

## President's Message

# A New Year and Renewed Focus: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

By Alan G. Brackett, 2022-23 President

The Louisiana Bar Foundation (LBF) has always been focused on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI). Funding civil legal aid has always been about caring for those who may otherwise be uncared for, which is disproportionately people of color. However, while the LBF has always supported diverse organizations and citizens, and strives to ensure its leadership reflects the diversity of Louisiana, it has become clear that we always need to be intentional in our processes and actions to ensure we remain true to our Mission and goals. We need to apply a DEI lens to the Foundation's work, including the infrastructure, leadership, membership and grants making.

Last year, on the recommendation of our CEO, I created a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee. The committee is co-chaired by board members Adrienne D. White and John C. Nickelson and is tasked with building DEI capacity and strategy through research, learning and analysis of internal protocols and processes, leadership and volunteer engagement practices, and client community ad-

vocacy and support efforts. We will review our programs, policies, procedures and practices to ensure and sustain a diverse, equitable and inclusive environment, both internally and externally.

I am also excited to report that, over the last year, we have made great strides toward our goal of building our Infinity Fund, established to ensure funds received from IOLTA, CINC funding and legislative appropriations can be fully granted to our civil legal aid partners to help those who need it most. Currently we are at 40% of our goal of \$500,000 for the year. By continuing to work together, we can provide civil legal aid to Louisiana's most vulnerable citizens.

And finally, thank you! Over the last year, with your help, we were able to support:

- ▶ more than 2,800 temporary restraining orders and protective orders for



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domestic violence victims;

- ▶ more than 10,000 cases of contested divorce, uncontested divorce, custody/visitation, adoption and other cases involving family law;

- ▶ more than 1,700 cases of collection, repossession or garnishment, contracts, warranties, liens, installment purchase, unfair sales practices, job discrimination, wage claims, civil rights and other cases of consumer health and protection; and

- ▶ nearly 600 cases of real estate and housing, landlord and tenant, public housing, bankruptcy, loan modification, debt relief, foreclosure prevention and mediation, and other types of housing issues.

The LBF provides an opportunity for everyone in the legal community to play a part in ensuring that every Louisiana citizen has equal access to our justice system. It is vital that we leverage our resources and expand stakeholders to identify opportunities that improve diversity, equity and inclusion within the civil legal aid system. To support the LBF mission, go to: [www.raisingthebar.org](http://www.raisingthebar.org). Or mail a donation directly to the LBF, Ste. 1000, 1615 Poydras St., New Orleans, LA 70112.

## LWCC Raises \$65,000 for LBF Kids' Chance Scholarship Program

The Louisiana Workers' Compensation Corporation (LWCC) hosted a speaker series event at the Foster Learning Center at the LWCC headquarters in Baton Rouge. Together with agent and business partners, LWCC donated \$65,000 to the Louisiana Bar Foundation (LBF) Kids'

Chance Scholarship Program. The event featured *NY Times* bestselling author Daniel Pink.

"LWCC is our longest standing partner and fundraiser for the LBF Kids' Chance Scholarship Program," said LBF 2022-23 President Alan G. Brackett. "The permanent disability or

loss of a family member at work can devastate a family. Kids' Chance scholarships help stabilize those families and ensure the children of those workers obtain a higher education." With the support of LWCC, the LBF has been able to award 331 scholarships in the amount of \$825,100 since its inception in 2004.