

PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

WILLIAM H. MERGNER JR.

It's fall—stay busy with the NJSBA



The fall season is upon us.

After what I hope was a relaxing and reinvigorating summer, the New Jersey State Bar Association's calendar is in full swing. The Association's sections and committees are busy, social and networking events are happening around the state and the educational programming is loaded with talented speakers and compelling topics.

In August, I had the privilege of visiting the law school campuses at Seton Hall and Rutgers-Camden to welcome first-year students for orientation. Watching the student groups raise their right hands to recite the Lawyers Pledge, I remembered the first-day jitters, the anxious and excited feelings at the start of my law school journey. At times the work may seem overwhelming, I reminded them. But the reward that awaits will far outweigh the hardships when they emerge from school as a member of the greatest profession in the world.

I made two recent trips to Trenton for networking events at the Office of the Public Defender and Office of Attorney General. It was a pleasure to address members of these vital institutions in the law. Public Defender Jennifer N. Sellitti and Attorney General Matthew J. Platkin have been steadfast supporters of the NJSBA and helped further the cooperative relationship between their offices and the Association. In the last year, more than 300 professionals in the Public Defender's Office joined the NJSBA, a testament to the strength of the partnership and the vibrancy they bring to the Association.

Recently, the New Jersey State Bar Foundation hosted its biggest night, honoring retired Assignment Judge Peter F. Bariso Jr. and former NJSBA President Karol Corbin Walker with the 2024 Medal of Honor for their service to the state's legal community. They are two individuals whose integrity, professionalism and legal skills are unmatched. I had the

opportunity to thank them for their outstanding contributions to the legal profession and to the advancement and improvement of the justice system in New Jersey.

October promises to be just as lively. The month kicked off with the 21st Annual Chancery Judges Reception at the New Jersey Law Center in New Brunswick, where the judges celebrated the start of a new term and introduced their clerks for the coming year.

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From Oct. 7–11, the NJSBA will host its annual Member Celebration Days as a tribute to the thousands of members and volunteers who work hard in the profession every day. The week will feature a series of free programs and events that demonstrate the value of an NJSBA membership, including a free seminar to help attorneys with e-filing and an open house networking reception at the New Jersey Law Center. There, attendees can delve into the value of belonging to one of our 80 sections, committees and divisions and explore opportunities in their practice areas.

At the end of the month, I hope you'll join me in celebrating this year's recipients of the annual Pro Bono Awards. The awards will honor six outstanding individuals, firms and corporate legal departments for their commitment to providing legal services to the state's underserved residents. This year's awardees are an impressive group, who have dedicated countless pro bono hours toward helping unaccompanied minors in immigration proceedings, criminal expungements, housing

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and tenancy issues and much more. All are welcome to attend an award reception on Oct. 29, where the NJSBA will recognize their work to ensure fair representation under the law.

In other news, the Association will hold its annual series of regional bar dinners this month in North, South and Central Jersey, where NJSBA leaders will share the latest Association updates on membership, advocacy and issues facing the profession with the state's county

and affinity bars. To prevent a backslide in judicial vacancies across the state, the NJSBA's Judicial and Prosecutorial Appointments Committee has met frequently to review judicial nominations to the Superior Court. As always, the Association has maintained vigorous advocacy practice for the benefit of New Jersey attorneys and the profession. The NJSBA has weighed in on issues related to child sexual abuse cases, purchasing attorney names for online searches, transparency in certain DUI matters, the banning of referral fees to out-of-state attorneys and other important topics.

Notably, the Association submitted an *amicus* brief before the U.S. Supreme Court on affirming prevailing party standards in preliminary injunctions.

These events represent a fraction of what the NJSBA will offer this season. Check out the NJICLE lineup for all the definitive sessions in every practice area, including programs on hot-button issues like artificial intelligence and how to keep your firm safe from cyber hacks.

Enjoy this active stretch in the NJSBA. I hope to see you around a seminar, reception or at the Annual Mid-Year Meeting in Dublin this November. ■



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