

Announcing the New CBA Strategic Plan

By AMY LIN MEYERSON

I am excited to announce the launch of our new 2020-2024 Connecticut Bar Association Strategic Plan covering CBA FY2021 to FY2023. Created by the Strategic Planning Committee, with input from the CBA Board of Governors, this plan builds upon prior CBA Strategic Plans, sets the course for the CBA's future, and lays out five overarching goals and specific objectives that CBA leadership, members, and staff will work to accomplish over the next three fiscal years.

Our last strategic plan terminated on June 30, 2020. Much like other programs and activities, our strategic planning process was delayed due to the pandemic. In July, we engaged Nancy P. Lee,¹ a BoardSource Senior Governance Consultant and Certified Governance Trainer, to help guide our Strategic Planning Committee and to provide an unbiased, external perspective.

In August, Nancy led our strategic planning sessions over two days as we brainstormed about our mission, vision, values, goals, and potential future directions. We examined the key elements of what has led to our successes and our challenges in the past that help to inform our future direction.

A draft plan was prepared and reviewed in depth by the CBA Strategic Planning Committee, CBA staff, and the CBA Executive Committee, incorporating consensus and their collective knowledge, experience, and judgment. The members of the Strategic Planning Committee are Cecil J. Thomas and Daniel Horgan (co-chairs), Amy Lin Meyerson, Cindy M. Cieslak, Karen DeMeola, Emily Gianquinto, Moy N. Ogilvie, Jonathan Weiner, and Keith J. Soressi. A final version of the strategic

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“The CBA is the preeminent leader in the legal profession in Connecticut and beyond. Our members are connected and have achieved collective and individual success in a diverse, equitable, and inclusive profession in service to society.”

— CBA Vision Statement

plan was approved by the CBA Board of Governors on September 14, 2020.

The new Strategic Plan amends and rephrases the CBA's Mission Statement:

Consistent with the purposes set forth in the CBA Constitution, we seek to foster a collaborative community that:

- *Creates opportunities for growth and development in the practice of law*
- *Advocates for Connecticut's attorneys and legal professionals*
- *Promotes community service and civics education and engagement*
- *Advances equitable access to justice, in-*

cluding the provision of pro bono legal services

- *Protects democracy and upholds the rule of law*
- *Ensures diversity, equity, and inclusion within the Bar and the Bench*

The stated purposes of the CBA are in our CBA Constitution:

Article II Purpose

The purposes of this Association shall be to promote the public interest through the advancement of justice and the protection of liberty; to aid its Members in the development and maintenance of their respective practices; to facilitate the delivery of competent legal services to the public and

particularly to those in greatest need; to support or oppose legislation and regulations consistent with the interests of the public good and its Members; to supply the highest quality continuing legal education opportunities and works of legal scholarship; to promote diversity within the Bar and the Bench; to develop collegial interaction among the members of the Bar; to safeguard the dignity of the legal profession; to coordinate the activities of the several bar associations within Connecticut; and to advance the interests of its Members within the American Bar Association, other organizations with which the Association is affiliated, and society as a whole.²

The CBA values stated in the Plan are the association's guiding principles that clarify what we stand for and guide us in our daily work:

PEOPLE – We work together with the mutual respect and kindness that befits the dignity of our profession. We are committed to building and refining our professional skills to adapt to a dynamic environment.

RELIABILITY – We can be counted on every day. We continually improve our services and infrastructure to provide our members with the best service experience possible.

MEMBER FOCUS – We build strong member and community relationships. We treat members and other stakeholders with dignity and respect. We meet our members' needs while protecting their interests.

SERVICE – We play a vital part in improving the quality of life in our community by contributing our unique skills and abilities as legal professionals and officers of the Court.

The purpose of this three-year Strategic Plan is to guide the Connecticut Bar Association into the future. It provides a framework to focus and coordinate the efforts of leadership and staff as we work toward identified goals and assess our as-

sociation's progress in furthering its mission. The CBA's performance plans, annual business plans, and budgets for FY 2021 through 2023 will be informed by the priorities, goals, and actions set forth in this plan.

Guided by the CBA Strategic Plan, our efforts will focus on five **Goals**:

- 1. Organizational Culture**
- 2. Governance and Leadership**
- 3. Maintaining and Increasing Membership**
- 4. Marketing and Communicating Value**
- 5. Access to Justice and Pro Bono**

We are now in the process of implementing the plan with the support of CBA staff while continuing to provide our award-winning professional development and networking opportunities that are crucial to the exchange of ideas and information to equip you with needed knowledge and resources. One area of focus under governance and leadership is to increase inclusion of mid-level lawyers in the substantive work of our sections and committees and provide more opportunities to young lawyers for leadership, including working closely with YLS Chair Cindy Cieslak and the CBA Young Lawyers Section; and with our Presidential Fellows and their newest members: Jeffrey D. Bausch, Jr., Updike Kelly & Spellacy PC; Jenna T. Cutler, Cohen and Wolf PC; Samim Jabarkhail, Nuzzo & Roberts LLC; and Paige M. Vaillancourt, Rescia Law PC.

Next steps will involve identifying the actions important to accomplish each goal, responsible parties for those actions, necessary resources, timeframes, and evaluative metrics. Progress will be reported to the CBA Board of Governors regularly and noted on an implementation matrix. CBA staff will assist with conducting periodic reviews by those involved with the implementation of the plan so appropriate adjustments can be made in order to maintain momentum of the plan

and maximize the effectiveness of efforts to accomplish our actions, goals, and priorities.

While the plan reflects the committee's current thinking and represents its planning process at a given point in time, the Plan is not an end in itself. Our Plan is goal-oriented, not process-oriented. It will guide our leadership and staff in decision-making and help ensure that the CBA's activities and programs are aligned with our mission. It is meant to be a functional tool that can evolve with changing circumstances as new information or unexpected challenges are encountered, even if it means modifying or jettisoning some steps in the process.

The information we learned during the planning process is just as useful in allowing us to change course and make other adjustments as needed—whether it's because of a global pandemic or a weeklong power outage due to a tropical storm.

To move the Plan forward, we will continue to need your help. We will need talented, committed people from diverse backgrounds and require deep partnerships with others who share our vision of a strong and effective bar association, a healthier legal profession, and a more just and equitable world. Please let us know if you can contribute your knowledge, passion, and creativity in helping us realize any one or more of our goals.

Thank you for your continued dedication and collaboration as we further our vision of connecting our members and achieving collective and individual success in a diverse, equitable, and inclusive profession in service to society.

You may view the CBA Strategic Plan at ctbar.org/StrategicPlan.

We welcome your questions, comments, input, and any assistance you can provide. Please e-mail us at communications@ctbar.org. Wishing you and your family a healthy and happy holiday season! Stay safe and be well. ■

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President's Message

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NOTES

1. boardsource.org/nancy-lee
2. The Constitution of the Connecticut Bar Association, Inc. was last amended by the CBA House of Delegates on January 13, 2014 and may be viewed on the CBA website at www.ctbar.org/docs/default-source/leadership-resources/2019-2020/04-2019-cba-constitution-bylaws-and-procedures_10-15-18.pdf

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Connecticut Fines

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The general level of inconvenience and potential for fines relating to pandemic face covering requirements and social gathering size restrictions during the current public health emergency appear to be on par with pre-existing statutory safety, health, and public welfare requirements affecting operators and passengers of motor vehicles, that are intended to protect not just the operators and passengers themselves but also the general public's health, safety, and welfare. ■

NOTES

1. State enforcement of adherence to federal motor vehicle safety requirements is distinguishable from state regulation of motorcyclists' protective headgear. (Protective headgear requirements have been challenged in several jurisdictions on constitutional grounds (including discriminatory selective enforcement grounds, and arguments that a state's police power does not extend to helmet requirements that only protect the individual motorcyclist's life and health, not the general public's health, safety and welfare.) Protective headgear requirements that apply only to minors and that allow use of headgear meeting federal safety standards (without imposing additional, more restrictive state requirements) have been easier to defend against constitutional challenge.

2. Conn. Gen. Stat. Section 14-300f(b) includes the same penalties for failing to stop a motor vehicle at the direction of a school crossing guard.

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and Disciplinary Counsel offices were unable to find the respondent. *Ansonia Panel v. Jose L. Altamirano*, #19-0337 (7 pages).

Presentment ordered for violations of Rules 1.3, 1.4(a)(2),(3) and (4), 1.5(a) and (b), 1.15(d), 8.1(2), 8.4(3), 8.4(4) and Practice Book § 2-32(a)(1) in regards to a divorce case where respondent, while under suspension, took a fee to file a divorce and failed to do so. Respondent had a significant history of discipline which, combined with not answering the present case, led to the presentment order. SGC ordered an additional violation of Rule 5.5(b)(2) to be considered on presentment. *Monahan v. David V. Chomick*, #19-0450 (9 pages). ■

Supreme Deliberations

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any factors were different...." For Justice D'Auria, this "absence of any explanation for the ruling...makes entirely deferential review problematic."

Turning then to the merits, Justice D'Auria concluded that the appellate court should have granted the defendants' request to file a late appeal for three principal reasons. First, citing the plaintiff's "arguably unnecessary" motion for offer of compromise interest and the absence of any reviewing court ruling "definitely determin[ing]" whether, following a 1997 amendment to § 37-3b, the trial court retains some discretion over the amount of postjudgment interest it can award, Justice D'Auria concluded that "the events that transpired after the jury's verdict were...susceptible to reasonable confusion sufficient to constitute 'good cause' and to justify the defendants' late appeal." Second, the plaintiff was not prejudiced by the delay. Third, the appellate court's ruling caused a "complete forfeiture" of a statutory right that was "wildly out of proportion to any procedural violation in the case."

We certainly sympathize with the defendants. After all, the plaintiff was not substantially prejudiced by the late filing and it's not like the dismissal lightened the appellate court's docket much, given that it still had to resolve the defendants' appeal challenging the trial court's award of interest. On the other hand, the defendants should have known that the appellate clock began running when the trial court accepted the jury's verdict. And it's hard to conclude that the appellate court's decision was arbitrary, when there was really no sound basis for the defendants to believe that they had timely filed their appeal.

But in any event, the lesson of *Georges* has been around at least as long as we've been practicing appellate law: when in doubt, immediately file the appeal—or at least file a motion for an extension of time! ■