

# From the Desk of the Chairperson

By Douglas L. Toering



## The Business Law Section: Extend Our Reach—and Yours

Where did 2015 go? If I could answer that question...

By now, most of 2015 is in the rearview mirror. Thank you to our past chair, Jim Carey. It was my privilege to have worked with him (and learned from him), not only during his tenure as Chair of the Business Law Section, but also during his term as Treasurer. Jim is one of those rare attorneys who can navigate back and forth between his private law practice and academia. Perhaps it is because Jim is such an excellent teacher that he has been so patient with me as I learn from him. Thank you, Jim.

And thank you, also, to our Vice Chair, Judy Calton, and to our Treasurer, Mark Peters, for all their service to the section during the past year. It has been a pleasure working with them. I look forward to serving with them and with our new Secretary, Kevin Block, during the upcoming year. It will be my privilege and honor to work with them as I serve you, our members.

Space would fail me to thank our council members, committee and directorship chairs, section administrator, and other section members who are dedicated to excellence in the practice of business law, whether it be transactional matters or litigation. Specifically, please allow me to recognize Laurence S. Schultz of Driggers, Schultz & Herbst, PC in Troy. A former BLS chair, Larry was honored at the BLS annual meeting in September with the Steven H. Schulman Outstanding Business Lawyer Award. Congratulations, Larry! And thank you to previous BLS chairs, Eric Lark and Hugh Makens, who presented the award. One more thank you—this goes to everyone who helped make the annual meeting and the Business Law Institute a success.

With that, what might 2016 bring? Our theme for 2016 is “*Extending Our Reach—And Yours.*” By that, I mean that as the BLS extends its reach, your practice can grow, too. How? Here are some ways:

1. Outreach to Newer Attorneys. New attorneys are the future of our section and, in many ways, our state as well. They want to make a difference. That’s good. Let’s show them how they can do so through the Business Law Section. If you have ideas, please contact Kevin Block, whose committee is spearheading this effort, or me.
2. Outreach to Other State Bar Sections: Joint Programming. No SBM section is an island. The practice of business law affects many other practice areas. Through cross-programming be-

tween the BLS and other state bar sections, we can learn from them and they can learn from us. Plans are already in the works for joint seminars with other sections.

3. Outreach to Others: Joint Programming Elsewhere. Whether it be the Michigan Association of Certified Public Accountants or the state of Michigan through the Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs, the section has worked with a variety of other groups. Let’s continue that.
4. Outreach to Judiciary and Legislature. The BLS works with the state business court judges and the federal bankruptcy judges on local practice in those courts. (The BLS offers free section membership to those judges.) And when it comes to legislative changes that affect business in Michigan, the Business Law Section is there. Indeed, over the past few years, the BLS has been instrumental in advancing legislation in Michigan, such as the business court statute and amendments to the business corporation act, the limited liability company act, and the non-profit corporation act.
5. Outreach to Former BLS Chairpersons. What a wealth of wisdom and experience our former chairs possess. How can we tap into that?
6. Outreach to In-House Counsel. For years, the BLS has helped sponsor the Crain’s General and In-House Counsel Summit. Any other ideas?
7. Outreach to You. How does this sound to you? Check out the new BLS website (<http://connect.michbar.org/businesslaw/home>). What committees interest you? How can you contribute to the professionalism of the practice of business law in Michigan? How can you help the BLS extend our reach while you extend yours?

Whatever the section does, of course, is built on the foundation of the excellent, hard work done by so many people—past chairs, past and present council members, past and present committee and directorship chairs, and the many other BLS members who have combined to make this section what it is today.

Will you roll up your sleeves with us? If so, the Business Law Section can extend its outreach while you extend yours. Help us make a difference.