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Richard K. Leefe Installed as 73rd President of the Louisiana State Bar Association

NEW ORLEANS—Richard K. Leefe, a senior partner in the Metairie law firm of Leefe Gibbs Sullivan & Dupré, L.L.C., was installed June 6 as the 73rd president of the Louisiana State Bar Association (LSBA), in conjunction with the LSBA's Annual Meeting in Destin, Fla. Administering Leefe's oath of office was Louisiana Supreme Court Chief Justice Bernette Joshua Johnson.

Leefe is the first LSBA president to serve in active combat in Vietnam. He also is the first LSBA president to teach law students in China. Both experiences expanded his world view and have served him well throughout his legal career.

"It has a great effect on your whole outlook on life," Leefe said about his Vietnam service and commanding a company of 160 young men. "After you go through that type of experience, you tend to see things differently. Whatever happens after that doesn't seem that important and doesn't bother you as much. It caused me to be more relaxed in my practice, but anxious to get things done. Seeing young men do their jobs with bravery and dedication is beyond inspiring. It makes a major difference in your life. You see the world. You feel closer to your country. These guys were dedicating themselves to doing their jobs, not for credit, not for glory. They were just risking their lives to do what was asked of them and some of them didn't come back," he said.

His teaching experience in China was "a surprisingly wonderful experience. (The students) were extremely intelligent and very interested in the United States and in our law. But one thing that surprised me was they had never been allowed to speak in class. All those years in school and they had never spoken in the classroom . . . until I got there," he said. "After three or four days, the dam broke and all these questions came pouring out. By the end of the course, I would sit in the middle of class and we would gather and just talk. Their thirst for knowledge and fascination with the law was amazing."

During his presidential term, Leefe said he will "take on challenges as they arise" but will particularly oversee further development of the newly established Senior Lawyers Division and the collaborative projects of the Senior Lawyers/Young Lawyers Divisions.

"The whole idea of the Senior Lawyers Division, as originated by former LSBA President Mike Patterson, is to keep our senior lawyers involved. We are wasting a great asset. The senior lawyers are a source of wisdom,

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Leefe

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knowledge and experience that we need to use in many ways. We need to keep them involved rather than let them drift away from the practice,” Leefe said.

Also during his term, Leefe will address concerns in legal education, adequate funding for access to justice programs on the civil law side, and appropriate indigent defense funding on the criminal law side.

Leefe received a bachelor of science degree in engineering in 1969 from Louisiana State University, his Juris Doctor degree in 1974 from Loyola University College of Law and later earned an LLM in International Commercial Law from Robert Gordon University in Aberdeen, Scotland. He was admitted to practice law in Louisiana in 1974.

In Vietnam, he served as a combat engineer officer in the U.S. Army, where he commanded an engineer company in the Mekong Delta. He attended the U.S. Army Engineer Officers School at Fort Belvoir, Va., and is a member of the Military Order of Foreign Wars.

Leefe served as LSBA president-elect in 2012-13 and as secretary and editor of the *Louisiana Bar Journal* in 2011-12. He served as a member of the LSBA’s Board of Governors and is a member of the LSBA Executive Committee. He was the original chair of the LSBA Senior Lawyers Division. He has served or currently serves as a member of the LSBA Rules of Professional Conduct Committee, the Committee on the Profession and the Public Access and Consumer Protection Committee. He is a Louisiana Bar Foundation Fellow, serves on the board of directors of the Louisiana Bar Foundation and the Louisiana State Law Institute, and is a member of the American Bar Association’s House of Delegates. He received the LSBA President’s Award in 2011.

He taught law school at Loyola University College of Law in New Orleans from 1976-2002. He also taught American law to Chinese law students at the Huazhong School of Law in Wuhan, China, in 2002, and taught Chinese engineer Ph.D. candidates at the same school in 2009. In 2012, he taught Courtroom Evidence to executive MBA students at Loyola University Business School.

Leefe has handled legal matters in Europe, Africa, Asia and South America, as well as in many states in the United States. He is the author of the treatise *Louisiana Code of Evidence Practice Guide*, 3rd edition (2005), published by Lexis Publishing. He also wrote the 1st and 2nd editions in 1990 and 1995. He received the Distinguished Service Award from Loyola University College of Law in 1992, the Excellence in Education Award from Professional Education Systems in 1991 and the LSBA Young Lawyers Section Award of Appreciation in 1991.

He and his wife, Barat, have been married for more than 31 years. He is the father of four children and has six grandchildren.

A high-resolution photo of Mr. Leefe is available for download at:
<http://www.lsba.org/GoTo/2013PhotosBoard>.

The Louisiana State Bar Association assists its more than 21,000 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.