



## JENNIFER SALINAS

### ***HNBA National President***

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“When we love, we always strive to become better than we are. When we strive to become better than we are, everything around us becomes better too.” — Paulo Coelho, *The Alchemist*

The world is a crazy place. And this country is an amazing place to live. Where else would it be possible from someone with my background to be able to take the reins to lead the Hispanic National Bar Association. My mom, an undocumented Mexican immigrant that came to this country when she was 14 to work in the fields and my father who dropped out of high school to go to Vietnam.

I got here because of people taking a chance on me. And I hope that through my presidency you will be inspired to affect the same kind of change and make a commitment to truly transform someone's life. My hope is that through our programming and initiatives, our members are clear on their purpose and inspired to pay it forward.

I've asked myself numerous times how I will measure my success. And I know in my heart of hearts it will not be by my deeds. As Maya Angelou said, “people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.” My hope is that your experience this year will be a positive one and that you will be inspired to act. To go outside your comfort zone and do something that is altruistic, that is a stretch, that will really help someone.

One of my goals this year is to make us a bigger presence in our communities. Starting in college or law school is too late. Those kids got the message. Now don't get me wrong, we will continue to support those programs and those students. But we are not going to stop there. We are going back to the roots of the HNBA and we are going to spend an incredible amount of time doing community outreach. As lawyers, we owe it to our community to be doing more. Justice Sotomayor said: “We educated, privileged lawyers have a professional and moral duty to represent the underrepresented in our society, to ensure that justice exists for all, both legal and economic justice.” It is our moral duty!

Our mission in the HNBA is more than about being a bar association. It's about advocating for our community, bettering our community. So I'm happy to report that we are bringing back past HNBA president and current Federal Circuit Judge Reyna's *La Promesa en el Derecho* (the promise in the law). Judge Reyna started this campaign when he was the HNBA president. It was such a simple idea but incredibly impactful. In the next two weeks, you will get a personal

letter from me providing a very detailed overview of this initiative. We are going back into our communities.

Now, I don't want you to think I've abandoned our lawyers. I have not. But I know that if we really want to move the needle, we need to be in our communities. We need to be modeling for them. We need to make sure they know what their rights are, and we need to arm them with the tools they need to fight many of the attacks that are being aimed at our community right now. This is our moral duty and I ask that you join us in these efforts.

But I am not going to stop there. I would be remiss if I didn't talk to all the law firm partners and in-house counsel who are reading this newsletter and are in positions to really change a young lawyer's life. There are so many things you can do now for our legal community. Be bold and make a difference in someone's life. Change the way you interview if you are just looking at a piece of paper, look for the diamond's in the ruff and, if you can do so, open some doors. And for those that are having doors open for you, don't forget those opportunities you are getting and the people that are giving them to you.

Every opportunity I have received has led me to where I am today and have made me that much more committed to giving back to my community, to the underserved, and to be a champion for the maligned.

I am committed to all your successes. My focus this year will be on our community. My theme is "Their Future, Is Our Future." My focus will be on helping students at every stage to get the skillset they need to go the college of their dreams, to know what it takes, to provide guidance. And we started that the morning following our HNBA gala. Yes, after lots of dancing and a late night, our new board of governors got up early and volunteered their time networking with high school students. In fact, we will begin every board meeting with a community service event.

In addition to going out into our community, we will make sure that our law students are receiving the tools they need to succeed in the career path of their choice. During this year, we will have a track dedicated to our law students and young lawyers that will be skill workshops including an all-day writing course. Writing is so critical to our success and we need to arm our students with the tools to succeed in this industry.

We will provide the same type of workshops regarding business development. Don't get me wrong, I love our substantive CLEs but we will have more CLEs/workshops on very practical skills including things as practical as how to pitch a case and going after a new client.

And we are revamping two of our marquee programs. As many of you know, our Intellectual Property Law Institute ("IPLI") has had resounding success. And thank you Microsoft for being more than our seed money. Thank you so much for all the sweat equity you have put into this program. For allowing us to have Catherine Romero and Mick Konowal for six years to develop and run this program with us. Microsoft's Erich Anderson has seen the value of this program and has reached out to his contacts in the tech industry to bring in new corporate participants. This year we had Google, Apple, Adobe, and, of course, Lenovo participating in the instruction. We will be doing the same next year. And we know our law firm partners will continue this journey with us through their financial and human capital support.

I will also be working with the Latina Commission to relaunch our Latina Executive Leadership Program. This was a program that targeted high performing Latina attorneys that had at least 8 years of practice under their belt. This will be an intensive training program that focused on taking their careers to the next level, whether that is equity partner, general counsel, a judicial

appointment, leading a non-profit or growing your small practice. And I want to thank Walmart, especially Alex May, for being our partner with the Latina Commission and our programming. More to come on that program.

Now I couldn't possibly tell you about all the exciting things that we will be doing in my welcome letter, so I will leave it there for now. I will be putting out a monthly president's newsletter that will highlight more about what we are doing to help our legal community as well as our community at large. I ask you to please volunteer your time. Please join me and our board in these efforts. Whether you are Latino or not.

And please join us next year in Albuquerque for our CCC in March (theme is "Ascension") and our annual convention in New York in September (theme is "Power of the Past, Force of the Future"). And on that note, I want to ask that you join us in planning and participating in our inaugural "This is What a Lawyer Looks Like" 5k fundraiser for scholarships.

Lastly, I want to recognize my supporters and family.

First, to my Lenovo team. Thank you for believing in me and for being such a strong supporter of diversity.

To my husband Gabe. You are my biggest advocate, biggest supporter, biggest cheerleader and I wouldn't be able to serve our community without your love and support. Thank you for being such an incredible husband and always always having my back.

To my kids, Neil (my baby I went to law school with) and Anthony (my "monkey"), thank you both for all your love and support. For being such great boys when I was a single mom. For having hearts of gold and for continuing with my legacy of giving back to our community. I'm so fortunate that I have raised such strong and upstanding young men. To my stepdaughters, Emma and Tessa, thank you for being such beacons of light. For always supporting me and allowing me to guide you as young Latinas. And most importantly thank you for sharing your dad.

And to my mom. My matriarch. I have no words to thank you for coming here to this strange country for me. For your future, for my future. Thank you for never giving up. You inspire me daily.

To my HNBA familia, especially our old and new board of governors, thank you so much for your love and support.

I look forward to serving all of you!

con cariño y amor,



Jennifer Salinas  
HNBA National President