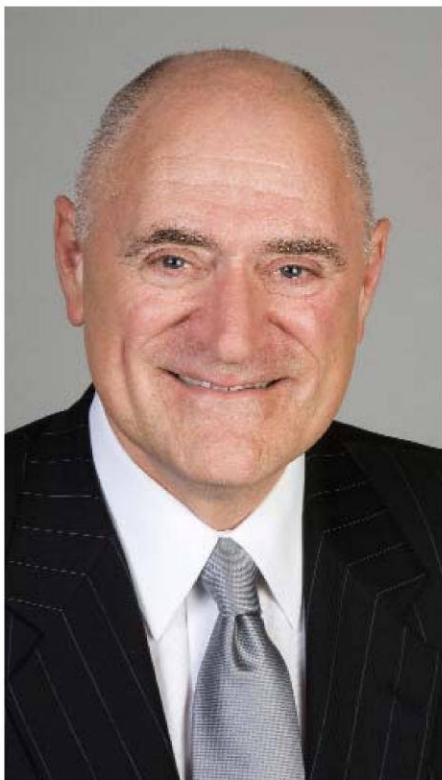


Calling All Atticus Finches



All of us have aspired at one time or another to be an Atticus Finch, that distinguished and poised lawyer with a fire in the belly for justice and righteousness. No one could have embodied those qualities better than actor Gregory Peck in his Academy Award-winning performance in the classic 1962 movie, “To Kill a Mockingbird.” And whether it was before or after law school, we somehow knew that Atticus was everything a lawyer — and we — ought to be.

But then came along the actual practice of law. Worries over the ability to pay bills, satisfy senior partners and clients who seemed never to be satisfied, and just keep our jobs tended to tarnish the luster of

Deep inside, each of us longs to be that perfect lawyer, Atticus Finch, as portrayed by Gregory Peck.

the practice of law that shone in Atticus Finch. Still, deep inside, each of us longs to be that perfect lawyer portrayed by Gregory Peck.

Unfortunately, I have no magic potion to make the practice of law different or to draw the qualities of an Atticus Finch closer. But I have a thought about where you can turn to pursue at least some of the aspirational goals that are at the heart of lawyering.

In 1895, fearing a takeover of the profession by the General Assembly, a group of lawyers joined together to fight legislation that would have diminished the stature of the legal profession and imposed government control over lawyers. After they were successful in that effort, they determined to create an association that would stand for the noble goals of the legal profession and bring Pennsylvania lawyers together. Thus came about the incorporation of the Pennsylvania Bar Association. In the PBA’s Articles of Incorporation those lawyers set forth the purposes of the association. Among the eight stated goals, the group included promoting the administration of justice, ensuring that no one because of poverty is denied his or her legal rights and the securing of proper legislation. Those goals now appear in our published bylaws. They are worth a read.

None of the goals that our predecessor lawyers included in the PBA’s original Articles of Incorporation were directed at serving themselves except the two that pro-

vide for advancing the science of jurisprudence and perpetuating the history of the profession. While none of those lawyers were around to see “To Kill a Mockingbird,” they had the same idea about the noble profession they were part of.

And so, while the nobleness of the profession does not always present itself in the day to day of our practices, you can look to the PBA as a place where the goals we aspire to can be sought, promoted and, once in a while, fulfilled.

If each of us pursues the best within ourselves and promotes the best within our profession, I bet we will all like the practice of law and the bar association a whole lot better. And maybe you’ll even feel like an Atticus Finch once in a while. 🌟



Clifford E. Haines
PBA President

Editor’s note: Members can find the PBA Articles of Incorporation and current bylaws on the PBA Web site, www.pabar.org. On the home page, click on About the PBA, the first link on the left side of the page. A link to the Articles of Incorporation is included with the material posted under the link Bylaws.