be flexible and dynamic.

Third, I get the chance to belong to a substantive bar or a set of substantive bars. Through its sections and divisions, the FBA gives every member the option of not only being active at the chapter or national level, but to work with experts in a specific legal niche. Divisions like those for senior lawyers or younger lawyers let attorneys join with others of their age and experience. Sections like those for bankruptcy, federal litigation, taxation, veterans, immigration, or numerous others give members a venue to mix with experts, share knowledge, and reach out for help when needed.

In short, the FBA is one of the best deals out there! Take advantage of all we have to offer, and offer a friend a “three-fer” today! **TFL**



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert J. Desousa".

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