

## PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

### NJSBA Remains Vigilant in Protecting Values of Legal System



*"May you live in interesting times."*

That maxim is supposedly the English translation of a Chinese curse, and speaks directly to the issues we are confronting as the legal profession examines the path ahead.

In the near future, the practice of law will not be the same as it was 10 or even just five years ago. The New

Jersey State Bar Association is examining the trends affecting us now and the issues on the horizon to see what the future holds for you and our profession.

One thing is certain—the way we work is going to change. A recent *New York Times* article (Nov. 6, 2015) speaks of the coming job revolution where, "smart software and robots are not poised to wipe out large numbers of American jobs, but technology-driven automation will affect most every occupation and can change work." The article goes on to say that automation is not just something that will take place in factories, but will be a reality for physicians, financial managers and even chief executive officers. A report in the November edition of *McKinsey Quarterly* offers further insight and suggests that while jobs will not be entirely automated, certain tasks will, much like the job of bank tellers was redefined with the proliferation of ATMs.

There is no question that the practice of law has already changed, and must continue to do so to accommodate the technical revolution that is going on around us in other parts of the business world and our personal lives. We see that on a daily basis as we use online banking, make purchases on Amazon or book plane reservations from our iPads. But we must guard against our professional legal advice and counsel becoming simply another commodity traded over the Internet.

As lawyers, we both dislike and embrace change.

We embrace it on behalf of our clients and we disdain it in our own professional lives, which are based on a loyalty and faith in the guiding value of precedent.

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In the last six months, the American Bar Association has made a series of proposals, which are directed at the future of the practice of law. Among those are proposals state supreme courts should be able to regulate not only lawyers, but also non-lawyer entities that are providing legal advice.

There is no clear answer as to how we must proceed on these facts.

What I can promise you is that the NJSBA is trying to look at the future and tell you what it holds for you. Our chief goal is to protect the public, and we are certain we will find a way to ensure professional legal advice is not turned into a commodity dispensed by those without the training and professionalism that is characterized in what New Jersey lawyers do every day.

Yes, we do live in interesting times, and we will meet the challenges that are presented to us. ☺