



**Thomas W. Cranmer**

# Sage Advice

It is a daunting task. Having the opportunity to serve as the president of the State Bar of Michigan is both a privilege and a challenge. Fortunately for me, I am following the footsteps of some great State Bar leaders. As my time to lead the Bar has approached, I have contacted a number of the past presidents for their advice and counsel. Although all of the individuals to whom I spoke were helpful, perhaps no one was as concise and direct as Past President (now Federal District Court Judge) Victoria Roberts. In her address to the Bar's incoming leaders at the Bar Leadership Forum this past June, Judge Roberts offered the following keys to success to the incoming presidents of the various local bar associations and sections:

1. Subordinate your personal ambition.
2. Recognize the contribution of others.
3. Do not abide incompetence.
4. Be decisive.
5. Be a visionary—not just a caretaker.
6. Be introspective.
7. Accept responsibility for poor decisions.
8. Communicate effectively.
9. Plan transition.
10. Be technically competent.
11. Trust your people—do not micromanage.
12. Know how to run a meeting.
13. Be visible, approachable.
14. Seek wisdom, knowledge, justice, courage, and integrity.
15. Be tolerant of others.
16. Have stamina.
17. Maintain a good sense of humor.
18. Know how to listen.
19. Recognize that many different personality types can lead.
20. Stay humble and focused—foster a team attitude.

As the day for my swearing-in ceremony approached, I often reflected back on Judge Roberts' comments. And it seems to me that

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she has gotten it exactly right. Moreover, it seems to me that Judge Roberts' keys to success have a much broader application than to just leading a bar association. When dealing with clients, communicating effectively (and often) and being technically competent are critical. When dealing with the court, knowing how to listen and maintaining a

good sense of humor can sometimes be the difference between winning and losing. Being decisive, accepting responsibility, recognizing the contributions of others, knowing how to listen, being a visionary...are some of the goals that I hope to achieve in the coming year. I invite you to share the journey with me. ♦