



Your Board at Work

It will be my pleasure to work with the Board of Governors this year in an effort to fulfill the mission statement of the Bar. You may not know all the members of the Board, so allow me to introduce them to you. The Board is divided into geographical districts from north to south.

- Whitney Cunningham is the representative from the northern third of the state. Whitney is in a two-lawyer firm with his wife, Jennifer Mott, in Flagstaff. Whitney is both a business lawyer and a litigator.
- Ray Hanna is the representative from Yavapai County. Ray is a sole practitioner in Prescott, and his practice is criminal defense. Ray is also the president-elect of the Bar.
- Jim Smith is the representative from Yuma. A bankruptcy lawyer, Jim is a sole practitioner and proud of it.
- Bryan Chambers is the representative from eastern Arizona. He is the chief criminal deputy at the Gila County Attorney's Office in Globe.
- Roger Contreras is the representative from southern Arizona. He is the chief criminal deputy in the Cochise County Attorney's Office in Bisbee.
- Richard Platt is the representative from Pinal County. He is the chief criminal deputy in the Pinal County Attorney's Office in Florence.
- A slightly larger contingent from Pima County includes Amelia Craig Cramer, the chief deputy in the Pima County Attorney's Office. Amelia is the secretary/treasurer of the Board this year. She is joined by Dee-Dee Samet, a Tucson sole practitioner with a civil practice, and Mike Crawford, a civil and commercial litigator with Mesch, Clark & Rothschild in Tucson.
- Representing Maricopa County are Alan Bayham, Jr., a personal injury lawyer in a two-man firm, Tom Crowe, a civil litigation and criminal defense lawyer, Steve Dichter, a small-firm lawyer with a civil and criminal practice, Diane Drain, a sole practitioner with a real property and bankruptcy practice, Joe Kanefield, a government lawyer who serves as the elections director for the state, H. Leslie Hall, an Assistant Attorney General litigating employment cases, Richard Coffinger, a sole practitioner with a criminal practice, and Tajudeen "Taj" Oladiran, a sole practitioner in Chandler with a business transactions practice.

- There are four public (non-lawyer) members of the Board. They include Ben Click, who is a retired Dallas Chief of Police and Assistant Chief of Police in Phoenix; Ben lives in Munds Park. Emily Johnston is from Tucson and describes herself as a rancher. She also has a wealth of non-profit board experience. Alex Jamison is from Phoenix and is an ombudsman consultant. Frank Barriga is a CPA with the City of Phoenix working with the airport.
- Three at-large members of the Board are appointed by the Supreme Court. They are Dave Byers, who is the Director of the Administrative Office of the Courts, Virginia Herrera-Gonzales, an Assistant Attorney General, and Jennifer Burns, a soon-to-be-retired state legislator.


- Rounding out the Board is our YLD representative, Mike Mason, a labor and employment lawyer at Greenberg Traurig. In addition, the three law school deans serve the Board in an ex-officio capacity, as does Dan McAuliffe, the immediate past president. The ex-officio members do not have a vote on the Board. And, in case you were wondering, I vote only in case of a tie.

So, it is a very diverse and interesting group. We have gender, racial and ethnic diversity. We have one person with a disability. Clearly, there is geographical diversity. The YLD President and I are the only so-called big firm lawyers with a vote. Three members are in firms of 15 or fewer, and six are solos. Seven are government lawyers.

These facts dispel some common myths. The Board is not run by the big firms. To the contrary, there is only one big firm lawyer with a vote. The Board is not run by criminal defense lawyers. In fact, the government lawyers outnumber the criminal defense lawyers. And the Board is not run by personal injury lawyers.

Each member of the Board brings a different perspective to the meetings. The public and at-large members have the same voice and vote as lawyer members. Public and at-large members also sit on and chair Board committees. Ben Click, for example, chairs the Discipline Oversight Committee on which Jennifer Burns and Dave Byers sit. Frank Barriga chairs our Audit Committee.

Where we all pull together is to serve the people of the State of Arizona and the members of the State Bar in accordance with the mission statement. If you have comments, suggestions or complaints, write to me at Ed.Novak@azbar.org. You may find the other Board members and their contact information in the Bar directory or on the Bar's Web site. We would like to hear from you.

Next month I will discuss some issues we are considering related to professional liability insurance and health care coverage for those who find it difficult to obtain or too expensive to acquire. 

The Bar's Mission

The State Bar of Arizona serves the public and enhances the legal profession by promoting the competency, ethics and professionalism of its members and enhancing the administration of justice.

