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OUR JOURNEY AROUND THE SUN

The tradition of the KBA annual meeting is fast approaching. I was not merely fortunate, but blessed, to begin my career among lawyers for whom relationships with other lawyers was paramount. And that meant, among many things, attending the annual meeting on a Friday morning in mid-December. There were not as many networking and social gatherings then as the KBA now offers, so the meeting was a real opportunity to connect with people you might otherwise see infrequently. While it marked the end of our bar year, in some ways the meeting kicked off the holiday season. We gathered in our overcoats after a brisk walk in the cold morning air to shake hands, catch up, and then get about the business of the association, with the annual reports and the election of new leadership. It truly was, and is, a tradition in the life of a KBA lawyer - a custom transmitted from generation to generation of lawyers.

When taking the office of President at this time last year, I talked of having come full circle in bar association life. As our circumnavigation of the sun together nears its completion, I reflected with some real focus over the past year. I can genuinely say I was never so struck with such clarity just how much living we manage to pack into such a short span. Just think of only a few of the smallest things that make up the whole - each conversation, meal prepared and eaten, errand checked off the list, chore completed, letter or email, mile driven, dog petted, morning cup of coffee on the porch, dip in the water, book read, tear dropped, smile, birthday, wedding, funeral, word uttered or heard, touch, gift given, gift received, flower admired, change in weather, worry, fear, prayer and blessing. The tapestry is so incredibly detailed.

Our Bar year has been equally full as its circle closes. Marking our profession of service to others, we began with the Golden Gala honoring our colleagues licensed 50 (and 60, and even 70!) years, through the swearing-in of our newest lawyers and the Memorial Service celebrating the lives of those who enriched ours. Along the way, we had a sell-out Law Practice Today Expo with Mayor Glenn Jacobs whose remarks left nary a dry eye in the house, a visit with legislators in Nashville, celebrating freedom of speech and of the press on Law Day with author Keel Hunt, the Supreme Court Dinner with a standing ovation for the inspirational Vicki Clark, the largest ever attendance and buddy-match for the Diversity & Inclusion Program and Reception with Janice Brown, an interprofessional mixer with Coach Kellie Harper, a hugely attended New Admittees and Member Appreciation Event, and hosting our local legislators for breakfast at home in Knoxville. Sprinkled throughout all that were countless committee and section planning meetings and programs, access to justice events, community service projects, this tremendous DICTA publication, and just plain fun social gatherings.

Together we took a dark topic head on - the opioid crisis. The column *The Opioid Epidemic: A Community's Response* tried to answer the question I posed last December: What can or should we do? This full circle look shared perspectives from the District Attorney's office, the judiciary, a father, a childhood friend, a police officer leading the overdose death task force, rehabilitation providers, children's healthcare providers, and prevention efforts of the Metropolitan Drug Coalition. This series

drew national recognition for the KBA. The need for attorney well-being sparked our first Wellness Expo, which also tackled this issue in a judgment-free, eyes-wide-open manner. The column ends this month with Dr. Stephen Loyd's message of recovery, redemption and hope.

With the approaching annual meeting, I have a number of other traditions that begin to ramp up at year's end - beginning with Richmond's and Maegan's birthdays in near back-to-back succession just before Thanksgiving, then Christmas, with Dalton's and Hunter's birthdays right on the heels. Needless to say, I resort to list-making. If you were to look on my laptop under "My Documents: My Personal: Miscellaneous: Christmas 2019" you would find a multi-columned, multi-page list of ideas and to-do's for menus, correspondence, interior and exterior decorations, donations, gifts, and more. There is a similar one for each of the past 15 years. Older ones were hand-written.

If only my children had known about this list and my password, they could have saved themselves a lot of time and trouble poking around in closets and cabinets and car trunks. A questionable tradition has been Waffle House for breakfast after Christmas Eve Midnight Mass. That one has been rather interesting with the kids when the service has fallen on a Friday or Saturday night. Suffice it to say, they've engaged in some entertaining repartee with other patrons. Talk about making memories.

This time of year places a huge emphasis on gifts. What gift do you wish for - to give or receive? I wish for those same three things that rested on my heart when this presidency began. And in doing so, I look not to the past, but to what comes next. I wish to continue leading and living with a servant's heart to help others be their best selves. This will bring me joy. I wish for a return to civility in our public discourse, particularly heading into 2020 as even the mettle of our best selves may be tested. And my last wish arises from the battle against the opioid crisis and addiction in general. I asked Dr. Loyd what his answer for us might be. He said, "The main thing I would want lawyers to know is the path people take is highly individual and we have to be willing to use all tools at our disposal with as little judgment as possible." So, my wish is that we will be ever vigilant for the sake of our loved ones, co-workers, colleagues, and community. Please continue the conversation.

I am beyond grateful to all the Board Members, committee and section chairs and members, and the KBA Staff, Marsha Watson, Tammy Sharpe, Tracy Chain, Jonathan Guess and Leslie Rowland. Your contributions to this year are too numerous to recount.

Thank you to my law partner Scott Elmore, and the other members of my firm Alicia Teubert, John Rice, Leslie Elmore and Kellie Beerbohm for your encouragement and sharing of my time elsewhere. And thank you especially to my husband, children and siblings for your patience and letting me share glimpses of our life in these messages - you've loved me well.

My biggest thanks are to each of you for this past year and for permitting me to serve as President of this exceptional association.

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