



By Dona Kay Renegar

United We Stand

When I originally drafted my message for our members in August, I reflected on the goals, issues, and values that unite us as a mandatory Bar Association. I chose the title, “United We Stand.” Little did I know that just two weeks later Hurricane Harvey would change the substance of the article but neither the message nor the title.

United we stand — as members of our Bar Association and alongside our brethren in the great state of Texas. As we watched Hurricane Harvey bear down on Texas and Louisiana, we could not help but harken back to August 2005 when Louisiana experienced the devastation of Hurricane Katrina and August 2016 when Louisiana suffered flooding of historic proportions, often referred to as the 100-year flood. Those of you from the areas worst hit by the 2016 flood — Acadiana, Baton Rouge, and the Florida parishes — reached out to me expressing your inability to watch the coverage of Hurricane Harvey as it brought back painful memories of the damage and loss we suffered last year. Despite this fact, our citizens, attorneys, and judges rallied to the aid of our neighbors to the west as Hurricane Harvey took aim at and battered the city of Houston and the Gulf Coast eastward through Beaumont, Orange, and southwest Louisiana. The Cajun Navy marshaled its forces and struck out for southeast Texas to help rescue citizens trapped by the flooding. Using the infor-

mation and knowledge we accumulated and organized during and after Katrina, the members of the Louisiana federal and state judiciary reached out to their Texas counterparts to offer support and guidance on how to handle inaccessibility to courts, pending litigation, and deadlines that may run before the courts are up and running again. Gov. John Bel Edwards and his staff, while keeping an eye on potential damage to our own state, supported the efforts of the Cajun Navy to begin rescue operations in Texas, opened shelters to support those displaced by Hurricane Harvey, and shared lessons learned by our state in dealing with the 2016 flooding and the devastation of Hurricane Katrina.

Disaster Response

The Louisiana State Bar Association (LSBA) has mobilized as well. We have activated our Disaster Response website, www.lsba.org/DR/, dedicated to providing valuable information on displacement resources, court closures, emergency declarations, and assistance for flood victims. Help is still needed. If you want to volunteer, consider registering with LA.FreeLegalAnswers.org, an online pro bono program that connects low-income clients with volunteer attorneys. The State Bar of Texas is currently recruiting volunteers to help with anticipated legal needs. A recently amended order of the Supreme Court of Texas, [\[goto/TexasCourtOrder\]\(http://goto/TexasCourtOrder\), permits out-of-state lawyers to practice Texas law temporarily. Interested volunteers must fill out the Disaster Relief Volunteer Form, \[www.lsba.org/goto/TexasVolunteerForm\]\(http://www.lsba.org/goto/TexasVolunteerForm\), in order to be matched with current legal needs.](http://www.lsba.org/</p>
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You can make a donation to the Louisiana Hurricane Harvey Disaster Fund, www.lsba.org/DR/donations.aspx, administered by the Louisiana Bar Foundation, the proceeds of which will go to civil legal aid services for indigent Louisiana citizens who are victims of Hurricane Harvey. These services include housing claims, evictions, domestic/family issues, and others that always arise after a natural disaster. You may also make a donation to the Hurricane Harvey Legal Aid Fund, www.lsba.org/DR/donations.aspx, administered by the Texas Access to Justice Foundation.

The LSBA Disaster Response Message Board, www.lsba.org/DR/drmessagelboard.aspx, was created to help facilitate the giving and receiving of non-monetary donations like housing help, office equipment, commuting assistance, and employment opportunities. Visit the message board if you are willing to donate or are in need of donations. SOLACE is also accepting assistance requests for non-monetary needs from those affected by the severe weather. If you or someone you know needs assistance, forward your request to SOLACE at solaceinfo@lasolace.org. Include an

email address that protects the sender's identity.

The Louisiana Civil Justice Center (LCJC) has activated its disaster legal hotline at 1-800-310-7029. The hotline will provide legal advice and services for individuals who reside in Louisiana parishes affected by the disaster, including Beauregard, Calcasieu, Cameron, Jefferson Davis, and Vermilion. Callers can receive answers to legal questions regarding insurance claims, replacement of legal documents, home repair contracts, FEMA issues, etc. The American Bar Association Committee on Disaster Response and Preparedness has also developed a Hurricane Harvey Relief website, www.lsba.org/goto/ABAHurricaneRelief, with valuable information for both storm survivors and attorneys who would like to help.

Get Involved and Be Heard

The way our citizens have come together to help Texas and the parts of Louisiana affected by Harvey's devastation underlines and emphasizes the message I intended to bring to our members this month before the storm hit: I encourage you to recall those issues, values, and needs that unite us as a Bar Association. While our membership is made up of more than 22,000 attorneys with diverse areas of practice, political affiliations, and geographic locations, we each contribute unique skills, experience, and styles to the practice of law in Louisiana. As a profession, we are unified in upholding the rule of law, supporting the American judicial system, defending the integrity of our judiciary, and supporting our members and their representation of their clients, be they corporate or individual, in the civil or criminal arena, or in transactions or litigation.

Sometimes our members find themselves at odds over our rules of professionalism, ethics, advertising, or the LSBA Legislation Committee's actions. Lively debate is an essential element of our mandatory bar and we count on our members to let us know how proposed rule changes, lobbying efforts, and the advancement of technology affect your

Disaster Resources

- ▶ ABA Hurricane Harvey Relief
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- ▶ LSBA Disaster Reponse website
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- ▶ LSBA Disaster Response Message Board
www.lsba.org/DR/drmesssageboard.aspx
- ▶ LSBA Online pro bono program
LA.FreeLegalAnswers.org
- ▶ SOLACE requests
solaceinfor@lasolace.org
- ▶ Texas Disaster Relief Volunteer Form
www.lsba.org/goto/TexasVolunteerForm

practice. The old adage, "You must be present to win," comes to mind. You cannot participate in the debate if you do not know where and when the discussion is happening. I encourage you to engage in our Bar Association by running for representative of your respective Judicial Districts, the Board of Governors, or requesting an appointment to an LSBA committee that interests you. We often have vacancies in leadership positions in the LSBA, and the president is tasked with filling those vacant positions by appointment. Let me know if you are interested in any available positions. The LSBA's website has a link to a description of all of our committees and a form you may complete and return to the LSBA indicating which committees are of interest to you. Go to: www.lsba.org/BarGovernance/Committees.aspx. I hope all of you will consider getting involved, making yourselves heard, and contributing to our Association. The contributions of our members who volunteer to lead the Association in these ways make us vibrant and strong. That strength helps us rise to the occasion when situations such as this recent storm develop.

Leadership LSBA Class

The Leadership LSBA Class for 2017 — comprised of 14 young lawyers who want to learn about the Association,

its leadership, and service to our members — recently began its year-long commitment. The application process begins in July each year, so let us know about young lawyers who may be interested in getting involved next year. I am thankful for the large number of lawyers who applied for the program reflecting their interest in and commitment to learning about the Bar Association. The class introduces lawyers to the various leadership positions and opportunities to serve our Association. If this year's class is an indication of the kind of lawyers in which we are entrusting the future of our profession, we are in great hands. Their dedication of time to this program while working and raising families is admirable. We have a diverse group of lawyers in this year's class. I look forward to getting to know them better and learning about the class project they propose.

Join me in welcoming the following lawyers to our 2017 Leadership LSBA Class — Bethany A. Blackson, Lake Charles; Anna Brown Priestley, Shreveport; Kristian B. Dobard, New Orleans; Shanerika M. Flemings, Shreveport; Gerald J. Hampton, Jr., New Orleans; R. Gary Higgins, Jr., Covington; Kathleen M. Legendre, New Orleans; Betty Ann Maury, Gretna; J. Reed Poole, Jr., Metairie; Alexander L. Reed, Lake Charles; Christopher J. Sellers, Jr., New Orleans; Elizabeth Fontenot Shea, Lake Charles; Todd C. Taranto, Mandeville; Arielle L. Young, Baton Rouge; and co-chairs Brittany O. Rosenbloom of Metairie and Micah C. Zeno of Gretna.

Conclusion

As of presstime, Hurricane Irma, a Category 5 storm for most of its existence, has barreled through the Caribbean, the Florida Keys and peninsula, and much of the southeastern United States. Again, united we stand as a Bar Association to help those who need our services in her wake. May God be with us all during this hurricane season.

