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Mark A. Cunningham Installed as 75th President of the Louisiana State Bar Association

NEW ORLEANS—Mark A. Cunningham, a senior partner in the New Orleans office of Jones Walker LLP, was installed June 11 as the 75th president of the Louisiana State Bar Association (LSBA) during the LSBA’s Annual Meeting in Destin, Fla. Administering his oath of office was Louisiana Supreme Court Chief Justice Bernette Joshua Johnson.

As the first “Generation X” LSBA president, Cunningham is techno-savvy and keenly aware of the challenges in the practice of law today. He explained:

“We can’t ignore that our profession is undergoing systemic changes as a result of advances in technology, changing demographics, increasing competition, and growing consumer demand for low-cost legal services. Many lawyers in Louisiana are struggling. We owe it to our members, particularly solo and small-firm practitioners, to provide them with the services and support that will help them succeed in both business and life.”

Responding to these and other challenges, Cunningham plans to institute and/or expand programs on several fronts during his year in office:

- Expanding practice management services for solo and small-firm practitioners, particularly in the area of technology.
- Tackling the shrinking job market for law school graduates and access to justice challenges by promoting new business models for young lawyers going out on their own. He has endorsed and cultivated the LIFT (Legal Incubators for Tomorrow) program started by the LSBA-affiliated Louisiana Civil Justice Center. The program provides practice management training, technology advice, network and referral opportunities, and mentoring to young attorneys committed to developing law practices which can sustainably serve modest-means or public-interest clients.
- Developing a program with statewide banking institutions to provide young lawyers with personal banking services including debt management counseling.
- Responding to attacks on the judiciary in Louisiana. “Our judicial system is often unfairly and inaccurately portrayed in the media. The LSBA has been and will continue to correct the record and stand behind our judges whenever interest groups attack the independence of our judicial system or its commitment to the rule of law,” he said.

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- Implementing the resolution of the LSBA's House of Delegates to lobby for legislation to amend the Unauthorized Practice of Law Statute in Louisiana to expand the standing of the Attorney General and private individuals to take action against non-lawyers practicing law.
- Working with the Louisiana Supreme Court to address challenges faced by Senior Lawyers seeking to retire and who want assistance with law firm succession planning.
- Working with the Lawyers Assistance Program, Inc. to greatly expand services and information resources available to lawyers, judges and other members of the legal community for help in dealing with depression, substance abuse and other mental health challenges.

“In the course of my bar work, I have met extraordinary men and women from across the state who are changing the communities they live in. Like me, these individuals were drawn to law school by the belief in the transformative power of the law. Some are focused on civil rights. Others are focused on economic development. They work for legal aid offices and nonprofits, but are just as likely to be solo or small-firm practitioners. Many dedicate their lives to public service by becoming career prosecutors or public defenders. Others work for big law firms. Some will spend their careers in a courtroom while others will never step foot in one. But they all share a common commitment to making this world a better place and are guided in their pursuit by the ethical standards we live by as officers of the court,” Cunningham said.

Cunningham is a member of Jones Walker's Corporate Compliance and White Collar Defense Team, focusing his practice on antitrust, intellectual property and other federal regulatory issues. He received a BA degree in 1989 from Claremont's Pitzer College, his Juris Doctor degree in 1992 from Tulane University Law School (senior managing editor, *Tulane Law Review*, 1992) and an LL.M. (Master of Laws) in Trade Regulation in 1994 from New York University Law School.

He has served in several LSBA leadership positions, including president-elect, treasurer, secretary, *Louisiana Bar Journal* editor and Executive Committee member. He served on the LSBA's Board of Governors, in the House of Delegates, as chair of the Lawyer Advertising Committee and on the Committee on the Profession and the Client Assistance Fund Committee.

Cunningham has been an adjunct professor of antitrust law at Loyola University College of Law since 2001. He serves on the boards of directors of the Louisiana Center for Law and Civic Education (president, 2011-14), the New Orleans Regional Leadership Institute and the New Orleans Bar Association. He chaired The Pro Bono Project (New Orleans) in 2009-10 and received the Project's 2009 Leadership Award and 2007 and 2008 Distinguished Service Awards. He was appointed to the National Center for State Courts' Lawyers Committee and to the Louisiana Supreme Court's Post-Conviction Relief Ad Hoc Committee.

A photo of Mr. Cunningham is available for download at:
<http://www.lsba.org/NewsAndPublications/PressPhotos.aspx?PRPA=46>.

The Louisiana State Bar Association assists its more than 22,000 members in the practice of law. The statewide association, as part of its multi-faceted mission, promotes and maintains access to justice initiatives for the state's residents, assists the Louisiana Supreme Court in its regulation of the practice of law, upholds the honor of the courts and the profession, and supports programs that increase public understanding of and respect for the law.