

REGIONAL NEWS

Montco Bar Leader Pledges Focus on Working Lawyers

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Of the Legal Staff

LUPIN

In a year in which bar association members continue to be battered by the economy and the Montgomery Common Pleas Court's bench has changed by one-third with the addition of seven new judges, Lupin said his bar association presi-

dency is taking place in a year of challenge.

"These are not the usual and customary times. ... It's a challenge. I think the challenge is energizing," Lupin said.

Lupin plans to work with the association's lobbyist, Richard Gmerek of Gmerek Government Relations Inc., against any proposals to append sales taxes to lawyer services. The bar association has discounted its continuing legal education courses by 20 percent because of the economy, Lupin said. And the bar association has made an ad hoc meeting of managing partners a standing committee. The committee will meet quarterly and will be chaired this year by immediate-past MBA president Mark A. Kearney to "explore how the legal environment is changing," Lupin said.

The bar association must also continue its support of local legal aid, Lupin said. He noted that the bar association contributed more to legal aid in 2009 than it had ever done in the past.

Lupin praised the decision by Montgomery Common Pleas Judge Richard J. Hodgson, Administrator Michael Kehs and Civil Division Administrative Judge Kent Albright to eliminate the court's settlement masters program and have sitting judges in the civil division preside over settlement conferences and perhaps preside over trials in the same cases.

Having cases stay with the same judge will "help our county, our citizens and our working attorneys," Lupin said.

The bar association's leadership will be meeting in early March to review the association's long-range strategic plan, Lupin said.

Lupin is pleased that there has been success on one of the goals in the strategic plan: making headway on diversifying the Montgomery County bar. The bar association will have its second summer of its 1L, diverse law student program, and the bar association will be committing funds again for a scholarship program, Lupin said. Lupin said that the students from last year's program said they would now consider working for a suburban law firm because of their positive internship experiences.

Lupin said he would like to see more progress made on another of the strategic plan's goals. The bar association would like to get more young lawyers involved in association activities. There has been progress on involving younger attorneys to a greater depth, but Lupin wants to grow toward accomplishing that goal even more.

Lupin practices in the areas of commercial

litigation and plaintiffs' personal injury litigation. He attended Penn State for his undergraduate degree and Temple University School of Law for his law degree.

Of Lupin's most famous cases, Lupin represented Montgomery County in successfully defending the constitutionality of the Montgomery County Personal Property Tax Law, which was a levy against an individual's holdings and securities in out-of-state businesses. The late billionaire Walter Annenberg challenged the law.

In another case, Lupin successfully defended Montgomery County, as well as the Northern and Western Waste System Authorities, in litigation brought against them by Waste Management of Pennsylvania Inc. in which Waste Management sought to enforce the trash haulers' right to collect waste in Montgomery County and dump it elsewhere.

As serious as much of the bar association's work is this year, Lupin has a lighter side. Lupin, who writes a commercial litigation column for the Pennsylvania Association for Justice, has been starting off his column with a Bob Dylan quote for the last decade.

Lupin said he didn't start off using Dylan lyrics because of being a huge fan of the singer-songwriter. Dylan has such a huge discography that Dylan became Lupin's commercial litigation muse because it is relatively easy to find lyrics from Dylan songs, Lupin said.

Lupin has been married to his wife, Linda, for 25 years. Lupin continues on 8

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for 36 years. Linda owns Paper Umbrella, an

invitation business. They have a grown son and daughter. The most important event in 2010 for Lupin may not be his MBA presidency, but welcoming his first grandchild, who is due to be born in April.

Lupin said his small family is looking forward to the joy of a little one. And Lupin, a big Penn State football fan and Phillies baseball fan, said he'll be readying his grandchild to follow in his footsteps as a big sports fan.