

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Alfredo Castellanos

In my first letter as President of our Chapter, I mentioned how lucky we were to count on a new Board for the new millennium. Needless to say, as some of you have already noticed from our two successful monthly luncheons and the recently held judicial reception for the visiting First Circuit Judges, the infusion of new blood has set us off to a good start.

Notwithstanding the above, there is still a lot to be done if we are to accomplish the ambitious agenda and goals that we have established for this year.

Once again, I would like to both congratulate and thank Chief Judge Laffitte for becoming (God permitting) the First Chief Judge of the new millennium and for allowing us to participate in his swear-in ceremony. As the first speaker of the ceremony, I can assure my colleagues that it was indeed a "frightening privilege"

being able to address Chief Judge Laffitte, Judges Cerezo, Pieras, Gierbolini, Dominguez, Acosta, Perez-Gimenez, and First Circuit Chief Judge Tortuella all at once, in the presence of a packed courtroom and with Governor Pedro Rossello and Ex-Governor Luis A. Ferre sitting right behind me. Also, I think that it is imperative that we recognize and praise ex-Chief Judge Cerezo for her magnanimity and unselfishness in deciding to end her well deserved term as Chief Judge early enough to grant Judge Laffitte the opportunity to lead our District Court into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

As I nervously mentioned in Chief Judge Laffitte's swear in ceremony, it is of utmost importance that our Chapter assist Judge Laffitte in anyway possible as we move toward the implementation of what has been properly labeled as Courtroom 21. Needless to say, it would be a tremendous waste of judicial resources if our District Court continues to move forward with the incorporation of all the new tools and devices that are now available to facilitate and expedite courtroom proceedings, if the members of our bar are not properly trained to use and exploit the vast benefits that new technology has brought us.

Having said the above, and being this the year of action and more action, our chapter is going to take the initiative, thanks to the persistence and vision of Mantel Quilichini, of organizing a unique seminar to prepare the members of our chapter for all the new changes that we will all soon face in our Federal Courtrooms. Said seminar will take place on June 4, 1999 and will be available for both members and non-members of our chapter. For more information, please call Manuel at 753-7910. I strongly recommend to all of the rich and famous partners, of all of the big and famous firms, to make sure that you send your entire litigation departments to this seminar. Remember, new technology will now permit smaller firms and solo practitioners to become more competitive, efficient and effective in the services of justice.

As a final note, please take note that the originally scheduled Appellate seminar has been changed to November 2, 1999. Also, we are in the process of organizing a judicial reception during the month of June with the primary purpose of increasing our Chapter's membership.

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 Manuel San Juan

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I hope that everyone had a great summer vacation. It is time to regroup and to focus again on the objectives that we have set for this incredible year.

First of all, I wish to personally thank Chief Judge Laffitte and Frances Rios de Moran for organizing and paying for the extraordinary and successful Courtroom 21 seminar that was held at the San Juan Grand Hotel. Needless to say, the immediate implementation and use of new technology in our District's Court rooms will assure that the Federal Court system in Puerto Rico will continue to promote and safeguard the highest standard of excel-

lence in the service of justice. In fact, thanks to the leadership and commitment of Chief Judge Laffitte and the continuous dedication of Ms. Moran, our District will be the first district in the entire U.S. Federal Court System to be Court Room 21 ready. We should all be proud of the above accomplishment.

Also, it is very important to mention and recognize that thanks to Ms. Moran, the Courtroom 21 seminar was graced with the presence and participation of Professor Frederick Lederer, who is the foremost authority in the development and implementation of the new technology in our Federal Courts. Professor Lederer is the National Director of the entire Courtroom 21 project. His presence was of great value to everyone that attended the seminar. For those of you that were not able to attend the above seminar, or for those of you that may want to refresh some of the lessons that were taught that day, both Chief Judge Laffitte and Ms.

Moran have created a Courtroom 21 hotline. The telephone numbers for the Courtroom 21 hotline are 772-3086 and 772-3084. Please ask for Mr. Norman Aybar when you call the above numbers. Also, please note that Mr. Aybar can also coordinate special visits to any of the three court rooms that have already implemented Courtroom 21 technology.

On a different note, I wish to congratulate Judge Geraldo A. Carlo for his appointment as the new Chief Judge of our District's U.S. Bankruptcy Court both personally and on behalf of the Federal Bar. Moreover, I also wish to thank Chief Judge Carlo for giving the Federal Bar the opportunity to participate in his recently held swearing in ceremony. As the Chapter President, I consider it an honor and privilege to have been able to participate as a guest speaker in both Chief Judge Laffitte's and U.S. Bankruptcy Chief Judge Carlo's swearing-in ceremonies in the past year.

**Join the Federal Bar  
TODAY!**

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Alfredo Castellaros

**B**elieve or not, 1999 is about to come to an end and a new millennium full of bright promises and hopes is about to commence. Unfortunately for me, this signals the conclusion of my year as president of our local Federal Bar Chapter.

Needless to say, it has been a great privilege being able to preside over this organization during this historical year. Before I proceed with a few final notes and comments about the past year, I feel compelled to *thank the following individuals* for the vast help and support they gave our chapter during 1999: Gustavo Gelpi, Jr., Arturo J. Garcia Solá, Manuel A. Quilichini, Joan Malet, Manuel San Juan, Eric Pérez Ochoa, Luis A. Oliver, Aibero G. Estrella y Francisco Colón Ramírez, Dave Indiano, Ms. Frances Morán, Chief U.S. Bankruptcy Judge Gerardo Carlo and a very special thanks to Chief Judge Héctor Laffitte and Chief Judge Juan Torruella for their unconditional support to our local chapter. Moreover, I wish to personally thank my former assistant Michelle Robles for all the help that she gave us during the last two years.

For those of you that missed some of the special activities that we organized and/or sponsored during the last year, and with the objective of inducing you to participate in our future activities, I will sum up all of the events that we held during the last year:

**MONTHLY LUNCHEONS**

Hon. Pedro Roselló  
Governor of the  
Commonwealth of Puerto Rico

Hon. Daniel Domínguez

Hon. Héctor Laffitte  
Chief Judge for the District of Puerto Rico

Hon. Carlos Pesquera  
Secretary of Transportation

US Magistrate Judges  
Hon. Jesús A. Castellanos  
Hon. Justo Arenas  
Hon. Aida Delgado

Hon. José Fuentes Agostini  
Secretary of Justice

Hon. Pedro Toledo  
Public Safety Commissioner  
and  
José A. Hernández Mayoral, Esq.

**BAR REVIEW COURSES**

As every year, the Federal Bar Association Puerto Rico Chapter, conducted two Bar Review Courses for the Puerto Rico Federal Bar Examination

**OTHER ACTIVITIES**

Court Room 21 Seminar

Swear-in Ceremonies of  
Hon. Héctor Laffitte  
Chief Judge for the District of Puerto Rico  
and  
Hon. Gerardo Carlo  
Chief Judge of the Bankruptcy Court

Breakfast Ceremony for the visiting  
Judges First Circuit

Christmas Party

Creation of the new Federal Bar yearly award for the following merits:

*Above and beyond service to the  
Federal Bar Association*

*Above and beyond service to the Court*

*Above and beyond service  
to the Profession  
and  
for being the exemplary role model to all.*

Lastly, the Courtroom 21 seminar organized by the Clerk of the courts Office with the assistance of some of our Board Members, was instructional while at the same time it soothed most tears of the use of technology in the courtroom among attorneys.

Unquestionably, this past year was a successful one to the very end. The people who made this success happen deserve all the credit and the thanks of every active member. I sincerely believe that the work of the Board, even in adversity, proved fruitful to all.

Obviously, the FBA's work in Puerto Rico is far from over. The new board of directors must continue to strive and maintain our standard of excellence. Only by accomplishing continued excellence can we assure ourselves that the new generation of attorneys will follow our footsteps and will feel as proud as we are of being active members of our FBA Chapter.

Once again, I wish to thank everyone for their unconditional support and may this Christmas Season and the New Millennium bring joy and happiness to all.



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**A** new board for the new millennium. To some of you, the above may sound like a theme for a political campaign, but in reality, it merely reflects the vast change that recently transpired in the composition of our chapter's board of directors. With the above in mind, I wish to personally congratulate Aixa Maldonado, Alberto G. Estrella, Francisco Colón Ramírez, Luis Antonio Oliver, and Eric Pérez Ochoa, for being elected as new members of our board. I sincerely look forward to being able to work with all of you during the upcoming year. I am certain that with the infusion of your new ideas, backed by your commitment and dedication to our chapter, we will accomplish the objectives that we have laid out for the year.

As some of you may already know, and in great part due to the wonderful job that Manuel San Juan did last year as our president, our chapter's financial situation has never been better. Fortunately for all, our chapter will have the necessary financial resources to make 1999 a banner year for our organization.

This being said, it is time to go to work. Our primary objectives for 1999 are the following:

- Increase our membership by 10%.
- Have at least nine monthly luncheons with key guest speakers.
- Sponsor and coordinate several seminars during the year for the benefit of our members. Presently, we are already coordinating a seminar on appellate practice and another on the use of computers in the legal practice.
- Continue with our successful federal bar review course, which has historically been our number one income generating activity.

- Continue with our fund raising charitable work to assist those who need temporary financial help.

- Give out our first scholarship for meritorious law students, and
- Find additional financial support for our award winning newsletter.

Needless to say, I am confident that with the vast talent that we have on the new board, we will be able to not only accomplish the above objectives, but we will be able to far surpass them.

Finally, I wish to thank past presidents Richard Graffam, Dave Indiano, Mari Carmen Taboas, Tony Pagán, Manuel San Juan and my dear friend Russell del Toro for all the support that they have given me during the last five years. Their exemplary leadership and their unquestionable commitment to the principles of our organization, merit our special recognition.

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