

WITH OUR NETWORK, EVERYBODY CAN WIN



We are a network of problem solvers. We should help each other to the extent that we can.

“You need to be aware of what others are doing, applaud their efforts, acknowledge their successes, and encourage them in their pursuits. When we all help one another, everybody wins.”

— Jim Stovall

THIS PAST WEEK, I WAS REMINDED OF HOW MANY DIFFERENT PLACES WE, AS ATTORNEYS, ARE. I am not speaking about our diverse tapestry—our practice areas and demographics; I am referring to our varying places of comfort or discomfort. Some of us are at a peak in our practices and are realizing our dreams of fiscal comfort and practice passions. Some of us are in a constant state of motion, with little or no rest, as we strive to meet monthly corporate and personal expenses. Some are just becoming aware of unrealized potential and are energized to take things to a new level. There are some who are fighting for equal pay for equal work. There are others of us who are exhausted, having worked for years toward a goal of eventual retirement, only to face conditions that make retiring impossible. Some of us had practiced for years and then faced unemployment after the economic downturn hit our profession in 2008, and are still unable to return to a position of financial comfort. Some of us are new lawyers, facing the challenge of finding any type of employment anywhere within the profession while loan repayment looms on the horizon.

Some of us are doing okay. Some of us are getting by with no major complaints. Some of us are right where we had worked and hoped to be at this point in time. Some of us see no prospect of employment while others struggle to supplement their professional income in order to meet living expenses. If only the general public understood that being an attorney does not always equate to wealth and abundance.

The battles against burnout, inequity, underemployment, and unemployment exist. They are real. But all of our circumstances can and do change. To be in a place of contentment, solvency, and realization of our dreams is a blessing indeed. It is a place where we all strive to be and to remain.

My position as president has its limitations. The State Bar of Texas as a quasi-governmental agency has limitations. The work of a network can be more effective than the development of any one initiative or program. We are an association of people. We are a network of professionals. There are attorneys who need work; there are attorneys who are looking for additional attorneys and support staff. Individuals are seeking to meet needs that are full-time, part-time, and temporary.

We are a network of problem solvers. We should help each other to the extent that we can. After all, an association is a community that one chooses to be a part of. Isn't that what we want and purport to be—a professional community? Let's put our community to work helping one another. This way we all win.

LISA TATUM

President, *State Bar of Texas*