By Miriam Krinsky

Celebrating a Milestone Anniversary

In our 125th year, we will renew our efforts to translate our founders' vision into reality

ean Monet, the French economist and statesman often credited with being the father of the Common Market, once said, "Without people, nothing is possible; without institutions, nothing is lasting." No words could be more apt as our Association approaches a historic mark. It was 125 years ago that two dozen civic leaders in our community joined together to make their vision of the legal profession a reality. They founded an association aimed at creating and supporting a law library to collect in one central location the laws governing the justice system and thereby to assist Los Angeles lawyers in their professional endeavors.

Over time, the lasting legacy of that organization—our Los Angeles County Bar Association—led not simply to the creation of the Los Angeles County Law Library but to countless other reforms in, and valuable contributions to, our local legal community and legal institutions. Today our Association proudly serves as the largest metropolitan voluntary bar association in the country. We are a recognized national leader in advancing the interests of our profession and promoting reforms designed to ensure the continued fair and prompt administration of justice for all members of our society.

I am honored to have the opportunity to lead our Association as we celebrate our 125th anniversary. Through the tireless efforts and dedication of our members, a phenomenal staff led by our exceptionally capable and committed Executive Director Richard Walch, and the energy of our many volunteers, our organization has continued to have a significant and enduring impact on our community.

Our Association's Lasting Accomplishments

The history of our Association is marked by a longstanding tradition of commitment not simply to the interests of our members but also to the betterment of our profession, our surrounding community, and the legal system in which we practice.

We continue to serve as one of the most vigorous and credible advocates for the profession both locally and nationally. Through our sections and committees, we have ensured that the voice of our profession is heard in the debate on significant issues of concern to the legal community. Our efforts have helped mold numerous laws over the years, including many that have led to important reforms that help ensure access to justice and legal services for the less privileged members of our community.

Through our online services, e-mail bulletins, and high-quality publications, we have maintained our role as a primary resource and focal point within the legal community for education, information, and other products and services useful in the practice of law in Los Angeles. Most recently, our computerized and searchable Civil Register has enabled lawyers in our community to access valuable

information regarding Los Angeles state court cases, litigants, and judges. In the coming year, we also intend to make available to our members daily e-mail bulletins containing summaries of significant appellate court decisions.

Our Association has consistently recognized the importance of maintaining a broad focus and reaching out to our surrounding community through our time-tested public service projects. These many invaluable initiatives—including the Barristers Domestic Violence Project, the AIDS Legal Services Project, the Immigration Legal Assistance Project, the Lawyer Referral and Information Service, the Dispute Resolution Services, Inc., the Indigent Criminal Defense Appointments Program, and a host of other worthy endeavors—continue to touch and leave an indelible mark on the lives of countless members in our community.

The Opportunities Ahead

In the coming year, we face numerous challenges and a wealth of opportunities. I intend to follow in the footsteps of the many capable leaders of the Association by promoting our continued involvement in matters of importance to our community and our legal system.

Under the able leadership of Federal District Court Judge Audrey Collins, our Task Force on the State Criminal Justice System—a group created in the wake of the Rampart crisis to consider reforms to the state justice system—will complete its review and analysis and issue its report and recommendations in the year ahead. With the continued cooperation and support of the key institutional components of the justice system (the superior court, the district attorney, the pub-

lic defender's office, and the private criminal defense bar), the task force will endeavor to identify reforms that will ensure the continued integrity of criminal convictions and instill renewed public confidence in our criminal justice system.

With the support of the Department of Children and Family Services, I intend to revive the Association's Bridges to the Future project, a mentoring program that provides support to our county's abused and neglected foster children as they age out of the foster care system. I also intend to examine other ways our legal community can provide support to the beleaguered and overburdened dependency and delinquency court systems.

As our organization embarks on a cel-



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ebration of our 125th anniversary (including a host of activities and initiatives chaired by our energetic Past President Patricia Phillips). I intend to use this historic occasion as an opportunity to reflect on our past history and our struggle over the years to achieve diversity in our own organization as well as the obstacles and challenges on our horizon. To further those efforts, we will launch a sixpart Breakfast with Giants discussion series. chaired by Samantha Phillips Jessner. These programs will afford an opportunity for the newer members of our community to interact in an intimate setting with some of our community's most accomplished lawyers and leaders and share in their perspectives, wisdom, and reminiscences.

As in past years, we will continue to pursue efforts to support our local courts and maintain the high quality and independence of our judiciary. In particular, the superior court leadership has identified the countywide implementation of one-trial jury service as one of the greatest challenges facing the local justice system. I intend to redouble our Association's support of the court's efforts in this area. Our Association will also examine how we can help secure reasonable compensation for those who perform their civic duty and serve on juries.

After the shattering events of September 11, all of us inevitably sought to return to our daily routines; yet many of us still struggle to attach some forward-looking perspective to the tragedy that shook our country to its very foundations. That infamous day has created newfound opportunities not simply for selfreflection but also for invaluable discussions with our youth about the liberties and values that make our country unique. To that end, I have tapped Los Angeles County Superior Court Judge Laurie Zelon and former Barristers President Laura Farber to spearhead the September Dialogue in the Schools project—an outreach program that will take place near the anniversary of that tragic day. The project will recruit lawyers, judges, and civic leaders to participate in a structured dialogue with local high school students focusing on the critical liberties and values our country is attempting to defend and preserve.

Winston Churchill once opined that we "make a living by what we get," but we "make a life by what we give." We all have ample opportunities in the course of our daily professional endeavors to make and receive a living. In the coming year, I invite all of you to participate in making a life by giving your time and your energy to one of our Association's many exciting and important initiatives. Together, we can transform seemingly impossible and yet-to-be-achieved objectives into worthy and lasting realities.