



## *IRENE ORIA*

### *HNBA National President & HNBA VIA Fund Chair*

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Querida Familia:

When we picked the theme for this year – “Looking Forward With 20/20 Vision” – over a year ago, we did not realize exactly how transformative 2020 would be, not only for the legal industry, but for every industry, every American, every community, the world. It certainly feels like life will never be the same again. The challenges that 2020 has ushered in for the new decade ahead are unprecedented. But we must not lose sight of the fact that, particularly because these are such scary times, our leadership is more important than ever. Consistent with our theme for the year, it is usually in a crisis that organizations like ours look back to and reconnect with what made them great in the first place. And what makes the HNBA great, what has always made us great, is our genuine commitment to supporting each other and our community. We are truly a family.

I am proud of how our staff and our leaders around the country are stepping up in different ways to meet the COVID-19 challenge, coming up with workarounds that allow us to continue to support our members and advocate for our community during this national emergency. Just by way of example (because there is a lot more that we are working on), our Judicial Endorsement Committee continues to recruit, vet and endorse select candidates for judicial appointments; our committee on 2020 Election Initiatives and our Voting Rights Section continue their work to ensure that our community remains informed about the state of elections in their areas and about alternatives to voting in person, and that we push back against any attempts to use this pandemic situation to suppress votes; thanks to our staff and our Judicial Division running this program, our 25th Anniversary Uvaldo Herrera Moot Court Competition is going forward in abbreviated form as a brief writing competition with scholarships to be awarded to the law student winners of the competition; and

we are working on a virtual alternative to Advocacy Day at The White House and on Capitol Hill, and on virtual CLE programming/webinars.

Rest assured that during these tough times, the HNBA presses forward with its 48-year mission of empowering the Hispanic legal community, strengthening the Hispanic educational pipeline, and advocating for solutions to issues that affect our community. Please join us. Write to me at [president@hnba.com](mailto:president@hnba.com) to talk about your ideas or how you can help. With your commitment, compassion, patience and understanding as we explore new ways to work on our various projects and programs, we will continue to advance our mission, albeit in different ways to adapt to the new normal.

As you all know, we were not able to gather in Phoenix this month for our 2020 Corporate Counsel Conference that was themed "Together We Rise." I hope, however, that those words still resonate with you. They resonate with me as I have no doubt that we will get through this latest COVID-19 crisis, together – maybe not physically together for some time, but always together in our hearts, minds and actions. #HNBA2020 #togetherwerise

The HNBA and VIA have gathered a list of informational and community resources, including public health information, during this time of national need. We are here to help each other and to stay connected in this time of social distancing. To access our COVID-19 Resource Site, please click [here](#).

Stay safe and healthy!

Con mucho cariño,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Irene Duro".

HNBA National President

HNBA VIA Fund Chair