

# PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

PARIS P. ELIADES

## The NJSBA is Making a Difference; Be a Part of It



**We're making a difference—join us.**

**F**our years ago, when Justice John E. Wallace Jr. was not re-nominated, a spark was ignited. Politics had crossed a sacred line, a line

drawn generations ago by our forefathers. Rising to speak for our democracy and our way of life, the NJSBA began 'oral argument' in earnest, reminding the public and our members of the issues at stake. Meetings, seminars and events were focused on the importance of an independent Judiciary. In Aug. 2013, the unexpected occurred, and Justice Helen E. Hoens's position on the Court was sacrificed. In an urgent call to action we stood 18,000-strong and challenged the powerful. We made the independence of our Judiciary relevant.

Worried that Chief Justice Stuart Rabner was next, we redoubled our efforts and directed our energies on this moment in history. We fought tirelessly to rally the legal community in support of Chief Justice Rabner's successful tenure appointment. Spin it however you want, we prevailed. The just result was achieved.

Our efforts have been felt elsewhere in Trenton. Two-and-a-half years ago, a special interest group mounted a campaign to dramatically change the circumstances under which alimony is awarded and when it is terminated. Following hundreds

of hours and countless meetings, the NJSBA was at the forefront of guiding the process and crafting a just and fair compromise that represents historic legislative changes in alimony jurisprudence. With the governor's hopeful signature, significant change will be cast into the law.

At the same time, we have directed our efforts toward advancing an important piece of legislation that will treat all professionals equally, including lawyers. This measure would require that civil actions alleging professional malpractice be brought within two years, much like the statute controlling physicians. While simultaneously protecting the rights of victims of malpractice by preserving the discovery rule for individuals who discover problems after two years, this legislation would standardize professional malpractice for lawyers, doctors, accountant, architects, engineers and other professionals. This is a just result, and it deserves to become law.

You too can make a difference. All it takes is to get active in our association and add your experience to a section or committee that inspires you. Anyone can be a part of this process, even a country lawyer from the mountainous northwest corner of this great state like me. By daring to try, I have had the privilege and honor of playing some part in legal changes, large and small. By challenging myself, I have had the privilege of working alongside great legal minds and leaders, young and old. There are no limits to what you can achieve, and no barriers to seeking justice. I get chills when I think about it.

**Join in and experience the thrill of effectuating change.**