



Kim M. Boyle

69th LSBA President

Boyle Focusing on Access to Justice, Member Outreach, Committee Initiatives

Kim M. Boyle became the Louisiana State Bar Association's (LSBA) 69th President on June 12 — the first African-American woman to hold this position.

She is a partner in the Employment Law Group of Phelps Dunbar, L.L.P., in New Orleans. She is a former judge pro tempore for Division I of Orleans Parish Civil District Court and is a former assistant professor of law at Loyola University Law School. She received an AB degree in politics and a Teaching Certificate in Secondary Education in 1984 from Princeton University and her JD degree in 1987 from the University of Virginia School of Law. She was admitted to practice in Louisiana in 1987.

Kim has served the LSBA in many capacities — President-Elect, Treasurer, Board of Governors, Budget Committee, Access to Justice Committee, Technology Committee, Minority Involvement Section, Louisiana Bar Journal Editorial Board and Nominating Committee.

She has held all offices in the New Orleans Bar Association, serving as president in 2003. She is a member of the American Bar Association, the National Bar Association, a former member of the Federal Bar Association (a former member of the board of directors) and the Louis A. Martinet Legal Society, Inc. She is currently serving on the Administrators of the Tulane Educational Fund, the main governing body of Tulane University.

Her community involvement is just as extensive. She previously served as co-chair for the Committee for a Better New Orleans/Metropolitan Area Committee, and serves as board member of the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under the Law, a member of the local advisory board for the United Negro College Fund and a trustee of the Greater New Orleans Foundation. She also serves on the Touro Infirmary Board of Directors.

Kim is a former member of the Louisiana Recovery Authority, and served as chair of the LRA Healthcare Committee, a member of the Fleur-de-Lis Ambassadors and a former member of the Bring New Orleans Back Commission, which focused on rebuilding the city post-Katrina. Kim previously served as secretary of the New Orleans Legal Assistance Corporation (NOLAC) and was the first African-American woman to serve as co-chair of the NO/AIDS Task Force Board of Trustees.

Kim's list of awards is equally impressive — New Orleans Bar Association's Presidents' Award, National Bar Association Presidential Award, LSBA President's Award, Louis A. Martinet Legal Society, Inc. President's Award, Louis A. Martinet Legal Society, Inc. A.P. Tureaud Award, Loyola University Black Law Students Association Louis Westerfield Award and the NO/AIDS Task Force Humanitas Award.

Kim M. Boyle at her office overlooking downtown New Orleans. Photo by J.F. Bergeron Studio and Gallery.



Journal: What are your LSBA initiatives for the coming Bar year?

Boyle: The primary initiative relates to member outreach. The number one goal under the LSBA Strategic Plan is to keep the LSBA relevant and meaningful to its members. Some association members have raised questions in the past about how relevant the association is to its members. Members in different geographic areas of the state have been concerned about how involved the LSBA is in their geographic regions. We began a member outreach tour during my tenure as president-elect, traveling through the state, meeting with different bar associations, members and the courts, to talk about the LSBA and its mission, and to seek more input and involvement from members in all parts of the state.

Other initiatives relate to ongoing LSBA programs. We are very, very focused on the Access to Justice Committee this year. We have asked Marta-Ann Schnabel, former LSBA President, to chair this committee. We are concerned that, based on the current economic climate, many more people nationwide and in Louisiana have lost jobs and have had full-time jobs turn into part-time jobs. Individuals who did not previously need or qualify for legal service assistance now need legal assistance to address issues such as evictions, custody disputes and other family matters. We have met with the legal services directors in the state to ensure that the LSBA continues to have a meaningful role related to the provision of quality civil legal services regardless of income.

Journal: Are there specific ideas in place of how to restructure the Access to Justice program?

Boyle: We will be rolling out a few new ideas soon. We are now undergoing a review and assessment of the entire program. (LSBA Access to Justice Director) Monte Mollere, (2008-09

LSBA President) Beth Foote and Marta-Ann Schnabel recently attended an ABA Equal Justice Conference and brought back a great deal of relevant information. We will then use the information received from the legal service providers, the Supreme Court, the Louisiana Bar Foundation, other states, our committee members and other stakeholders to roll out additional initiatives after the Annual Meeting.

Journal: Will the LSBA outreach efforts to local bars continue this year?

Boyle: Yes, (LSBA President-Elect) Mike Patterson and I will continue the outreach efforts. We will also be working with other Board of Governors members to become more involved in these efforts as well. We will be encouraging Board of Governors members to attend meetings of local and specialty bars that take place in their geographic districts. We want to receive information from members in those districts on their concerns, problems and issues on the practice of law and with the LSBA and we would like Board of Governors members to bring information back to their members about what the LSBA is doing, particularly with new initiatives. During my year as president-elect, I met with several local and specialty bars, and I have scheduled more meetings after the Annual Meeting in Jefferson Parish, Slidell and other locations. As an example of how we would like to continue to encourage the involvement of the Board of Governors in outreach efforts, I was scheduled to attend the Alexandria Bar crawfish boil on May 15, but was unable to attend because of a scheduling conflict. (LSBA Director of Member Outreach and Diversity) Kelly Legier contacted various Board of Governors members in the area and Cloyd Benjamin volunteered to attend the Alexandria Bar function and had a great time. Charles Elliot, a new board member, was also in attendance. Also, when I met with the officers of the Baton



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Rouge Bar Association and the Baton Rouge Martinet Society, Jim Boren from the board actively participated in the meeting. That is exactly what we want to happen. We want our Bar members to not only know the president and officers, but also to have a strong relationship with their own district representatives. We want this two-way interaction so we can both receive and relay relevant information.

Journal: During your outreach efforts this past year, what are some specific concerns voiced from members throughout the state?

Boyle: There were a number of issues discussed as we traveled throughout the state. One big issue was the status of the rule changes concerning lawyer advertising. This was a huge issue because of the Supreme Court's decision to implement the rules on Oct. 1, 2009. There also was discussion about Bar committees and how to get more people involved in committees to obtain broader viewpoints from all geographic and practice sectors. There were also many comments in Shreveport about making sure that the Bar is sufficiently involved in the northern part of our state. There is a perception, right or wrong, from some members in northern Louisiana that the Bar has not been as present as members would like it to be. We need to address that because this is the association of ALL members. This is OUR association. We want every single member of the Bar to participate in our association to the level they are able, based on individual practice and personal responsibilities.

Journal: You mentioned increased member involvement in committees and sections. What encouragement can you give to members to participate? What mutual benefits are there to increased participation in committees and sections?

Boyle: One benefit of service is having the opportunity to

meet, exchange ideas with and have discussions with lawyers you may not ordinarily have the opportunity to form a professional relationship with, depending on the type and location of your practice. In my years of involvement as a committee and section member, Treasurer, Board of Governors member and now the incoming president, I have had the pleasure, the opportunity and the benefit of working with many lawyers and judges across the state that I never would have otherwise met. We have discussed issues related to the practice of law, various practice issues, access to justice issues and administration of justice issues, and also forged personal and professional relationships at the same time. One of the primary benefits of Bar involvement is the ability to exchange ideas with colleagues in all parts of Louisiana. Bar involvement also brings exposure to your practice. When you chair committees or sections or present CLE programs throughout the state, you showcase yourself and your practice. We believe this helps not only your practice and exposure within the Bar but also your exposure with clients and residents in our local communities.

In this year's *Louisiana Bar Journal*, we plan to further highlight the work of our committees and feature members' pro bono and community work across the state. We will work closely with the Public Information Committee, chaired again this year by Julie Baxter, to showcase the good work of our members both within and outside the association in their respective legal communities. When we have a member working with and raising money for Habitat for Humanity, for example, we want the members of the LSBA to have that knowledge, as well as that member's clients, community and family members, by publicizing the information through outreach to local media. We need to let the media know the good work of attorneys. The media sometimes quickly publicizes something negative about our profession. However, the vast majority of Louisiana

lawyers are good, professional, ethical and hardworking individuals involved in their communities and we want the local communities to know that.

Journal: Through the Young Lawyers Section and Leadership LSBA, the Bar has several avenues in place to involve members from day one of their practices. What other encouragement can you offer to young lawyers about their involvement from day one?

Boyle: The importance of young lawyer involvement is almost a “no brainer.” Statistics in Louisiana and the rest of the nation indicate that young lawyers represent the largest demographic of the legal profession. They are the future of the legal profession in Louisiana and the LSBA. At our Board orientation this past March, our Executive Director Loretta Larsen provided us with information that 36 percent of the lawyers in the LSBA fall within the category of young lawyers, which is the largest age demographic of any group of the LSBA. Young lawyers are clearly the future of our association. If we do not have young lawyer involvement now, we won’t have leadership five, 10 or 15 years from now. Moreover, the work of our young lawyers is outstanding. I had the opportunity to attend the Pro Bono and Children’s Law Award Ceremony on May 20 where the New Orleans Bar Association’s Young Lawyers Section received the Friend of Pro Bono Award based on its work in providing direct pro bono services and funding local organizations dedicated to providing legal services to the poor. That work is absolutely critical to the access to justice issues we discussed earlier. The NOBA YLS is directly working on this issue and raising money through the Bar and Grille, the golf tournament and other projects. Our own LSBA Young Lawyers Section does a phenomenal job of working with students with moot court and writing competitions to interest them in the legal profession at a young age. I would also like to commend the wonderful work of the Leadership LSBA classes. If we can’t capture young lawyers’ interest and get them involved with the LSBA on day one of their admission to the Bar, we will have a problem in the future. We are so focused on the role of young lawyers in our association that the House of Delegates is considering a resolution from the Bar Governance Committee at the Annual Meeting for creation of a Law Student Division of the LSBA. That’s how focused we are and how much we recognize the importance of young lawyers in our association.

Journal: Is the legal profession becoming more diverse? Are Bar programs helping to enhance a diverse legal workforce?

Boyle: Absolutely, I believe the legal profession is and will continue to be more diverse. It is difficult to compare the profession now with when I was admitted to practice 22 years ago. However, if you look at the members of the LSBA, the Board of Governors and its leadership, the bench and the leadership of local and specialty bars in the state, from a racial, gender, ethnic and even geographical perspective — however you wish to define diversity within our association — we have made huge strides and we will continue to make huge strides because we are committed to the issue of diversity. Diversity is an issue that

we attempt to work on every day. The LSBA Diversity Committee, under the leadership of former LSBA President Wayne Lee and Judge Ricky Wicker of Louisiana’s 5th Circuit Court of Appeal, is doing phenomenal work. The committee recently put on another successful Conclave on Diversity. Because of the conclave’s success and the importance of this issue, Kelly Legier, the LSBA’s outreach coordinator, is now working with local bars in various parts of the state to put on mini diversity conclaves through 2009-10. The issue of diversity is very, very important and the committee’s work is extremely important. We are addressing these issues with the courts and other stakeholders in the profession as well. We feel positive about the direction we are moving, as an association and as a profession, as it relates to diversity.

Journal: Do you think the Board of Governors-approved Statement of Diversity Principles will have an impact?

Boyle: Yes, it will have an impact from a standpoint of showing the overall commitment to improving diversity in all aspects of the Bar. We are asking law firms, law programs, government entities and others to sign the diversity statement. Our 2008-09 President Beth Foote first asked her law firm to sign the statement. My firm, Phelps Dunbar, has also signed. Other law firms and agencies have now signed. There is a lot of work being done by all members of the association concerning diversity. The issue of diversity is being addressed by various LSBA committees and sections. Moreover, we believe that it is important for associations to have principled statements concerning relevant issues. The LSBA has a specific mission statement that reflects to our members and the community at large what we, as an association, believe in. That’s extremely important. The Statement of Diversity Principles dovetails with the overall LSBA Mission Statement, specifically in the aim of assisting and serving our members in the practice of law, assuring access to and aiding in the administration of justice, assisting the Supreme Court in the regulation of the practice of law, upholding the honor of the courts and the profession, promoting the professional competence of attorneys, increasing public understanding of and respect for the law and encouraging collegiality among its members.

Journal: Tell us about your family.

Boyle: I am always very proud to talk about my family. I am very blessed to have my parents, Ernest Boyle, Jr. and Connie Boyle, with whom I am extremely close. My mother is a retired public school teacher in New Orleans. My father is a retired postal worker. They have been, in my biased and personal view, the best parents anyone could have. I am very proud of and close to my brother, Wardell Boyle, who retired from the Air Force after 20 years of service. He had a very distinguished military career and served overseas several times. He then went back to college to complete his degree and graduated *summa cum laude* several years ago from Old Dominion University. Currently, he is working on his master’s degree and he will finish by next spring. Because of his commitment to the community and his interest in public service, Wardell became a public school teacher and is working and living in Newport News, Va. He is married to

Photo by J.F. Bergeron Studio and Gallery.





Lois Boyle — more my sister than my sister-in-law — who is a court reporter in Virginia. She also went back to college last year and graduated with honors. I am proud to say that both my brother and sister-in-law completed their college educations while working full-time and raising their family. I have two grown nieces, Leilani Boyle and Tiffany Boyle. Tiffany also lives in Newport News, is a part-time student at Old Dominion and works full-time. She is also the mother of my beautiful great-niece, Amia. My nephew, Brian Boyle, is an engineering student at a college in Florida. I am proud of all three of them. I am also blessed with close family members, aunts, uncles and cousins and many close friends who I consider to be members of my family.

Journal: Tell us about your education and early legal experiences.

Boyle: I attended public school from elementary school through high school. I graduated from high school in 1980. I had the opportunity to attend Princeton University, graduating in 1984 with an AB degree in politics and a teaching certificate in secondary education. I graduated in 1987 from the University of Virginia Law School. I moved back to New Orleans and had the opportunity to work at several law firms and with a number of excellent attorneys. I began my legal career at a small law firm, Barham & Churchill, founded by former Louisiana Supreme Court Justice Mack Barham. This was a wonderful opportunity. I then worked at McGlinchey Stafford for six years, working in the Commercial Litigation section under Frank Martin. At McGlinchey, I had the opportunity to form many professional relationships, many of which I still have today. In 1993, I was asked by then-dean of Loyola University Law School Louis Westerfield — the first African-American dean at Loyola — to apply for a position as a full-time professor. I taught at Loyola Law School for two years and it was one of the best experiences I ever had. I loved working with the students because you actu-

ally learn more from them than what you impart to them. I also enjoyed working with the faculty and administration at Loyola. I then worked for several years with a firm I co-founded, Rodney, Bordenave, Boykin, Bennett & Boyle. In 2000, I was privileged to be appointed by the Louisiana Supreme Court to sit as judge *pro tempore* in Civil District Court Division I for nine months. It was a wonderful opportunity to see the practice of law from the other side of the bench. It was a great experience working with the other judges and court staff, who served as my mentors and colleagues. They answered all of my questions with grace and professionalism. I learned much about the practice of law and administration of justice there. When I completed my tenure at Civil District Court, I was privileged to begin working at Phelps Dunbar in the Employment Law Group in New Orleans. I work with some of the best attorneys in the state of Louisiana and I am lucky enough to call them close friends. I have had wonderful professional opportunities every step of my legal career and I have learned so much from the people with whom I have worked.

Journal: Did you always want to be a lawyer?

Boyle: It sounds corny but, yes, I always knew, from a young age, that I wanted to be a lawyer; however, I didn't know early on whether it would work out that way or not. As a child, I always watched the lawyer TV shows. For example, I loved Perry Mason who always won his case . . . in an hour! I believe Perry only lost one case in all of his many years of TV lawyering. But, aside from that, something always appealed to me about the practice of law. As lawyers, we have the ability to literally change our communities. Lawyers have the ability to affect momentous legal changes, in all areas and issues impacting our society. As a profession, we have made our country and our communities better. Even as a young child, I wanted to be a small part of that.



Photos by Louisiana State Bar Association staff.

Journal: Do you have one defining moment in your legal career (to date) that made you stop and say, “Yes, I am proud to be a lawyer”?

Boyle: Actually, I am always proud to be a lawyer in Louisiana. However, I will discuss just a few defining moments. I had the opportunity to work on a redistricting case involving Jefferson Parish a number of years ago. We represented Jefferson Parish in the trial court and before the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals, which both upheld the creation of a majority minority district which allowed the minority citizens in the district the opportunity to elect someone of their own choosing under the 1965 Voting Rights Act. I am also proud of the community work with various bar associations and nonprofit groups. I was very honored to serve as president of the New Orleans Bar Association, one of the strongest local bar associations in the state. I am most proud of the work I did with thousands of others to help rebuild New Orleans and Louisiana after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. It was a privilege to serve on Mayor Ray Nagin’s Bring New Orleans Back Commission, which focused on rebuilding New Orleans. I was privileged to serve on the Louisiana Recovery Authority under the leadership of Xavier University President, Dr. Norman Francis, addressing the recovery efforts throughout the state. Thousands of citizens devoted countless unpaid hours to the ongoing rebuilding efforts. There are many unsung and untold heroes rebuilding neighborhoods and schools. They are the true heroes as it relates to the current recovery in the state. I am proud to work with people who are passionate and committed about the city and state and who want nothing more than to bring it back and make it better. I am proud of the resilience of our community and proud to say I contributed in a very, very small way. Finally, I am truly honored and humbled to serve as the 69th President of the great Louisiana State Bar Association,

and to have an opportunity to work with our wonderful and talented members as well as the members of all of the courts throughout the state.

Journal: As the first African-American woman LSBA president, you are a role model for many. Who is your role model?

Boyle: I can’t identify just one role model. I have been blessed to have numerous role models and mentors in my life, among them, my parents, my brother and sister-in-law, my grandmothers, my godfather, and numerous other family members. My mentors include teachers in school, who were passionate about their profession and who looked on their jobs as a true calling and a true profession, and who made me a better student. I have had many professional mentors. To name just a few, Justice Revius Ortique, the first elected African-American Louisiana Supreme Court justice; Louisiana Supreme Court Justice Bernette Joshua Johnson; Dr. Norman Francis; Allen Miller; Dean Louis Westerfield; Justice Mack Barham; Ron Gardner; Nan Alessandra; Trudy Bennett, Natalie Brunson-Wheeler, Dr. Kathleen Jones, my lifelong best friends; Professor Tamar Meekins, my law school roommate; Yolanda Johnson; Professor Kathy Lorio; Professor Bobby Harges; Marta-Ann Schnabel, who first encouraged me to become involved in bar work through the New Orleans Bar Association; Wayne Lee, the first African-American LSBA president; law school professors, current and former members of the bench, partners, other colleagues in the legal profession, individuals with whom I have worked on various boards and committees, and the list goes on and on and on. All of these people and many, many others — through their dedication, commitment, passion for the law, passion for the profession, and passion for their community — in my view, have made me a better lawyer and, hopefully, a better person.