



## ERICA V. MASON 2017-2018 HNBA NATIONAL PRESIDENT

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### **“VISION IN ACTION!”**

Dear HNBA Members, Sponsors, and Supporters:

As we move into our 46th year, it is my privilege to serve as your National President, and my honor to work with the HNBA's Board of Governors, National Office, and all of our members, sponsors, and supporters to advance our important work on behalf of Latino/a legal professionals, students, and communities across this country.

Our theme this year is **“Vision in Action!”**, and all of our efforts are focused on actions and programs designed to create measurable progress and change the outcomes of Latino/as in the legal profession. We will meaningfully move the needle by strengthening our law school pipeline, increasing our numbers in the state and federal judiciary, refocusing our strategic advocacy efforts, and providing the training, business development, and networking opportunities that our members need to be more successful in their careers. The glacial pace at which progress has come for Latino/as in the profession is no longer acceptable.

NOW IS THE TIME for collaboration, building bridges, and demonstrating the power of the collective: 50,000 Latino/a attorneys moving in tandem towards common goals can move mountains. But we all must do our part.

NOW IS THE TIME to strengthen our network so that all Latino/a attorneys and aspiring attorneys are connected in meaningful ways to job opportunities, mentoring, and advice from those who have already “made it” and can help them navigate this often challenging profession. Our VPs of Membership and Regions & Affiliates are actively working on both Affiliate and individual member outreach by identifying every local, regional and national Latino/a lawyer and law student organizations. We will extend our hands to those who are not yet part of the HNBA and invite them to become members of our association and part of all that we do.

NOW IS THE TIME to expand the reach of the HNBA's highly successful national programs to the many Latino/a attorneys and students who cannot afford to take part in these programs at our national conferences. Our VP of Programs is transforming these programs into toolkits, webinars, and other pre-packaged platforms that will be distributed throughout our network of Regions and Affiliates with the goal of significantly increasing the HNBA's programmatic reach and impact, particularly at the local level.

NOW IS THE TIME to do more to ensure our members' success in their individual legal careers. Our VP of Sections & Committees is working with the leaders of our many substantive law Sections, Committees, and Divisions, to ensure that our members have increased publication and speaking opportunities, both inside and outside of the HNBA. Our goal is to better promote our members and ensure that they have many opportunities throughout the year to showcase their expertise and increase their visibility as subject matter experts in their respective fields.

Additionally, our Law Student Division President and the HNBA Judicial Council are launching a Judicial Clerkship initiative to increase the number of Latina/o law students placed into highly competitive clerkship positions. This key initiative will be accomplished via active law student outreach to encourage our law students to apply for prestigious clerkship and internship opportunities; an expansion of the HNBA online database of clerkship opportunities; outreach to judges to encourage the selection of more Latina/o law students for these positions; and outreach to ABA-accredited law schools to encourage their career placement offices to ensure that high-potential Latina/o students are given equal access and guidance with respect to clerkship opportunities.

NOW IS THE TIME to increase our advocacy on behalf of our members and the communities in which we live and serve. Our VP of External Affairs is finalizing the HNBA's 2017-2018 legislative priorities and advocacy strategy for the year, which will make increased diversity in the federal judiciary a top priority.

We will also continue our efforts to advocate for the least among us, including those impacted by recent natural disasters in Puerto Rico, Mexico, and the southern states, low income communities, unaccompanied minors, and our DREAMERS. As the National Voice of the Hispanic Legal Community, it is our obligation to do our part to ensure that our DREAMERS remain protected. In doing so, the HNBA stands proudly with more than 400 CEOs of the Fortune 500 who have expressed support for DREAMERS and for DACA legislation, as well as the millions of individuals and organizations who believe that our DREAMERS are our future and deserve the security of knowing that they have a future here.

NOW IS THE TIME to speak up and show the importance of choosing a career in the law and full participation in our legal system. Our **#PROUDLATINOLAWYER** social media campaign will promote the many positive things that lawyers do in this country, the idea that lawyers are the bedrock of our democracy and the rule of law that holds it all together, and feature profiles of our many Latino/a lawyer exemplars. We want to rebrand the oft-disparaged image of the legal profession and the American legal system within our communities with the goal of increasing interest amongst young people in becoming a part of our law school

pipeline. I am proud to report that many of our sister minority bar organizations/entities, including the NAPABA, NBA, NNABA, the National LGBT Bar Association, and the ABA's Commission on Disability Rights have all expressed interest in joining us in these efforts and promoting their own **#PROUDLAWYER** stories!

Last but certainly not least, NOW IS THE TIME for us to demonstrate our leadership and innovation in the law. We are already planning our most robust and forward-looking HNBA Corporate Counsel Conference ("CCC") to date, and we look forward to seeing you in San Francisco, CA, March 15-18, 2018! The theme for this year's CCC is INNOVATE! and is all about "what's next" in the law and how to get our members ahead of the curve with respect to the trends, threats, and opportunities that are changing the face of the legal industry as we know it. The 2018 CCC will also feature a CLE track entitled "The Art of Successful Lawyering," a series dedicated to providing our members with the knowledge and resources necessary to become happier, better, and ultimately more successful lawyers. **#HNBAInnovate!**

This year also marks the 10th Anniversary of the HNBA Latina Commission, and our Commissioners are planning a number of programs and activities to commemorate this milestone and renew our commitment to lead the fight to ensure parity for Latina lawyers and law students!

Despite our many challenges, we have a blueprint for facing these challenges head-on, and the collective talent, energy, resilience, and dedication to make it happen! Please help us in these efforts by volunteering, sponsoring, promoting our messaging on social media, and most importantly, showing up. We need each and every one of you.

NOW IS THE TIME to act in unison as a powerful and positive force for change. I look forward to working with each of you towards these goals, and to meaningfully moving the needle this year for Latina/os in the profession!

Con mucho cariño y respeto,



Erica V. Mason  
HNBA National President