Dear Colleague:

As President-Elect, I am honored to make approximately 600 appointments to ABA Standing Committees, Special Committees, Commissions, and other Association entities and initiatives. I welcome and value your participation as you seek an appointment or nominate an ABA member whom you know.

The online guide on this website lists and describes the available ABA appointments and how they fit into the overall organization. It also provides guidance for your participation in the appointments process.

The nominations application system is integrated with the ABA’s association management system, which means you will not need to complete basic information about yourself. If your record is incomplete, I encourage you to complete it as fully as possible so that the Appointments Committee has necessary information about you for the vetting process. Please visit https://www.americanbar.org/my-aba/profile/ to complete your profile.

The number of highly qualified applicants typically exceeds the number of positions available. The Appointments Committee and I must make hard choices and balance numerous factors when making appointments, including applicants’ substantive background, as well as the geographic and demographic diversity of the Association’s entities. If you, or the person whom you nominate, do not receive an appointment this year, I hope you will understand the constraints under which we are working and consider reapplying in the future. You also may consider becoming involved in one of our outstanding Sections, Divisions or Forums by visiting https://www.americanbar.org/membership.

ABA membership is required for service on ABA entities. The only exception is membership on commissions where non-lawyer experts are allowed to serve. If you are self-nominating, please make sure your membership is current before you apply. If you are not a member, you can join the ABA by going to https://www.americanbar.org/membership. If you are nominating someone else, please make sure your nominee is a member or would be willing to join if appointed.

The online process begins on December 30, 2019, and the deadline for all submissions is February 21, 2020. We urge you to submit your application well before the February 21st deadline to avoid system delays that may occur due to heavy use close to the deadline. Please note that the on-line nominations system works best for PC users; mobile device users may experience some difficulties completing the online application. If you need assistance completing the application, please contact Danielle Norwood at danielle.norwood@americanbar.org.

The Presidential Appointments Committee members will assist in vetting the nominations. We offer the following suggestions to members who are interested in applying or nominating a colleague:

Focus on the nominee’s true interest. If you are applying on your own behalf or for another, a better fit between the Association's needs and the applicant’s talents will be achieved if we know
what strong interests the candidate has. You will see that the online form is designed for appointment to a specific entity.

**Tell us about the nominee’s relevant experience.** We encourage the participation of lawyers from all segments of practice, including young lawyers, members of firms of all sizes, solo practitioners, government lawyers, judges, legal educators, public interest lawyers, and lawyers in less traditional practice settings. A proven record of volunteer work and leadership in the organized bar - including a state or local bar - will enhance the nominee’s application. For an appointment that concerns a substantive area of the law, strong practical experience in that area is as desirable as service in the organized bar. When applying for more than one appointment, be sure to fill out a separate application for each position and provide only background experience relevant to the specific Committee or entity.

**Request an appointment that the nominee cares about.** If experience to date does not rise to the level of the nominee’s ambition, please give us reasons for considering the appointment, nonetheless. If we are unable to make the appointment requested, we will do our best to direct the nominee to an appointment or other opportunity commensurate with current experience and interests, and one that may help the nominee progress toward a future appointment.

**Indicate alternate choices.** Feel free to apply or nominate a member for more than one appointment. Let us know at least one alternate in the event that we are unable to accommodate the first choice. The “one appointment” rule (no member shall serve in more than one Presidential appointment position at the same time) will be followed with all appointments, but alternate choices increase the chance of receiving one appointment.

**Distinguish the nominee.** The appointments process is an opportunity to encourage participation in the Association’s leadership by a wide diversity of members. If appointing you or your nominee will make the Association more inclusive, or provide unusual but useful experience or perspective, please indicate such facts in the application/nomination.

I look forward to working with you to advance the work of our Association.

Sincerely,

Patricia Lee Refo