

President's Interview



# One on One with Barry H. Grodsky, 78<sup>th</sup> LSBA President: *On Professionalism, Mentoring, Strategic Planning and Family*

Interviewed by John E. (Eddie) McAuliffe, Jr.

**B**arry H. Grodsky, a partner in the New Orleans firm of Taggart Morton, L.L.C., has filled many Louisiana State Bar Association (LSBA) leadership roles since his first foray in 2002 as a member of the LSBA's Professionalism and Quality of Life Committee (the precursor to today's Committee on the Profession).

He received a BBA degree, with honors, in 1979 from the University of Texas-Austin and his JD degree in 1982 from Tulane University Law School. He was admitted to practice in Louisiana in 1982.

Grodsky served as LSBA president-elect in 2017-18 and as secretary and editor of the *Louisiana Bar Journal* from 2013-15. He represented the First Board District on the LSBA's Board of Governors. For many years, he has chaired the Committee on the Profession and coordinated several law school professionalism programs for the Bar on behalf of that committee. In 2009, the LSBA received the American Bar Association's Smythe Gambrell Professionalism Award for the Bar's ground-breaking professionalism efforts. He also has served on the Budget Committee, the Bar Governance Committee, the Continuing Legal Education Committee and the LSBA Fee Arbitration Panel. He received the LSBA's President's Award in 2008 and 2010 and the award for outstanding service to the Bar in 2013-14.

He is an instructor at Tulane University and received the Tulane University Teacher Recognition Award in 1993. He was a Tulane University Faculty Fellow from 2000-02 and received the Distinguished Faculty Award in 2016.

Grodsky and his wife, attorney and LSBA Associate Executive Director Cheri Cotogno Grodsky, are the parents of a 9-year-old daughter, Caroline.

**Eddie:** We've known each other a long time and I know you are very worried about this interview. But let's start by telling the members about your education and your career path.

**Barry:** I started my education at Sam Barthe School for Boys. My "formative" years were spent there. Having survived that, I started my education at the University of New Orleans. I later transferred and graduated with a business degree from The University of Texas in 1979. Then, I graduated from Tulane Law School in 1982.

**Eddie:** Because I've known you for so long, I know how important family is to you. Your Dad was in the clothing business and your brother Mel took over the business eventually. So, why did you decide to go to law school?

**Barry:** I made a decision to file suits rather than sell them. My family had a number of different clothing stores. My

brother Mel still works in the clothing business. I worked there in high school, and parts of college and law school as well, but I realized retail wasn't for me and I wanted to practice law. Also, my oldest brother was in law school when I was a teenager and that process fascinated me.

**Eddie:** Your wife Cheri Cotogno Grodsky is an attorney and the associate executive director at the LSBA. How will working with Cheri affect your year as president? Will you finally feel like you are in charge?

**Barry:** Cheri has been instrumental in a lot of what I've done for the Bar. She is the attorney liaison for the Committee on the Profession. She introduced me to Bar activities when I was attending events as a spouse. That first enabled me to see what the Bar was doing and I became involved.

**Eddie:** In Bar circles, you are known for always having a joke or funny story. That's not by accident. Tell us about your Mom, Jenny, a wonderful lady!

**Barry:** My mother had a great sense of humor. My father, too, but my mother spent a bit of time doing some stand-up comedy. She passed away right after Hurricane Katrina. In going through material in her apartment, we found stacks and pages of jokes and material. Her notebooks! All good stuff.

Barry H. Grodsky, the 78th president of the Louisiana State Bar Association, with his wife, Cheri Cotogno Grodsky, and their daughter Caroline.  
Photo by Stephany Cure / Wise Girl Design and Photography.



**Barry Grodsky with former President Richard K. Leefe at the 2014 Annual Meeting in Destin, Fla.** Photo by Matthew Hinton Photography.

**Eddie:** How did your Mom's attitude about comedy affect your outlook in the practice of law?

**Barry:** If you don't have a sense of humor in what we do, you will go crazy faster. We have to have a good light heart and a smile. It's important to keep happy, funny thoughts and don't take ourselves too seriously.

**Eddie:** I know you are still close to your brother Mel. How does Mel's counsel and your relationship with him affect your practice of law?

**Barry:** We both attended Sam Barthe's School for Boys so are we cut from the same cloth there. He's practical, a level-headed common-sense person. After high school, he joined the Army. Then he went to work for himself at age 20. He's now 71. He has always worked for himself and has pride in what he does. He's a great role model and mentor. He's very bright. He shows what a person can do by seeing how hard he works and what he has accomplished.

**Eddie:** You were a law clerk in Orleans Parish Civil District Court. Who were your mentors? What attorneys helped you on your path?

**Barry:** It's interesting that a lot of what I do now for the Bar through the Committee on the Profession is mentoring. My earliest role model, though, was before high school, attorney Peter Michel, my high school basketball coach. Peter was

a superb high school All-American basketball player. He played at Georgetown and for a brief stint with the New Orleans Buccaneers. He also practiced law. I looked up to him and am still friends with him now. A coach is a mentor. I did some interning with Judge Morey Sear in federal District Court. I clerked for (Civil District Court) Judge Steven Plotkin. He was the role model for me and many others. He gave a lot of responsibility to his law clerks. It was my first real interaction in court and a great experience. We worked together writing opinions. I was introduced to judges and formed good relations. The irony is this was in 1982-83. In my early years of practice, though, I didn't have any real mentors. When I look back and see what I didn't have, that was part of the reason we pressed so hard to put a mentor program in place. I have worked in various firms and have since been given good advice along the way. I first started to see what a mentor could be when I practiced at Shushan, Meyer, Jackson, McPherson & Herzog. Looking back, I understood the importance of mentoring.

**Eddie:** Is that why you are so interested in giving back to young lawyers through the LSBA's Mentoring Program?

**Barry:** Absolutely. To give young lawyers this opportunity is wonderful. We often learned through trial and error. Now we can teach and assist young lawyers to make their paths easier. That's a fundamental element of professionalism. It's important to have this program in place now.

**Eddie:** What is your general practice now?

**Barry:** It's equally divided. I represent financial institutions doing mostly creditor and bankruptcy work as well as handling litigation, transactional matters and regulatory litigation. The other half is property management law representing landowners and property management companies. Everything from negotiating, preparing and enforcing leases, housing defense work, fair housing litigation, and all the administrative aspects of that. It's an area that I've grown into and I really enjoy it.

**Eddie:** What was your worst day in court?

**Barry:** Even though I won this hearing, my single worst day in court, which I hope never to duplicate, was this... After I had been practicing for about five or six years, an attorney in my office asked me to go to bankruptcy court for a hearing for a brand new client. I never met the guy. I had a broken toe, so I went into court with one nice dress shoe and a tennis shoe to meet the client for the first time. Then, during the hearing, the zipper of my pants broke. (No, that pair of pants didn't come from my brother's store.) During the hearing, I had to hold on to my pants. But I won the hearing. I had to keep holding the pants up while walking out of court carrying a heavy briefcase. The client, thereafter, reported back to the attorney that we won. Then he fired me.

**Eddie:** What was your best day in court?

**Barry:** That's a good one.

**Eddie:** Any day you don't lose?

**Barry:** That, too. I was involved in litigation dealing with an employee compensation case. We lost at trial, a disappointing result. I felt bad for the client who was duped by the employer. We appealed and the decision was unanimously reversed. The client, an engineer, put his faith in me to clear the matter up on appeal. It was a fair result. It gave the client an opportunity to right a wrong. It was a good resolution.

**Eddie:** Have you had more good days or bad days?

**Barry:** Absolutely, more good days. Going to court, with extremely rare exceptions, no matter if it's a win or a loss, if I can shake my opponent's hand at the end and walk out in a professional and civil manner (nothing personal), then it's a good day. It's also a good day when I think of all the friends I have made along the way — good people and good lawyers. People who have worked hard to improve the profession. These are wonderful relationships. Adding in a few characters always puts a smile on my face.

**Eddie:** You talked about getting involved in Bar activities. You've been involved with the Committee on the Profession for several years. Why did you

get involved in that committee?

**Barry:** That was my first endeavor with the Bar in 2002. I wrote a letter to then-LSBA President Larry Feldman and asked to be placed on the Professionalism and Quality of Life Committee (its precursor). I went to my first meeting. Bobby Delise, Larry Feldman, Steven Plotkin were there, those were the few people who I knew. I served on the committee for a few years and had the opportunity to engage in professionalism programs. In 2006, I became vice chair. Since 2008-09, I chaired the committee.

**Eddie:** Why is the work of the Committee on the Profession important to the Bar and the public?

**Barry:** This committee epitomizes what the state Bar is supposed to do and what we do for the public and profession. We engage in professionalism activities in several areas, including law school students — our prospective lawyers — by offering a number of innovative programs to promote and teach professionalism. Because whether you are an admiralty lawyer, a bankruptcy lawyer, etc., we all need to maintain a level of professionalism.

**Eddie:** You are being modest here. You were the main person who started many of these professionalism programs.

**Barry:** When I started work on the Committee on the Profession, the only law school program in place was the 1L Orientation Program. Via that program, we go into law schools a few days before the first day of classes with an impressive contingent, including the Bar President, other officers and Louisiana Supreme Court justices. Then we go into breakout groups with prominent lawyers and judges dedicated to professionalism. But that was the only program we had at the time. Some students were not focused on that. Then we understood there were problems with character and fitness, that component of Bar admissions.

**Eddie:** That's a process our generation didn't have to go through.

**Barry:** In the "old" days, the character and fitness portion for Bar admissions was one page with just basic questions. You



Barry, Caroline and Cheri Grodsky at the 2015 Annual Meeting in Destin, Fla. Photo by Matthew Hinton Photography.

completed the form and someone signed it if they knew you. It seemed that possibly some people who got through maybe shouldn't have. The Louisiana Supreme Court then put in a more rigorous test through the National Conference of Bar Examiners. Now the character and fitness questionnaire is 32 pages long, intrusive, invasive. You are asked where you worked for the past 10 years, your schooling, your debt information, etc. It takes a long time to complete. This has caused students to do some real hard self-assessment and students needed some help in answering questions and addressing personal concerns such as addiction or psychological problems. We knew we could get them help. We created the character and fitness program and visited students in the first-year spring semester and second-year first semester to teach them how to complete the character and fitness test. We worked with the Committee on Bar Admissions, the Office of Disciplinary Counsel and the Judges and Lawyers Assistance Program.

We give the students hundreds of pages of information on how to answer specific questions. This program was the first of its kind in the country and the LSBA was recognized with the American Bar Association's Smythe Gambrell Award. Prestigious. We are proud of that. This program is helping a lot of people. We received feedback that students were getting the help they needed to become productive lawyers.

**Eddie:** A number of law school graduates are not able to find a job. What's the Bar doing about that?

**Barry:** The job search is difficult. Many law school graduates are still trying to find jobs in the profession for quite a while after law school graduation. We encourage young lawyers to find work through access to justice programs and be matched with pro bono and low bono clients. We also created the Transition Into Practice (TIPS) Mentoring Program for students out for a year. While we don't put



Barry and Cheri Grodsky at the 2018 Louisiana Bar Foundation Gala in April. Photo by Scott Threlkeld Photography.

them in touch with employers for a job, the program exposes them to legal settings and explains to them how a law office works, how to get clients, ethical rules, where the courts are, etc. The one-to-one mentoring program gives young lawyers assistance if they want to hang out their own shingle if they can't get a job. There were no programs like this before TIPS.

**Eddie:** What has been the feedback on TIPS?

**Barry:** Positive feedback in the 90 percent range. When we first discussed the pilot program (in New Orleans, Baton Rouge and Shreveport), the biggest concern from the Louisiana Supreme Court is that we wouldn't get enough mentors. For the first year, we had 120 mentees and 250 mentors. We have a waiting list for mentors, and several mentors sign up to participate in the program again and again.

**Eddie:** Do you get feedback on mentor/mentee pairs? Do they continue to communicate after the program is completed?

**Barry:** Yes, there are good relationships formed. It's a voluntary program. Some law school graduates don't choose to participate. But those who have completed the program tend to stay in touch with their mentors. It's

a one-year program commitment but it does give the mentee a person to talk to down the road for additional guidance.

**Eddie:** My first mentee called and asked if I would introduce her to the federal court. It was a privilege to do that for her.

**Barry:** We also have several other programs in law schools, including 3L Programs. We are getting ready to introduce programs on debt service. After the mentoring program is complete, we knew we couldn't just leave the young lawyers on the doorstep. So we are now creating programs for lawyers in practice from two to seven years. These lawyers deal with different issues than a one-year lawyer. Do I still want to be a lawyer? Do I want to stay in a big firm? Go to a smaller firm? What can I do to change my practice? My work-life balance is out of whack. What to do? These are all issues faced later in a practice. We are going to continue to work on more programs.

**Eddie:** For several years, the Bar has had a Code of Professionalism. I've heard there's a new Code of Professionalism in the works.

**Barry:** It's not a new one. A subcommittee of the Committee on the Profession was created to amend our Code of

Professionalism. We haven't updated it in quite a while. It was created by the LSBA and Louisiana Supreme Court 26 years ago. It needed to be updated for the 21st century. Subcommittee Chair Alicia Bendana has done a lot of work on the updates. It was a two-fold process. First, we wanted to keep the good parts, such as "My word is my bond" and "Respect to the court." Second, we needed to add things that are topical now, such as the proper use of social media. Who knew about that 26 years ago? The updated Code has been approved by the subcommittee, the full Committee on the Profession and the LSBA's House of Delegates. The updated Code has been approved by the Louisiana Supreme Court. It will be sent to all 22,000+ lawyers with my sincere hope that everyone will take just a few minutes to read and reflect upon it. It is aspirational, not mandatory, but it is a good thing. It will spur a lot of updated professionalism programs. It needed to be done.

**Eddie:** You mentioned you are working with the Louisiana Supreme Court on the new Code of Professionalism. Do Bar presidents often work with the Supreme Court?

**Barry:** Yes, we do. The Bar president and the Supreme Court justices often work together. We have an excellent relationship with our Supreme Court. The justices support our Bar programs. We are under the auspices of the Louisiana Supreme Court. The more involved I get with the National Conference of Bar Presidents and the Southern Conference of Bar Presidents, I have noticed that the states with Bars controlled by their Legislatures sometimes have issues and concerns we never seem to face. We are so fortunate to have the relationship we have with our Supreme Court and I believe this strong relationship will continue. Chief Justice Bernette Joshua Johnson has been a fantastic supporter of the Bar and we are truly appreciative of that.

**Eddie:** I notice that for most programs involving law students and young lawyers, we see Louisiana Supreme Court justices in attendance.

**Barry:** Yes, it's important for law students and young lawyers to be addressed by the Louisiana Supreme Court justices. It speaks volumes about how important the relationship is between the LSBA and the Court. Plus, it shows the students how involved the Supreme

Court is in the profession.

**Eddie:** One facet of the LSBA is to foster access to justice, as it is for the Supreme Court as well. What is the Bar doing for citizens of Louisiana in that respect?

**Barry:** This is an extremely difficult issue. (Our Immediate Past President) Dona Kay Renegar laid a lot of groundwork on this issue during her term, which will serve as a foundation for future presidents. This is not about criminal representation. For the criminal system, there are constitutional protections to obtain legal representation. But there are no guarantees in the civil litigation area. For instance, in the housing areas, I often have to litigate with self-represented parties. The attorneys and the judges are trying to make the system work, but it is not easy. We are taking a hard look at this. First and foremost, the issue is funding. Louisiana is one of only three states which does not fund access to justice programs, and, although Congress does provide resources, these programs are still underfunded. We need to work closely with the Louisiana Bar Foundation, which does a magnificent job of getting money in and allocating it to the various legal services agencies, and we need to continue supporting its efforts. We need to let citizens know we have ways to communicate with us about their problems. We are blessed to have a great staff that deals with access to justice issues. We are currently compiling material (such as the online Modest Means Directory) which will connect lawyers and citizens needing help and who can pay something. It's a win-win for everyone. The citizens are getting the help they need, and the lawyers are getting contacts, some moderate fees, experience handling cases, and good word-of-mouth support. We need to identify and promote every possible program we can to aid in this endeavor.

**Eddie:** In the recent past, the Louisiana Supreme Court has ceded regulatory functions back to the LSBA? What are those functions?

**Barry:** Years ago, the LSBA handled most mandatory Bar functions. Later, areas like Discipline and Bar Admissions became under the governance of the Louisiana Supreme Court. But the Bar's strong administrative capacities and physical facility have allowed some governance

and regulatory functions to come back to the LSBA from the Supreme Court. Legal specialization is one area that has come back. Recently, the Supreme Court signed an order for Mandatory CLE to come back under the Bar's jurisdiction.

**Eddie:** Is taking over regulatory functions good for the Bar? From a lawyer's standpoint, it seems like a one-stop shop.

**Barry:** A lot of members associate some duties with the LSBA that are not under the Bar's jurisdiction (like discipline). But, we feel that, the more regulatory functions that a mandatory Bar has under its jurisdiction and control, it shows overall significance and importance in the Bar's role and strengthens our position as a mandatory Bar.

**Eddie:** I have traveled around the state and I've noticed that some lawyers in rural parishes say the LSBA has no relevance to them. How do you answer that?

**Barry:** And, I must note, that this question comes from a person who has been to all 64 parishes. Let me answer this way. Once, a Shreveport attorney, a good consumer lawyer, commented to me that, in Shreveport, they perceive the State Bar stopping just north of I-10. That struck a nerve with me. It's true that about 75 percent of our lawyers practice from I-10 south, and the farther you get away from that corridor, it becomes more of a challenge. Shreveport is an interesting city. It has a wonderful Inn of Court and an active local Bar. With the assistance of former LSBA President Larry Shea, I had a great opportunity to work with Larry Pettiette and Judge Mark Hornsby on the Bar's Mentoring Program. I remember the first time I went there to give a speech. I was expecting to address five to 10 people from the Inn of Court and local Bar. Well, they rolled out the red carpet and there were 130-140 people there, including (U.S. 5th Circuit Court of Appeals Chief) Judge Carl Stewart. We need to address the needs in all parts of the state. We need to do a better job of outreach and explain to all members the Bar's resources and relevance. It's not just Alexandria, Shreveport, Monroe, but more rural areas as well. Some parishes just have a handful of lawyers, but they need to become part of what we do. We have too many resources for them not to take ad-



**Barry Grodsky holds Caroline Grodsky during the LCLCE reception at the 2014 Annual Meeting in Destin, Fla. Photo by Matthew Hinton Photography.**

vantage of them. We need to improve outreach and educate them. I applaud Dona Renegar for her efforts on this and future Bar leaders must follow her lead.

**Eddie:** What would you tell urban and rural lawyers about getting involved?

**Barry:** The first thing is get involved in an LSBA committee or a section that interests you or perhaps serve in the House of Delegates. Find an LSBA project or program that you know about or heard about. Contact the Bar and get involved. Just get involved, period. There are 60 local and specialty Bars in the state. Get involved there as well. I want to have more interaction with local Bars and Inns of Court, especially on mentoring. Don't forget about online CLE. It's limited to how many hours you can take in a year but the program is there. We also offer CLE programs in many places throughout the state.

**Eddie:** You've been involved with the LSBA for several years and are familiar with the staff. How important are staff members to your work, the Board's work and the work of all attorneys?

**Barry:** That's a softball question. We can't operate without the staff members. When you first start working with the Bar, it doesn't take long to know that the staff members are both friends and colleagues. It would be 100 percent impossible to accomplish anything without the staff. Before I was the *Journal* editor, and clueless, the Communications Department staff helped me with many aspects of that



Barry Grodsky and Eddie McAuliffe in 2005.

job. But it really does start at the top with Executive Director Loretta Larsen. We recently celebrated Loretta's 25 years as Executive Director with the Bar, calling it her "first 25 years." (Loretta has worked for the LSBA for a total of 32 years.) We are so fortunate to have her and her institutional knowledge. Plus, Cheri was with the Office of Disciplinary Counsel for 15 years and has been with the Bar for 20 years. That's a lot of experience.

**Eddie:** Loretta surrounds herself with good people.

**Barry:** Yes, there's a lot of institutional knowledge at the top. I can research something for three or four days or I can call Loretta. I have my answers instantaneously. We also have magnificent directors, many who are staff liaisons to various committees. As you go through Bar leadership, it is easy to understand that the success you achieve would not have been attained without the selfless work of the Bar personnel. The more you become involved the more you understand their importance and significance. These are the silent heroes who deserve the true credit. The committees could not do what they do without the staff assistance. The best part is that I don't think of the Bar "staff" as much as I think of it as my friends at the Bar office.

**Eddie:** And most LSBA staff members multi-task?

**Barry:** Yes, they do. Having staff members who do a multitude of tasks is inevitable and invaluable. Every staff member makes sure everything goes right. Without the staff handling some of the heavy lifting, those of us in leadership would never get to practice law. You can't put a price tag on that.

## Rapid-Fire Round: What Do You Prefer?

**Eddie:** Shoes, tie or slip-on?

**Barry:** Now, it's "big boy" tie-up shoes.

**Eddie:** Belts or suspenders?

**Barry:** Belts.

**Eddie:** Neckties or bow ties?

**Barry:** Few people are talented like you to be able to tie a bow tie. I use neckties.

**Eddie:** CDC Rule Day or Bankruptcy Court Day?

**Barry:** That's 50-50.

**Eddie:** CLE programs, live or via Internet?

**Barry:** Ironically, most of my CLE hours are earned from the teaching/lecturing side. In fact, the last CLE I attended was the LSU year-end program which involved civil procedures and lease law. Both presenters discussed, in painstaking detail, a case that I lost in the 4th Circuit.

**Eddie:** Research preference, books or Internet?

**Barry:** Associates.

**Eddie:** What do you see as challenges to the practice of law?

**Barry:** The biggest challenge is lawyers who are unemployed or underemployed. How do we help them? Sometimes there may be an abuse/addiction connection, so we have to be supportive of the work of the Judges and Lawyers Assistance Program (JLAP). We have to make sure the lawyers, judges, their families, law students and other legal professionals get the confidential JLAP assistance they may need. We also have to make sure that we are doing what we can to promote access to justice. There are too many self-represented people needing lawyers, as in wrongful foreclosures, wrongful evictions and domestic cases, where one side has an attorney and the other side does not, etc. These are difficult times and scary for individuals to go to court with no training or background. That's a need to address.

**Eddie:** You discussed young lawyers without employment. Any problems with lawyers on the back end as we grow older, like the two of us?

**Eddie:** Client communications, telephone or email?

**Barry:** First choice, I talk to the client in person. Second choice, I talk to the client by phone. If I can't reach them in person or by phone, then, and only then, do I place something in writing via email.

**Eddie:** Paper or paperless office?

**Barry:** My office is paperless. But I am "old school" and I still write things out. I am fortunate to have a spectacular paralegal and my clients and attorneys I work with all know Courtney.

**Eddie:** Courthouses, modern or pre-1900s?

**Barry:** I love the old courthouses.

**Eddie:** For filing pleadings, via Internet or walk to the courthouse?

**Barry:** Walk to courthouse, because I can never be sure where my online filings may end up.

**Eddie:** University of Texas or anywhere else?

**Barry:** That's THE University of Texas!

**Barry:** We are addressing it. We have a Senior Lawyers Division. Statistically, that Division is growing very quickly. With economic forces at work and tough times, some lawyers have to work longer and for more years. That's part of the society and economy we are in. There are other issues as well. Some lawyers want to get out of practice and want to know if they can sell their viable practice. What are the parameters to do that? With solo practitioners in rural parishes facing catastrophic events, what happens to the lawyers' files, pending cases and court hearings? We have to have things in place to protect our lawyers and their clients. One of the benefits of having this division is that with age, comes wisdom. Many of these lawyers also serve as mentors. We have active leadership in that Division with such respected attorneys as Ed Walters, Richard Leefe and Mike Patterson. They have all been mentors to me.

**Eddie:** Here's a practical question. How often do you hear attorneys say dues are too high? How are the LSBA's finances?

**Barry:** I haven't heard too much

legitimate squawking about dues. Our dues haven't been raised for a while. We are very fiscally and financially solid. It's a good position to be in. We have been blessed over the past few years to have outstanding treasurers, individuals like President-Elect Bob Kutcher and Minor Pipes who understand the budgeting process and who have strong financial backgrounds. We also are fortunate to have good outside counselors for financial management and investments. We are hoping there are no catastrophes. We are in a good spot.

**Eddie:** There is a lot of stress in the daily practice of law. What do you do to de-stress?

**Barry:** My 9-year-old daughter, Caroline, who is in charge of just about everything, is my number one stress reliever. We have a lot of fun. I did play golf but my friends encouraged me to stop for good reasons. Also, losing golf balls was expensive. I also enjoy reading and, periodically, exercising, but chasing after a 9-year-old is a full-time occupation. But, I am also putting what I hope to be the last touches on a novel I wrote and hope to one day get it published.

**Eddie:** What are your goals for your year as Bar president?

**Barry:** I've received good advice from past presidents who have said establish a few core goals and projects. If you can get those done, and the ship doesn't sink, you will be successful. Here are some of my goals:

- 1) Have the updated Code of Professionalism signed, sealed and delivered when I start in June and begin promoting it statewide. As a profession, we simply need to be more professional.
- 2) Continue the focus on law students about to become lawyers and instruct them on how to pay back debt. All of the law schools are amenable to this idea.
- 3) Bolster access to justice in all ways we can and work with the Louisiana Bar Foundation to aid in these endeavors.
- 4) In the fall of 2018, we will start formulating our next Long-Term Strategic Plan. We need to get another plan in place with three components — 0-2 years; 2-4 years; and beyond 4 years. Our President-Elect Bob Kutcher is on board with this. This will lay the groundwork and become a road map for those who come after to



Barry Grodsky and Eddie McAuliffe in 2018. Photo by Darin Trittel.

steer the organization. We are doing some of the work now. Once we get back surveys to start the process, we will hit the ground running. We have set up a committee to create the long-term plan and will have a facilitator come in to help us set goals and chart the course. We are due for this update as the last plan was implemented by then-LSBA President Mike Patterson.

5) A few surprises along the way. I also want to promote the fantastic committees we have. I am truly amazed at the hard work and dedication of all of our committee chairs and leaders. This is volunteerism at its best. I could not be prouder of their efforts. As much as their members give, they get even more in return by serving on a committee. I want to encourage participation.

**Eddie:** During your Bar year, you will have some important guests coming into New Orleans, the Southern Conference of Bar Presidents.

**Barry:** Yes, to coincide with the New Orleans Tricentennial, the Southern Conference of Bar Presidents will hold its Annual Meeting in the city. We are going to put on a show for the 19 southern states. It's a great collegial group and there are great opportunities for building relations and sharing projects and programs. For instance, Virginia's incoming Bar president is providing extremely important information to me on a wellness program being instituted by the Virginia Supreme Court. When they work out the kinks, we will be looking at that program, too. Working with the National Conference of Bar Presidents, I have learned that Arizona is adopting a pairing process for young lawyers with-

out work and those people needing legal services who can pay something. It's a sophisticated system and will take about two years to implement. Once Arizona figures it out and tests it, their Bar leadership will assist us with this program. These relationships with the Southern Conference of Bar Presidents and the National Conference of Bar Presidents are critical.

**Eddie:** Your daughter, Caroline... What else would you like to say?

**Barry:** We don't have enough time. She is in third grade at Trinity School. She loves school. She is very bright, very pretty, with a lot of personality and pizzazz. She loves her Mom and she's a Daddy's girl. She is keeping me young. She is very conversant and can have a 20-minute conversation with an adult. I just let her go. She is truly a joy.

**Eddie:** Let me conclude by saying that, if you don't like your LSBA Secretary, it's your fault.

**Barry:** You were widely recruited to fulfill these obligations. We are thankful you have taken on this role in Bar leadership. You've done a great job. And nobody on the Editorial Board or the staff has taken a shot at you yet, so that's a good thing.

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