



A Message From the Chair

The Spring Meeting in San Juan is this week, and we are all looking forward to it! I am excited to report that we have outstanding attendance. We are about sold out! The CLE is going to be terrific and the materials will be available for sale in case you miss this meeting. For the first time, we are making materials available in hard copy and CD Rom.

On Wednesday, we will be doing a training program for military personnel stationed at Fort Buchanan and elsewhere. Military personnel providing legal services are greatly in need of training on family law issues. We are very excited about this. We will be presenting a six-hour program on many aspects of family law. We hope to do a similar program prior to the Annual Meeting and at other future meetings, if bases are located nearby. The Section is very proud of this endeavor. West Publishing is assisting us in producing the program and in making videos of the program that will be available on its web site.

A few weeks ago I had the honor of being asked to testify before the Senate Judiciary Committee on the proposed federal constitutional amendment banning gay marriage and restricting civil unions. As all of you know, in February, the ABA House of Delegates adopted a resolution, submitted by the Family Law Section and the Section of Individual Rights and Responsibilities, urging Congress not to enact any legislation that would restrict the ability of states to define civil marriage for its citizens or to decide what effect would be given to marriages or civil unions from other states. It was on this issue that I was asked to testify. It was an exciting experience. The House is also having hearings on an identical proposed amendment. The ABA has an opportunity to make a difference on this issue.

Our Working Group on Same Sex Marriage and Alternative Unions will be finishing its White Paper shortly. This project has been a major undertaking and we are all proud of the soon-to-be finished product. The Council will be asked to approve the final draft in San Juan, after which it will be submitted for formal ABA approval. Once that has been accomplished, we will be printing and distributing it, as well as making it available on our web site.

The Section is a co-sponsor of the 2004 Children and the Law Conference, being co-sponsored by the ABA Center for Children and the Law and the American Psychological Association. It will take place in Washington, D.C. the first weekend in June. We are planning several of the workshops. You will receive more information about this conference shortly.

The Section is thriving. The committees are working very hard and a lot is getting done. For those of you who haven't joined a committee, it is a great way to get involved in the Section and to meet new people. For those of you not joining us in San Juan, please consider coming to the ABA Annual Meeting in Atlanta or joining us in Milwaukee for our fall conference.

Phyllis D. Bossin