

Excerpts from Jim Tancredi's Annual Meeting Speech

HCBA Annual Meeting
April 6, 2011

[A Time to Lead, A Time to Serve, A Time to Make a Difference]

...This year, the HCBA officers and staff will advance an ambitious agenda to both rebuild fundamentals among us and to tackle a fast moving future.

...I am truly grateful for the opportunity to act as Steward for HCBA and to serve its members from the bench and the bar. I am humbled by your decision to entrust me with this incomparable legacy and pledge dedication to its preservation and enhancement through our collective efforts.

...HCBA exists as one of those unique and resolute institutions of leadership, talent, energy and respect for the Rule of Law. Where inertia can otherwise reign, HCBA (through its members) can and will emerge as a resource to address the unsettling times we are in and the problems we face. Many of those problems were, until late, unimaginable: the closing of courts or straining of their resources, the elimination of funding for Legal Aid, and an increasing number of businesses and individuals who cannot afford legal process.

...The problems that have beset our business and legal cultures are deep and systemic.

...Einstein urged “We can’t solve the problems at hand, using the same kind of thinking that created them.” We must drive the dialogue of change and contribute to the innovations ahead.

...The HCBA’s mantras of Civility, Excellence, Service and Collegiality exist in this legal community because of the bar association’s members who insist upon that culture. Leadership, Service and Making a Difference must rise alongside those goals, as in the absence of our collective efforts, this community may not have the will, resources and reach to assure a culture consistent with the profession we strive to preserve.

...While still much maligned in our popular culture, lawyers are also the first voices to be heard and silenced in societies fearful of the momentum of fundamental human rights. With this as a backdrop, the business changes ahead of us will present challenges that will seek to commoditize and marginalize lawyers and eliminate many key aspects of our professional satisfaction. It is the role of HCBA (and all such associations) to counter-balance the convergence of technological and economic pressures that threaten to be a “tidal wave to the profession” (ABA).

... “The economy, technology and globalization are causing massive shifts in how our clients meet their legal needs.” (Fred Ury - National Conference of Bar Presidents and former CBA President.)

...Technological efficiencies abound and must be mastered by us to compete. [The power of information management is just stunning: a multi-state survey on an issue of law or circuit splits can be accomplished in minutes; electronic review of millions of discovery documents can be accomplished in hours and search engines (both free and fee paid) can search, track, and analyze a legal topic in less time than a walk to the law library of your firm.]

...The virtual office is here; the virtual lawyer may not be far behind unless we remain vigilant and learned enough to highlight and continue to enhance the attributes of human judgment, experience, intuition, relationship, strategic thinking and humanity that are the core “Value Added” propositions of our profession. Those who develop these attributes and technological competencies will come to lead the legal profession.

...In order to compete in the 21st Century, the legal futurists insist that the legal profession will need to develop new or improved skills:

- (chief among them) - Collaboration
- Project Management
- Emotional Intelligence
- Financial Literacy
- Time Management; and

- Technological Affinities

...It is my hope and expectation that the constant in the sea of change will be the relationship of bench/bar with the HCBA:

- to discuss and guide us through these changes
- to cultivate and urge a vision for the future, and
- to collaborate and forge ahead with innovations that optimize the delivery of legal services.

...There are several key bridges [to cross in arriving at] our destination.

...I have outlined and proposed a preliminary agenda for these goals to the CLE Committee, HCBA leadership and staff. Only a pro-active and energized Bar Association can accomplish and facilitate the professional adaptations we must make.

...Our Courts and jurists have demonstrated the resolve to enhance the disposition of simple matters and complex litigation, to explore lean ADR, to tackle the proliferation of pro se representations, and to recognize the necessity for efficiency, speed, deliberateness and predictability. [I expect more such efforts on the horizon.]

...Sameness, inertia, and a lack of resources or time, in the face of a rapidly changing world are formidable enemies of what we need to become. Let us know you are there!

- Seek bar leadership opportunities
- Join and lead a substantive committee
- Partner in CLE programming, technical education and innovation, and
- Serve the public or pro bono interests through HCBA networks.

...Henry David Thoreau admonished “Don’t worry if you build your castles in the air, they are where they should be. Now put a foundation under them.” Let us move forward together in building our new foundations.

...Lastly, it is clear that, particularly in the face of change, that a meaningful professional life reaches beyond money and success.

...Winston Churchill succinctly mused “We make a living by what we get, we make a life by what we give.” Everything meaningful happens through conversation and genuine collaboration: Talk with your HCBA Stewards, then Lead, Serve ... and make a Difference in our work together.

Thank you.