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Convocation on Professionalism and the Global Community

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BY LESLIE E. STEWART



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Supreme Court of Georgia Chief Justice Harold D. Melton

On Nov. 30, 2018, the Chief Justice’s Commission on Professionalism (the Commission) held its Convocation on Professionalism (the Convocation) at Atlanta’s Porsche Experience Center. This year, the Convocation theme was Professionalism and the Global Community, which focused on the professionalism values of competence, civility, character, and commitment to the rule of law and the public good. The purpose of the Convocation was to model professionalism while discussing a high-conflict issue and to demonstrate the ways in which attorneys have implemented “A Lawyer’s Creed” and the “Aspirational Statement” in their work with the global community. The event, which was sponsored by Squire Patton Boggs, Miller & Martin PLLC and Alston & Bird LLP, was well-received by the attendees. The speakers included an array of notables and dignitaries with ties to Georgia, beginning with Supreme Court of Georgia Chief Justice Harold D. Melton, who urged the attendees to demonstrate professionalism through service to their community, a key element of “A Lawyer’s Creed” and the “Aspirational Statement.”

The first panel, “Overview of the Global Community in Georgia,” was facilitated by Javier Díaz de León, Consul General of Mexico. Two judges, Hon. Meng H. Lim, Tallapoosa Circuit Superior Court, and Hon. Dax E. Lopez, DeKalb County State Court, spoke movingly about how their judicial careers have been influenced by their experiences of straddling two cultures. Abby Turano, deputy commissioner for International Relations, Georgia Department of Economic Development, explained how and why Georgia welcomes foreign businesses to Georgia.

The second panel, “A View from General Counsels of Companies Doing International Business,” was moderated by Shelby S. Guilbert Jr. from King & Spalding. The panelists, including Angus M. Haig, senior vice president and general counsel for Cox Automotive, and Ricardo Nuñez, senior vice president and general counsel for Schweitzer-Mauduit International, described their challenges and how core values affect their roles as international general counsels. Audrey Boone Tillman, executive vice president and general counsel for AFLAC, portrayed the challenges and successes of being a woman of color supervising attorneys in Japan. Joseph Folz, vice president, general counsel and secretary for Porsche Cars North America, shared his experiences working for a German-based company.

The third panel, “The Business Pros and Cons of Developing a Formal Working Relationship with an International Lawyer or Law Firm,” was facilitated by Petrina A. McDaniel from Squire Patton Boggs. Tricia “CK” Hoffer, principal at The CK Hoffer Firm, regaled the attendees with her vivid descriptions of being threatened by automatic gunfire as a result of a cultural miscalculation while she represented an un-named government. Therese Pritchard, from Bryan Cave and Robert Tritt, Dentons US LLP, discussed the necessity of retaining competent local counsel in international cases.

The Convocation’s keynote speaker, Randolph “Randy” Evans, U.S. Ambassador to Luxembourg, described his humble beginnings in Georgia and how the values instilled in him by his family continue to influence the way in which he deals with his professional duties—of treating each person with respect and dignity.

After lunch, the next panel, “What Lawyers Need to Know about Labor Trafficking,” focused on the darker side of doing business in the global community. The moderator, Hon. Richard Story, judge, U.S. District Court, Northern District of Georgia, oversaw a lively discussion between Norm Brothers, senior vice president and general counsel for UPS; Susan Coppedge, former U.S. Ambassador-at-Large, the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, and senior advisor to the Secretary of State (Ret.); and Jay Doyle of Lewis Brisbois Bisgaard & Smith LLP. This panel focused on the way in which government and private business have collaborated to combat the scourge of human trafficking.

The attendees were then treated to a presentation on “An Overview of Professionalism in Immigration Cases” by James McHenry, director of the Executive Office for Immigration Review at the Department of Justice, who unpacked the complex hearing procedures surrounding this timely topic.

The second afternoon panel, “Emerging Issues and Pro Bono Opportunities for Attorneys as a Result of Changes in Immigration Laws,” was moderated by Phil Sandick from Alston & Bird. The panelists were Audra Dial from Kilpatrick Townsend & Stockton, Jorge Andres Gavilanes from Kuck Baxter, Monica Khant, executive director of the Georgia Asylum and Immigration Network, and Willis Linton Miller from The Latin American Association. During this panel, the speakers touched on the need for pro bono assistance on these important cases due to an upsurge in work and the conse-

quent burnout on the part of those working full time in this area.

The final panel of the day, “Ethics, Regulatory and Procedural Issues in International Practice,” was facilitated by Shelby R. Grubbs, from Miller & Martin. Along with Paula Frederick, general counsel of the State Bar of Georgia and Ben Greer Jr., retired partner at Alston & Bird, the presenters discussed the competing ethical standards that attorneys must negotiate in international work and the necessity of adhering to Georgia standards regardless of cultural or ethical differences.

The Convocation offered a marvelous opportunity for in-person attendees to learn about how the principles of professionalism impact our legal work in the global community. Commission member Hon. Carla McMillian, Court of Appeals of Georgia, tweeted throughout the day at @cjcpga in English and Spanish with the help of Commission member Maria F. Mackay, a Georgia certified interpreter who provided Spanish interpretations of the proceedings for McMillian to tweet. Commission advisor Jennifer Davis and Commission liaison Dee Dee Worley provided invaluable “behind the scenes” staff assistance for the event throughout the day. The Commission staff was grateful for the support of the Commission members and other Convocation contributors and planners who provided invaluable assistance for this immensely successful Convocation. More information about the Convocation and other upcoming Commission events, including the 20th Annual Justice Robert Benham Awards for Community Service, is available on the Commission’s website at www.cjcpga.org. ●



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