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Marcy Shaw and Laird Lile

YOUR Board of Governors
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SERVING THE CITIZENS AND LEGAL COMMUNITY OF LEE COUNTY SINCE 1949



by Sara Fitzpatrick Comito

TO: All 20th Circuit Florida Bar Members...so begins the Report from The Florida Bar of Governors that you're used to seeing in your in box every month. The latest contained summary information and links to further details on issues from Florida Bar admission and immigration status, to approval of an ethics advisory opinion regarding lawyers using cloud computing, to necessary reviews of practice sections and committees. If you have questions or concerns about anything contained in these regular missives, you're directed to contact YOUR Board of Governors representatives. When's the last time you did so?

Willing to serve

"I try make myself readily available to my colleagues in the 20th Circuit," said Laird A. Lile. Lile's service is his way

of paying forward a debt he feels to the people who have been there for him along the way. "Early in my career, I had the good fortune of working with a couple of attorneys who served as mentors and really instilled in me the importance of serving and being involved."

He's been on the BOG since 2006 after completing a tenure as chair of the Real Property, Probate, and Trust Law Section of The Florida Bar, composed of about 10,000 members of the Florida Bar, which numbers 96,000 total. "I wanted to continue in service to the profession," he explained.

Marcy L. Shaw's motivation to serve the profession developed even before graduating from law school. Currently, in her second term on the BOG, she said, "I enjoy interfacing with my constituents and addressing any issues they may have

in an appropriate manner with The Florida Bar. Serving on The Florida Bar Board of Governors is truly an honor, as I have the opportunity to interact with some of the most dedicated members of The Florida Bar, most of whom are also well-renowned in their respective practice areas.”

Shaw and Lile concur that it is a privilege and pleasure to maintain the trust of their peers in the circuit. Communication is the key to continuing trust. In addition to being available by phone and email to his constituents, Lile said he tries to attend as many Lee County Bar Association membership meetings as possible. “There’s nothing that substitutes for in-person communication and opportunities.” Additionally, it’s up to members to do their part to facilitate the communication process. “I encourage all members of the LCBA to come to the monthly meetings and let me know their comments and concerns.”

Like-minded connections

Shaw suggested that although it has many dimensions, members’ experience with The Florida Bar is often limited, and that can also be self-limiting. “Through my bar service, I have learned that a lot of attorneys do not like The Florida Bar; many view it as an entity that imposes rules, regulations, and requirements on them. Although that is certainly one aspect of what The Florida Bar does, because we are a self-regulating profession, it also provides a tremendous amount of support to attorneys.”

LOMAS and the Ethics Hotline are a couple of programs that offer such support, but unfortunately, many attorneys don’t even know they exist. Shaw continued, “I encourage you to take a good look at The Florida Bar website to see all of the resources that are available to you, most at no cost. In addition, through its divisions, sections and committees, The Florida Bar presents a multitude of opportunities for attorneys to get involved in their substantive practice areas, with similarly minded colleagues.” She said that through such opportunities, she’s been able to make both professional connections and personal friends.

Lile encourages smart phone users to download The Florida Bar app for Android, iPhone and iPad, which includes The Florida Bar News and a Quick Member Look-Up with direct links to emails and phone numbers. More features are being added in coming months. Along with its Facebook page and Twitter feed, attorneys and judges now have additional choices to receive information from the bar. As part of Lile’s work on the BOG Communications Committee and its Technology and Communications Strategy subcommittee, he said the bar is continually leveraging ever more extensive outreach programs to get information to the 96,000-plus members in a timely manner.

Actions and issues

Along with acting as liaisons to their circuit colleagues, BOG members also have a role in recommending rules to the Florida Supreme Court regulating The Florida Bar and work together to adopt policies regarding continuing education, advertising, discipline and ethics.

Adequate funding for the state courts has become a critical issue recently. Lile said, “Last year and the year before that, I was very involved in the legislative process, and the legislative issues the entire judicial branch faces each year is significant. Ensuring our courts have the appropriate funding is critical – and presents an ongoing challenge in the state budgeting process.”

Other bar priorities include mentoring, Lile said. “There’s been a consensus by the board to invest heavily in developing a leadership academy to reach out to lawyers who maybe don’t have the same mentor opportunities I was able to have.”

Shaw serves as vice chair of the board’s Rule Committee, and is on the board’s Disciplinary Review Committee. She also serves on the bar’s Standing Committee on Pro Bono Legal Services.

When your BOG representatives attend their six meetings per year, it is without compensation or reimbursement. But the implicit value of being able to vote on substantive actions and issues that affect their constituents is reward enough for your representatives.

Collegial concerns

Of course, disagreements happen in the committees of the BOG. “I have witnessed some of the most lively, professional, and persuasive debates on contested matters that come before the board,” Shaw said. “Everyone is passionate about their positions, but we all maintain the level of professionalism you would expect from a group of elected representatives.” Lile agreed. “The collegiality of the entire board is something I’ve come to appreciate.” He said he’s continually heartened that disagreements are held to a degree of professionalism that befits the law community at large.

Lile and Shaw both enjoy getting to know representatives from other parts of the state. “It’s very rewarding professionally,” said Lile, noting it’s often helpful to know lawyers in other circuits when he needs to make a referral. Shaw maintained, “It is a very friendly and welcoming group. It has been a wonderful experience to meet and get to know colleagues from throughout the state.”

Just as with your LCBA membership, you get most the out of The Florida Bar when you’re aware of all the services and advocacy that are available to you. Next time you get that monthly report, perhaps you’ll consider taking your representatives up on the offer to hear your concerns. They’re there for you, after all. [|RG|](#)