

NEVADA LAWYER

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Message from the President

Connie Akridge, Esq., State Bar of Nevada President



THIS IS YOUR STATE BAR OF NEVADA

"Over the course of the next year, I look forward to working with the members of the BOG along with SBN Executive Director Kim Farmer, SBN staff, SBN members, as well as with the judiciary and with the leadership of all county and local and specialty bar associations in Nevada to serve our members statewide."

When I started bar service in 1995 as a writer for the Clark County Bar Association's publication *The Communique*, I already had an active family life with my husband and two kids along with a busy private practice and wondered if I really had time to commit to another activity. What I discovered is that the time I devoted to bar service gave me more than I contributed to the bar. Bar service allowed me to work with, and get to know, some really great Nevada attorneys and has helped me immensely in terms of personal and professional growth as an insurance regulatory and health law attorney. In this, my first column as President of the Board of Governors (BOG), I want to thank all State Bar of Nevada (SBN) volunteers for their dedicated service over the past year and I also want to thank all the winners of the SBN awards recently announced at the SBN's annual meeting:

- Presidential Award: Margo Piscevich
- Volunteer of the Year Award: Jeff Rodefer,
Gaming Law Section Chair
- Young Lawyer of the Year Award: Paola Armeni
- Special Recognition Award: Ben Graham and Coe Swobe

Thanks Cam.

For his exceptional leadership and service to the SBN over the past year, I want to take this opportunity, on behalf of the SBN members and staff, to thank one of the most competent attorneys and genuinely kind and generous persons I know, Cam Ferenbach. Cam did more than "keep the bus on the road" during his 8 years on the Board of Governors and last year as President. His vision and steady hand on the wheel allowed the state bar to move forward in numerous areas. During Cam's term:

1. client security fund rules were changed to enhance the ability of the SBN to protect the public, including increasing the amount available to reimburse losses suffered by members of the public due to a dishonest act of their attorney;
2. diversity scholarships to law students were awarded by the SBN Diversity Committee;
3. the effectiveness and efficiency of the BOG meetings and elections were improved through use of electronic board books, use of “generative” discussions to consider important issues facing the SBN and electronic voting for the BOG election;
4. with additional LRE funding, the SBN was able to provide the state’s pro bono service providers with additional funding; and
5. while questions 1 (Nevada Judicial Appointment Amendment) and 2 (Nevada Appellant Court Amendment) did not pass muster with the voters, Cam was passionate in his support of these measures on behalf of the SBN.

Over the course of the next year, I look forward to working with the members of the BOG along with SBN Executive Director Kim Farmer, SBN staff, SBN members, as well as with the judiciary and with the leadership of all county and local and specialty bar associations in Nevada to serve our members statewide. To be sure, there are challenges ahead for the SBN in performing its role of governing the legal profession, serving its members and protecting the public interest. Our legal community continues to struggle with the sputtering economy, including dealing with funding challenges for our courts, pro bono service providers and law related education programs. We can work together to overcome these challenges.

Over the next year, three of the initiatives we will pursue are as follows:

Rethinking the Annual Meeting.

This year fellow BOG member Bryan Scott and I chaired a committee to explore ways to make the SBN’s Annual Meeting more relevant to SBN members. We partnered with the SBN sections to develop exceptional programming and activities for the conference. Thanks go to all of our annual meeting committee members, all the section chairs and all SBN members who participated in the annual meeting programming. Particular thanks go to Ryan Works and the Young Lawyers Section for another great Trial Academy. Thanks go, as well, to Kim Farmer and staff for a great meeting!

We are already beginning to plan for the SBN annual meeting in June 2012, which will be held in San Diego at the Hotel Del Coronado on Coronado Island. We are continuing to look for ways to attract more members to the SBN annual meeting and make the 2012 meeting the best yet. Mark your calendars for the Hotel Del Coronado June 28 – June 30, 2012.

Mentoring.

With the leadership of the Professional Summit Committee headed by Supreme Court Justice Nancy Saitta and Dara Goldsmith, of Goldsmith and Guymon, along with SBN Executive Director Kim Farmer and SBN CLE Director Emily Akerberg, the SBN will roll out its mentoring program in March, 2012, contingent on the approval of the Nevada Supreme Court. This program will replace the Bridge the Gap program. Shortly after admission, each new lawyer (unless deferred or exempt), will be paired with an experienced lawyer who has practiced for at least seven years in Nevada and who has been selected by the court for his or her commitment to ethics, professionalism and professional skills. Together, the new lawyer and the mentor will develop a curriculum of activities to introduce the new lawyer to the legal community and to the practical application of ethics, civility and professionalism. The new lawyer will also receive practical guidance in the areas of client relations and law office management, as well as practical skills in a substantive area of the law. This program is modeled after successful programs in Utah and Georgia.

Planning a New Las Vegas Office.

The facilities planning committee will continue exploring moving the SBN Las Vegas office to a newer, more functional facility to better serve SBN members. Our goal is to shift toward a member-focused workplace while at the same time reducing overhead. While our current facility has served us well, a new facility would allow the SBN to do more on-site programming and allow staff and SBN volunteers to more efficiently perform their responsibilities.

If you wish to contact me on any matter, I am available by e-mail at cakridge@nvbar.org. Also, I have set up voice mail at the bar offices for bar-related matters apart from my practice at Jones Vargas; that number is (702) 317-1449. As your incoming bar president, I invite any bar member who wishes to meet face-to-face, for any reason or no reason at all, to leave me a message or send me an e-mail to coordinate our schedules. I look forward to hearing from you.

This is your organization. Make the time to become involved. Check out our website at www.nvbar.org to see all of the volunteer opportunities. ■