

Views from the Chair

Howard Kenison

Howard Kenison is a shareholder with the firm Jones & Keller, P.C. in Denver. He is the chair of the Section of Environment, Energy, and Resources.

Gratitude. One word that captures my theme for my final Views from the Chair column.

First, I would like to express my gratitude to our Section's members for their membership and I am especially grateful for those of you who have been able to participate virtually in our conferences, webinars, and networking events over the past year.

I am grateful for the support of the Section staff. I am especially grateful to Dana Jonusaitis who was my weekly guide through the labyrinth of ABA procedures, Section governance, and the nuances of leading a Section of over 8,800 members, including close to 400 members in leadership positions. Her staff—Valentia Sundell, Kevin Gordon, Zoya Ali, Ellen Rothstein, and most recently, Hannah Muerhoff—have worked persistently from home this year to keep the Section running smoothly. My sincere gratitude to Ellen who has faithfully reminded me of the deadlines—and acceded to my requests for extra time—for preparation of this column. More importantly, Ellen and *Trends* editor-in-chief, Matt Sanders, have made these columns immeasurably better.

Thank you to our committee chairs and vice chairs. Our 28 substantive committees are the critical lifeblood of the Section—the pandemic did not stop their work. These dedicated volunteers created (and continue to create) wonderful virtual programs and provided written content that keep our members informed.

Christine LeBel, publications officer, and your team, I am grateful for the books published this year, for *NR&E*, *Trends*, *The Year in Review*, and committee articles. The Section's publications can be found on the shelves of many environmental, energy, and resource attorneys across the nation, including mine.

I am thankful that Roger Martella, education officer, was leading the charge, with Christine Jochim, to plan our Section's 28th Fall Conference, and Emily Fisher, to develop a successful virtual 50th Spring Conference on Environmental Law. While we had hoped to celebrate the milestone Spring Conference in person, the virtual conference was excellent and served our members very well indeed.

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To Jonathan Nwagbaraocha, membership officer, my genuine thanks for your leadership in keeping our membership numbers level during this pandemic year. And, most importantly, for your and Monty Cooper's leadership as we push forward with our diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts.

My heartfelt thanks to Immediate Past Chair Karen Mignone, who was always an incredible and important source of encouragement whenever I would be concerned about the difficulty of leading the Section for an entire year from my home office.

And I am extremely grateful for the opportunity to work with the Section's executive leadership team. Chair-Elect Michelle Diffenderfer's institutional knowledge of the Section is amazing and helped steer critical decisions throughout the year. Jonathan Kahn, vice chair, brought logic and an organized approach to issues during our regular leadership team calls. Bottom line—with Michelle, Jonathan, and incoming Vice Chair Jeff Dennis, the Section has a forward-looking leadership team with deep knowledge of the Section and ABA. All will be well going forward.

To the other members of the Executive Committee—Linda Tsang, secretary; Mike McLaughlin, budget officer; Pamela Barker and Seth Davis, House of Delegate members, and Sheila Hollis, our Board of Governors liaison; and to our Council members—I extend my thanks for your good cheer and support throughout this year. I only wish I could have been with you in person to get know you all better.

Together we accomplished much this year. Among many other things, our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force, led me and the Section on a path of discovery and learning about these important issues. We have revived our connections with the nation's law schools through the work of our Environmental Law Societies Task Force. The Pro Bono Task Force has developed partnerships to connect members with pro bono opportunities where legal advice, model legislation drafting, or research is needed. Our Leadership Development Program developed and is now curating a Transition Tracker for our website that is keeping our members apprised of the significant actions taken by the Biden administration in environmental, energy, and resources regulations, policies, and laws.

The Environmental Justice Task Force did an incredible job helping to draft Resolution 112 on Environmental Justice to be considered by the House of Delegates at the ABA Annual Meeting in August. Many people deserve thanks for getting the Resolution and Report before the House of Delegates, but none more than Professor Jimmy May. Because of the work of this team, the Section is leading the ABA on this important national issue.

Finally, I am profoundly grateful to have served as your Section chair for the 2020–2021 ABA year. It has been a year we will not forget. Although the COVID-19 pandemic limited our opportunities to see each other to the virtual realm, all of us persevered and the Section maintained its activities and succeeded. I watched in amazement as my email inbox filled up daily with the activities of the Section. These emails gave me an insight into the amazing commitment of our Section’s leaders—including officers to committee vice chairs. They are a virtual representation of the thousands and thousands of volunteer hours you all have given to the Section this pandemic year. You did not quit. Thanks.