

# 75 Years

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STATE BAR OF MICHIGAN

## 75TH ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL FEATURE

# Message from the President

By Roberts P. Hudson

Editor's Note: In April 1936, **Roberts P. Hudson**, the first president of the State Bar of Michigan, published his inaugural column. It is reprinted here as part of the State Bar's 75th anniversary celebration. Watch this space throughout the year for additional historical articles and reflections.

"Our doubts are traitors,  
And make us lose the good we oft  
might win  
By fearing to attempt."

—William Shakespeare

If doubts have assailed the small minority of the profession who question the necessity or advisability of a strong, coordinated organization of lawyers, those doubts are being speedily dissolved by the success of such organizations in other states in improving the standards of the legal profession. If we may judge by the quick and earnest response of lawyers in Michigan to the present organization, there is every reason to expect its success here. We have had the benefit of the experiences in eighteen states in comparable organizations, and it is my firm belief that our Michigan organization furnishes one of the most satisfactory vehicles for self regulation and control.

The motivating cause for the organization of compulsory bars is not found solely in the desire of any group of lawyers to devote their time and energy for the benefit of the profession. It arises rather primarily from the protests of the public and press against the relatively small percentage of unethical lawyers who bring discredit upon the profession at large and from a real desire to render a material service to those members of the profession who have not as yet reached the heights; to assist and guide, if possible, the younger lawyers who must as time goes on take the place of their

successful elders who must in time surrender the torch of leadership. Another cause is to assist in the correction of abuses resulting from attempts by laymen to advise the public on matters which require legal education and experience, thereby jeopardizing both personal rights and the rights of property.

For thirty years or more lawyers of Michigan, through a voluntary and selective organization, have labored unselfishly to raise the standards of their profession and have devoted their time and talents without hope or expectation of reward, not only to improve their own profession but to protect the public against those who, through ignorance or by design, would prey upon it. Their labors and idealism have made your organization possible, and the Bar of Michigan owes a tribute of gratitude to those unnamed and unrewarded lawyers who have given so much and so unselfishly for the ultimate benefit of the public.

No organization of lawyers can long survive which has not for its primary object the protection of the public. Laws are not made for the benefit of the few. They should be those rules of conduct prescribed by the people themselves, through their properly constituted representatives, for the equal protection of the rights of society in the aggregate. They should apply with equal force to the rich and poor alike, and to the protection of those rights the legal profession must apply itself with integrity, industry and faith.

Your organization is designed not only for the benefit and betterment of its mem-



Roberts P. Hudson

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bers, but primarily for the public at large who require the services of the profession. It must never be subservient to political dictation or intimidation, nor control from outside its membership. It cannot represent the interests of any group or political faith. It must not draw distinctions of color, race or creed. It must not submit to politically minded leadership. It must not stand aloof from its membership. It must purge itself of the unfit. It must not recognize geographic boundaries. It is now and must remain democratic, independent and representative of the best ideals of citizenship.

Neither mere words, nor formula, nor organization can create high standards. The success of your organization will, as in all other organizations, depend upon the unremitting labors of its commission and officers and upon the co-operation and assistance of its membership.

We welcome into the organization all the Bar of Michigan and pledge to you the best efforts of the Commission.

It is a glorious heritage and it is for the members of the Bar of Michigan to support and foster and maintain. ■