



ON DIVERSITY, IMPARTIALITY

In a recent President's Message in Arizona Attorney (January 2013), we were told of the remarkable diversity reflected in the composition of our Board of Governors. But while a delegate from Yuma is a respectable start, we need to do more. A street musician, an Inuit, or maybe a southpaw is still wanting. Because with all that diversity brought to bear on the collective decision-making of our Board as currently constituted, the core values of the State Bar of Arizona nevertheless continue to include "diversity."

I had thought the concept to have been thoroughly discredited by now.

By which I mean the notion that a member of a favored category (some so foggy as to be determinable only by inquiring which self-selected box was checked on the latest census form), is elevated to a superior position by coercive force (as opposed to market force or merit) without regard to (or in defiance of) other objec-

tively better or brighter candidates (who occupy, by definition, unfavored categories), under the indefensible rationale that the person promoted speaks for all his or her favored foggy fellows (who think as one), or will represent them where no one else will, or will contribute ideas that no one else will have, or will enhance the experience and inspire the creativity of everyone around by mere presence, or who requires a "critical mass" of others similarly categorized and elevated not to feel intimidated, or who will, by his or her promotion, redress the colonialist, sexist, racist, etc., misdeeds of our forebears

ically correct group photo, all to the everlasting "enrichment" of the polity.

Or some such. Pick your poison. Defining "diversity" is admittedly a murky business. What proponent would want, in the 21st century, to shine analytical rigor and moral clarity on the face of such a disagreeable ambition?

"Diversity" has no business among our core values. But since a mission statement for lawyers with a glaring "Intentionally Omitted" would be a hoot to all but lawyers, let's substitute a time-tested principle needing no quotation marks and having a much shorter, more understandable and universally revered definition:

Impartiality.

Admittedly, returning to first principles will require, for some, a paradigm shift. Impartiality is antithetical to "diversity," and though lawyers are notorious for taking inconsistent positions, we cannot in good faith cherish both. Peel away the euphemisms and bromides, and "diversity" is inconsistent not only with impartiality, but with honesty, integrity and the human dignity of all involved. At its obnoxious heart, "diversity" is more than the appearance of impropriety writ large; it is an abuse of power that violates our collective trust.

There's a reason Lady Justice wears a blindfold.

—Stephen W. Baum
Phoenix



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE by Amelia Craig Cramer

Diversity & Inclusion

The mission of the State Bar of Arizona is to serve the public and enhance the legal profession by promoting the competency, ethics and professionalism of our members and by enhancing the administration of and access to justice.

Our vision is for all Arizona lawyers to be part of a supportive and legal community of professionals exhibiting the highest standards of ethical conduct and technical skill, and sharing a passion for excellence in the practice of law.

Diversity is one of the Bar's stated core values. Diversity embodies our commitment to ensuring that the legal profession and the justice system reflect the community we serve, with all of its social, economic and geographic diversity.

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Our governing board reflects this commitment to diversity. It includes representatives from Flagstaff, Prescott, Glendale, Phoenix, Tempe, Mesa, Scottsdale, Globe, Florence, Tucson, Sahuarita, Bisbee and Yuma. Board members include lawyers approaching retirement, mid-career lawyers and young lawyers.

Lawyer members of the board work in a variety of settings—at large private firms, as in-house counsel, as solo practitioners, in state and local government.

Their areas of practice include criminal prosecution and defense, personal injury, bankruptcy, business transactions, labor and employment, real estate and land use, domestic relations, legislation, commercial litigation, worker's compensation, administrative law and more.

We also have nonlawyers on our board, including individuals experienced in large law office management, accounting, investments, government agency administration and nonprofit management. These board members are Republicans, Democrats and Independents; Latino, African-American, Asian and Anglo; female and male; physically disabled and able-bodied; straight and gay; married, single and partnered; grandparents, parents and childless; Catholic, Protestant, Jew, atheist and agnostic; liberal, progressive, moderate and conservative. We bring to the table a tremendous breadth of professional experience, as well as a broad range of personal experience that informs our collective decision-making and enriches us in the process.

Our State Bar committees and our Bar staff likewise are constituted in a way that reflects this commitment to diversity. Our active efforts to promote and sustain diversity within the bar include a Bar Leadership Institute, now in its sixth year of operation. The BLI provides a nine-month curriculum for a diverse group of competitively selected young lawyers, up-and-comers in our profession who have an interest in service and

leadership. Through the BLI, we expose these young lawyers to leaders of the Bench and Bar from across our state to help them in becoming leaders.

We also have a Diversity Pipeline Project that operates in partnership with Arizona's attorneys, schools, colleges and other organizations to encourage young people, especially those in underrepresented populations, to consider careers in the law.

This year, we have established a Diversity and Inclusion Task Force chaired by our Secretary/Treasurer, Lisa Loo, that is developing recommendations for ways the Bar can more effectively further diversity and inclusion. The Task Force also serves as a liaison between the Board of Governors and our three State Bar Committees that are dedicated to issues of diversity and inclusion: the Committee on Minorities and Women in the Law; the Committee on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity; and the Committee on Persons with Disabilities in the Legal Profession.

In addition, the Task Force serves as a liaison between the State Bar and our partner bar associations, including all the county bar associations, the Arizona Women Lawyers Association, Los Abogados, the Native American Bar Association, the Navajo Nation Bar Association, the Arizona Minority Bar Association, the Arizona Black Bar Association, the Black Women Lawyers Association of Arizona, the Arizona Asian-American Bar Association, Association of South-Asian Lawyers, Arizona Gay & Lesbian Lawyers Association, Arizona Jewish Lawyers Association, and the St. Thomas More Society.

It is our hope that the work of this Task Force will facilitate greater coordination and collaboration among these various professional groups. Toward that end, the State Bar has posted a new calendar reflecting events being held by our partner bar associations and by our State Bar's diversity-related committees. You can find it at www.azbar.org/news/events/diversitycalendarofevents. Please take a look, and plan to attend one of the upcoming events. You will find it an enriching and rewarding experience. ☐



and/or salve the feelings of the paternalistic, patronizing and imperious bureaucrats wielding the coercive force and/or at the least (and at the same time perhaps most importantly), contribute to a more polit-



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