It is my honor and privilege to have been selected as the 88th and first African-American president of the State Bar of Nevada. 2016 is turning out to be a year of milestones for me. Not only do I celebrate this great honor, but in April of this year, my family commemorated our 46th year of living in southern Nevada. On May 21, I celebrated my 25th year after graduating from Lewis and Clark Law School, I celebrated my 20th year working in the Las Vegas City Attorney’s Office on August 5, I will celebrate my 25th year of practicing Law on October 11 and, finally, I celebrate my 50th birthday on October 21. I am looking forward to a busy, productive and exciting year leading the Board of Governors, interacting with the Nevada Supreme Court and various bar committees, traveling across our beautiful state and meeting as many of you as I’m able.

Being mindful that I serve as president for only one year, I’m whittling down my initial lengthy laundry list of goals to a more manageable and achievable list of priorities. Like my predecessors Elana Graham and Larry Digesti, I remain firmly committed to further reducing the state bar’s backlog of attorney discipline cases. Doing so not only protects the public’s interest, but our own as well. With the Supreme Court’s help, and with the hard work of Bar Counsel Stan Hunterton and his capable staff of attorneys, paralegals and investigators, we have made strides in the last couple of years to significantly reduce the backlog, but there is still much more work to be done.

In addition, I am focusing my efforts on attorney wellness, increasing the diversity of our membership, increasing the number of pro bono volunteers, interacting and collaborating with local and specialty bar associations, and increasing attorney engagement and participation in state and local bar activities, especially among young attorneys. Did you know there are 13 standing committees, 26 sections and one division within the state bar, plus 13 local and specialty bars with which to become involved?

Additionally, I’d like to provide bar members with more meaningful member benefits and resources. As our members begin to age, we are coordinating our newly created Transitioning Out of Practice (TOP) program with our Transitioning Into Practice (TIP) program. The bar’s executive director, president-elect and I will also be taking a rural road trip throughout northern Nevada again this year to meet and converse with rural judges and attorneys to determine how the state bar can best serve them.

Since joining the Board of Governors in 2006, I have had the pleasure of working with a group of caring, dedicated and intelligent professionals who volunteer their time, resources, energy and talents to better our profession and protect the public’s interest. One such person is our Immediate Past President Larry Digesti, whom I’d like to thank for his steady guidance, leadership and friendship this year. Larry has truly been a role model for me to emulate. I’d also like to thank the 2015-2016 Board of Governors—District 1: Rick Pocker, Kari Stephens, Kimberly Buchanan, Troy Isaacson, Richard Dreitzer, Paola Armeni, Eric Dobberstein and Ryan Works; District 2: Julie Cavanaugh-Bill; District 3: Ryan Russell; and District 4: Gene Leverty, Ann Morgan, and Paul Matteoni—for their hard work and continued support. I’d like to welcome our newest board members Doug Clark and Jack Howard. I look forward to working with you both. All of the governors are readily accessible, and their contact information can be found at www.nvbar.org.

During my last reelection, I was taken aback by the large number of lawyers who didn’t know who comprised the Board or what role the Board of Governors plays. In short, the Board of Governors is comprised of 15 members, representing the four state districts. Nine members are elected from District 1 (Clark County); one member is elected from District 2 (rural counties); one member from District 3 (Carson City) and four members from District 4 (Washoe County). The Governors are elected for two-year terms and carry out the state bar’s administrative functions, set policies and procedures, affect rule changes through Administrative Docket Requests (ADKTs) to the Nevada Supreme Court, take legislative positions relative to the administration of justice and oversee the bar’s fiduciary responsibilities.

On a more personal note, I am dedicating my presidential year in honor and memory of my mother, Minnie O. Scott, who lost her second battle with breast cancer on December 29, 2007. My mother was my first and greatest role model and supporter. Without her love, guidance and unyielding support, none of my accomplishments would have been possible. My mother graduated with one other girl from Hopewell Colored High School in Round, Rock Texas in May 1952. One of 11 children, she picked cotton as a youngster and married at an early age. She raised four children in North Las Vegas as a single mother and had our well-being at the forefront of her mind always. To my brother, sisters and I, she constantly stressed education, treating everyone the same and a love of God, family and our fellow citizens. I love and miss her beyond words.