



The Law Students Are Coming, The Law Students Are Coming!

If we had only known then what we know now, how different would many of our career paths have been? How did we find our way (or is "stumble" a better verb) into our specialty areas of practice? How much would we have benefited from regular interaction with practicing lawyers in the legal communities where we attended law school?

The San Diego County Bar Association, in conjunction with the three law schools located in San Diego County—Thomas Jefferson, Cal Western and University of San Diego—have embarked on a bold initiative. Beginning with this school year, all students at our local law schools have been offered member-

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ship in the SDCBA, paid for by their law schools. We are now in the process of welcoming more than 2000 law students.

Many of you participated in the welcoming reception for our law students on September 20 hosted by the Bar and well attended by our state and federal judges, along with our general membership. Several events are planned for the year, including "What They Don't Teach You in Law School," "How to Apply for a Summer Clerkship," and advice on career planning. As part of their membership, participation in all Bar sections and many CLEs will be available to our law student members.

This process began in 2005 when our board of directors, motivated by the desire to increase law student participation, voted to reduce dues for law students. Past president Wells Lyman chaired the Law School Relations Committee this year and took this vision to the next level. Board member Lea Fields worked tirelessly on this project with the help of past president Chris Todd and board member Kristi Pfister. Their efforts were coordinated with the career development staffs of the three law schools with the goal

of designing an all-inclusive program for the law students.

The most important aspect of the experience, and what will make the difference for our law students, is the direct contact these students have with our practicing lawyers, the members of the SDCBA. Toward that end, I ask all of you to take the time to share your experiences with our new law student members. Attend the events planned for our student members. Greet them at the sections and committee meetings. Welcome them at CLE events. Offer to answer their questions. Share your experiences.

The law is a business, but it is first a profession. When I began practice many years ago, I was taken by the willingness of lawyers to offer me their insights and their guidance. Although I was thrown into a competitive environment, I was impressed, motivated and encouraged by the many lawyers

who extended a helping hand. It helped me through the difficult transition I faced as a young lawyer. Like all who came before me, I felt as though everyone knew more than me.

Somehow I made it, in part due to the insights and support I received from my more experienced colleagues. I learned the valuable lesson of what separates the law, what makes it a profession, not merely a business. It helped me develop the pride I have always had in being a lawyer, part of the most noble of professions.

Please take the time to seek out our new law student members. Welcome them and encourage them. San Diego is not only America's finest city, it is America's finest legal community. Help to ensure that we pass this on to the next generation.

P.S. With this, my last president's column, I want to thank each of you for allowing me the honor of being your 2006 Bar president. I have enjoyed the most rewarding year of my professional life. You have given me memories that will keep me warm for a lifetime! ■