



By Edward J.  
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# The More Things Change . . .

*We are all living in changing times. The law and the lawyers are likewise in changing times. The impact of the changing social conditions is almost unprecedented.*

July 1953 heralded the first issue of this publication: Volume I, Number I. Take a look. You can read the whole issue on our website. Go to: [www.lsba.org/GoTo/Journal](http://www.lsba.org/GoTo/Journal).

This issue begins the 60th year of the *Louisiana Bar Journal* — Volume 60, Number 1. I am proud to be the editor for our 60th volume. For my first editor's column, I had planned to take a look back at Volume I, Number I, and tell you how far we have come and how much our association is different from its 1953 version.

Well . . . that was the plan. But, after

reading Volume I, Number I, it was clear to me that, as George Bernard Shaw said, "The more things change, the more they stay the same."

Not that we don't live in a different legal and societal world than we did in 1953 — we do — but our Association was wrangling with many of the same issues we are dealing with today.

In our *Journal* in 1953, then-American Bar Association President Robert G. Storey wrote an article titled "Our Changing Profession." The first paragraph of his article could be, and should be, written today:

We are all living in changing times. The law and the lawyers are likewise in changing times. The impact of the changing social conditions is almost unprecedented. Our revered leader of the Bar, Chief Justice Vanderbilt, said that these changes are very significant in two particulars, first, the philosophy of the changes, the rapidity, the earth-shaking consequences of these lightning changes in the social structure; and, in the second place, while most changes in the past have been generally of a local or regional nature, the changes now are on a world-wide scale.

1953.

Could be 2013, huh?

Our Bar Association had a Board of Governors Retreat this past May and THESE were the very same issues all of us were wrestling.

The more things change . . .

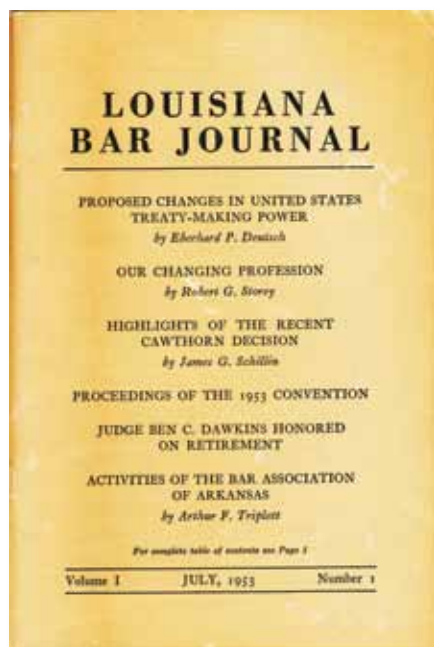
Of course, no one in 1953 even envisioned the Internet and the impact of email, electronic filing, social networking, tweeting and lawyer advertising, but I am sure they thought their world was moving pretty fast from a technological standpoint.

A peek into the "Proceedings of the 1953 Convention" reveals that one important mission of our Association remains unrequited. In his Address as Retiring Louisiana State Bar Association (LSBA) President, Alvin O. King of Lake Charles, stated:

Many families cannot pay for the services of a lawyer . . . The lawyers must take care of these groups of people; but I doubt if we are doing so adequately. Our obligation to our fellow man should impel us to provide some plan by which the aforementioned people can secure legal services when needed. If we do not, someone will do it for us, and probably not to our liking . . . We have Legal Aid Committees by Districts, but that does not seem to serve the needs adequately.

Prescient, wasn't he? So where are we now, 59 years later?

Now we have the Legal Services Corporation (LSC) which funds programs in each state, like the three Louisiana legal services programs. These programs provide civil legal services to individuals at or below 125 percent of the federal poverty guidelines. Approximately 2.3



million Americans are assisted each year by LSC grantees. Nearly 1 million cases are closed each year. More than 63 million Americans, including 22 million children, qualify for civil legal assistance from the LSC grantees.

But wait!

Congress is considering withdrawing funding from the LSC for fiscal year 2013. Just as we did in 1953, WE need to stand up and work for full funding for legal services for several reasons.

► Economic difficulties have already placed a heavy burden on legal services programs at a time when more Americans than ever qualify for, and desperately need, legal assistance. Louisiana has one of the highest poverty populations in the nation, with nearly one in five people living at or below the poverty line. Changes based on census data will also lessen Louisiana's federal LSC allocation, so the state will feel the effects of any LSC cuts to a greater degree.

► Other funding sources for legal aid programs have diminished in recent years. Revenue from the Interest on Lawyers' Trust Accounts (IOLTA) has decreased around the country due to low interest rates, and public and private donations have diminished due to economic conditions. Louisiana depends on federal money for more than half its total legal aid resources, so ensuring that LSC is well funded is critical for the state.

► Recent cutbacks to LSC have negatively affected Louisiana and must be reinstated. Federal cuts to LSC have forced Louisiana's grantees to eliminate more than 25 jobs across the state while trying to absorb an increase in demand for legal services. The reduction in funding and staff will result in at least 2,500 families unable to receive needed legal assistance.

The LSC needs full funding to give its grantees adequate resources to serve the low-income people of Louisiana. We need to stand up to the challenge and help. Our voice is important. After all, this is one of the missions of our Association and one of our duties as a profession.

OK, off of the soapbox.

There are, however, some obvious differences between us now and us in 1953. In 1953, the impact of the "baby

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**—Robert G. Storey  
1953 American  
Bar Association  
President**

boomers" was yet to hit. There were no lawyers who were "Generation X'ers," "Generation Y'ers," "Generation Z'ers" or "Millennials." They are here now and how we address their needs will dictate who we are as a profession and as an Association.

### **Insignifica**

In 1953:

► Dues were \$10 per year.

► We had 3,340 members. We now have 21,000+.

► We had a resolution to advocate the increase of the salaries of federal judges from \$15,000 per year to \$17,500 per year.

► In order to be admitted to the Bar, an applicant had to be a graduate of an approved law school or have completed three years of college work and pursued the study of law for three years under the supervision of a reputable Louisiana lawyer who has been engaged in active practice for not less than five years. Some applicants did not have to take a Bar exam.

► The accounting ledger shows that in 1953 the LSBA bought a new typewriter for \$159.55. (Many of our

members have never seen a typewriter in their offices.)

### **Back to the Future . . .**

In 1953, retiring LSBA President Alvin O. King discussed the same issues our Board of Governors discussed in May:

It is my considered opinion that the Louisiana State Bar Association should make a more determined effort to be of tangible service to the members of the Bar and through them to the public in general. We should be able to give something of real value to each and every member of the Bar for his money. Any organization or association that does not render some service or give something of value to its members or the public in general cannot long justify its existence. We, as lawyers, must not forget that we are a limited class . . . We thereby have a limit on those who can practice our profession . . . We should constantly strive to improve the standards of our profession by increasing the standards for admission and thereby try to improve the efficiency of our services. It is also proper for us to constantly strive to improve our own standards of living and obtain for our families and ourselves more security for our old age and for the time when sickness and hard luck may strike us. This we can do only by industry and hard work and by seeing to it that our fees keep pace with the advancing cost of living. While we are doing all this for ourselves, we must keep in mind and never forget that we are in a profession and not a business.

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