



PHOTO COURTESY OF LAURA GIBSON

Laura Gibson

Hometown: Houston

Position: Partner in Dentons, member of the firm's litigation and dispute resolution practice, and head of the firm's employment and labor practice team

Board Member: District 4, Place 1, from 2016-2019; and 2018-2019 chair of the board

[INTERVIEW BY ERIC QUITUGUA]

I LOVE BEING A LAWYER BECAUSE

it allows me to problem solve. I enjoy my practice the most when the client consults me to discuss how to handle a situation before it becomes a lawsuit. When my clients wait to consult me until after a problem is irreconcilable, my work is less rewarding because I know from past experience that I could have prevented the problem from becoming a lawsuit.

MORE THAN MY WORK AS A PAST PRESIDENT OF THE HOUSTON BAR ASSOCIATION,

I believe that my work at the State Bar was affected by my experience as a council member of the HBA's Labor & Employment Law Section and ultimately, as the chair of that section. When I first got involved in the section, it felt like there was a group of people who were "in the know"

and then the rest of us. During the time I had a leadership position in the section, I made a concerted effort to introduce people I didn't know to people I did know. When I chaired the section, I encouraged the council members to act as though they were hosting a function in their own home, make all of our members welcome, and to sit with people they didn't know. The State Bar Board of Directors comprises 60 members and we only meet four times a year. That means that it is important for each director to attend every meeting and to be fully engaged, both at the board level and also in the service of committee assignments. I think it is also important to encourage people to get involved in the bar whether it be through a section associated with their practice area or on a committee. We have room for any lawyer who wants to get involved in making our bar stronger.

I AM FOCUSED ON CONTINUING TO MAKE OUR BAR TRANSPARENT

and inclusive and improving our communications with all members. As chair, I will work diligently to serve all of our members and to encourage an open, honest, and respectful dialogue that continues to welcome divergent points of view. I am committed to honoring equality in conversations, engaging in conversational turn taking, listening attentively, and creating psychological safety for our members in order to unlock our best ideas. If our members have ideas on how we can make our bar better, I encourage them to send me an email with their thoughts to laura.gibson@dentons.com.

THE BEST WAY FOR A TEXAS ATTORNEY TO MAXIMIZE THE VALUE OF MEMBERSHIP IN OUR BAR

is to take the time to learn the member benefits we provide. Every time I speak to a group about what the State Bar offers, the reaction I get is one of surprise. In May 2018, we launched the Members Health Plan, which is a member-owned group health plan. A lot of people don't know that they can go to the bar website and look up both state and federal cases on Casemaker and Fastcase without any charge. Another great resource for Texas lawyers is the Texas Minority Counsel Program, which is one of the largest CLEs we offer. This year's conference will be held on October 17-19 in Houston at the Westin Houston, Memorial City. This CLE is unlike most others in that it is very interactive. In addition to the great CLE, it provides some of the best networking opportunities in our state.

THE PERSON YOU ARE SPEAKING WITH

is the most important person in the room. **TBJ**