

Landings



Every pilot knows his passengers will grade his prowess as a pilot on the smoothness of the landing, regardless how challenging the remainder of the flight may have been and how successfully he may have accomplished everything involved up to the moment of touch down. After a long first flight together in which we overcame strong surface winds on takeoff, howling headwinds during cruise, all manipulated smoothly, arriving safely and on time at the intended destination, but after a bumpy landing, I was once asked by my passenger "Do you crash like that every time you land?" No notice is given to the successes of the flight, just the "greasing" of the landing, or lack thereof. Such are the anomalies attendant to aviation.

But once again, life is often no different. The measure of this year for our Association may be judged by the smoothness of my landing at its conclusion in June. To which I say: Bring on your judgment! We are going to have a wonderful landing at the Annual Meeting in Hot Springs in June. Brian Rosenthal, Annual Meeting Chair, has taken a few ideas and created a stunning commemoration of an event fifty years ago that seemed destined to tarnish Arkansas history forever. Using original recordings of the oral arguments in the case of *Cooper v. Aaron* accentuated by live performances directed by Judge Tim Fox, the Little Rock school crisis of 1957 will come alive in the context of its legal and social importance to our nation. Visits by some of the Little Rock Nine and the Brown sisters from *Brown v. Board of Education* will punctuate and give personality to recorded words and faded photographs. It is an event I eagerly anticipate.

But Brian is only one of many volunteer leaders that will make our landing smooth at the conclusion of this year. Professor John Watkins has led the completion of the work of the Attorney-Client Privilege Task Force, prepared a written report, most of which was approved by our House of Delegates, and filed a petition before the Supreme Court seeking modification of several rules of civil procedure. Past-President Bob Cearley has concluded his work as Chair of the Task Force on Judicial Discipline Commission Procedures, presented a written report adopted by our House of Delegates, and likewise filed a petition before our Supreme Court to alter the manner in which complaints against our judges are handled by the Commission. Jack Lassiter has diligently led a Jury Improvement Task Force to present proposed changes to the jury system and has successfully guided the Legislature to adopt many worthwhile changes.

And the list of leaders just keeps growing. Jeffrey Ellis and her workaholic Membership Committee have pushed us over their goal of 5,050 members of our Association. It is impossible to describe the awe in which other associations in our surrounding states hold our Association and its ability to grow so large as a voluntary bar. We have succeeded in this because we continue to focus on our members and the benefits we can provide for them. In the words Jerry McQuire would no doubt have used had he been an Arkansas lawyer, "It's the members, stupid." Closer to home, Judith Gray would always remind us to consider just how this decision or that would affect our members. Thanks, Judith and Jeffrey!

Great volunteer leaders must be held

It is impossible to describe the awe in which other associations in our surrounding states hold our Association and its ability to grow so large as a voluntary bar. We have succeeded in this because we continue to focus on our members and the benefits we can provide for them.

together and supported by a dedicated and determined staff. We are certainly blessed with eleven of the most self-less, tire-less workers ever to work with a bar association. Ours is one of the smallest staffs in all the South, but without peer in their productivity. They have deftly handled a most difficult move to the new Bar Center with very few interruptions of the activities of our Association, and all with a smile and resolve that all would eventually be well. And so it is, all well at the new Bar Center. It is my earnest hope that all of our members will take the time to visit and to use this beautiful new home of ours.

And our landing this year will be made smooth, too, by the employment of Karen Hutchins as our new Executive Director. She brings a calm yet forceful resolve to her work that will assure our continued success for years to come.

To you, then, my fellow member of the Arkansas Bar Association, I say "tailwinds and smooth landings." It has been a great flight together! ■