

DIRECTION CAN TAKE US FAR



We are the spokespersons for the public, the individual, and the client. We campaign to right wrongs, pursue redress, and effectuate change.

The great thing in the world is not so much where we stand, as in what direction we are moving.

—Oliver Wendell Holmes

HAVE YOU NOTICED HOW THE WAVES ROLL ONTO THE BEACH IN SUCH SMOOTH SUCCESSION? The timing is not always the same, nor the spacing between whitecaps. Some leave behind trails of sea foam while others carry in someone's lost treasure. Some crash to the surface in a magnificent spray and some glide effortlessly until they expire, receding back into the massive body of water. Always, the succession of waves continues. We expect and rely upon the movement upon the shore. It is a life-sustaining action upon which we depend, some more so than others.

I consider our profession and our judicial system to play a similarly important role in our lives as a society. Lawyers before us and, I pray, the attorneys to follow will remain a constant succession of advocates upon which people can depend to help them take their causes to the third branch of government and seek remedy. As a profession, we have been, and must continue to be, a succession of leaders. Collectively we must: perpetuate the knowledge of our history so we can avoid repeating the same mistakes; maintain and sustain the rule of law; and, set our trajectory on what we want our role, the judicial system, and the rule of law to look like in the future. Will it look like an elegant home, a wonderful spread of ranch land, or, perhaps, a beautiful marriage? Like all of these metaphoric examples, our successive leadership as a profession takes work, maintenance, investment, and vision. Without them, our successive leadership deteriorates and loses value. Our profession and the rule of law require attention and a directional heading. Without which the direction may only lead to depreciation, and depreciation should not be an acceptable option.

We are the spokespersons for the public, the individual, and the client. We campaign to right wrongs, pursue redress, and effectuate change. What we do is (and should be) intricately intertwined with the rule of law. Our profession must be one of successive leadership. It must be life-sustaining. How are we doing? Are we maintaining? Have we been investing? Our current value may be a reflection of how well we have been performing. Are you satisfied with what you see? Are we satisfied? If not, it may be time to dig deeper, increase our investment, and focus on our profession and the rule of law to increase their value; reclaim the position and posture our predecessors held, along with the responsibilities that come with it; and be better about satisfying them.

Right now the waves keep rolling in. Will we? I give pause to question whether the waves and we continue in perpetuity without recurring attention and investment.

LISA TATUM
President, *State Bar of Texas*