

President's Message

by Matthew B. Moreland



Goals for a New Year at the Federal Bar Association

I am honored to become national president of the

Federal Bar Association. I know I have “judicially” large shoes to fill following Hon. Gustavo Gelpí, yet I am excited about the opportunity to serve this organization of energetic and optimistic members. As the youngest president in FBA history and the first plaintiff's bar practitioner to be elected to the office, I know there are both questions about and expectations of what my leadership will be during the coming year. Be assured, I will use my youth and energy to continue the legacy of my predecessors to “strengthen the federal legal system and the administration of justice by serving the interests and the needs of the federal practitioner, both public and private, the federal judiciary, and the public they serve.” Simply stated, I will seek to fulfill the mission statement of our association.

My plan to fulfill our mission is to:

1. Expand the FBA's goals to increase its visibility, relevance, and value;
2. Preserve and promote the growth of chapters nationwide via substantive programming and significant professional networking;
3. Work with sections and divisions to offer content and education that promote retention and new membership on the chapter level as well as nationally;
4. Promote law student chapters nationwide, working directly with chapters to provide content and value that allow law students to recognize the value of maintaining their FBA membership beyond law school.

Visibility, Relevance, and Value

We will work to expand the visibility of the FBA through enhanced member benefits and increased support of the judiciary. We will provide value to both existing and new members through CLE offerings, networking opportunities, leadership opportunities, and advocacy efforts. We will appeal to the altruism of young lawyers with our high standards of professional competence and ethical conduct. Our ability to interconnect members via a national network of federal practitioners and judges affords our membership opportunities that are unmatched at a nationwide level. Participation in a governance association that helps shape the federal legal profession is not only rewarding but vital, as jurisprudence evolves with technology and ever-changing rules of practice. Lastly, the FBA will monitor legislation and advocate on federal issues. The association's advocacy is of great value to all members whether judiciary or practitioner. It is our high visibility as local and national leaders who move our profession forward which brings value to our members. Together, our visibility and value make the FBA relevant to our members and those they serve. My continued promotion of these three pillars will improve our association and the practice of law throughout the nation.

Chapters, Sections, and Divisions

The second and third prongs in the plan promote the growth of chapters—the foundation of the FBA. The cornerstone in this foundation is the continued support of the FBA circuit vice presidents, who bring local chapters together to share ideas and offer benefits to their members. It is critical to empower the circuit vice presidents to accomplish their dynamic goals and strengthen our chapters.

Law Student Members

The fourth prong in the plan, which focuses on encouraging law student associates to commit to long term involvement in the FBA, will require that we re-examine how our national office serves our large and growing membership. A good problem to have! One of my first activities as president will promote membership through two already active law school chapters: Loyola Law School and Tulane University School of Law. The Board of Directors will conduct its first meeting in New Orleans in late January 2015, and local chapter leadership is planning an event to bring together these law students with the local and national Board of Directors and federal judges from Louisiana. We will use this opportunity to highlight administrative law judges, whose expertise is greatly appreciated across the districts but largely unknown to law students.

The next Board of Directors meeting, to be held in Arlington in March 2015, will coincide with the Younger Lawyers Division's Annual Thurgood Marshall Moot Court Competition. Last year, this competition drew more than 50 teams from law schools around the country. The presence of the Board of Directors, national members, and federal judges will demonstrate to the law students the great value offered by membership in the FBA. I eagerly look forward to fostering other innovative projects to expand law school membership in the FBA.

Conclusion

The need for innovation and growth is not restricted to our focus on law student associates; these characteristics are hallmarks of a dynamic organization. If you have ideas to promote the visibility, value, and relevance of the FBA at either the national or local level, please speak up. Together, we will build an even stronger Federal Bar Association.

Finally, I would like to thank the Rhode Island Chapter for hosting the Annual Meeting and Convention in Providence. It has been an exceptional event that I will forever remember. ☺

