



By Joseph L. (Larry) Shea, Jr.

LSBA – Reaching Out Across the State

As an attorney who has practiced law in Shreveport for more than 35 years, I am proud to be the first president from north Louisiana in 12 years and only one of nine presidents from Shreveport over the last 85 years. It is this background that drives one of my primary initiatives of outreach to and inclusion of members throughout the state. I want to bring the Louisiana State Bar Association (LSBA) to all of its members wherever located and to bring as many of those members into active membership in the LSBA through participation in sections, committees or positions of governance.



Louisiana State Bar Association President Joseph L. (Larry) Shea, Jr., far right, attended the Sept. 17 “Celebration of the 40th Anniversary of the Legal Services Corporation” at the Shreveport Bar Center. The event celebrated and recognized Legal Services of North Louisiana. Attending, from left, were Judge Leon L. Emanuel III, director of Legal Services of North Louisiana; Judge C. Wendell Manning, president of the Louisiana Bar Foundation; Ben L. Politz, chair of the board of Legal Services of North Louisiana; Judge Roy S. Payne, president of the Shreveport Bar Foundation; Larry W. Pettiette, Jr., president of the Shreveport Bar Association; and Shea.

I often joke about being from the “outlier” province of Shreveport. One of the most frequently repeated tales told among Shreveport attorneys is the story of the outlier who requested of a New Orleans colleague that a committee meeting be scheduled in Shreveport. As the story goes, the New Orleanian responded, “That is a long way to travel for a meeting,” to which the outlier replied, “It is the same distance both ways.” I hear that similar tales are told in Monroe, Ruston, Natchitoches, and even a province to the west, Lake Charles. In truth and in fact, both the outlier and New Orlea-

nian were correct. It is the same distance and it is a long way.

But, travel is no longer necessary to participate. Advances made by the LSBA in the area of technology have substantially enhanced the capabilities of the Bar to meaningfully involve members from across the state. The LSBA has installed a video-conferencing system whereby attorneys may participate in Bar meetings from their hometowns, at the computers in their offices or even on a mobile device. The LSBA has partnered with local bars to place compatible video-conferencing



LSBA President @LSBA_President · Aug 14

At the Southern University Law Center 1L Professionalism Orientation w/ Justice John Weimer & Chancellor Freddie Pitcher!



Follow the LSBA President Joseph L. (Larry) Shea, Jr. on twitter @LSBA_President.

equipment in the bar centers in Lafayette, Baton Rouge and Shreveport. There is now an Outreach Committee of the Bar that meets exclusively via video-conference and whose mission is to identify and develop the means to engage more members in the programs and activities of the LSBA by using rapidly advancing but widely available technology. I am hopeful that we will, together, put this technology to good use.

On a similar note, and in furtherance of outreach, the state Bar has worked diligently toward establishing closer relationships with the many local and specialty bars that serve Louisiana. We have partnered with local bars on many endeavors, including the delivery of quality CLE programs and providing assistance to and support of many of the admirable access to justice projects that have been undertaken. I hope to follow the lead of past presidents by enhancing these collaborations. As part of that effort, the LSBA is planning a local bar leadership conference in January 2015 to provide a forum for representatives from local bars and legal communities to discuss the common problems facing the bars and ways to address those problems, as well as to share information relating to successful ventures and to assist in coordinating activities. The attorneys who are in a legal community that is just starting a local bar or that needs to jump-start an existing local bar will be welcome to attend the forum. The LSBA is available to assist in any way that it can.

Over the last two years, I have had the opportunity to visit with many LSBA members about their perceptions of the Bar and views of what the state Bar has to offer. I have been provided with suggestions concerning projects that the Bar should pursue. I have listened. One observation I have taken from all of these conversations is that the LSBA needs to do a better job of communicating with our members about all of the worthwhile and valuable programs the Bar is currently supporting and undertaking.

The LSBA needs to make sure that its members know about the services it provides, including Fastcase, the free legal research tool offered to members; the Client Assistance Fund, providing compensa-

tion to clients who have been defrauded by their lawyers; the variety of continuing legal education programs, including free seminars, being offered by the LSBA; the assistance offered by the Ethics Advisory Service to members confronted with difficult legal ethics issues; the Law Practice Management Assistance Program and the Lending Library, both of which are designed to help lawyers improve their practices and increase the quality of the legal services provided; and the LSBA Lawyer Fee Dispute Resolution Program to resolve fee disputes between attorneys and clients.

LSBA members need to know that the state Bar is at the forefront of efforts to address a myriad of issues facing the legal profession in Louisiana, from mental health concerns within the profession to an uncertain future in legal education, from a shrinking legal job market to a crisis in access to both criminal and civil justice, just to name a few.

I am focused on communicating with our members, having gone so far as to “tweet” on occasion (something that someone my age should seriously consider avoiding). I am committed to the LSBA using every opportunity to reach out to its members wherever they are located and to connect those members with those services and programs that will be most helpful. I will continue to bring this message to our members all over the state so keep a look out for me.

LSBA Video Conferencing

Easily join LSBA meetings & video calls without leaving the room. Use your office computer, iPad, iPhone or Android device to connect with others who may be on a wide range of video systems throughout the state.

Now available in Lafayette, Baton Rouge and Shreveport bar associations!

Another benefit of membership
from the Louisiana State Bar Association