SECOND ACTS
for Solo and Small Firm Lawyers

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Part III
Maintaining Ties with the Bar

Leaving the active practice of law doesn’t necessarily mean that lawyers have to surrender that hard-earned license to practice and stop participating in activities of the organized bar.

Chapter 9
The Bar Is Our Home
Marvin S.C. Dang

Chapter 10
Maintaining Your Status with the Bar
Craig A. Stokes
The Bar Is Our Home

by Marvin S.C. Dang

It’s been said that “home isn’t a place, it’s a feeling.” For many senior lawyers, home is the bar . . . the bar associations. Whether it’s a state or local bar association, an affinity bar association, or the American Bar Association, these organizations are the “feel good” homes for many senior lawyers, including me.

ABA lawyer members who are 62 years of age or older or who have been licensed to practice law for 37 or more years are automatically enrolled in the Senior Lawyers Division. There are no additional dues to be an SLD member. (Before 2016, lawyers who were 55 years of age or older could join the SLD by paying dues.) In 2018 about 60,000 lawyers were SLD members. These senior lawyers—or “experienced” lawyers as they are dubbed by the SLD—comprise about one out of every four ABA dues-paying lawyer members.

While many of these experienced lawyers are still working full-time, others are semiretired or retired. They have not only remained ABA members; many continue to be active volunteers in the SLD and in various ABA sections, divisions, forums, standing and special committees, and commissions. These volunteers serve in leadership positions, write books and articles, speak at continuing education programs and webinars, and participate in myriad committee activities. And these experienced lawyers are volunteering past their 60s and into their 70s and 80s.
I asked six experienced lawyers in 2018 to share some of their perspectives and to explain why they continue to volunteer in bar activities. Those lawyers are:

- **John Hardin “Jack” Young**, of Rehoboth Beach, Delaware, who has been a lawyer for 45 years. He’s semiretired and is “of counsel” to the Sandler Reiff law firm.
- San Francisco lawyer **John Uilkema** passed the bar 57 years ago and is semiretired from the law firm of Dergosits and Noah.
- Admitted to the California bar 58 years ago, Charles “Chuck” Collier fully retired last year after most recently being a partner emeritus at a law firm.
- **Louraine Arkfeld**, of Tempe, Arizona, is a retired judge. A licensed lawyer for 41 years, she now consults and teaches.
- A lawyer for 50 years, **Al Harvey** works full-time as “of counsel” to the Lewis Thomason firm in Memphis, Tennessee.
- **Ruth Kleinfeld**, of Manchester, New Hampshire, retired as a judge two years ago and is establishing a part-time arbitration practice. She’s been a lawyer for 53 years.

### Decades of ABA Involvement

**Marvin Dang:** I know that all of you are longtime ABA members and have been active volunteers for decades. When did you join the ABA and what ABA activities have you been involved with (besides the Senior Lawyers Division)?

**Jack Young:** I joined the ABA in 1973 upon admission to the Virginia bar. In the ABA I’ve been Chair of the Standing Committee on Election Law; Chair of the Election Law Task Force of the Section of International Law; and Chair of the Section of Administrative Law and Regulatory Practice. I served on the ABA Board of Governors.
John Uilkema: I became an ABA member in 1961. I was Chair and Honorary Council Member of the Section of Intellectual Property Law (IPL); IPL Section Delegate to the ABA House of Delegates; ABA Board of Governors member; ABA Nominating Committee member; Council member of the Section of Civil Rights and Social Justice; and Chair of the ABA Standing Committee on Group and Prepaid Legal Services.

Chuck Collier: I joined in 1974. I was on the ABA Board of Governors.

Louraine Arkfeld: In 1977 I became an ABA member when I graduated from law school. I dropped out for a few years and rejoined in 1984. I'm currently Chair of the ABA Commission on Law and Aging. I was Chair of the ABA Judicial Division; Judicial Member-at-Large on the ABA Board of Governors; Chair of the National Conference of Specialized Court Judges; and Council member of the Section of International Law.

Al Harvey: I joined the ABA in 1968. I've been actively involved with the Section of Litigation; the Solo, Small Firm, and General Practice Division; the Civil Rights and Social Justice Section; the ABA Retirement Funds Board; and the ABA Standing Committee on Law and National Security.

Ruth Kleinfeld: I became an ABA member in 1983. I've been Chair of the National Conference of Administrative Law Judiciary (NCAJ); liaison from NCAJ to the ABA Commission on Women in the Profession; and liaison from the Judicial Division to the ABA Commission on Law and Aging.

Dang: When did you join the ABA Senior Lawyers Division, what SLD activities are you currently involved with, and what are some of your past activities?

Young: I've been an SLD member since 2010. I'm currently Immediate Past Chair of the SLD; Chair of the Nominating Committee; Co-Chair of the Opioid Initiative Task Force; and SLD liaison to
the Rule of Law Initiative. I was SLD Chair (2017–2018); Planning Committee member of the SLD’s 2018 Opioid Summit; Chair of the Continuing Legal Education Committee; Chair of the Non-Dues Revenue Committee; and Chair of the Alternative Dispute Resolution Committee.

Uilkema: I became a member in 2005. I’m Co-Chair of the 2019 Annual Meeting Committee; Co-Chair of the Member Benefits Committee; SLD liaison to the ABA Section of Civil Rights and Social Justice; and liaison from the Intellectual Property Law Section to the SLD. Previously I served as a member of the SLD Council; member of the Annual Meeting Committee; and Membership Committee Chair.

Collier: It was around 2000 or 2001 that I became an SLD member. Currently I’m Chair of the SLD’s Supreme Court Trip Committee and Special Advisor to the Book Publishing Board. I was SLD Chair (2008–2009); Chair or Co-Chair of the SLD’s Experience magazine editorial board; Chair or Co-Chair of the SLD Supreme Court Trip Committee; and Chair of the Book Publishing Board. I’ve written reviews of SLD books for Experience magazine.

Arkfeld: I joined the SLD in 2010. I’m currently Vice-Chair of the Opioid Initiative Task Force; Co-Chair of the Strategic Planning Committee; and SLD liaison to the ABA Commission on Law and Aging. I was SLD Chair (2015–2016); SLD Council member; and Chair of the Transition Task Force.

Harvey: I became an SLD member around 1999. I’m Chair-Elect of the SLD. Previously I was SLD Vice Chair, Delegate to the ABA House of Delegates, on the SLD Council, and a member of the SLD Ethics Committee.

Kleinfeld: It was in 1995. I’m currently a Delegate from the SLD to the ABA House of Delegates, Chair of SLD Travel Committee, and Co-Chair of Pickering Award and Reception Committee. I was SLD Chair and Immediate Past Chair. I’ve been involved with
travel, Annual Meeting dinners, writing for Voice of Experience, the By-Laws Committee, and webinars.

Dang: Currently, how much of your time per month do your ABA activities take?

Young: Currently about 5 hours a month.

Uilkema: It varies, but at present I would estimate 15 to 20 hours per month.

Collier: The amount of time varies, but probably in the range of 5 to 10 hours per month.

Arkfeld: Depending on what I have been involved in, the time has varied from 10 hours a week to 10 hours a month.

Harvey: My ABA activities take about 50+ hours of time per month.

Kleinfeld: I estimate about 10 hours a month. For each ABA Annual Meeting and Midyear Meeting there’s about 7 to 8 days plus travel time.

Reasons to Stay Involved

Dang: Why do you choose to stay actively involved with the SLD and with other ABA activities?

Young: It’s the sense of connection with the legal profession, the continuing legal education, and the camaraderie of the profession.

Uilkema: The activities and their objectives are important to me. But probably even more important are the friends and personal relationships that they have fostered.

Collier: I enjoy bar association work and enjoy working with other successful lawyers and judges. I also hope that my efforts are of
assistance to other lawyers through publications, committee work, etc., and contribute to the legal profession.

Arkfled: I enjoy the opportunity to be involved in meaningful work and to stay engaged in current issues. I continue to meet interesting people and enjoy professional colleagues who share my interests.

Harvey: It's the professional responsibility, service to the bar and the community, social interaction—being with friends built over a lifetime as a lawyer, enjoyment of bar work and activities, and travel.

Kleinfeld: I enjoy the friendship and interaction with intelligent, successful, and interesting lawyers and judges. Staying active in the bar association helps me maintain competence and social utility and the opportunity for multigenerational interaction.

Dang: What would you tell a senior lawyer who has been active in bar activities (especially ABA and SLD) are the reasons that he or she should stay actively involved?

Young: I would give all the reasons in my earlier response.

Uilkema: I would tell them that all the good things that have been important to them ... educational opportunities, experiences, and friendships ... will continue. Also, there's good and important information for them relating to the law practice, the slowdown of the law practice, and retirement.

Collier: Exiting from full-time practice opens up so many opportunities to utilize one's skills and contribute to the profession through committee work, writing, speaking, and mentoring. Staying active in a bar association allows one to continue to work with friends and colleagues and to render services to the profession and the community. It gives a person the chance to share his or her expertise with others.

Arkfled: I would repeat my reasons in my earlier response.
Harvey: The same reasons as in my earlier response.

Kleinfeld: Friendships, intellectual stimulation, meaningful work, and ability to contribute to the vitality of the organized bar. Some ABA members have told me they stay members mainly for insurance coverage benefits. Also, the ABA offers many economic benefits.

It’s Never Too Late to Get Involved

Dang: What would you tell a senior lawyer who isn’t currently active in bar activities are the reasons that she or he should now consider getting involved?

Young: The SLD in particular provides an opportunity to stay involved in the profession, to continue to work on projects of interest, and to receive information important to life and wellness decisions for yourself, your family, and your friends.

Uilkema: You’ll find the activities and your involvement satisfying, educational, and useful, and, probably even more importantly, you will enjoy the people you meet and the friendships you develop. Somewhat ironically, I have often made closer personal friends in my bar activities than I have from my law partnerships. In retrospect, I recall my much older and first senior partner who had been the chair of the ABA Section of Intellectual Property and who obviously experienced the same thing. At that time I didn’t understand it and was somewhat envious of his ABA friends.

Collier: The benefits of bar association work include the opportunity to write articles and books; the chance to participate in special events at the ABA such as the annual meeting; hearing great speakers and the leaders of the profession; networking; continuing friendships over many more years; staying involved in the profession; and contributing through committee work.
Arkfeld: I would tell her or him the reasons I stated earlier. Also if you no longer have a professional workplace, it's difficult to have these opportunities without something like the ABA.

Harvey: I would give the same reasons that I gave earlier.

Kleinfeld: It's the intellectual stimulation and the opportunity to contribute by giving back to the legal profession.

Dang: How easy is it for a senior lawyer who hasn't been involved to now get involved in bar activities?

Young: The SLD is open to all ABA members who are 62 years of age or older. It has a place for everyone at all levels of involvement. It's open to participation in each of its substantive committees, as well as being open to new projects and ideas.

Uilkema: It would seem very easy, but for the person who has never been involved, that person might have a built-in resistance to getting involved.

Collier: There are always openings on committees that make it very easy to get actively involved. Every volunteer is welcome.

Arkfeld: It's easy to get involved because organizations are always looking for people willing to do good work.

Harvey: The first step could be as easy as attending a meeting or joining a committee.

Kleinfeld: It's very easy if the lawyer is willing to do the work (write, attend meetings, or present a webinar). It's also easy if you get introduced by a friend or associate.

Dang: How can senior lawyers be actively involved with bar activities without having to travel to meetings?

Young: Attending ABA or SLD meetings can be the least important part of membership—although the meetings are both fun and interesting. Senior lawyers can be actively involved through writing
articles for the SLD’s monthly Voice of Experience e-newsletter or the quarterly Experience magazine, participating in webinars and CLE programs, or drafting resolutions to the House of Delegates on issues important to you that you believe the House of Delegates (through sponsorship by the SLD) should enact.

Uilkema: They can get involved through developing some kind of personal involvement that makes them feel a part of the process. It’s important that they are involved with other people.

Collier: Senior lawyers can be involved through e-mail and telephone. Many SLD committee members participate only by phone and e-mail.

Arkfeld: They can be involved without travel because many SLD committees work online or via conference call. The SLD is always looking for good writers for articles for the Voice of Experience e-newsletter or Experience magazine, and this work can be done remotely.

Harvey: Most committees work via conference calls and email. But to be really active, they should plan to attend some meetings or conferences.

Kleinfeld: Without attending meetings, they can participate in committee meetings by telephone, write for the Voice of Experience e-newsletter or for Experience magazine, or participate as presenter at webinars (this can be done remotely).

Some Final Thoughts

Dang: Do you have any other comments?

Young: Yes, senior lawyers have a lot to contribute based on their experience and their experiences. The SLD is an excellent place to continue to connect to the law and the bar. In the words of Monty
Python in *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*: “I’m not dead yet.” Anything but. Senior lawyers are a vital part of the legal profession.

**Uilkema:** The SLD should keep up the good work!

**Collier:** The SLD is a strong, vigorous ABA entity. Anyone active in it will benefit from participation in its activities.

**Arkfeld:** I am always reinvigorated after engaging with my SLD colleagues!

**Harvey:** Enjoyment of service to the profession should not stop on retirement. The need is there at every level, and experience gained through a life in the law is still valuable.

**Kleinfeld:** Get involved!

Continued bar association work is not just for the good of the legal profession. It’s good for those who volunteer. The ABA in general, and the SLD specifically, has been and continues to be the “feel good” home for Jack, John, Chuck, Louraine, Al, Ruth, and me. The bar can continue to be—or begin to be—the home for many other senior, experienced lawyers.