

A Fond Farewell



Kimberly M. Cahill

This is my last column. My term as State Bar president ends this month. It has been a whirlwind, but one I could not possibly have accomplished without the help of many, many people, and I want to use this opportunity to say thank you to as many of them as possible.

Principally, I want to thank the members for giving me the opportunity to serve as president this year. So many of you went out of your way to contact me, to offer encouragement, ask questions, and show your concern for the membership and for the organization. With members like that, the State Bar will remain vital and relevant well into the future.

Next, I want to thank the local, special-interest, and affinity bars and their presidents who welcomed me to their meetings. From Ironwood to Monroe to Sturgis to Sault Ste. Marie, I was welcomed warmly and enthusiastically. You listened, asked questions, and offered suggestions for making our organization better and more relevant for you. I am eternally grateful.

The State Bar of Michigan is very fortunate to have a great group of commissioners who work very diligently to set policy and steer the SBM forward. We had many new commissioners this year, and each worked very hard to learn the ropes and get up to speed on the issues facing the SBM. They were assisted in all of this by the more experienced commissioners, who went out of their way to pass along their knowledge to the new members. No one person can or should set policy for the SBM. The diversity in the commissioners' knowledge, practice experiences, and life experiences ensures that the membership's interests are considered in every decision the Board of Commissioners makes. Thank you to all the commissioners.

The State Bar's officers work very hard. Each is responsible for a different State Bar division, so that by the time an officer reaches the presidency, he or she has experience in each of the Bar's core functions. Despite doing that, and managing their own practices, the officers took extra time this year to help with my presidential duties. They each committed to updating the strategic plan and working through a hiring process to find our new executive director, and were generally available to offer advice and support, and to do whatever else was necessary. Thank you to Tony Jenkins, Charles Toy, Ed Pappas, and Ron Keefe. I am sure that our new treasurer, Julie Fershtman, will follow right along in their footsteps and be a great addition to the group.

The Bar will be in very good hands with our new president, Ron Keefe. Ron has been an outstanding commissioner, officer, and friend. He has chaired the Upper Michigan Legal Institute for a number of years, and has devoted an enormous amount of time to help coordinate the president's Upper Peninsula tour—even helping out with the driving. Ron will be a fantastic spokesman for the Bar, and I wish him every success in the upcoming year and always.

Throughout the years, I have had the opportunity to work with many great Bar presidents and commissioners. I learned

something from every one of them. I feel especially grateful to have worked with Ed Brady, Al Butzbaugh, Nancy Diehl, and Tom Cranmer. Thank you to each of them.

The Bar staff is wonderful and helpful always. While each provides help in his or her own special way, some provide extra assistance to the president. Marge Bossenbery, Tracie Dinehart, Linda Novak, and Candace Crowley provided me with invaluable assistance throughout the year. Without a doubt, one of our best accomplishments this year was hiring our new executive director, Janet Welch. Janet is an outstanding executive director, and will only improve with experience in that position. I see a very bright future ahead for the Bar with Janet at its helm. She has provided invaluable assistance to every Bar president during her years as our general counsel and head of governmental affairs, and her vision and expertise will serve us very well. Thank you, Janet, for all your assistance to me during my years on the Board.

Probably the question I get asked most frequently is how I manage to keep a practice going and serve as State Bar president. To a great extent, I must thank the judges before whom and the attorneys with whom I practice, since they have gone out of their way to accommodate me and my schedule during my term.

I hope that each and every one of you has the opportunity to participate with the Bar. I always got much more back from my service than I gave.

Keeping my office up and running has been the primary responsibility of my assistant, Deann Williams. She is the patient (if occasionally frazzled) voice who answers my phone, smoothes out my tangled schedule, and makes sure I get to where I've committed to be reasonably on time. Thank you, Deann.

My friends and family have been unparalleled during this year. Friends have gotten used to me deferring plans and putting things on hold, and to hearing "just wait until October." My family members, two of whom are also my law partners, have taken the brunt of my absence. My mother,

**The State Bar's
primary objective
is the welfare of
the public and its
members. We have a
bright future ahead.**

Florence Schoenherr-Warnez, and my sister, Dana M. Warnez, have covered for me with clients and with the courts. They traveled with me when I needed it, attended events with me, sent directions to my PDA when I was lost somewhere on the road, and made my excuses to everyone under the sun. My second sister, Pamela M. Cahill, the only non-lawyer in the family, has been extremely supportive also, in ways too numerous to mention here. My family has done everything necessary to give me the time to devote to the Bar this year, and I will never forget their love and support.

To close, thank you. The State Bar is a wonderful organization, with its primary objective being the welfare of the public and its members. We have a bright future ahead. I hope that each and every one of you has the opportunity to participate with the Bar. I always got much more back from my service than I gave. I know you would have the same wonderful experience that I have had. ■