

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



## Finding Relevance in a Changing Legal Landscape

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**I, like many of you, have a love/hate relationship with change. How many times have you, like me, said, “I’m so glad I’m not just starting out practicing law. Things have changed so much”? I love practicing law, but when I look back, I remember wonderful mentors, partners, and judges who took time to explain the “why” of a procedure or strategy. I remember opponents who zealously advocated for their clients, but never personalized the dispute.**

I remember having time to consider and reflect on a problem. I think wistfully of those times and the days before Federal Express, fax machines, and email (showing my age here) not to mention before IT, DMs, and AI sped up our lives. Many years ago, I knew almost all the members of the State Bar of Nevada personally. Indeed, one of the benefits of being a member of the state bar was (and still is) networking ... getting to know your fellow bar members outside the practice of law.

Although times have changed, the State Bar of Nevada (SBN) is doing more than just reacting to those changes ... it is taking the lead to pave the way for you, its members, to adapt and thrive. The state bar does this by staying true to its mission in new and creative ways that can help you. When someone proposes that the state bar take on a project or advocate for a position, I like to ask, “*Is it our mission?*” Conversely, one of my favorite responses when I’m asked why the state

bar is moving in a certain direction is, “The state bar’s mission is to *serve our members, govern the profession and protect the public.*” If the response to the first question is “Yes, because it serves our members,” or “Yes, because it is part of governing the profession,” or “Yes, because it protects the public,” then I know that our state bar should take a hard look at the proposal.

This is how a bar stays relevant in a changing legal landscape.

One of the state bar’s jobs is to help its members start, maintain, and wind up a law practice. Recently, I heard from a member who left a firm to start her own practice. When she went looking for resources, she didn’t have to look far. The state bar’s website ([nvbar.org](http://nvbar.org)) had everything she needed except clients ... and it provided tips on how to find those as well. Check out <https://nvbar.org/for-lawyers/resources/start-your-practice/>. This resource is also helpful if you want to better understand what it takes to start a business.

Want to ensure you stay up to date on the latest law in your practice area? Again, check out the state bar’s website ([nvbar.org](http://nvbar.org)). Within the menu, go to “For Lawyers.” Check out “Resources.” The list includes SBN CLE Programs. Voilà! Some just require reading an article and answering a few multiple-choice questions.

Finally, are you trying to wind down your practice and don’t know what to do with the 100-plus boxes of files in your basement? Go to the state bar’s website ([nvbar.org](http://nvbar.org)). From the menu, go to “News and Publications,” then go to “State Bar Publications” and select “Succession Planning.”

And those tools relate just to the first part of the state bar’s mission ... “To serve its members.”

Want to know where the interest on your IOLTA account is going? Take a look at [nevadabarfoundation.org](http://nevadabarfoundation.org). Just scrolling through the first three pictures will brighten your day, and the substance of what the Nevada Bar Foundation (NBF) accomplishes will amaze you. The NBF manages the IOLTA program. It makes more than \$4 million in annual grants to organizations that promote access to justice by providing direct legal assistance to the poor, victims of domestic violence, and children protected by or in need of protection of the juvenile court. NBF also makes grants to encourage students to pursue a legal career through support for the state bar’s statewide High School Mock Trial program.

Another way the state bar is taking the lead is with its bar exam. The Board of Bar Examiners still administers the bar exam twice a year. In its continuing efforts to analyze and improve the quality and efficacy of the Nevada Bar Exam, the Board of Bar Examiners is working with the Nevada Supreme Court on a bar exam study.

Our Office of Bar Counsel (OBC) is also on the forefront of professional regulation. Once, we had a backlog of discipline matters. Now the OBC processes 85 percent of complaints to dismissal or hearing within eight months, and sanctions have become consistent by using uniform standards. The work of the Board of Bar Examiners, Admissions Department, Office of Bar Counsel, and Disciplinary Boards meet the second and third prongs of our mission: “to regulate the profession and protect the public.”

So the next time you, like me, are looking at the past wistfully, turn your head in the other direction and look at your state bar. As the sign on my sister’s door says, “Don’t look back, you are not going that way.” Know that the bar to which you belong is still meeting its mission, even though the profession may be changing. In doing so, your State Bar of Nevada ensures that we can look on this profession with one thing that doesn’t change: pride.