

Dear NMHBA Members,

I am excited to share that the 2015 NMHBA Board of Directors Retreat was held on Saturday, August 29<sup>th</sup>. The Board affirmed its commitment to the 5 Year Strategic Plan first approved in 2013. In a bold decision, the Board has publicly launched the NMHBA's next comprehensive campaign in conjunction with the NMHBA Foundation, a 501 (c) 3 public charity.

Beyond fundraising, the comprehensive campaign will build on the success of the past three years and extend membership services and benefits. The NMHBA will continue to offer consistent and affordable Continuing Legal Education, Meet & Greets, Pro Bono opportunities, a Job Bank, and expanded newsletter and website communications. Additionally, the NMHBA will host an electronic member resource network and member marketing and advocacy services to promote the professional development of its membership in the legal profession. The purpose around these bold aspirations is to reach a new level of excellence as a 501 (c) 6, trade and professional organization.

The Board also expressed a shared sense of responsibility to the broader Hispanic community. The NMHBA will continue endorsement of qualified judicial candidates, as part of its advocacy efforts to increase diversity of leadership in the legal community. Furthermore, the NMHBA has also made a commitment to advocate for equitable access to justice, and identified several issues areas in which NMHBA involvement can ameliorate the status of New Mexico's legal system.

Finally, the NMHBA and NMHBA Foundation received state wide notoriety for the many educational initiatives and programs, which have established a successful educational pipeline that starts with middle school student through law school graduates. Programs such as the NMHBA Summer Law Camp, high school outreach for Constitutional and Law Day, Practice LSAT Workshops, and tuition, book and bar scholarships for law students will continue to receive the highest level of support enjoyed the past three years. None of these programs are possible without the continued financial support from the many law firms, individual attorneys and current and past members and directors who, year after year, make a commitment to the legacy of the NMHBA.

When reaching the decision to launch this comprehensive campaign, the Board acknowledged that the NMHBA is in an exceptional position to mount a successful campaign. With the close of Fiscal Year 2015, the NMHBA Foundation broke all-time records for new gifts, donations and grants. It's an honor to have a community so inspired to support the NMHBA and NMHBA Foundation's growth and development.

I am also honored and humbled to have been elected president by the Board. And with great pleasure, I have appointed: Denise Chanez Chair of the Education & Mentorship Committee; Jacqueline Medina Chair of the Membership & Member Services Committee; Cristina Chavez Chair of the Advocacy Committee, Darren Cordova Chair of the Budget, Policies & Compliance Committee; and Alicia Santos Chair of the Fundraising Committee.

*Unidos Seguimos Adelante!*

— Damian R. Lara, NMHBA President