

PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

ROBERT B. HILLE

President Hille Vows Commitment to NJSBA Members and its Mission

A Look at the Year Ahead



I am committed to the association and its mission, and I welcome the year ahead as an opportunity to advocate for our members, to advance the important work of the NJSBA and to improve the practice of law for all attorneys.

What the NJSBA does matters.

It matters for our more than 18,000 members who come from

every corner of the state.

It matters for the solo and small-firm attorneys, who make up two-thirds of all attorneys in private practice. They serve a critical role in their communities and are a driver in the New Jersey small business economy. They keep business dollars in New Jersey.

It matters to the law students and newly admitted attorneys who join our profession at a time when law school debt is crushing and diminishing job opportunities are leaving many underemployed. It matters to lawyers attempting to re-enter the profession.

It matters to all of us.

Lawyers face regulatory burdens that impede their ability to practice. They also face a rising tide of unfair competition from borderless, virtual and remote practice models. These and non-professional providers divert financial resources from New Jersey. They also threaten to reduce local control over legal services and put legal representation in the hands of distant competitors not bound by New Jersey ethical obligations and rules.

These are challenging times, but we are here and are committed to meet those challenges.

The NJSBA is already working to be proactive and I will harness the momentum that my predecessors have begun to keep moving forward. We can no longer react to change. We must be the source of it. This requires that we work together with all three branches of government to ensure that we pre-

serve and promote a system and profession that serves this state and its citizens.

The bar association has helped to shape history, through our *amicus* participation, legislative advocacy and by serving as a resource to state and national agencies in the creation of rules and regulations for the profession that make sense. We will continue that work to preserve the essential democratic role of our profession while integrating the opportunities and advancements that are happening every day.

To succeed, these efforts must include a continued strengthening of the relationship between the bench and the bar. We are all lawyers and committed to the same goal of ensuring New Jersey litigants have access to one of the best judicial systems in the nation and the world. Together, we can preserve the local character of the profession and a level playing field while helping our members to be competitive and meet the needs of their clients in an increasingly borderless world.

To do that, the association has launched two task forces to focus on these needs. One will examine cyber security issues in the profession, from data security to court rules. A second will evaluate, identify and review issues surrounding the practice of law by taking a proactive look at court rules, statutory regulations and federal issues with the goal of offering comprehensive proposals that will advance the administration of justice and ensure the bar has a voice in any changes. Additionally, the NJSBA will continue to energize efforts to adopt professional malpractice reforms to level the playing field for all professionals, as well as fortify efforts on behalf of veterans, and help steer the launch of a diversionary program for those who have been accused of offenses related to their military service.

Our members do great things. And together we can do even more.

I look forward to working with our leaders and staff in the year ahead to improve the practice of law for our members so that they can effectively continue to serve the citizens and communities of this great state. ♪