

# 2001: The Year That Transformed Us

No one could have imagined last year how 2001 would transform us. We knew that we would face the continuing need to ensure that our profession diversifies its ranks, and we expected that economic uncertainties would challenge our efforts to provide pro bono services and financial support for the poor and underrepresented in our communities. We did not anticipate the recent terrorist attacks, committed on upon thousands of civilians from around the globe. Nor could we have anticipated a presidential decree potentially restricting the rights of foreign nationals detained on U.S. soil or the related proposal to abrogate the attorney-client privilege in certain circumstances. We are grateful (and proud) that rather than diverting us from our responsibilities as lawyers, the events of September 11 reaffirmed our belief in democracy and strengthened our commitment to the Rule of Law. It was heartwarming to see our bar association lead in the most crisis by facilitating a major training (with Chinese for Affirmative Action and the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights, among others) for volunteer lawyers willing to represent victims of hate crimes and by establishing the Lawyers United for America Fund to provide direct legal services for victims of the violence on the East Coast. As fate would have it, we were able to help in an even more immediate way. VLSP director Tanya Neiman, scheduled to be in New York shortly after the tragedy, used our extensive experience and materials, developed after the Loma Prieta earthquake, to work closely with the Associa-

tion of the Bar of the City of New York and others in the massive training and deployment of pro bono lawyers needed to serve those whose lives were shattered by the events of September 11. Recently, we learned through Governor Davis's office of survivors locally

who have mounting needs. Characteristically, BASF and VLSP formed a swift response by mobilizing law firms willing to provide pro bono legal services. These services in such areas as probate, insurance, health insurance benefits, immigration problems, and so on.

---

## President's Report

Douglas R. Young

