



PBA President
Gretchen A. Mundorff

Take Two Aspirins and Get on That School Bus

As a child, in an attempt to play hooky from school, I would feign the sudden onset of a mysterious illness. I failed miserably in my attempts at acting sick, as my mother was a registered nurse and knew her daughter well. I swear my mother was clairvoyant and could read my thoughts as quickly as I could think them! She would look me straight in the eyes and say in her most authoritative voice, “Gretchen Adele, take two aspirins and get on that school bus!” She was also quite famous in our family for saying that 90 percent of being successful in life is about just showing up. Of course, she didn’t really mean that by just showing up one would be successful. Rather, what she believed was that one becomes successful in life by showing up and actively participating and engaging in life. My father had his own way of expressing his views on success. He would often say, “There are people who make things happen, there are people who watch things happen and there are people who wonder what happened. Gretchen Adele, I want you to be the type of person who makes things happen. I want you to generate positive energy.”

I’ve been thinking about my parents’ words of advice. They were words to live by then, and they continue to hold true in my life today. I’ve been thinking about what they said and relating it to what we, together, have made happen this year at the PBA. Early in my presidency I talked with you about the need for a mentoring program. I spoke in terms of the need that all young lawyers have to find a mentor who provides a safe place for them to go for advice, support and encouragement. Thanks to your willingness to show up and actively participate

and become engaged in our PBA mentoring program, many young lawyers have found their safe place in you. Many of you have also told me that the mentoring program has been a reciprocal process whereby the young lawyers have actually mentored you with respect to the use of computer technology for legal research and law practice management. The PBA mentoring program has been a success for everyone involved and has certainly generated positive energy throughout our PBA family.

Last summer we reinstated the Bar Leadership Institute (BLI), under the capable guidance of co-chairs Mary Schellhammer and Paul Troy, to help our young lawyers make the transition to bar leaders. I am pleased to tell you that the BLI listserv is one of the PBA’s busiest. Members of the BLI class talk frequently with one another about various PBA projects in which they are engaged. As a class, they have supported the “Preservation Walk” at our Maclay Mansion by purchasing a stone in their class name. They have also shown their support for the work of the Pennsylvania Bar Foundation by providing a BLI class basket for the silent auction at this year’s annual meeting. They have participated in various public service projects in the name of the BLI, and they have actively participated and engaged in the work of our committees and sections and in our PBA Civics Initiative. One of our BLI class members, Guerline Laurore, has demonstrated her leadership by being appointed as a vice chair of our newly constituted Immigration Law Committee. We congratulate Guerline for her demonstrated leadership.

With respect to our PBA Civics Initiative, last fall we ran many Celebrate

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the Constitution programs throughout Pennsylvania during which we energized students and their teachers in discussions regarding the importance of our Constitution and our government. The PBA was featured in the March 2010 issue of the *ABA Journal* for our Celebrate the Constitution programming in schools and in particular for an event at the Manchester Academic Charter School on the North Side of Pittsburgh. My presidential initiative for civics, Project Citizen, is chaired by PBA past presidents Andy Susko and Ken Horoho and directed under the capable guidance of the PBA's law-related education coordinator, attorney Susan Etter. We created a Project Citizen pilot program that involved teams of lawyers, judges and educators in five school districts across Pennsylvania this spring. These programs will culminate in our PBA Law Day activities in May. Our theme for Law Day is "Freedom Rocks!" I like this theme. It's full of positive energy. Freedom rocks, and so do all of you by actively participating and doing your part as Pennsylvania lawyers to make sure that the children in Pennsylvania know something about their Constitution, their government, the rule of law and the important role that courts and lawyers play in our society. Thanks for getting on our PBA bus!

As you are aware, I made diversity and inclusion a core presidential initiative this year. I am pleased to tell you that thanks to the good work of the PBA Diversity Task Force and its co-chairs, Sam Cooper and Bill Pugh, the PBA Board of Governors voted unanimously to create and support a PBA Diversity Team and the position of PBA diversity officer to work on this important issue. The task force subcommittee on the structure of the PBA has recommended changes to the composition of both the Board of Governors and the PBA Nominating Committee to ensure greater diversity and inclusion around both the board table and the Nominating Committee table, with the goal of constituting a Board of Governors and a Nominating Committee that reflect the broad diversity of our PBA membership. Last fall the PBA engaged in

a productive Diversity Summit in Philadelphia, and we continued the dialogue on the issue of diversity at the Minority Attorney Conference in March. I ask for your continued support of the PBA Diversity Team and the diversity officer as they embark on this important work to ensure that the PBA is truly the home for *all* Pennsylvania lawyers.

Another core presidential initiative this bar year was to provide more pro bono service. Many of you have provided pro bono service and have completed the PBA certification form so that we may quantify all of our work on pro bono cases. Throughout the year, beginning last May and culminating at the Conference of County Bar Leaders seminar in February, I have traveled around the state with PBA Pro Bono Coordinator David Trevaskis to present our Pro Bono Awards to deserving recipients. They truly are lawyers who make things happen and generate positive energy, and I applaud all of their efforts. They have used their legal expertise to change lives. I was pleased to be joined by Chief Justice of Pennsylvania Ronald D. Castille in our request that we all engage in providing more pro bono service at this critical time in our history. Because of all of your efforts, I believe that Pennsylvania lawyers will lead our nation's efforts to secure access to justice for the poor and underserved of our communities.

After the release of the Interbranch Commission on Juvenile Justice (ICJJ) report and recommendations last summer, we created the PBA Task Force on the Interbranch Commission Report on Juvenile Justice co-chaired by PBA Vice President Tom Wilkinson and Andrea Marceca Strong. Our task force was charged with the work of reviewing the ICJJ report and recommendations and determining which recommendations the PBA could most effectively implement. I am pleased to report that as a result of the good work of our task force members, the task force will deliver its report and recommendations to the Board of Governors and House of Delegates at the annual meeting in May. We applaud their work and the positive energy that their

work has generated around and about the PBA.

We have created a PBA legislative transition team to work with our PBA lobbyists on the Hill with regard to issues that we know are important to Pennsylvania lawyers and the constituents we serve. Together we continue to monitor the bills regarding joint and several liability and testified in April with regard to the PBA's position on this legislation. We are also monitoring legislation regarding county legal journals. In conjunction with Committee/Section Day on March 31, the PBA hosted a meeting of county bar executives, presidents and county bar lobbyists to discuss the legal journal issue, which is of critical importance to our county bar associations. We sent a team of PBA officers to Washington, D.C., for the ABA Day on the Hill in early April. Our PBA Day on the Hill in Harrisburg on April 26 was much more impactful as a result of your presence and the power of your collective voices.

These are just some of the initiatives and issues that we have been working on at the PBA this year. My sincere thanks to all of you for showing up this year and actively participating and helping us to further these initiatives on behalf of all Pennsylvania lawyers and those we serve. Together we have generated great positive energy about lawyers and the organized bar. Because of all of you, we made many positive things happen in the name of the PBA this year.

I look forward to seeing you, my PBA family, at the annual meeting in Philadelphia in May. I look forward to the positive energy and leadership of our next president, Matt Creme, and president-elect, Tom Wilkinson, as they put their imprimaturs on our bar association. It has been my great honor and privilege to serve as your president. I have truly loved this job. And I can assure you that I will continue to take two aspirins and get on our bus for the PBA! ♦



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PBA President