

# Mobile Bar Association

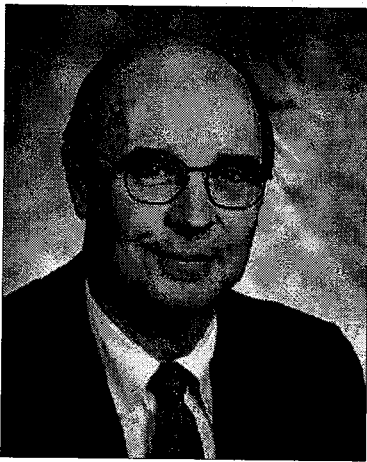


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Mobile Bar Association  
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Mobile, Alabama 36602  
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# Monthly Bulletin

## President's Comments



**Ben Rowe, President**  
Mobile Bar Association

The State Bar's *Quality of Life Survey* results reveal a high level of career dissatisfaction among Alabama lawyers, particularly in the area of "work/life" balance. Some ideas about what can be done about it follow. They primarily address personal responsibility and are directed to young lawyers, who appear to be the most troubled, the most in need of a "work/life" adjustment, and the most likely to take corrective action.

1. If you strongly suspect that you are in the wrong profession, you probably are. Get out. That, essentially, was the advice I was urged to give by one member of the Association who, now in his fifties, fervently wishes he had. This may well be good advice, but if you are not so inclined, read on.
2. Young lawyers must accept the fact that practicing law involves years and years of hard work. There is no way around it. You will say that is no surprise, but in fact a shocking number of law school graduates and/or their spouses seem to think hard work is behind them and that practicing law is pretty much a 9-5 enterprise that involves wearing a lawyer suit and striking a pose. When this misapprehension comes in conflict with rising economic demands and expectations, unhappiness follows.
3. Having said that, it is also necessary to understand that there is - or should be - more to life than law practice. Therefore,

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#### 2006 OFFICERS

- President **Benjamin T. Rowe**
- President Elect **M. Kathleen Miller**
- Vice President **Ian F. Gaston**
- Secretary **Richardo A. Woods**
- Treasurer **Ross A. Frazer**
- Pres Young Lawyers **Chad R. Brown**
- Executive Director **Barbara C. Rhodes**
- Editor **Ferrell S. Anders**

## PROGRAM

ON FRIDAY, JUNE 16, 2006, 12:00 O'CLOCK NOON AT THE  
 RADISSON ADMIRAL SEMMES HOTEL  
 THE GUEST SPEAKER WILL BE MAYOR SAM JONES  
 CITY OF MOBILE  
 MEMORIAL RESOLUTION:  
 ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE FRANK M. DEBELLIS

# President's Comments

*continued from page 1*

consider this advice:

- a. At the end of a reasonable work day go home to your family (note: your family is not at The Bakery or The Garage and that cute thing at the next table is not your spouse), and when you walk through the door wear a smile and leave the frustrations and disappointments of the day behind you. Hug your spouse and children. You don't get a do-over, that is, a second chance to be involved in your children's young lives, so don't neglect family vacations. They will provide you with memories more valuable than gold. In addition, exercise: run, play tennis or golf. Read.
- b. Cultivate your spiritual life. The theologian Paul Tillich (Lutheran minister, soldier of the Great War, teacher at Union Theological Seminary & Harvard) believed that a civilization is defined by its religion: "religion is the substance of culture." In the same way, an individual is defined by his or her spiritual life. Yes, weekends are good, quiet times to get a lot of work done at the office. Go to your house of worship anyway. And let me add this: If you don't have a spiritual life, it is not because you are smart or sophisticated. And certainly not because you have thought a lot about it. To begin thinking about it, read *The Question of God* by Dr. Armand Nicholi, Harvard psychiatrist.
- c. Be involved in good works. Obituaries never report hours worked and rarely money made. They do report the good you did because this is what is ultimately important and worth bragging about. There is not much of a relationship between wealth and happiness. There is a very strong relationship between good works and happiness.
- d. A few months ago Judge Graddick noted the disappearance of the lawyer-politician. Since then I have seen a couple of articles on the subject. In short, laws are being made without the benefit of lawyers. So, run for office if you are so inclined –but when you get there, remember that your election is the expression of a public trust, not an invitation to the public trough. There are not enough lawyers in office. There is already an entirely sufficient supply of crooks.
- e. In practice, conduct yourself civilly and professionally. You will be happier and, in all likelihood, more successful. Whatever you do, do not be driven by greed or envy or the idea that your value is determined by where or how big your house is or what car you drive. Nothing is more corrosive or less related to happiness and true success. The next time you are in a heterogeneous group (that is, a group not made up exclusively of lawyers in little gray lawyer suits) – your house of worship is a good place to find such a group – try this: Look at the people around you whom you admire and ask yourself whether you admire them because of what they have or because of the content of their character.
- f. To me, a glass of Lagavulin on a chilly night is one of life's great pleasures. Nevertheless, beware of alcohol (and its functional equivalents). Opinions to the contrary notwithstanding, what "Rooster" Cogburn called double-rectified busthead does not make you handsome, beautiful, clever, or invisible. What it can do is sneak up on you and steal your life. It is no respecter of age, education, intelligence, gender, or social status. Eternal vigilance is the price of sobriety.

These are the elements of a balanced life. They are primarily matters of individual responsibility, but there are things the Bar and law firms can do to help. These include orientation of young lawyers and mentoring, as well as a substance abuse program, which the Bar has. But the heavy lifting is up to you.