

By Margaret P. Stevens

# Celebrating 75 Years of the Barristers

## On the 125th birthday of the Association, the Barristers also reaches an important milestone

The Barristers Section has two reasons to celebrate this year: the Association's 125th anniversary as well as the 75th anniversary of the Barristers. Recently, I had an opportunity to review the Barristers archives in preparation for this 75th year. What struck me was the incredible vision and energy of previous Barristers presidents, officers, and committee members who accomplished so much for newer attorneys in Los Angeles—and continued on to careers as prominent attorneys and as members of the federal and state judiciary.

The Barristers—or the Junior Barristers, as it was called initially—was first formed in 1928. Charles E. Beardsley chaired the inaugural year and Edward S. Shattuck the second year. Beardsley went on to become one of the leaders of the Los Angeles legal community, and the Beardsley firm, as it was once known (now Morrison & Foerster) has many famous alumni, including Seth and Shirley Hufstедler. Shattuck is remembered today by the Shattuck-Price Award, which is given to an attorney in the Los Angeles area who has contributed to the profession to the benefit of the public, clients, and members of the bar. This was just the beginning of the long line of extraordinary leaders—including current Association President Miriam Krinsky, who is a former member of the Barristers Executive Committee—who helped shape the Barristers into what it is today.

Although the 1920s and 1930s came long before the current vogue of mission statements, the founding era archives reveal a strong commitment to assist newer attorneys. These efforts included appearances by famous (and infamous) attorneys as guest speakers, interaction between Barristers and leaders of the profession, and social gatherings that, according to former chair Robert M. Barton, “brought a spirit of lasting camaraderie.” This commitment to act as a resource for members has remained a theme of the Barristers, and in the 1960s was expanded to provide legal assistance to those in need.

One of the original Barristers pro bono projects, the staffing of attorneys for the U.S. District Court indigent defense counsel, began in 1960, a time when there was no federal public defender. As the 1963-64 chair of the Barristers, for example, Charles G. Bakaly Jr. was on call to take assignments from particular district judges. This was to supplement the panel of four or five Barristers who appeared every Monday morning at the U.S. District Court for assignment to criminal matters. In light of the billing and caseload demands on newer attorneys, this volunteer spirit is highly commendable.

The Barristers has remained committed to this spirit. So it is not surprising to find Ronald L. Olson's statement as a Barristers former president (1976-77) in the archives, in which he recalled “advocating mandatory pro bono service, [which] was not an idea whose time had come in 1976-1977.” Perhaps in this century the profession will realize Olson's vision to contribute to our community.

In 1967, when the Barristers changed its male-only membership rule, the leaders of the new and young attorneys in Los Angeles expanded in diversity to include Margaret Morrow (the first female president, 1978-79), Lee Smalley Edmon (president 1988-89), and recently Laura Farber (1996-97), a past chair of the ABA Young Lawyers Division and a recipient of an ABA Spirit of Excellence Award, honoring contributions to racial and ethnic diversity in the law.

Our vision for the Barristers in the twenty-first century continues to build on past accomplishments, with a few additions for our 75th year. This year, the Barristers is expanding its community outreach efforts. In preparation for Community Law Day 2003, the Barristers teamed with the Association's 125th Committee to enlist members from each of the Association's sections to volunteer on Saturday, May 3, 2003, at locations throughout the city. These volunteers will provide general information and answers to basic legal questions to the public at no charge. In addition, the Barristers joined forces with Public Counsel to reinstitute its legal assistance program for the homeless and at-risk families and created the Guardian Ad Litem Project for minors in dependency court.

Acknowledging the growing need to provide support in career development, the Barristers Professional Development Task Force currently cosponsors career panels with the Association on a monthly basis, and the Networking Committee has also planned monthly events with various bar affiliates throughout the Los Angeles area, a listing of which can be found at [www.lacba.org/barristers](http://www.lacba.org/barristers).

Our 75th year could not pass without a celebration. This summer, we will revisit our history and honor those former presidents, chairs, officers, and committee members who devoted their energy and time toward improving the profession for the new and young attorneys in Los Angeles. This 75th anniversary event will also herald the inauguration of the first Barristers Award, which will be presented to an outstanding member of the bar who has significantly contributed to our profession. We hope that you can join us and share memories and stories on this very special evening. On behalf of the officers and committee members of the Barristers, we salute the Association's 125 years of history and look forward to continued success on behalf of our members. ■



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