



Benny Agosto, Jr.
National President

The Year of the Advocate

By: Benny Agosto, Jr.

Dear HNBA Member and Friends:

I am honored to serve as your 2011-2012 National President. Working together we will accomplish great things and have a tremendous impact on our community and our country.

Did you know that there are 50.5 million Hispanics in the United States? This constitutes a 43 percent population increase in ten years. Of the total Hispanic population, 17.2 million are younger than 18. One in four children in America is Hispanic. Overall, Hispanics accounted for more than half the population growth in the U.S. over the last decade. What this means is that Hispanics are poised to have greater influence across the nation's economic, social, and political fronts for years to come.

The question that must be answered then is what role is the HNBA going to play in all this?

The HNBA is the voice of the Hispanic community and as such, we are advocates for those we represent. During the "Year of the Advocate," the HNBA will provide leadership, education, advocacy, and guidance to three essential areas of our population. We will be advocates for the profession, the community, and the children. As such, it is imperative that we have a clearly delineated plan to best serve our members by creating, modifying and promoting initiatives to enable our organization to achieve the highest level of influence.

As advocates for our profession, the HNBA must create opportunities for its members to promote their respective careers through education, leadership and networking. The HNBA will prioritize a focus on member benefits by providing, for the first time, webinars, CLE's, and nationwide leadership conferences for lawyers, judges and law students. Additionally, our organization will be adopting the HNBA Lawyer's Creed to ensure that our members epitomize the highest level of ethical standards and professionalism.

It is also our mission to preserve the recruitment and retention of Hispanics in law schools and to provide them with scholarship opportunities. In order to accomplish these goals, we must facilitate the exchange of information between law students and HNBA members by including the law student division in our activities, creating an online mentorship program, and making scholarship monies available for each region to award to law students. This year, the HNBA will

work closely with the HNBA Legal Education Fund to raise funds and increase visibility by hosting fundraising events such as the Second Annual Tennis and Golf Classic in Miami, a charity golf tournament in Denver, and the first ever LEF Luncheon in Portland.

The HNBA will be an advocate for our community this year by revamping its National Law Week initiative, creating the Latino Attorneys Helping Latino Soldiers-Veterans initiative, and hosting the First Annual HNBA National Pro Bono Awards, which will provide an opportunity for the HNBA to honor its members and partners who provide pro bono legal services to the community.

The HNBA will also advocate for the youth in our country. In addition to the National Law Week activities, we will create the Feed the Children initiative. This initiative will give us an opportunity to provide funds to feed children in the host city for our Annual Convention. The Feed the Children initiative will provide Hispanic children great assistance, and allow the HNBA to leave a powerful footprint of its commitment in every city we travel to.

The 2012 HNBA Mid-Year Corporate Counsel Conference, chaired by Miguel Pozo, will take us to New Jersey. The Conference scheduled for March 28-31, 2012, promises to be the HNBA's most innovative and comprehensive Corporate Counsel Conference ever. The Conference will also host the 17th Annual Uvaldo Herrera National Moot Court Competition, with a record setting number of scholarships set to be awarded.

The HNBA's advocacy will be put to the test at the HNBA's Legislative Day and Capital Awards Dinner, which will be held in May 2012 in Washington, D.C. With 2012 being an election year, the Legislative Day events promise to be filled with great opportunities for the HNBA to drive home the key national policy points, which will ultimately allow the Hispanic community to make important decisions during the upcoming elections.

The 2012 HNBA Annual Convention will take place in Seattle, Washington. Our convention co-chairs, Jesse Valdez, Joaquin Hernandez and Javier Garcia, have promised us great weather, fabulous CLE's and a convention second to none.

As members, we must rededicate ourselves to the mission of the HNBA. As the voice of the Hispanic community, we must serve those that cannot speak for themselves. We will not rest in our efforts for legislative, judicial and executive advocacy. We have come a long way, but our work is not finished. Let's stand together and be an HNBA advocate in the upcoming year.