

MEET YOUR NEW BAR PRESIDENT:

A Q&A WITH BRYAN SCOTT

BY ROBERT HORNE, STATE BAR STAFF

Bryan Scott begins his one-year term as president of the State Bar of Nevada this month. Scott is an Assistant City Attorney for the City of Las Vegas, handling issues relating to planning and zoning for the city council and planning commission. He has been with the city attorney's office since 1996.

WHAT IS IN YOUR MUSIC MIX?

"I have an eclectic mix of music, everything from the '80s to country to opera, to gospel to rap to pop to rock. I have almost 2,000 songs."

IF YOU WEREN'T DOING THIS, YOU'D BE ...

"...a chef. I've always liked cooking; it's a creative outlet for me."

He has served on the State Bar of Nevada's Board of Governors since 2006. He's also a past president of the Clark County Law Foundation (2006), Clark County Bar Association (2005), and the Las Vegas Chapter of the National Bar Association (1996-99).

Scott's family moved to North Las Vegas in 1970, when he was just 3 years old. He graduated from Rancho High School and completed his undergraduate degree in business management at UNLV in 1988, after which he earned his Juris Doctorate from the Northwestern School of Law at Lewis and Clark College in Portland, Oregon in 1991.

WHAT IS THE BEST ADVICE YOU EVER GOT?

"I've had a lot of great mentors throughout my life.... The advice they gave me was setting a good example for me to follow. ... My mother was a great role model. She was a person who went to a segregated high school in Texas, and I have her diploma hanging in my office with my diplomas. She instilled in me to treat all people following the golden rule: treat people the way you want to be treated."

WHY DID YOU CHOOSE TO WORK AS A GOVERNMENT ATTORNEY?

"I really wasn't happy with the work I was doing in private practice—insurance defense work. It was fulfilling for a time, but I needed a change after doing that for three years. A friend of mine, who worked for the city attorney's office in the criminal division, told me about an opening in the city attorney's office (civil division). I was hesitant at first. I didn't know if I wanted to work for the government. I'd always wanted to be in private practice.

After he talked me into it, I submitted my resume, and Brad Jerbic, my current boss, called me in. ... I've been happy here since. I started

off doing insurance defense work for the city. We are self-insured, so I was doing the same thing [as I was] in private practice, but I had more autonomy over my cases.

In 2000, Steve George became a judge in Henderson and the city's land-use attorney job opened up. Brad asked me if I would like the position. I had always done litigation, and I didn't know anything about land-use law. He made me a promise that if I didn't like it, I could go back to litigation. I followed Steve around for two weeks, and then the job was mine. On live television, I was representing the city council, advising the city council and planning commission on all zoning and planning issues as well as ethics issues. ... I've been doing that ever since. This is my 16th year doing land-use law, and I still love it.

My job affords me the opportunity to see first hand how the city is developing. I've been here since 1970, and none of this (he points to all the buildings visible outside his office window) was even thought of when I moved here. I had a hand in all the things you see out here. I've seen all those projects on paper prior to them ever being built: the outlet mall, World Market Center, Smith Center, Las Vegas Valley Water District, even the city's Lou Ruvo brain center. ... It's nice to see the city grow and know I played some small role in its growth."

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE CURRENT CHALLENGES IN PRACTICING LAW?

"It's still just trying to make people believe that lawyers, especially in government, have their best interests at heart. We are trying to get people to respect lawyers more, know that we're not just out for a dollar, and that we are always trying to help people.

Technology has become a bit of a challenge. Lawyers have to practice differently than they were before. We are seeing a lot more electronic filing, and some people are not keeping up as well as others have with that. I don't know if that is because we are so used to doing it a certain way that we are hesitant to do it a different way, or that we haven't been trained well enough to use it effectively."



BRYAN SCOTT, ESQ.
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YOU'VE BEEN A MEMBER OF THE STATE BAR OF NEVADA'S BOARD OF GOVERNORS SINCE BEING APPOINTED IN 2006. WHAT ARE SOME OF THE PAST CHALLENGES THE BAR HAS FACED SINCE YOU HAVE SERVED ON THE BOARD? HOW HAS THE BOARD ADDRESSED THOSE ISSUES?

"Discipline of lawyers has been our biggest challenge to date, and we've done a lot of work trying to relieve the backlog of discipline cases. We've hired new bar counsel, hired additional bar staff, hired additional paralegals, and we've really been getting the word out to lawyers and judges that this is a priority for us. People are embracing it, and even the public is seeing that we are doing something about

WHAT IS ON YOUR DESK RIGHT NOW?

"My iPad; Title 19, which is the city's planning code; my Circle of Support Award from the Clark County Bar Association;... and my Magic 8 Ball."

disciplining lawyers, if it's needed.

We have a challenge with substance abuse and alcohol issues, which fuels some of our issues with lawyer discipline. We've instituted a substance abuse/mental health CLE

credit, that the Nevada Supreme Court and the CLE board approved a couple of years ago, to bring more awareness to the problem. Even though you may not be suffering under that particular illness or condition, at least you may be able to help fellow bar members get through problems they are having.

Also, we've increased our participation in the Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers program. We've initiated the Nevada Lawyer Assistance Program; those programs have been successful in getting

some lawyers back on track."

ARE THERE ANY PROJECTS YOU ARE PROUD OF DURING YOUR TIME ON THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS?

"I'm proud of my time on the Nevada CLE Board as the state bar's liaison.

That board is responsible for accrediting CLE courses and monitoring credit compliance. We are trying to bring the CLE board and the Board of Governors together to work in a more cohesive manner. For two years, 2005 to 2007, I was a member of the Nevada Supreme Court's Study Committee on Lawyer Advertising.

I was on the facilities committee for four years, and we were successful in buying the new bar building and selling the old building. The staff was crammed into 11,000 square feet of old building built in 1930s. I was the facilities chair, and we went around to various realtors and looked at various locations to house the bar's new building, which really became a challenge once Zappos.com moved downtown and started buying up a lot of the land around downtown. We were successful in getting a 30,000 square foot building at 3100 West Charleston. So, that is probably my favorite part of being on the board at this point. Securing a new building that could potentially be the bar's forever home. ... My hope is that we can make it more of an active bar building, perhaps by putting a mock courtroom in there as well."

I'VE READ THAT YOU WILL BE THE FIRST AFRICAN AMERICAN AND FIRST GOVERNMENT ATTORNEY TO SERVE AS PRESIDENT OF THE STATE BAR OF NEVADA. HOW IMPORTANT IS IT TO YOU TO BREAK DOWN THOSE BARRIERS?

"I'm very proud of that. It's really an honor. I was the first African American president of the Clark County Bar Association as well. Unfortunately, there has *continued on page 7*

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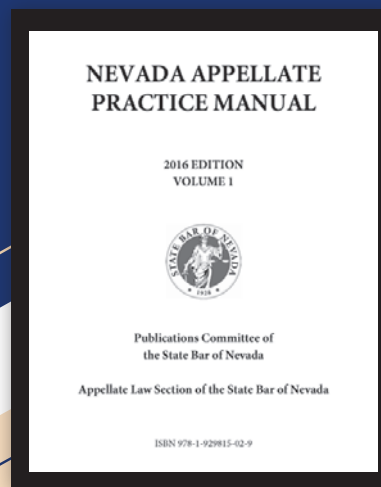
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not been anyone who has followed me since then. It really does show kids of color and all kids that they can achieve the same things others have. I came from a single-parent family and received free lunch as a kid. I never knew any lawyers growing up. My mom never made more than \$15-16,000 a year, and for me to be in this position is really mind-blowing. It's a real sense of pride for me and my family. Being the "first" is always the hardest, because you have to make sure you give 110 percent to the job to set the example, and that is the nerve-racking part. You want to make sure you set the example for other people to follow. It also shows people who haven't run into much diversity in their communities that I'm the same as you are. The law is a great profession, but I wish it were more diverse.

Being a government attorney will add a new dimension to my presidency as well. Now I have to balance my duty to the public as well as my duty to bar members. I have to do my job 100 percent here and 100 percent there. When the city attorney is absent, I'm the acting city attorney. My boss, Brad Jerbic, has been very supportive of my bar activities, and he has endured all my presidencies, and all the other bar-related activities I have I wanted to do. I believe bar service makes me a better attorney, and he believes it makes me a better attorney to be involved in those things. It's hard to put into words what being the first means, but it is a tremendous honor for me to represent the more than 11,000 lawyers of the Silver State." **NL**



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