

STROOCK

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Via e-mail to elections@hnba.com

Re: Self-Nomination for HNBA President-Elect

Dear HNBA Nominations Committee:

I affirm that I am a member in good standing of the HNBA; I have served in more than one role on the HNBA Board of Governors for **four(4)** of the past five (5) years; I am admitted to the practice of law and have been in good standing with the bars of Florida (4/30/2001), New Jersey (2/7/2000) and New York (9/25/2001) for over **eighteen (18) years** with no discipline history; and as detailed below, I otherwise meet the criteria set forth by the HNBA's Bylaws to hold the office of President-Elect, which is the office I seek for 2018-2019.

In 2014-2015, I served as **HNBA Regional President for Region VIII (Florida)**. I have been credited with "turning on the lights" in Region VIII. Today, Region VIII is one of the HNBA's most active Regions, continuing to raise most of its own funds by applying fundraising strategies that I implemented as Regional President. The robust leadership and fundraising skills that I demonstrated as Regional President led then HNBA President Robert Maldonado to appoint me in 2015-2016 to the role of **HNBA National Finance Director (NFD)**. I was reappointed to the NFD role by HNBA Past President Pedro Torres-Díaz in 2016-2017, making me the only NFD in recent history to serve two consecutive terms. My current elected role on the 2017-2018 Executive Committee is **HNBA Vice President of Programs (VPP)**, and we are having a very exciting and productive year when it comes to programming.

I am now running for President-Elect because it would be a great honor, and would give me immense personal satisfaction, to continue to serve and to lead this organization to the next level in every respect – finances, membership/outreach, programmatic content and impact, public relations/external affairs, etc. I submit that my four years of service as Regional President, NFD and VPP signal my ability to do just that – take this organization to the next level in conjunction with the rest of the HNBA Leadership Team:

- **Proven Leadership Qualities & Management Experience.** In each of my prior roles at the HNBA, and in my professional capacity as a supervising senior attorney at an Am Law 200 law firm, I have consistently demonstrated leadership skills across the board in managing finances, teams, committees, projects, programs, etc.
- **Wide-ranging HNBA Experience.** My HNBA leadership experience has been all-encompassing. The regional and national roles I have performed have allowed me to get an understanding of practically every aspect of the organization. I am intimately familiar with the inner workings of the HNBA and I believe that knowledge along with the close relationships I have developed along the way with the organization's members, leaders, strategic partners and other sponsors alike, will make me an effective President-Elect and future President.
- **Fundraising & Budgeting Experience.** As Regional President and NFD, I have exhibited the fundraising and budgeting experience and knowledge of effective fundraising strategies that will add value to the position of President-Elect.
- **Flexibility, Availability and Resources.** I have served on the National Leadership Teams for all four of the HNBA conferences in 2016 and 2017. For the past four years, my firm has covered all of my expenses associated with carrying out my many duties and obligations as Regional President, NFD and VPP, including all of my event registration fees and expenses associated with my participation in numerous HNBA events such as Board of Governors meetings, national conferences, and national and regional programmatic events. NFD and VPP are two of the most vital and most rigorous/time-consuming officer positions in the organization, requiring, among other things, substantial expenditures of time and expenses associated with fundraising/programming outreach, frequent travel across the country to attend meetings/receptions with sponsors and program partners, and management of the organization's finances/programs including serving as Chair of the Finance Development and Programs Committees. I know very well, because I have lived it, the significant time and financial and other resources that are required of HNBA Officers. Speaking both for myself and my law firm, I can attest that we remain ready, willing, able, flexible and committed to continue making the substantial investments of time and resources that are required for me to be an effective President-Elect.
- **Vision/Ability to Advance Legal Profession and HNBA's Mission.** As evidenced by the HNBA's record-breaking fundraising in 2016 and 2017, my work as NFD exhibits the leadership, vision and true commitment to the HNBA's mission that is needed to ensure the organization's financial stability and to enhance the HNBA's influence and stature as a national bar organization

in the years to come. The year 2016, my first year as NFD, is the best financial year the HNBA has had to date, the closest we have ever come to generating \$3 million in annual revenue. Similarly, my work as VPP demonstrates my ability and vision to represent and advocate for the Latino community and advance the Association's mission. Our programming accomplishments thus far this year include: (1) launching a new HNBA initiative, and the first ever Hispanic GC pipeline initiative – ***Poder25***; (2) launching the new HNBA/Prudential ***Su Dinero*** Program which provides our members much-needed educational materials and financial tools to help them achieve financial wellness; and (3) expanding the reach and impact of the HNBA's highly successful national programs – *i.e.*, Latina Leadership Academy and Intellectual Property Law Institute – by transforming them into pre-packaged platforms that will be locally distributed around the country through our network of Regions and Affiliates.

- **Commitment to the HNBA and to Diversity & Inclusion.** My prior HNBA service record demonstrates a true commitment to the work of the HNBA. It is also worth noting that I am deeply committed to diversity and inclusion not only within the HNBA's leadership, but also in our communities. In addition to serving the HNBA, I sit on my Am Law 200 law firm's Diversity Committee and served for two years on the Florida Bar's Standing Committee on Diversity & Inclusion.

Some of the challenges and opportunities I believe the HNBA will face in the coming year relative to the position of President-Elect are:

- **VIA Foundation.** The VIA Foundation presents both challenges and opportunities. The immediate challenges will be, among others, the seamless coming together under one umbrella of the LEF and VIA, and putting in place the policies and procedures that are needed for the HNBA and VIA to function as a joint enterprise.
- **Executive Appointments.** Another challenge is creating/supporting a pipeline for appointment of Latinos to elected offices in state and federal governments.
- **Judicial Appointments.** Lack of diversity in federal judicial appointments will undoubtedly remain a challenge, and the HNBA like other diverse organizations may be vetting a potential Presidential nominee for a U.S. Supreme Court vacancy should Justice Kennedy retire from the Court. We already have some experience with this as the HNBA previously vetted and issued a statement on Justice Gorsuch's nomination.
- **Puerto Rico Humanitarian and Economic Crises.** The unresolved crises presented in Puerto Rico are numerous and the full extent of the challenges in 2019 is unknown because we are embarking on yet another hurricane season that may further endanger the island.

- **Improved Affiliate Involvement.** We have seen an unprecedented increase in affiliate involvement/memberships this year which we should capitalize on in the coming year with a view towards bringing even more affiliates into the fold and using those affiliates to deliver programming and other benefits to our members at the local level.
- **DACA/Immigration Reform.** Immigration-related issues will remain at the forefront next year in one way or another and the HNBA should be prepared to address these issues as appropriate when they arise.
- **External Affairs.** The extent to which the HNBA should issue position statements, and the content of and internal procedure for issuing such statements, on certain issues when they arguably impact our members or more broadly our mission and the Latino community generally, or join in such statements prepared by other organizations, is a constant challenge.
- **2019 Annual Convention in New York.** Having our 2019 AC in one of the most expensive cities in the world will present a challenge, but I am confident that our (including my own) recent experiences budgeting for conferences in other expensive cities such as Miami, Chicago, Boston and Washington will serve us well in keeping costs low for the AC in NYC.

My overarching goals as President-Elect, in accordance with the HNBA's Bylaws, will be to (1) perform such duties as the President or Board of Governors may assign, (2) revisit and enhance the HNBA's long-term strategic plan and develop a more specific detailed plan for 2020; (3) oversee the finalization of amendments to the HNBA's Bylaws; (4) engage in fundraising activities and work with other stakeholders on fundraising strategies for HNBA/VIA; and (5) work on the Annual Budget. I anticipate accomplishing these goals by, at all times, maintaining an open line of communication, and working in conjunction with, the President and the National Office as well as the other Officers and members of the Board of Governors, to assist in tasks as needed.

Sincerely,



Irene Oria