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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The Road Ahead

By Ilene Sherwyn Cooper

With the shocking, unexpected passing of my mother this past June, the fragility of life and the preciousness of our daily living have become more poignant. What does our life hold for us, as professionals, as family members, friends, as people, living and working in a community? While many answers to this question can be offered, all would agree that life holds only what we make of it - through the personal decisions and choices we embrace along the way, through our families, our friendships, and through our associations. For indeed, whom we touch, and who touches us, makes each day of our lives more compelling and memorable. And so, we begin my tenure, as President of the Association, with opportunities for growth and outreach.

Our Association has historically and notably represented a membership with a depth of commitment and compassion towards its members and a camaraderie and spirit that has propelled it forward, and enabled it to flourish as a single integrated force since its inception. We have done so despite hardships and losses, both economic and personal. While such times, which often tap our physical and/or financial strength, can traumatize our ability to move forward, they have and can prove to be a unifying influence, providing us with life lessons and with a framework for joining together and utilizing our valuable resources to work towards better days.

Thus, with today's overbearing economic times, we are met with challenges, individually, as professionals, and as a Bar Association - challenges, which we have never before confronted, but which we should, and will address.

It has been said that "[a]ll the world is a narrow bridge. The main things is, do not be afraid to cross it."¹ Hence, the Bar Association will move forward this year, as we have on so many countless occasions, with an agenda that resonates with resilience, and the tenacity to develop programs and enhance its goals in order to accommodate the needs and aspirations of its membership during these rough economic times, and well into the future.

Towards that end, we have established a Diversity Committee. The chairs, Luis Pagan and Bronwyn Black, are committed to reaching out to all of our colleagues to further the committee's mission - the critical need for inclusion and participation. Indeed, a membership and leadership of varying views, ethnicities and backgrounds can only promote the growth and perspective of our organization, and insure its continuing utility to all attorneys.

A Community Outreach Committee has also been formed, chaired by Allison Shields and Jaclene D'Agostino. With the need

of every attorney, no less solo and small practitioners, for referral sources, networking opportunities, and community service, the committee will provide this information to our membership through *The Suffolk Lawyer* and a newly designed web page. Our Strategic Planning Committee, chaired by the undersigned and Matthew Pachman, will be focusing on the needs of our Association, as reflected in our membership survey, for webcasts, an improved website, greater accessibility to and reduced cost of CLE, and public relations. A new website is indeed in the making through the efforts of the undersigned, Allison Shields and Barry Smolowitz.

Membership Services and Benefits is another focal point of this year's agenda, and steps have already been taken by the committee, chaired by Robert M. Harper and Andrew Ellsworth, to increase the services provided by the Bar at discounted rates or no charge to our members. In furtherance of this goal, the Bar Association is sponsoring two membership and networking cocktail receptions free of charge to our members. At publication, the first of these receptions will have already been held at Wolfer Vineyards, on September 22, 2009; the second reception will be held at Blackstone Steakhouse, on October 26, 2009.

Enhanced communication with, and participation by our East End colleagues, is a continuing concern. We hope to address this to a greater extent this year through an increased number of East End CLE programs, and the development of webcasting. This will enable our East End members to view CLE programs from their office, as well as participate in membership meetings from afar. A newly created President's Council will meet twice a year with the Executive Committee. It will garner a continual participation and support from our past presidents who will discuss the progress of the association and recommendations for its continuing growth and development. Indeed, our past presidents bring a wealth of history, good council, and camaraderie to our Association, and we look forward to working with them.

"It takes effort to make something of your life when other people are making do with less. Have courage to make change. Indecision prevents action....Routine decays."² And so, with this thought in mind, I look forward to your support during my term as your President, and hope that we will move forward with the foregoing initiatives, with a positive, upward view, and much success.



Ilene S. Cooper

¹ Prayers and Meditations, at p. 18

² Wood, Nancy, *Dancing Moons*, at p. 43.