

## President's Message

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I am humbled and honored to accept the role of president of the BPLA, and I look forward to guiding the board and our members as we work to fulfill our mission in the coming year.

**First**, I challenge the more than 900 members of the BPLA to continue building our roadways to the USPTO, including the PTAB, despite not having a brick-and-mortar presence here in Boston. We have been making strides toward this goal, and would advance it further by hosting the USPTO's Director in Boston to meet our members. We will continue our dialog with Dana Colarulli, the Director of the Office of Governmental Affairs at the USPTO, to work on bringing PTO programming to our commonwealth. We also now have government rates for our programs, with the intention of encouraging the 48+ PTO examiners and Administrative Patent Judges who reside in Massachusetts to attend and participate.

In addition, we have representation in the newly formed PTAB Bar Association, which was launched by 45 law firms and industry partners last October on the anniversary of the AIA. Like the Federal Bar Association, the PTAB Bar Association is becoming active in educating its members, and we intend to leverage PTAB educational programming in Boston. Last year, the BPLA hosted the first of hopefully many PTAB Summits, thanks to the Contested Matters Committee co-chairs and two PTAB Judges. We look forward to the second PTAB Summit in 2017.

**Second**, we need to foster the participation of patent and IP lawyers who serve as in-house counsel, so that more of these industry members can bring their voices to the mission of the BPLA.

To accomplish this, we will work to increase the number of co-chairs in our many committees who are in-house counsel. This year, we already have in-house counsel who will serve as co-chairs of the Business & Marketplace, Medical Devices, Litigation, and Trade Secrets Law Committees, in addition to the In-House Practice Committee. We also now benefit from having an in-house attorney on our board, Jen Sieczkiewicz, who is the research and business development counsel for rare disease at Biogen.

**Third**, in keeping with our longstanding mission to provide educational programs and a forum for exchanging ideas and information concerning patent, trademark, and copyright laws, we will bolster the outreach of our educational programming provided by our various committees. I encourage the BPLA to continue to look outward, toward educating the public on the value of strong intellectual property rights.

Last year we launched the Law School Committee, co-chaired by Susan Montgomery (executive professor of law and business at Northeastern University School of Law) and Andy Beckerman Rodau (professor of law and co-director of the IP law concentration at Suffolk University Law School). They organized an interesting program called “Making Connections in Boston’s IP Community,” which brought in-house and law firm lawyers together with law students. We all recognize the importance of educating lawyers in general, and law students in particular, about the impact of the creation and protection of intellectual property rights on the US economy.

This year, I encourage our board to go further and launch a committee focused on introducing undergraduate and high school students, particularly diverse students, to intellectual property law. It is important for the BPLA to concern itself with educating a pipeline of youngsters who will pursue science and technology, and who will potentially become interested in the career choices many of us in this association have made. The Office of our Attorney General, Maura Healey, is also interested in our educational outreach at this level.

Diversity and inclusion are top of mind at this particular time. I am grateful to have a profession that values and is furthered by its diverse membership. We need to collectively welcome and mentor the members of our bar association, which has attracted talent from across nationalities, genders and orientations. Our profession is truly represented of the best of the American “melting pot,” and we need to preserve this culture.

I would be remiss if I did not thank Erik Belt, our immediate past president, for his friendship and guidance over the years. Since becoming a board member seven years back, I have had the pleasure and fortune of being a step behind Erik. He has been a consummate role model. Erik cares deeply about the BPLA’s mission and outreach, and has contributed substantively in many ways to its success. In his collaborative style, each year Erik took great pains to keep me well informed as to the intricacies and responsibilities of the position I was jumping into. Erik has already re-engaged with our Amicus Committee, which is very busy this month as they plan to submit two *amicus* briefs on behalf of the BPLA for the following cases: *Wi-Fi One LLC v. Broadcom* (Fed. Cir. en banc), and *Impression Products, Inc. v. Lexmark International, Inc.* (US Supreme Court).

The members of the Board of Governors and I look forward to the participation of each of our members, and hope to leverage your energy and ideas to keep our patent—and, more generally, our IP bar—relevant and dynamic. We continue to solicit ideas to make our outreach more effective, and invite you all to join our efforts to do so in 2017. Thank you!