

From the Desk of the Chairperson

By Michael S. Khoury

Reaching Out



This is my first letter as Chair of the Business Law Section, and I want to start out by recognizing the excellent job done by Mark R. High over the past year. It is always a challenge to continue projects started by others as well as initiating new activities to improve the Section and deliver

quality services to our members. I only hope that I can carry on as well as Mark.

We had a successful Annual Meeting on September 20. The Section recognized Vernon Hampton and Charles McCallum, the 2007 recipients of the Steven H. Schulman Outstanding Business Lawyer Award.

2007-2008 Initiatives

As those of you in attendance at the Annual Meeting know, I have proposed three initiatives for the fiscal year 2007-2008. These initiatives are the establishment of a Section Historian Project, the monthly delivery of an electronic newsletter to Section members, and outreach to groups of lawyers who have previously not participated in the Business Law Section.

The Section Historian Project is underway, with a number of lawyers agreeing to develop a Section history. I will be seeking a volunteer to oversee the project on an ongoing basis. I hope to be able to deliver the first version of the history to members by next year's Annual Meeting. If you are interested in participating in this project, or if you have knowledge of some of the activities of the Section (especially in the early years), I would be delighted to hear from you.

Each of you should have received the first issue of the Section e-newsletter on September 5, 2007. As I reported to the members at the Annual Meeting, we were able to determine that over one-third of Section members linked from the e-mail version of the electronic newsletter to the web version, and almost 300 members followed a link to some of the Section events or other information described in the newsletter. All of this occurred within the first 48 hours after delivery of the newsletter. I hope that this will continue to be a good service to Section members. Approximately 8 percent of our members do not have e-mail addresses that they choose to share with the State Bar of Michigan, and we may need to address how to get this information to them.

Finally, the Section leadership has been cognizant of the diversity of the State Bar of Michigan and the lack of diversity of regular Section participants in the lead-

ership of the Section. Over the last 10 years significant strides have been made to ensure geographic diversity of the Section Council and the inclusion of women in all aspects of Section activities. However, we have relatively little participation, for example, from African-American and Hispanic attorneys. Part of the outreach activities during this year will be to work toward some joint programs with special purpose bar associations for the benefit of our respective members.

Section Activities

The Section will continue to work with ICLE to deliver high-quality programming to the members of the Bar. In addition, the Small Business Forum activities in western and southeastern Michigan are drawing participants from both within and outside the Section to their functions.

We have many Section committees you can join, and I encourage you to seek out a group in your area of interest. The chairs of each of the committees would welcome your participation.

Membership

The State of Michigan is facing challenging times, and the leadership of the Section is cognizant of the fact that you will not spend your money on Section dues unless you see the value for those dues. I hope that you find continued membership in the Section to be valuable to you, and that you look for opportunities to participate in activities during the next year.

Better yet, tell a colleague about the Section! Instead of just sharing your old issues of the *Michigan Business Law Journal* with your new associate, invest in that lawyer's future by signing them up to be a member of the Section. (Besides, he or she might read it before you and be ready to discuss the new law or precedent when your client calls.) As a member from my law student days, I will attest to the value of getting involved in activities with your fellow business lawyers.

Finally, keep June 13-14, 2008 blocked on your schedule. The Michigan Business Law Institute moves this year to Dearborn, and it should be a great program.