

A Message from the Section Chair

In January of each year, in connection with the NYSBA Annual Meeting, the *New York Law Journal* invites NYSBA Section Chairs to submit an article about the work of her or his Section. In my 2013 article I noted that more than one-third of the members of NYSBA are 55 years of age or older and thus eligible to be members of the Senior Lawyers Section. The mission of the Senior Lawyers Section is to appeal to the varied interests of this large and growing group by addressing the issues that these lawyers face in their practices and their lives.



The Section has achieved a remarkable rate of growth in the almost four years since it was established. That growth is due in large part to the vision of my predecessors, Justin Vigdor and Walter Burke, as well as to the varied programs developed by our Program and CLE Chair, Carole Burns, who is also Chair-Elect, and the wide-ranging content of our newsletter skillfully shepherded by Editor Willard Da Silva. A review of this issue of *The Senior Lawyer* provides ample evidence of the breadth of the Section's interests.

The eleven committees that the Section has established address a broad range of issues of interests to our membership and all of them welcome active participation by current and new members of the Senior Lawyers Section. In this Message I shall highlight the work of a number of these committees by presenting excerpts of descriptions prepared by the committee chair. It is my intention to have at least a page in each future issue of *The Senior Lawyer* that provides an update on the work of the various SLS committees.

Age Discrimination Committee: The basic purpose of the Age Discrimination Committee is to help senior lawyers, as well as younger members of the bar, to become familiar with this area of the law as it may affect their careers and to help promote changes that will end age-related discriminatory practice affecting attorneys. As part of this effort, the Committee intends to continue the excellent work of the NYSBA Special Committee on Age Discrimination in the Profession which issued a report on mandatory retirement practices in the profession that was approved by NYSBA in 2007.

Law Practice Continuity Committee: The Committee supports efforts to assist solo and small firm practitioners in planning for the orderly transition of their practice, as well as to identify ways in which mechanisms can be established to protect the interests of the clients of deceased, disabled or absent solo or small firms practitioners who have not made adequate provision in advance for his or her inability to continue representing clients.

Legislation Committee: The Committee reviews pending State and Federal legislation of interest to Senior Lawyers, and proposals under consideration by NYSBA to support or oppose legislation and, where appropriate, makes recommendations to the NYSBA Executive Committee as to action. The Committee also reviews recommendations received from the Section or from the NYSBA Executive Committee with respect to prospective proposals.

Pro Bono Committee: Staffed civil legal service programs are able to serve only a small portion of low-income New Yorkers who need assistance. Private attorneys who volunteer their time, pro bono, help reach those who otherwise would not be aided. Senior lawyers, whether retired or not, have a wealth of experience to contribute. This Committee seeks to meet more of the needs of the public, while at the same time providing an avenue for meaningful service. The Committee intends to promote strong ties between the Section and the NYSBA Empire State Counsel Program and also to the Attorney Emeritus Program of the court system, which is directed to members of the New York Bar who are 55 years of age or older.

Program and CLE Committee: The mission of the Committee is to present programs of interest to the Section's membership. Since SLS membership is quite diverse, the programs cover a variety of subjects including: financial planning for the transitional attorney; incorporating new technology into your law practice; practice management for solo and small firms when an emergency occurs; alternatives to the full-time practice of law; different models for pro bono service, and the use of social media in the practice of law. Suggestions for topics, speakers and programs are welcome.

Retirement Planning and Investment: The emphasis is on planning rather than retirement. The Committee addresses financial and life planning issues and next steps for attorneys and their clients. The Committee's objective is to provide programs and information on professional options, work/leisure/life balance and financial and insurance planning vehicles.

Technology: The Committee focuses on processes, tools and services relating to the use of technology in the practice of law and looks for those tools, services and software that assist and streamline the practice of law. It provides a forum for discussion and analysis of evolving issues at the intersection of technology, computer systems security and effective use of law office technology. Its membership include solo, small firm and large firm practitioners.

As you can see from the brief descriptions that I have provided, the activities of the SLS are quite varied. I urge members of the SLS to become active on our Committees and members of NYSBA to join our Section and our Committees.

Susan B. Lindenauer