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October 29, 2019

**President's Report  
to the House of Delegates  
November 2, 2019**

Constant change is the new normal. This is true for society as a whole, and also for lawyers. Change is the law of life, and now it is the life of law practice. Our profession has experienced more change over the past 20 years than it did over the last 200.

I went to law school in the Dark Ages – the 1980s, before Al Gore invented the internet. We knew nothing of cell phones or email or social networking. We did legal research using books, not computers.

We wrote legal briefs and memos on typewriters.

When I graduated from law school, the newest and most mind-blowing new technology was the fax machine.

Today, the world creates as much information every 48 hours as it did from the dawn of civilization to the dawn of the Millennium. And, owing to the sustainability revolution, the two fastest-growing occupations in the United States are solar installer and wind turbine service technician.

In 2005 – a lifetime ago it seems – author and *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman published *The World Is Flat*, referring to the revolutionary changes in commerce brought about by new technologies.

That technological revolution did not just affect commerce.

The same seismic changes in communication that made this “flattening” possible have permeated every aspect of our lives.

Time has accelerated. Social media is ubiquitous and demands instant response. Work hours are 24/7, 365 days of the year, and businesses are always on call. There are no breaks, there are no pauses. The world never rests.

As Friedman predicted, the world is now flat. So, too, the practice of law.

Because the law is a mirror of society, changes in society impact the law. The technological changes that revolutionized the way the world communicates have had an enormous impact on the practice of law.

Clients expect immediate responses to their questions. They demand cost-effective and efficient service. Before they speak with us, they have armed themselves with information about their matter and the relevant law – information they could not access in the pre-Google days.

To meet their legal needs, we must meet our clients where they are – not where we once were or where we wish them to be. The only way we can do that is by embracing the technological revolution and letting it work for us. We either adapt to change or we become irrelevant. And make no mistake, change *is* the new normal.

For millennial lawyers, harnessing and leveraging change – especially technological change – is second nature. But today, all lawyers need these skills. This is not optional. It is our professional obligation as lawyers. And it is a business obligation to our practices.

Not only must lawyers and law firms change, so too must the organizations that represent them. Bar associations must reimagine how they deliver services to meet members – and potential members – where they live. When our members look for the tools, resources and CLEs they need, they turn to the cloud. We need to be there as well.

That is why the New York State Bar Association is making deep investments in technology. We are building a virtual bar center to welcome members wherever they reside, however they work, in whatever field they practice. This is imperative. The strength and relevancy of NYSBA depends on our accessibility and the ease with which members can get what they require.

New York is the economic and legal capital of the world. New York law, and New York lawyers and judges, are globally recognized as the gold standard in the profession. Likewise, the New York State Bar Association is a global force. We are widely regarded as the world leader among bar associations; our reputation is unmatched.

Some 330,000 attorneys are licensed to practice in New York. More than 140,000 – over 40 percent – live or practice outside of the state, and more than 26,000 live outside the U.S.

While these attorneys are not physically inside the state, they have a professional tie to New York; they need New York law and New York connections. And NYSBA is expanding globally to meet their needs - virtually.

We have launched a quarterly e-newsletter – *NYSBA Global* – with articles of interest to international attorneys. We are offering more CLE programs in areas of international law and practice. We are building relationships with international bar associations, law firms, and law schools. In November, I will travel to Tokyo to represent NYSBA at the International Section Global Conference.

And these are just but a few of the steps being taken as part of our global membership initiative.

But our efforts aren't just on the global scale. New York lawyers — from Montauk to Niagara Falls — need NYSBA as well, especially those who practice in rural communities.

Forty-four of New York's 62 counties are rural. While attorneys clustered in cities have ready access to technology and professional resources, rural lawyers often face a different experience. Our virtual bar center will make it easier for rural attorneys to get the CLE, tools, resources, connections and communities they need.

Our new Task Force on Rural Justice — chaired by Justice Stan L. Pritzker and Taier Perlman — is looking at the issues particular to rural lawyers, including the expansion of broadband access. In the year 2019, broadband access should be a civil right. It is indispensable to closing the justice gap in rural areas.

The legal profession is more diverse than ever before and reflects the great diversity of our Empire State. We continue to work to ensure that our Association reflects the diversity of our profession and our society within its membership, leadership, and programming.

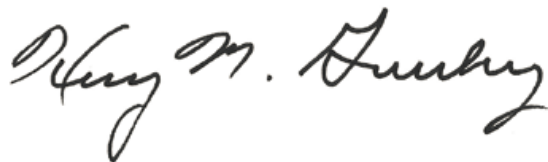
The Committee on Diversity and Inclusion has drafted a Diversity Plan for the Association. The Plan contains a set of goals and recommendations to promote and advance the participation of diverse attorneys in both the Association and the legal profession. I encourage you all to review the Plan before its presentation at the January 2020 meeting of the House of Delegates.

Many exciting changes are underway for our Association. Technology is helping NYSBA adapt for the future – and technology will ensure that we continue to be the trusted resource for the legal profession of New York State.

Technology makes it possible for us to serve lawyers everywhere. Technology is not a panacea, and it will not meet every challenge facing the legal profession. It is, however, a facilitator of the changes we must make and a tool we must learn to leverage if we wish to remain relevant in the digital age.

We must embrace change, and we must embrace technology.

It can help our practices, foster communication and expand access to justice. It can empower us to do the public good. And, it can help us be better lawyers.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Gregory M. Durkin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

## **SPEECHES, REMARKS & OTHER PRESENTATIONS:**

Address on the life and legacy of Judith S. Kaye at the 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Diamond & Hearts Event for New York's Children, sponsored by CASA: Court Appointed Special Advocates for Children, in Albany, New York (October 29, 2019).

Remarks on the legal profession's obligation to lead, delivered for broadcast on WAMC's Midday Magazine, Albany, New York (October 2, 2019).

Remarks welcoming attendees of 2019 Statewide Stakeholders Meeting: Working Together to Expand Effective Assistance for All Low-Income New Yorkers, convened by the New York State Permanent Commission on Access to Justice, Albany, New York (October 28, 2019).

Remarks at Local and State Government Law Section 2019 Fall Meeting, at The Embassy Suites, Saratoga Springs, New York (October 25, 2019).

Remarks at the 144<sup>th</sup> Annual Dinner of the Onondaga County Bar Association, Marriott Syracuse Downtown, Syracuse, New York (October 23, 2019).

Remarks welcoming attendees of the New York Fair Trial Free Press Conference 2019, sponsored by the New York Fair Trial Free Press Conference, First Amendment Watch at NYU's Carter School Journalism Institute, New York State-Federal Judicial Council, S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications and the New York State Bar Association's Committee on Media Law and Committee on Continuing Legal Education, at the Daniel Patrick Moynihan United States Courthouse, in New York City (October 21, 2019).

Remarks honoring John Dunne at the 2019 Haywood Burns Award Ceremony and Symposium, sponsored by the New York State Bar Association's Committee on Civil Rights, at CUNY Law School, in Long Island City, New York (October 16, 2019).

Remarks introducing Cass R. Sunstein, Robert Walmsley University Professor at Harvard, at a continuing legal education program entitled "Impeachment: A Guide to the Legal Process and Its History," at Fordham Law School in New York City (October 15, 2019).

Interviewed, along with Harvard Law School Professor Cass R. Sunstein, by Brian Lehrer for WNYC Radio's The Brian Lehrer Show, a daily call-in program, covering politics and life, locally and globally. The interview was originally broadcast on October 14, 2019. The link to the broadcast is: <https://www.wnyc.org/story/impeachment-legal-guide/>.

Remarks on "Lawyers and Depression," delivered on WAMC's Midday Magazine. The remarks were originally broadcast on October 2, 2019. The link to the broadcast is: <https://www.wnyc.org/story/impeachment-legal-guide/>.

Interviewed by Susan Arbetter for the Capitol Pressroom, a news and analysis program aired daily from the New York State Capitol, on the upcoming New York State Constitutional Convention. The interview was originally broadcast on September 27, 2019. The link to the

broadcast is: <https://www.wcny.org/september-27-2019-reporters-and-nysba-president-hank-greenberg/>.

Remarks at Bridging the GAP CLE Program for newly admitted attorneys, sponsored by the New York State Bar Association, Albany, New York (September 27, 2019).

Remarks at NYSBA 2019 Technology Summit, in New York City (September 19, 2019).

Interviewed by Errol Louis for NY1's *Inside City Hall*, a news program that interviews political newsmakers, pundits and consultants from New York City and beyond, every weeknight at 7 p.m. and 11 p.m. The interview was original broadcast on September 19, 2019. The link to the broadcast is: <https://www.ny1.com/nyc/all-boroughs/inside-city-hall/2019/09/20/navigating-the-immigration-system>.

Interviewed by Alan Chartock for WAMC's *The Capitol Connection*, a news and analysis program aired on radio stations across New York State. The interview was originally broadcast on September 19, 2019. The link to the broadcast is: <https://www.wamc.org/post/capitol-connection-1938-hank-greenberg-president-new-york-state-bar-association>.

Interviewed by Casey Seiler for WMHT's *New York NOW*, an Emmy Award-winning public affairs program shown on PBS stations in New York State. The interview was originally broadcast on August 30, 2019. The link to the broadcast is: [https://video.wmht.org/video/new-york-state-bar-association-on-2020-agenda-41v4kk/?fbclid=IwAR1QHHkA797MHFToUX8i3M7imVovY8Em\\_tZI\\_FbSVa4QA-OoUXP88mcv0J4](https://video.wmht.org/video/new-york-state-bar-association-on-2020-agenda-41v4kk/?fbclid=IwAR1QHHkA797MHFToUX8i3M7imVovY8Em_tZI_FbSVa4QA-OoUXP88mcv0J4).

Remarks at Opening Convocation of the Syracuse University College of Law, in Syracuse, New York (August 15, 2019).

Remarks in support of resolution (10A) creating the *ABA Best Practice Guidelines for Online Legal Document Providers*, proposed by the New York State Bar Association, the New York County Lawyers' Association, and the American Bar Association's (ABA's) Standing Committee on the Delivery of Legal Services, Center for Innovation and International Law Section, before the House of Delegates, at the ABA's Annual Meeting, in San Francisco, California (August 12, 2019).

Remarks at a continuing legal education program entitled, "Diversity, Inclusion and Elimination of Bias," and sponsored by the New York State Bar Association, in Albany, New York (July 26, 2019).

Remarks at Elder Law and Special Needs Section Summer Meeting, at Boston Marriott Long Wharf Hotel, in Boston, Massachusetts (July 18, 2019).

Remarks at Family Law Section Summer Meeting, at The Saratoga Hilton, in Saratoga, New York (July 12, 2019).

Formal remarks at the Admissions Ceremony for the New York State Supreme Court, Appellate Division, Third Judicial Department, at the Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller Empire State Plaza Convention Center, in Albany, New York (June 26, 2019).

Testimony at the New York State Office of Indigent Legal Services' hearing on financial eligibility for assignment of counsel in family matters, in Albany, New York (June 19, 2019).

Address upon being sworn-in as the 122<sup>nd</sup> President of the New York State Bar Association, in Albany, New York (June 7, 2019).

Remarks at the Presentation of the 2019 Howard A. Levine Award for Excellence in Juvenile Justice and Child Welfare and Education Program, sponsored by the Committee on Children and the Law Committee of the New York State Bar Association, in Albany, New York (June 5, 2019).

Remarks at an event entitled, “The *Braschi* Breakthrough: 30 Years Later, Looking Back on the Relationship Recognition Landmark,” sponsored by The Richard C. Faila LGBTQ Commission of the New York Courts, among other groups, held at the Supreme Court, New York County Ceremonial Courtroom, in New York City (June 3, 2019). The link to a video of these remarks is:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tF1APx3qoEI&feature=youtu.be&fbclid=IwAR0f190q-siSXhEYKNuIHnVQnXSRDrzHL0D5vvuVvM4hOpHX110VOR1gv4Q> (see 25:37 to 1:01:13).