

Change Is Upon Us

As Yogi Berra said, "The future ain't what it used to be." The same might be said about the future of legal education and of the legal profession.

For a number of years, and more frequently lately, we have heard in essence that there are too many lawyers compared to available and projected legal jobs, that law school is too expensive, and that legal education is not practical and does not prepare law school graduates to be "client-ready," "practice-ready," or "profession-ready."

I have asked the New York State Bar Association's Committee on Legal Education and Admission to the Bar, to work with legal educators, practicing lawyers, the Board of Law Examiners, and the courts to take a hard look at these issues in view of recent experience, forecasts and commentary. The Committee collected the articles in this special issue of the *Journal* which, we

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hope, will help to educate and inform all of us about what is happening in legal education and in the profession generally, as well as more specifically in New York State. Although the State Bar has not adopted positions on many of the issues discussed here, we are confident that this compilation will be an invaluable resource as we continue to explore these topics.

These issues are important to the profession and to the public. Projections of the numbers of law school graduates and projections of law-related jobs between now and 2020 indicate that there will be enough law-related jobs for about 20% of the graduates. At the same time, the indigent and people of modest means continue to face very substantial unmet legal needs related to maintaining basic life necessities. And the average debt of those coming out of law school is in the six figures, which discourages them from taking jobs that might address these unmet legal needs or perhaps even from pursuing a legal career, which can still be a rewarding and satisfying career choice. There are no easy answers. These issues require serious study and discussion, and it is important that the New York State Bar Association be part of that discussion.



"Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future."

– John F. Kennedy

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Change is upon us. "Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future" (John F. Kennedy). We must look to the future. ■

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