

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE DECEMBER 2009

This month, I want to relate to you some thoughts on optimism and let you know what we are doing and planning to do to make the DCBA a better organization as we move ahead.

Winston Churchill once said: "A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity; an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty."

There is a unique quality of optimism in this country that dates back to its founding. We are a country of immigrants given to the ideal that in the United States of America opportunity rests within our innate ability to create success beyond what our forbearers have been able to attain for one reason or another (e.g., lack of nobility, discrimination due to race, ethnic origin and/or religion, education, and employment options, to name a few).

Here in Miami-Dade County we are fortunate to have a vibrant immigrant community, many of whom have become leaders in education, business and politics...not to mention law. However, in these times of economic difficulty and often times, uncivil political division, remaining optimistic can be a challenge.

In October we welcomed Florida Supreme Court Justice, James E. C. Perry to our luncheon. Justice Perry spoke about how he was inspired as a young man by others seeking social change for equal rights at a time when segregation was being perpetuated as the law of the land and racial discrimination was a way of life. Hearing Justice Perry relate some of his life experiences got me to thinking that success at really important things and for that matter, just about anything, has its basis in believing it can be done...even when it may seem the odds are overwhelmingly against you.

In the last U.S. general election, one of the most memorable and successful rallying cries was: "Yes we can!" Like President Reagan in the early 1980s, President Obama sought out the optimism of the American people in rallying voters to his campaign.

In Minnesota where I was born, we have an optimistic cry of sorts: "You betcha!" (This was a Minnesota saying well before Sarah Palin and Tina Fey's rendition). It is a retort to everything from: "You want to go ice fishing?" to "Do you think the Vikings will win the Super Bowl?" Talk about long odds, but maybe.

Well, I want you to know that your DCBA is on the cutting edge of optimism. We have expanded our membership base to include law students and paralegals. Our membership benefits have never been better or more varied. Check out our new look website. You can use your membership to gain discounts for everything from Brooks Brothers clothing to insurance, to copy and data services, to CLE materials and much more.

This year we have activated our Long Range Planning Committee (LRPC) and are in the process of putting together a comprehensive three year plan to improve everything we do to provide even more value to your membership. This includes building out the fourth floor of our existing office building, making it a conference center to host events and meetings of importance to all segments of our growingly diverse membership.

Recently, I met with Presidents of some of the leading local voluntary bar associations including The Cuban American Bar Association, The Florida Association for Women Lawyers, Miami-Dade County Chapter, The Colombian Bar Association, The Puerto Rican Bar Association, and the Gwen Cherry Black Women Lawyers Bar Association, to name a few, on how we can share ideas and work together toward common goals. We are working to have regular meetings. I was asked if the DCBA would help provide the resources (scheduling and space) and take a leadership role in making this happen. My reply: "You betcha!"

***** THANK YOU! *****

Thanks to all who participated in the Miami-Dade County Law Library Fundraiser Gala on October 15th. We raised over \$45,000.00! Your support has helped us save this valuable institution for another year!