

Alexandra Villarreal O'Rourke
Application for Regional President Position for Region VI

Current Involvement with the HNBA

I have been involved with the Region VI chapter of the HNBA since shortly after moving to Charlotte, NC from Washington, DC in February 2017. Within a few weeks of arriving, I contacted our Regional President to ask how I could be of assistance. After a few months, I volunteered to serve as Deputy Regional President to help coordinate events in our region. I helped organize and moderate our successful 2018 GC Panel and I am leading the planning for our Fall 2018 Hispanic Heritage Month panel on Legal Issues in Reaching and Serving Spanish-Speaking Consumers.

Reasons for Seeking the Position

I am seeking the position of Regional President because I believe strongly in the importance of Latino representation and leadership in the legal profession. I am a Mexican immigrant and arrived in the U.S. not speaking a word of English. My very first job in high school was for a Latino lawyer who inspired me to take AP classes, join student organizations, and ultimately go to college. He even sponsored me to attend the Junior Statesmen of America summer camp, which is where my love of public policy first blossomed. His encouragement led me to eventually apply to law school. The relationship with that first mentor taught me the importance of Latino mentorship and representation in creating a pipeline for future Latino lawyers. At Harvard, I was the Executive Editor of the Latino Law Review, and on the board of the Latin America Law Society. Since graduating from law school, I have mentored a number of Latino law students and young lawyers and have helped them apply for jobs and internships. As Regional President, I hope to have the opportunity to create and encourage these types of mentoring relationships for Latino lawyers in our region, and provide pathways for them to make inroads inhouse, at law firms, and in other civil organizations in our region. I am a firm believer that creating those opportunities is the most important step in the success of Latinos in our profession.

Goals and Plans for Accomplishing Them

My goals for my term in as Regional President of the HNBA include:

- Creating a close relationship with the Latin America Chamber of Commerce and other diversity-focused organizations. We have begun to make inroads in approaching some of those groups. However, my plan is to invite them to co-host events so they can see the value of the HNBA platform and become inspired to be collaborate further.
- Growing the HNBA membership, particularly in South Carolina. Currently we have few active members in that part of our region. My firm has strong connections to South Carolina and several offices there. My plan would be to gain sponsorship from my firm and other SC firms to have an event in Greenville, SC to introduce the work of the

HNBA. I have already identified a couple of young lawyers in SC who have expressed an interest in forming part of a core group there and helping with that event.

- Forming close relationships with the law schools in the Region to have links to the student organizations for Latino students. We have begun to make inroads with Duke law school's student group, and they have expressed an interest in co-hosting an event at the law school.
- Finally, I would like to have the HNBA develop contacts with local and state government officials to collaborate on issues affecting Latinos. As part of my work with non-profits in the area I have developed several of those relationship, and I would love to leverage them for the benefit of the HNBA.

Challenges and Opportunities

The main challenge for our chapter in this region is one of sheer numbers. The North and South Carolina bars have disturbingly low numbers of active Latino lawyers. That leads to obvious challenges in recruiting and planning events for the region. However, I also see that challenge as a significant opportunity. Many of the companies and law firms in the region face significant challenges recruiting Latino lawyers. As a result, several of them have indicated a strong interest in working with the HNBA to identify candidates and grow the pipeline of Latino lawyers. Based on this important need, I believe we have an opportunity to garner significant support – both financial and in terms of time donated – to focus on events that serve Latino law students, summer interns, and young lawyers. I am confident that a mentoring program pairing senior lawyers (Latino and non-Latino) with law students and new graduates would be extremely popular and well-received. That involvement could then lead to other “allies” in the region that would help grow opportunities for all HNBA members in the region.