July 29, 2019

SENIOR LAWYERS DIVISION
CHAIR’S INTENT FOR BAR YEAR 2019-20

INTRODUCTION

As we welcome new officers and new members of the Council, we can reflect on our past accomplishments and the directions that our Division needs to go in the years ahead, and particularly for the next bar year. The American Bar Association recently found itself at a crossroads and it needed to take significant steps to reposition itself for the next decade. Membership was being lost at an alarming rate, both recruiting of new members and retaining existing members. The Senior Lawyers Division became a major part of that new direction. Just three years ago, the ABA Board of Governors, took a significant step by expanding the Senior Lawyers Division to encompass every ABA member age 62 and older. Our Division went from about 3,000 members to approximately 60,000. We took on new responsibilities to provide the senior members of our Association with a meaningful experience as they worked through that significant part of their legal careers and concluded their professional service.

My vision for the Senior Lawyers Division is to make it an important and significant part of the professional lives of lawyers and to execute our mission as the Advocate for Experienced Lawyers and American Families. It is the Chair’s intent for the next bar year to focus on five major areas: (1) Retain Membership; (2) Provide Quality Publications; (3) Present Substantive Programs; (4) Collaborate with other Sections, Divisions, and Forums; and (5) Provide Centers of Excellence based in the Senior Lawyers Division.

RETAIN MEMBERSHIP

In May of 2019, after over a year of study, the ABA began its program to increase and support membership. The overall program emphasized a more reasonable dues structure while providing members with increased benefits. The emphasis was on recruiting more new members, particularly young lawyers, and solo and small firm lawyers. Our Division has a limited role in recruitment, except through encouraging law firms and state and local bar associations to join and participate in their national professional organization.
The primary role of the Senior Lawyers Division is to convince our members to continue their membership in the ABA as they work toward the end of their legal careers. The Senior Lawyers Division can and should provide a continuing professional experience for our members with communications and publications, valuable programs, and opportunities for continued collegial experiences. Many lawyers, after completing their service in their respective Sections, Divisions, and Forums, need other opportunities for work and leadership in their profession. It is said that the sixties of today are the new forties. If so, the experience gained in working with other ABA groups can be transferred to the activities of the Senior Lawyers Division.

To accomplish this goal of retaining membership, we will (1) Work with ABA marketing and membership staff to develop our retention plan, (2) Engage members in programs and social events, and (3) Provide opportunities for leadership and service positions in all of our activities.

PROVIDE QUALITY PUBLICATIONS

The one way that we can stay in constant touch with our members is through our publications. The ABA, like most professional organizations, cannot regularly bring its members together. But we can take our Division to our members through magazines, emails, letters, and books. We can also provide an outlet for our members who want to contribute by writing interesting and informative articles and books. Our publications also provide an opportunity for our committees to publicize their programs and work product. We would like substantive committee to submit an article at least once each year.

In our publications we will: (1) Publish our award-winning magazine, EXPERIENCE, on a quarterly basis. Each issue will have a theme and will concentrate on articles about our profession, about the legal developments, and about advice on interesting subjects for lawyers and their families. (2) Publish our e-newsletter, “Voice of Experience,” monthly with articles on what’s happening in the Division, in the ABA, in the law, and in life. (3) Publish books through the ABA on a variety of subjects of interest to lawyers and America’s families. We will seek two to three new books on senior issues this coming year.

PRESENT SUBSTANTIVE PROGRAMS

The Division has demonstrated superiority in several program areas. One significant contribution has been in confronting the national opioid problem. In May of 2018, the Division conducted an Opioid Summit with the support of several ABA entities and other outside organizations. From the Summit came the Report: “Experienced Lawyers, American Families, and the Opioid Crisis.” The Report made nine recommendations for action. These recommendations were accepted as ABA policy by the ABA House of Delegates at its mid-year meeting in January 2019. This year the Division is joining with the Health Law Section to present a CLE Showcase Program at the Annual Meeting in San Francisco, which will feature
the President Elect of the American Medical Association, the Co-Chair of the Legal Services Corporation Opioid Task Force, and primary counsel in the current opioid litigation.

This year, we will: (1) Form a Joint Opioid Task Force with the Health Law Section to carry on this work; (2) Encourage our Committees to present programs in their substantive areas using Webinars and stand-alone programs at ABA meetings; (3) Develop programs which can be incorporated into the ABA CLE Library; (4) Join with other ABA entities in presenting programs through our Liaison Representatives; (5) Work with the Special Committee for the Celebration of the 19th Amendment.

COLLABORATE WITH OTHER ABA SECTIONS, DIVISIONS, AND FORUMS

This past year the Division received an award from the Section Officers Conference for its work in collaborating with over twenty sections and entities within the ABA and outside of it. The Division recognizes the strength of combining our efforts with those of other groups. This year we will: (1) Join with the Health Law Section in forming the Joint Opioid Task Force and present programs and activities related to solving the problems of opioid addiction; (2) Work with the Judicial Division in the development of Drug Courts and other specialized judicial programs; (3) Coordinate with and support State Bars in the operation of their senior lawyer organizations and encourage states without such organizations to organize them; (4) More fully develop a system of liaisons with every ABA Section, Division, Forum, and Special Commission; and (5) Work with other Sections, Divisions, and Forums in the development and presentation of Resolutions to the ABA House of Delegates, with our Division taking the lead in at least one Report and Resolution this year.

PROVIDE CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE BASED IN THE SENIOR LAWYERS DIVISION

We have learned that there are several areas of special interest to our members. These areas need to be further developed and made available to our members. Some of the areas already underway are Elder Law, Opioid and Drug Abuse, Dementia programs for lawyers and caretakers, Disaster Assistance, pro bono service, and legislative/policy sponsorship. We believe that through the experience and leadership of our members, developed by their long years of work and dedication to their law firms and bar associations, they are well positioned to educate, teach, coach, and counsel.

In this area, we will: (1) Create a home for Elder Law practitioners with programs and publications focused on elder law issues; (2) Build on the Opioid programs already established and reach out to state and local groups through the Joint Opioid Task Force; (3) Provide dementia programs for lawyers, caregivers, and others; (4) Create service centers for volunteer assistance in pro bono and for work in disaster relief; and (5) Organize a working group of practicing lawyers in senior positions with their law firms to explore solutions and decision making techniques.
DIVISION LEADERSHIP

I am honored to be the Chair of the Senior Lawyers Division, but the success that we will enjoy this year will depend on our officers, members of the Council, committee chairs, and our staff to accomplish our overall mission. We will rely on your dedication, ideas, encouragement, and support.

Respectfully,

Albert C. Harvey