In 1959, the PBA turned its attention to its internal organization. PBA leadership set out to create a structure that would be representative of its growing statewide membership.

It formed a Board of Governors to replace its Executive Committee, which by this time in the association's history had grown to an unwieldy 77 members.

Under the old system, members of the Executive Committee also served as ex officio chairs of the PBA sections and committees. As historian Henry Thomas Dolan wrote in his 1971 history of the PBA, it was an arrangement that allowed Executive Committee members to "come to their chairmanships by no principal of representation."

The newly-formed Board of Governors serves as the PBA's central management group setting the operational direction of the association. It's made up of many of the most visible and active leaders of the association, including the president, president-elect and vice president. Also included are member representatives from a dozen geographical zones. Zone boundaries are set by county lines and most zones, with the exception of Allegheny and Philadelphia counties, are made up of multiple counties.

The basic framework has been tweaked periodically to round out the representation of PBA membership. Examples of the representation evolution include the 1992 addition of a designated minority governor. A second minority governor seat was added in 2011. 1993 saw the addition of a designated woman governor on the Board. In 2003, a unit county governor, who is selected from among the county bar associations that require their local members to also be PBA members, was added to the Board.

It was the principle of fair representation that again rose to the top of the PBA's agenda just a few years after the creation of the Board of Governors. In January 1966, it created the House of Delegates to serve as the "repository of voting power." The ABA House of Delegates served as its model.

Today, the House of Delegates has more than 375 members.

The structure of the PBA House of Delegates is meant to ensure that each corner of the commonwealth, and every region in between, has a say in the function and stated beliefs of the association.

The House is largely made up of delegates from the geographical zones. Each zone gets one delegate for every 100 PBA members within its boundaries and one additional delegate for each zone in which every county bar association has adopted the unit plan of membership. In 1997, the House amended its bylaws to give every county — even those with less than 100 PBA members — at least one voting member.

In simplest terms, the House of Delegates sets the policies and oversees the business affairs of the PBA. With the exception of very urgent issues that can be acted upon by the Board of Governors, all voting rights of PBA members are exercised in the House. The House has authority to change the association's polices, bylaws, articles of incorporation and cost of membership dues.

The House also has non-voting members. These include the current deans of Pennsylvania law schools and a current student member from each of the schools, the Pennsylvania attorney general and court administrator of Pennsylvania, among others.

Wrote Dolan of the creation of the House of Delegates, “The criticism made throughout all of its (prior) years was that it had almost no principal of representation built into it, and only chance determined who among the membership, or how many beyond a quorum of 50, might be in attendance at a meeting. … The creation of the House of Delegates sought once and for all to have the voting power of the association chosen on a strict principle of representation.”

Sources for this information include Henry Thomas Dolan's history of the PBA written for the January 1971 issue of the PBA Quarterly and the special centennial issue of The Pennsylvania Lawyer published in 1995.

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**WIP Oral History Project Features First Two Interviews**

The PBA Commission on Women in the Profession, in commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the enactment of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution ratified on August 18, 1920, recognizes outstanding women leaders who have made a significant impact on our profession and who have served as mentors and role models for our members. The WIP Oral History Project seeks to preserve oral histories of the paths of those leaders and their achievements, as told in the first person by these outstanding women. WIP announced that the first interviews have been completed and are now featured on its webpage. It will continue to add interviews to this page as they are completed.