



Goals To Match a Bar's Mission

This is my first column as President, and I thought I would take the opportunity to tell you about my plans for the future.

First, let me say what an honor it has been to serve as your representative on the Board of Governors over the past 10 years. Those who serve on our Board are among the finest people I have had the privilege to know and are without exception dedicated to serving the public and our members. Your Board debates, argues, agrees and disagrees, but always conducts its meetings in a civil and professional manner. And it always focuses on what is best for the organization. I have great respect for my colleagues, and I look forward to working with them this year.

Your Board has tackled many important issues over the years that affect our profession and the services we provide the public. I have asked the Board to focus on three goals over the next year: (1) access to justice; (2) technology and (3) recognition for the lawyers who have served Arizona over the past century.

At my urging, the State Bar recently amended its mission statement to include promoting "access to justice" as a core principle of the organization. This mission statement was reflective of past efforts by the State Bar and our members to help the indigent obtain access to legal services. These have included pro bono efforts, financial contributions, and working with our Arizona Foundation for Legal Services & Education to help the legal aid providers in Arizona obtain the resources they need to provide legal assistance to the poor and working poor.

Arizona lawyers have given generously of their time and money to this effort. But we can and need to do more.

I have appointed a task force to study the urgent need to increase access to justice in Arizona. Todd Lang, who has devoted his professional life to improving the lives of Arizonans by helping them receive the justice they deserve, will chair this task force. He will lead an impressive group of judges and lawyers over the next several months as they study these issues and report back to the Board with its recommendations in November.

The strategic vision of the State Bar includes a commitment to help our lawyers navigate and maximize all available technologies. As a proud member of Generation X, I embrace my

geek side and rely heavily on technology to help me practice law. Laptops, smart phones, tablet computers and the Internet are tools that lawyers now incorporate daily into their practices. I, for example, rely on my iPhone and iPad to access case law through Fastcase (provided to all State Bar members at no charge), the Arizona Revised Statutes, the Arizona Administrative Code and countless other websites with information relevant to my practice areas.

I have asked the State Bar IT team to look at creating an app for smartphones that will add to the recent enhancements we've already made and continue to make to our website azbar.org. Imagine having an app on your smartphone or tablet computer that could pull up statutes, rules and cases with the touch of a finger.

Finally, as the State of Arizona celebrates its centennial

on February 14, 2012, we should also celebrate 100 years of lawyers serving in the state. Lawyers have been practicing in Arizona since Territorial days and helped Arizona grow and prosper over the century. It's time to celebrate the accomplishments of all the great lawyers who have come before and helped build our profession into what it is today. Stay tuned for more information on this effort.

I am proud to be a lawyer, I am proud of our profession, and I am proud to be your President. Thanks for giving me this opportunity to serve you. I look forward to a great year. 

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