

A Six-Month State of the Association Report



AS WE HIT THE SIX-MONTH MARK of my presidency and administration, it is important to take a step back and see where we are, where we are heading, and to report on the state of the Los Angeles County Bar Association. My time as president is short and within that time to date, our team has worked to accomplish as much as possible.

Over the last few years, LACBA membership has dropped tremendously. We have made great strides in regaining membership by developing new benefits and we are working hard to make membership attractive to all lawyers.

Last year, LACBA's Board of Trustees adopted a section autonomy policy that permits sections to present programs their members want with the requirement that the sections break even annually rather than per program. We have granted section chairs access to financial information and are continuing with an across-the-board policy of complete transparency. Any member has a right to receive nonconfidential LACBA information.

LACBA's Counsel for Justice has developed and implemented an aggressive plan for fund-raising and building its charitable activities. CFJ is under no false pretenses about its actual cost of operations. In 2018, CFJ broke all prior records for number of clients helped, number of volunteers, total value of pro bono services, and the number of pro bono hours. We encourage CFJ to expand its Domestic Violence Legal Services clinics to other courthouses throughout the county. We also urge the expansion of CFJ's Veterans Legal Services Project. I am convinced there are more veterans in Los Angeles County than any other county in the country. I recognize that some LACBA members believe it is not our primary focus to deal with these pro bono activities. However, I believe our pro bono projects serve the dual function of giving back to the community and providing our members with a pathway to provide service.

Cost Saving Measures

Earlier this year, I said that LACBA is going to need to do more with less. Under the direction of Executive Director Stan Bissey, LACBA has implemented a hiring freeze for the professional staff. There are plans to sublet the twenty-sixth floor of LACBA's downtown headquarters, which would allow some employees to work remotely and thus provide a smaller physical footprint in the office space. We are also looking at other cost-cutting measures while continuing to provide the same high level of

service to our members.

Stan is excellent and dedicated. I consider him a co-leader with the elected volunteer officers of LACBA. Staff members feel reinvigorated in their jobs and are pleased with Stan's leadership. Along with his senior staff, we work as a team to improve LACBA every single day. One of Stan's projects is the LACBA mobile app for smartphones that will allow members to custom design the information they wish to receive from LACBA, get updates on programs of interest, and make suggestions regarding membership benefits.

In the next six months, we will look closely at our fiscal

responsibilities to the membership and make determinations

so that we will continue to operate for many years to come.

We are currently executing a program in which lawyers and law firms will have the opportunity to host a continuing legal education event in their offices or at a venue of their choice. Any law firm or lawyer member who wishes to host an event would receive LACBA staff support to promote the event.

We have also implemented the "Bring a Guest" program in which a LACBA member can bring a nonmember to any section event at little or no cost to the nonmember.

LACBA's Board of Trustees has recently implemented new bylaws and added a new position of vice-president for diversity, inclusion, and outreach. This is an elected position with a two-year term.

Affordable Membership

Another LACBA goal this year was to make membership more affordable. Dues are free to first- and second-year attorneys, and third-year attorneys pay only \$50 annually. (Third-year attorneys who do not practice in Orange County or Los Angeles County pay \$99 annually.) In addition, law students now are free members of LACBA and the Barristers/Young Attorneys Section. Special rates and discounts also are available for long-term members and those who are not actively practicing law.

The 2018-2019 president of the Los Angeles County Bar Association, Brian S. Kabateck is founder and managing partner of plaintiffs law firm Kabateck LLC in Los Angeles where he practices in the areas of personal injury, insurance bad faith, pharmaceutical litigation, wrongful death, class action, mass torts, and disaster litigation.

MY LACBA STORY

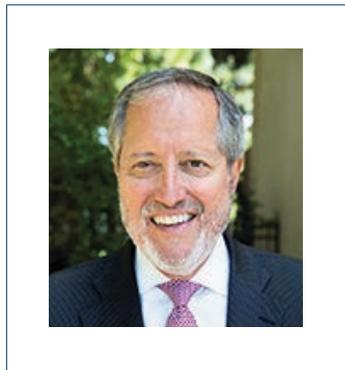
David J. Pasternak has been a Los Angeles County Bar Association member for more than 40 years, serving as president, trustee, and barristers president. He was also the 91st president of the State Bar of California and first member of the State Bar Board of Trustees appointed by the Supreme Court of California. David is a member of Pasternak, Pasternak & Alsbrook and has had a long and distinguished career as a civil litigator, state and federal court receiver, a provisional director, partition referee, special master, and Bankruptcy Court custodian. In a few short words, David shares his LACBA story and the impact that being an active member has had on his career.

This is David's story:

When I was in junior high school, I chose to pursue a career in the law because I liked to read and believed that becoming a lawyer would enable me to help others. After graduating from Loyola Law School 42 years ago, I joined LACBA and the Barristers Section in 1977.

Both the Barristers and LACBA were instrumental in my success as a lawyer. I started in Barristers by volunteering to serve as a settlement officer (similar to a mediator) in the landlord-tenant court at what is now the Stanley Mosk Courthouse and, shortly afterwards, was asked to chair that program. In addition to making lifelong friends, Barristers offered me my first leadership opportunities and many of my first mentors and role models. LACBA later continued offering me all of those same rewards for no more than the commitment of some of my time.

At a time when new attorneys frequently change jobs, it is more important than ever that they expand their network of friends and professional acquaintances to enable them to have more future professional opportunities. LACBA, and especially Barristers, offer those opportunities while also enabling new attorneys to fulfill their professional responsibilities at a time when it is more important than ever that all attorneys do so. We all need to help provide access to justice to those who are less fortunate, as well as to educate the public about their rights, the importance of the rule of law and independent and impartial courts, and the vital role that our justice system plays in our democracy.



We invite you to explore all the benefits of LACBA and Barristers/Young Attorneys Section membership, which is free to all first- and second-year attorneys. If you have questions about your membership or how to get involved, please contact LACBA Member Services at 213-896-6560.

In conjunction with the Barristers/Young Attorneys Section, LACBA has launched "Admitted," a new podcast that assembles experience, tips, and insights from practicing attorneys to help students prepare for their legal careers and successfully transition from law student to legal professional.

Bench and Bar

We continue to work closely with the judges of the Los Angeles Superior Court and the Federal District Court for the Central District of California in providing our members with access to the judiciary. We are hopeful the new governor will take note of the hard work from our bench officers as well as the constant lobbying from LACBA.

We have also developed programs to offer membership discounts as the Los Angeles Superior Court transitions to an electronic format. We have partnered with ACE and One Legal for membership discounts on e-filing.

More to Come

There is a lot that we have accomplished and a lot that we have not. Nonetheless, we continue to fight every day to restore confidence and faith in LACBA. We need to be a bar association that appeals to young and new lawyers, and we need our members to encourage others to join. In the next six months, we will look closely at our fiscal responsibilities to the membership and make determinations so that we will continue to operate for many years to come.

I am distressed by our failure to reach out to all of Los Angeles County. Los Angeles County has more lawyers than any county in the state, and we have a responsibility to make our bar association more vibrant and interesting so that attorneys will feel it is their association.

Leadership Transition

I want to assure that the hard work will continue as LACBA transitions from my leadership to that of President-Elect Ron Brot. We cannot forget the past, but LACBA must be dedicated to both the present and future. Young people in high school and college are considering careers in law, and we must do more to reach out to them and to make sure they want to join the Los Angeles County Bar Association.

Many have gotten us this far, so let's keep pushing. If you sprint ahead, you run alone, but if you are in it for the long haul, you must run together. ■