



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

BY VERNON "GENE" LEVERTY, ESQ., PRESIDENT, STATE BAR OF NEVADA

BUILDING OUR FUTURE BY HONORING OUR PAST

I have great respect for our past leadership. For every high-profile instance of a lawyer or former lawyer whose behavior has been less-than-admirable, there are many untold stories of lawyers giving their all to see that justice and fairness prevail. This month, I want to call attention to the contributions made by the past presidents of the State Bar of Nevada. They exemplify our professional heritage, and each has left an admirable legacy. By celebrating past leadership, we also create a beacon for future leaders.

The State Bar of Nevada is fortunate because many attorneys, not only its past leaders, have contributed to various committees, sections and specialty bar organizations. The state bar's members volunteer their time and give back to our profession. I would love to celebrate every person who has contributed to our profession, but so many have contributed that I am sure we could not capture everyone. Each volunteer deserves to be appreciated,

and on behalf of the State Bar of Nevada, I thank each person past, present and future for your service.

As a formal organization, the State Bar of Nevada has existed for 89 years. The bar has been fortunate to have had leaders who dedicated several years of service to the bar before becoming president. Roscoe Pound defined a "profession" as a group of people "pursuing a learned art as a common calling in the spirit of public service." Similarly, each past president accomplished goals that contributed to our bar, our profession and our Rule of Law.

We have had several generations of the same family serve as presidents and honored members of the bar. Our first president was H.R. Cooke, who served from 1927 to 1928. His son, Thomas A. Cooke, was president from 1969 to 1970. Our soon-to- retire Honorable Magistrate Valerie Cooke is the daughter of Thomas A. Cooke. William Woodburn (1932-1933) and his son, William K. Woodburn (1954-1955), both served as president, and the law firm William Woodburn formed, now Woodburn and Wedge, is one of Nevada's oldest law firms; it celebrated its 100th anniversary on March 1, 2018. Leo Puccinelli (1976-1977) and his son Hon. Andrew J. Puccinelli (1998-1999) were also both bar presidents.

Past president Melvin Brunetti (1984-1985) was appointed to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. Former president Hon. Larry R. Hicks (1993-1994) was appointed to the federal bench. Past president Hon. Bruce Beesley (2008-2009) serves as a federal bankruptcy judge.

Hon. Cam Ferenbach (2010-2011) is a federal magistrate. In addition, several past presidents are sitting district court judges, including Hon. Nancy Allf, Hon. Gloria Sturman and the late Hon. Patrick Flanagan (2003-2004).

Each of the previous 88 presidents, during their terms of office, contributed to our profession. Because it is impossible to list each of their contributions, we'll take a look back at all presidents since the hiring of our current Executive Director, Kimberly Farmer. Here's a very brief summary of the last 11 presidents' impact on our profession:

Bryan Scott, 2016-2017

Chaired the Diversity Committee; Collaborated with specialty bars.

Laurence Digesti, 2015-2016

Reduced discipline backlog; Rolled out Short Trial Volunteer Program.

Elana Turner Graham, 2014-2015

Altered Attorney's Oath to focus on civility; Presided over opening of new bar headquarters.

Alan Lefebvre, 2013-2014

Worked to reduce the unauthorized practice of law; Campaigned to establish the Nevada Court of Appeals.

Frank Flaherty, 2012-2013

Lobbied for funding to support pro bono legal service providers in

ATTORNEY SPOTLIGHT:

Nevada; Initiated A.A.M.H. CLE requirements for Nevada attorneys.

Connie Akridge, 2011-2012

Oversaw the formation of the Transitioning into Practice (TIP) mentoring program; Increased the grants made by the Nevada Law Foundation through the IOLTA program.

Hon. Cam Ferenbach, 2010-2011

Improved the Clients' Security Fund program; Issued the bar's first diversity scholarships.

Kathy England, 2009-2010

Implemented several technology improvements, including online dues payments; Increased transparency and efficiency in bar operations.

Hon. Bruce Beesley, 2008-2009

Led the state bar during the economic crisis of 2008; Supported initiatives to "green" the practice of law in Nevada.

Hon. Nancy Ailf, 2007-2008

Supported adoption of new lawyer advertising rules; Contributed to making participation in the IOLTA program mandatory for attorneys with trust accounts.

Rew Goodenow, 2006-2007

Hired a new executive director for the state bar (Kimberly Farmer); Dealt with legislative issues, particularly those pertaining to judicial elections.

A complete list of all the past presidents, including photos, is available on the state bar's website at: <https://www.nvbar.org/about-us/board-of-governors/state-bar-past-presidents/>.

The bar has been fortunate to have had outstanding presidents who each dedicated a year of service to the bar and made contributions that make our bar what it is today. We have gathered the talented past presidents into a new organization: the Past President Council – a group that will continue to work to build the bar's future. We have called on the talents of past president Larry Digesti to coordinate our past presidents. The council will tackle projects such as capturing the history of Nevada's legal community. We are certain the council will provide many suggestions and contributions to the State Bar of Nevada. Again, thank you to our past presidents for their service and contributions to our profession.

The intent of this message is to not only to thank those volunteers who gave and will continue to give to our profession, but also to encourage each Nevada lawyer to get involved with the State Bar of Nevada. Every bar member can contribute and provide their own legacy. Our profession is larger than ourselves, and our profession requires each of us to give back to the noble profession to which we worked so hard to join. It is up to you to leave your legacy to our profession.

JUSTICE MIRIAM SHEARING



Each month, I call attention to the contributions made by lawyers who have played an important role in the Rule of Law. In March, we spotlight Justice Miriam Shearing, who was not only the first female Chief Justice of the Nevada Supreme Court, but also the first woman elected as a Justice of the Peace for Clark County, the first woman elected as a judge for the District Court in Nevada and the first woman to sit on the Nevada Supreme Court.

She became known for her fairness and was elected to the bench three times during the 27 years she spent on the bench. Shearing was also known for her concentration on equal access to justice in the state of Nevada. A summary of her career and accomplishments is available in an article by Mary Berkheiser titled "Justice Miriam Shearing: Nevada's Trailblazing Minimalist," featured in the Fall 2005 edition of the Nevada Law Journal; it is available online at the Boyd School of Law's Scholarly Commons website, scholars.law.unlv.edu. **NL**

Leadership
A leadership is a pr
ability to motivate
organizing a group
achieve a commo
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