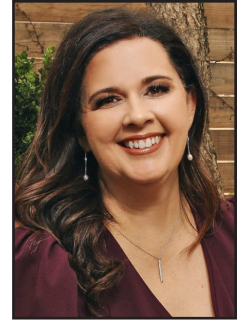


Installation Message: It's All About Service



By Shayna L. Sonnier

(Editor's Note: Excerpts from the June 8 Installation Speech delivered by 2023-24 Louisiana State Bar Association President Shayna L. Sonnier.)

What we do is all about service.

I am the 83rd president of the Louisiana State Bar Association. I'm one of 83. This title and this role are so much bigger than the person who holds it. It's something that I know, and that all of the previous presidents before me knew. This position is all about serving our members and our profession. Every single person who spoke to you today, every single person who was sworn in today, their entire goal, their entire objective is to serve the membership of the profession and thereby serve the public by increasing access to justice and by making sure that attorneys are at their best and have the resources that they need in order to perform at their best for their clients. We're ready to serve and ready to lead.

As lawyers, what we do truly matters. This profession gives us the opportunity to be successful and to live great lives, but it also gives us an opportunity to truly give back. It's not like someone ever wants to come and see us. They come to us because they need us, and we're in a unique position to help them through whatever it is they're going through. I think we always need to keep that thought in the forefront of our practices. Again, this is all about service.

I serve as president for one year. When outgoing LSBA President Steve Dwyer and I attended the ABA Bar Leadership Institute, a conference to help prepare future bar presidents, one of the presenters pointed out to us, "You know, you get that title and you're going to start getting invitations and you're going to have people coming up to you out of nowhere like you are special. You're not. That's all going to go away.



And you need to remember that." I feel truly blessed to hold this position for this one year to serve my members and to serve my profession, and I'm going to do the best that I can with it.

I also want to encourage you to reach out to me. I'm all about collaboration. I am all about feedback (but keep it constructive, please). I'm not someone who comes in thinking this is the way we've always done it, so this is the way it should continue to be done. I am not afraid of trying new things. I look forward to meeting and working with everyone. I want you to reach out and let me know where you think we can improve, where you think we need to grow. Keep me serving you because that is the entire reason that I'm here. If there is any person who was sworn in today who isn't ready to serve, then, we'll have a conversation. But I know that they all are on the same page so I am not worried. We're going to hit the ground running. We're going to do a great job. We have a great framework from which to do that as we've had presidents who have come before who have worked hard and created a strong foundation. We will build upon that foundation to keep us going in the right direction and keep climbing higher.

I'm so excited to be working with Young Lawyers Division Chair Senae Hall, the Young Lawyers Council and all of the young lawyers. As a past chair of the YLD, young

lawyers hold a special place for me. There are so many past YLD chairs and past Council members who are now on the Board of Governors. Steve Dwyer said that the young lawyers are our future leaders and he truly meant it because many of you are already achieving those goals. I encourage all young lawyers to keep doing what you're doing and to allow us to work with you and assist you.

I'm the sixth woman president of the LSBA and I want to point out that the last three LSBA presidents from District 3 have all been women — Alainna Mire prior to me and, before her, Dona Kay Renegar, both excellent leaders and past YLD chairs. I don't want you to ever feel discouraged or that you can't continue just because your term ends. This is not where it stops because you need to get involved and stay involved.

With that, I want to thank you all for attending the Annual Meeting and Summer School. We've had a great turnout and we've had great programming.

Feel free to find me, call me, email me, text me, but don't do voice memos because I have an Android so I probably won't get it for several days, if at all. Reach out to me in whatever way you can. I am looking forward to this year and I thank you for allowing me to be your president.

Shayna L. Sonnier