

THREE WORDS TO LIVE BY



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THE JOB OF STATE BAR PRESIDENT HAS BEEN DESCRIBED AS THAT OF A CEO—THAT IS, CHIEF ENGAGEMENT OFFICER. I like that description because it speaks to one of my main aspirations for the short time I hold this title. I have many goals for the year ahead, and you will read more about them in upcoming columns, but I want to begin with these three words: Engage, Inform, *Inspire*.

Engage.

At the start of his own presidential year, in 1990, Jim Parsons invited the State Bar to engage in a “year of inclusion” in which more Texas attorneys worked on behalf of the bar and its membership. “I am certain that all past presidents have wanted the same thing—a broad-based representation with all groups involved and included,” Jim wrote. “But I am trying to focus that desire on groups who, for whatever reason, have not been participants in the leadership and operation of our State Bar.”

Twenty-four years have passed, and the State Bar has seen tremendous strides in engaging many of the groups Jim mentioned, including minority attorneys and lawyers from small firms and towns. Still, I believe it is time for another “year of inclusion” in which we strive for an even deeper engagement with our members to ensure that the State Bar remains strong, relevant, and prepared to face tomorrow’s challenges.

As I shared in my April President-elect’s Opinion column, the focus of my term will be on communications, and we are already hard at work improving and expanding our collection of communications tools. I’m excited to say that a new members-only network called Texas Bar Connect has launched in beta mode, offering a new way for attorneys to connect and share information. Whether it’s through social media or more traditional means of dialogue, I need your input—and your help—as we work together to make our profession stronger.

Inform.

Another part of my role as president is to help publicize the many programs and services that the State Bar offers to members and the public. Many attorneys simply may not know that the bar offers programs that can reduce the stress of running a law practice and help them be more productive. Examples include access to free legal research through Casemaker, practice tips through the Law Practice Management Program, and new business through the Lawyer Referral and Information Service.

Also, through our email communications, the State Bar continues to keep members informed of opportunities and resources, along with the latest member benefits, legal news, and job openings. If you are not receiving these emails, please let us know.

Inspire.

This year I also hope to inspire all of us to recommit ourselves daily to this noble profession we share—to protect the rule of law, to stand firm for equal access to the justice system, and to enrich our communities through pro bono work and public education. Outgoing President Lisa Tatum has done a wonderful job in this area through her civics education project *I was the first. Vote for Me!* and the pro bono Care Campaign. Through her leadership, these programs have benefited the people of Texas, lawyers and non-lawyers alike, and inspired all of us who practice law to engage in greater service.

I am looking forward to elaborating on these and other topics as the year progresses. And as always, I want to hear your thoughts. Email me at statebarpresident@texasbar.com.

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