

## Shaping the Future of the LBA—Together

At its March 24 meeting, the Louisville Bar Association Board of Directors approved a significant change to how the Board will operate going forward. Effective immediately, the Board will transition from meeting monthly to meeting every other month. In place of those monthly meetings, each Board member will take on a more active role in the work of the association by serving on a committee. And the bimonthly Board meetings will, moving forward, be more dynamic and solution-oriented, and less focused on passively approving actions recommended by association staff or the Executive Committee.

At first glance, this may seem like a small or even purely administrative change. In reality, it reflects something much larger—an intentional effort to make the LBA more responsive, more flexible and more focused on the needs of its members.

The Board's committee structure will include Membership, KLRS, Communications, Budget, Health and Wellness, Diversity and Inclusion, Public Service and Pro Bono and Continuing Legal Education. Many of these committees have existed for years, but not all of them have been as active and engaged as they should be. These committees are where much of the meaningful work of the association takes place. By encouraging deeper engagement at the committee level, we hope to create more opportunities for thoughtful discussion, faster responsiveness to member needs and more tangible results.

This change is also part of a broader effort to adapt to the evolving landscape facing voluntary bar associations—not just in Louisville, but across the country. Like many membership-based organizations, bar associations are navigating shifts in how professionals connect, engage and spend their time. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated trends that were already underway, including increased remote work, greater reliance on virtual programming and fewer opportunities for informal, in-person interaction.

At the same time, the legal profession itself is experiencing generational change. Younger lawyers often seek different types of engagement that more experienced (i.e., “old”) lawyers did in their early years. They don't go to networking events as much. They value flexibility and quality of life more than climbing the ladder. It's easy to bemoan these generational changes, but the fact is, the new generation is here, they're not going away, and they'll need different things from their bar associations than many of us did at the same stage in our careers.

For voluntary bar associations like the LBA to survive, we have to adapt, thoughtfully and proactively. Our Executive Director, Kristen Miller, has taken great strides to strengthen the LBA's relationship with UofL Brandeis School of Law, for instance. And the school's amazing dean, Melanie Jacobs, has been tireless

in working to use our resources to connect her students with mentors and future employers. Meanwhile, LBA leadership and staff have worked hard to respond to these changes—expanding programming, supporting sections, enhancing communication and creating new opportunities for engagement.

The Board's decision to restructure how it meets is a continuation of that work. It is designed to move us away from a model focused primarily on meetings and passive approval of staff-recommended measures. It will push us toward an association that emphasizes action, collaboration and meaningful participation.

Importantly, this is not about doing any less or more work than anyone already does. Our staff already works hard, and we are blessed with scores of tremendous lawyers who volunteer countless hours of time every year to support the association and the Louisville legal community. Rather, this change is about doing things differently—and, we believe, more effectively. By shifting time and energy into committee work, we hope to strengthen the connection between the Board and the membership, and to ensure that the LBA remains a dynamic and forward-looking organization.

As with any change, the success of this effort will depend on engagement—not just from Board members, but from the broader LBA community. Our sections, committees and programs are at their best when they reflect the ideas, energy and perspectives of our members.

I encourage you to share your thoughts with me, with members of the Board or with your section leaders. What is working well? Where can we improve? What would make the LBA more valuable to you and your practice?

Even more importantly, I encourage you to consider getting involved. Whether by serving on a committee, taking on a leadership role within a section or simply attending and participating in LBA programs, your engagement helps shape the future of this organization.

The LBA has long played an important role in the life of our profession and our community. By remaining open to change and committed to our members, I am confident that it will continue to do so for years to come.



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Samuel W. Wardle  
LBA President