



Monte E. Frank is the 93rd president of the CBA. He is a member in Pullman & Comley's litigation practice, representing business and municipal clients in the state and federal courts in Connecticut and before administrative agencies on a wide range of matters. He regularly represents clients in mediation and arbitration in Connecticut and other states.

In a year of immense change, which saw our judicial institutions, access to justice, the judicial budget, legal aid funding, and refugees all under attack, the Connecticut Bar Association responded with principled positions to advance equal justice under the law. On top of that, we moved forward to advance diversity and inclusion, assist veterans, and help our members adapt to the new minimum continuing legal education (MCLE) rule and the rapidly evolving nature of the practice of law. As I reflect on all that we've accomplished over the past year, I cannot help but feel an immense sense of pride. The vast majority of members I heard from felt re-engaged and proud to be a member of an association that not only advances the interests of members with respect to the practice of law, but also presses for access to justice and stands tall as a guardian of the rule of law.

# An Honor to Serve

By Monte E. Frank

In every single instance when faced with a challenge and a decision needed to be made whether to act, I reverted to the purpose of our association as set forth in Article II of our constitution as the guiding principle:

The purposes of this Association shall be to promote the public interest through the advancement of justice and the protection of liberty; to aid its Members in the development and maintenance of their respective practices; to facilitate the delivery of competent legal services to the public and particularly to those in greatest need; to support or oppose legislation and regulations consistent with the interests of the public good and its Members; to supply the highest quality continuing legal education opportunities and works of legal scholarship; to promote diversity within the Bar and the Bench; to develop collegial interaction among the members of the Bar; to safeguard the dignity of the legal profession; to coordinate the activities of the several bar associations within Connecticut; and to advance the interests of its Members within the American Bar Association, other organizations with which the Association is affiliated, and society as a whole.

As a result of our efforts, the CBA achieved so much for lawyers, veterans, the people of the state of Connecticut, and our nation.

## Diversity and Inclusion

Two years ago, I embarked on a quest to re-tool the CBA to become a leader, rather than a laggard, in diversity and inclusion in the Connecticut legal community. I am proud of the progress we have made, including adoption of a diversity and inclusion policy and a diversity and inclusion

plan. However, more importantly, the CBA has implemented the plan, resulting not only in changing who we are as an association, but in addition, we have started the process of advancing the legal community as a whole. This past year, the CBA created the statewide Inaugural Diversity & Inclusion Summit: The Collaborative Blueprint, which brought together 150 decision-makers and thought-leaders resulting in a plan and pledge. Rather than stop there, the CBA had follow-up meetings with the signatories of the summit's plan and pledge to assist with the enactment of its goals. The second annual summit will be held at Quinnipiac University School of Law on October 25, 2017. Finally, the CBA launched its Pathways to Legal Careers program this past spring. I committed my entire presidential discretionary budget line item to this program because of the importance of developing a pipeline. I believe this investment will yield huge dividends down the road. None of our advancements on diversity and inclusion could have been accomplished without the hard work of the CBA's Diversity and Inclusion Committee. On a personal note, the committee members have challenged my way of thinking at every level, and as a result we have collectively made better decisions. Moreover, I believe that the turn-around of the CBA is due in significant part to the diversity of opinions now being expressed and respected at the highest levels of our governance.

## MCLE

As the new MCLE rule went into effect this year, we recognized that as lawyers adapt to the new requirement, they would look to the CBA because our CLEs are *for* Connecticut lawyers, *by* Connecticut lawyers. Accordingly, the CBA re-doubled its efforts to provide the best CLE options to educate

our members and to make it easy to comply. As a result, the Connecticut Legal Conference sold out, and many of our CLE's at the CBA Law Center in New Britain were at capacity. To further accommodate our members, we invested in new technology to enhance our On-Demand CLE offerings, available at [ctbar.org/CLEOnDemand](http://ctbar.org/CLEOnDemand).

### Refugees

At the American Bar Association Mid-year Meeting in Miami, FL, the House of Delegates "unanimously" adopted the Connecticut Bar Association's proposed resolution concerning refugees, asylum seekers, torture victims, and others deserving of humanitarian refuge. I am grateful and so proud of the CBA for leading the way.

### Government Affairs

The CBA continued to be influential in Hartford. While our accomplishments are too voluminous to mention, I would be remiss if I did not mention a few, including advances in business laws, and adoption by the Rules Committee of the Military Spouse Licensing Rule. Thank you to section and committee leadership for your work in furthering the CBA's legislative agenda.

### Legal Aid

Simply put, the CBA is a legal aid defender. The CBA worked on all fronts to support legal aid, including lobbying in Washington to restore the Legal Services Corporation budget.

### Civil Gideon

The CBA took a leadership role on the Civil Gideon Task Force, which resulted in the groundbreaking report. We then went to work at the General Assembly to implement it. As I write this, Connecticut is on the cusp of having a pilot program, which will allow us to pioneer this new front in improving access to justice.

### Focused Task Forces

*Human Sex-Trafficking:* During my tenure, the hard work of this task force continued and resulted in additional legislation to combat human sex trafficking in Connecticut. In addition, the task force participated in implementing the new legislation's requirement for training on the signs of trafficking now mandated for all employees of hotels, motels, and B&Bs in our state.

*Opioid Addiction:* This year, I established the Opioid Addiction Task Force to fight the alarming level of opioid related deaths in Connecticut. The task force consists of health care lawyers, government lawyers, members of the General Assembly, and public health experts, among others. The task force met frequently to consider new legislation and debate policy. It also put on a CLE at our legal conference, which featured task force Chair Ralph Monaco, Congresswoman Elizabeth Esty, Representative Sean Scanlon, Representative Rosa Rebimbas, and Yale Medical School's Dr. Daniel Tobin.

*Technology and Business Model Changes:* I established this task force to 1) educate Connecticut attorneys on key developments that impact, or are expected to impact, the future of the legal profession; and 2) develop realistic, practicable recommendations for how Connecticut attorneys can respond to these changes. I appointed Vincent Pace to chair the task force and, under his leadership, it com-

pleted its promised deliverables, including a BarChat on cybersecurity and a CLE at the legal conference on how technology and changing business models impact legal practice.

As I turn over the helm of the CBA to Karen DeMeola and the leadership team, the CBA is financially stable, our membership is growing, our sections and committees are vibrant, and the CBA staff is doing great work. However, equally important to me, the CBA has hit its stride as a leader on issues that matter. Our association is not a passive organization that stands idly by while our institutions are attacked, access to justice is denied, and xenophobia influences policy. To the contrary, the CBA stood up and became a watchdog for the rule of law, which is at the very core of the "purposes" of our constitution.

It has been an incredible honor to serve as your president. **CL**



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