

**PROTECTING THE NBA'S FUTURE  
BY PRESERVING ITS PAST**

*Elect*

**PAMELA**



**MEANES**

**NBA President-Elect, 2013**

**THE  
PEOPLE'S  
PLATFORM**

## THE PEOPLE'S PLATFORM

---



For some time now, I have shared with you, the valued members of the National Bar Association (NBA), my vision of the future. I've been clear about my commitment to growing the NBA's membership and in turn, its power as we move into that future. As a candidate for the office of President-Elect of the NBA, I owe it to each and every member of this organization to put my views and ideas into a clear and concise platform for all to see.

However, it is imperative that you know that the vision that I have shared is not my vision, but one that I have developed from my countless communications with NBA members. Over the last six months, I have had the opportunity to speak to NBA members, including past and current leaders. In addition, I sent a letter to each NBA Regional Director, Section and Division chair, and affiliate chapter president, seeking their input, concerns and suggestions about how the NBA could advance its mission and improve its service to members. The response was overwhelming. Having had the opportunity to speak with and/or hear from more than 700 NBA members, I have developed what is in every sense, "The People's Platform."

Based on my discussions with so many of you, it is apparent to me that members want a professional organization that: 1) exercises financial restraint and achieves stability; 2) effectively communicates; 3) offers practical benefits which are targeted at sustaining and advancing African American lawyers; and 4) effectively addresses and protects the political and civil rights of all.

## FINANCIAL STABILITY

---



During my tenure as Vice President of Finance, members indicated that they wanted an organization which exercises financial restraint, one that is committed to not repeating the mistakes of the past and expecting different results. To accomplish this goal I would:

1. Evaluate current expenditures and on day one of my administration recommend to the Board of Governors (BOG) events and/or expenses which could be consolidated and/or eliminated
2. Implement the current Five-Year Business and Strategic Plans
3. Adhere to the Fiscal Management Policy & Procedure Manual
4. Implement the financial controls passed by the BOG in 2009 to 2011, which:
  - Prohibit subparts from holding events which are not funded

- Ensure that the Board exercises its fiduciary responsibilities and makes certain that all programs be fiscally responsible, and that expenditures do not exceed revenues
- Establish a process that permits a member to submit a hardship registration waiver, which shall be limited to one per bar year per NBA member. All such waivers shall be submitted in writing to the NBA Executive Director, 45 days prior to each such meeting, event or function. The Executive Director shall approve or deny each such hardship registration waiver within 15 days of receipt of same

## EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

---



Based on my discussions with NBA leaders and affiliate chapter presidents, it is apparent to me that members want clear and concise expectations from NBA leaders, as well as support and guidance regarding implementation of said expectations. More important, members want an organization with a national presence, consistent and quality publications, and an active social media outreach. Recognizing that strong and effective communication is essential to the survival of an organization, I would:

1. Ensure consistent publication of the *NBA Magazine*:
  - Enter into a three-year sponsorship agreement with a law firm to design and distribute the *NBA Magazine*
  - Solicit articles from the Law Professor Division
  - Solicit articles from Regions, Sections, Divisions and Affiliate chapters for Inside the NBA section
2. Institute a Comprehensive Communication Action Plan: utilize the Director of Communication to establish a communication team which would be responsible for developing and overseeing internal and external communication. Accordingly, this team would:
  - Oversee all communication, including the *NBA Magazine*, News Briefs and press releases to ensure quality and consistency
  - Oversee and develop a social media campaign, complete with multiple daily posts on Facebook, Fan Page and Twitter
  - Formulate a collaboration with the National Association of Black Journalists, complete with joint meetings and Memorandum of Understanding
  - Implement the NBA Speakers Bureau, complete with marketing NBA leaders to various media outlets as experts on various legal topics
3. Ensure Consistent Communication with Members:
  - NBA President's Weekly Update: place a weekly update in News Briefs notifying members of important changes and/or modifications to policies, procedures and spotlight a Region, Section, Division and/or affiliate chapter activity
  - Hold quarterly informational meetings with Regional Directors and affiliate chapter presidents

- Encourage each Region to implement one aspect of the People's Platform, complete with programs, publications and community service projects

## PRACTICAL MEMBERS BENEFITS

### Targeted at sustaining and advancing African American Lawyers

---



Based on my discussions with NBA members, it is apparent to me that members want benefits which will address their professional needs and enhance their practice. To address these needs, I would:

#### LAW STUDENTS

1. Establish a Regional Directors/Regional National Black Law Student Association (NBLSA) Partnership
  - Regional NBLSA would partner with the NBA region in its area and participate in regional activities and meetings
  - NBA members would commit to attending and participating in the regional NBLSA's conference
  - Regional Directors would commit to recruiting NBA Judicial Council members to serve as judges at NBLSA's regional and national competitions
2. Establish a Professional Development Workshop
  - Utilize the Young Lawyers Division (YLD) to conduct a professional development workshop at the NBLSA's Joint Leadership Retreat leadership meeting
  - Host a networking reception after training
3. Establish an NBA BLSA Chapter Participation of the Year Award
  - Presented to the BLSA chapter which has the greatest participation in NBA Law Day
  - Winning Chapter featured in NBA publications, News Brief and on the website
  - Winning Chapter given access to NBA Corporate Advisory Board members

#### YOUNG LAWYERS

1. NBA Young Lawyers Leadership Forum at Gertrude Rush:
  - Utilize YLD to host a half-day conference designed to address the professional and social needs of NBA young lawyers
  - Conduct a minimum of two CLE's focused on professional development and substantive practice area(s)
  - Have a networking/speed dating event, complete with representatives from minority/majority firms, corporations, government, law professors and members of the judiciary
  - Hold a Youth Community Service Project, complete with

a seminar related to the NBA publication “What Happens When Young People Reach 18”

- Party and/or Reception
2. Seasoned Lawyer Professional Mentorship Program:
    - Utilize Regional Directors to recruit seasoned lawyers to serve as a professional mentor to an NBA young lawyer
    - Participating young lawyer must be an active member of YLD and must commit to serve as mentor to a young lawyer and/or law student within three years following participation in program
    - Duration of mentor relationship is six months to one year
  3. NBA 40 Under 40 Award
    - Utilize YLD to plan and implement the 40 Under 40 Award

### **SMALL FIRM/SOLO PRACTITIONERS**

1. Establish an NBA Virtual Paralegal Network: utilize NBA paralegals to provide free paralegal services to NBA small firm and solo lawyers for maximum of three months. In exchange, NBA members, when able, would agree to hire a paralegal from the network
2. Establish a Partnership with FastCase, a federal and state legal research company, to provide free annual subscriptions to active Solo/Small Firm Practitioners Division members
3. Establish a Master’s Monthly Hotline: utilize the Solo/Small Firm Practitioners Division to recruit seasoned small firm and solo lawyers to participate in monthly resource calls to provide advice to NBA small firm and solo lawyers



### **CORPORATE & MAJORITY FIRM LAWYERS**

1. Re-establish the Corporate Advisory Board complete with “words of wisdom,” attorney profiles in NBA publications
2. Formation of Corporate LinkedIn group for each region complete with discussion groups about business and professional development

### **GOVERNMENT LAWYERS**

During my extensive discussions, I spoke with many government lawyers who indicated a desire to be active NBA members but found that participation was cost-prohibitive. Thus, pursuant to the NBA Five Year Business Plan, I would oversee the creation of a government agency outreach program. Based on existing data, government lawyers account for twenty (20) percent of our membership. Accordingly, the NBA needs to conduct market research to determine the things that it can do to attract more government lawyers. Thereafter, NBA leadership would design a plan to make NBA membership more attainable for government lawyers. That

plan may include but not be limited to, creating a separate dues structure for government lawyers.

## JUDICIARY

Establish an action plan to protect African American judges who are unfairly evaluated, or who come under unjust attack or challenge.

## MAKING MEMBERSHIP COUNT FOR ALL

In addition to the above, I would utilize expanded communications capabilities to spotlight subparts and members on a weekly basis.

## ADVOCACY FOR CIVIL & POLITICAL RIGHTS

---



In light of the Supreme Court's recent decision in *Shelby County, Alabama v. Holder*, the Trayvon Martin verdict, Marco Rubio's attempts to stall Brian Davis' and William Thomas' appointments to the U.S. District Court in Florida, the underrepresentation of African American judges in the federal judiciary and the decline of African Americans' enrollment in law schools, NBA members want a proactive organization which is capable of immediately addressing and defending civil and political rights which are being challenged and/or attacked. If elected President-Elect, to accomplish this goal I would do the following:

1. Considering the Supreme Court's recent decision in *Shelby County, Alabama v. Holder*, a case challenging the constitutionality of provisions of the Voting Rights Act, I would have the NBA Election Protection Committee, Civil Rights Section, Legislative Division, lobbyists and Communication team work in collaboration to develop an action plan, complete with voter education, partnership with voter rights advocates, and lobby to obtain new legislation;
2. Brian Davis' nomination to the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Florida has now been pending for 505 days. William Thomas' nomination to the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Florida has now been pending for 236 days. In response to Senator Marco Rubio and other Senators' attempts to stall African American appointment to the federal bench, I would have the Judicial Selection committee, Legislative Division, Judicial Council Division and the Communication team work in collaboration to develop an action plan which will permit the organization to expeditiously and effectively respond to this situation. Said plan would include a media campaign, appeal to local NBA affiliate chapter to start a letter writing campaign and utilization of the NBA lobbyist; and
3. Trayvon Martin verdict: In light of the injustice that occurred in the initial handling and prosecution of the Martin case, I would have the NBA Legislative Division, Criminal Law section and the Communication team work in collaboration to develop an action plan which would position the organization to take a thoughtful, united and very public position advocating for judicial equity and fairness for all.