

Hubbard sees challenges to take on as ABA president

By MIKE FITTS
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William C. Hubbard doesn't speak of his year as president of the American Bar Association as a career achievement award; he talks of having one year to do important work to ensure and extend justice in the United States.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
Attorney William Hubbard will focus his year as ABA president on access to justice and modernization of legal systems in the internet age.

He took the top post of the nation's most prominent legal organization in August, culminating decades of involvement with the Bar, dating back

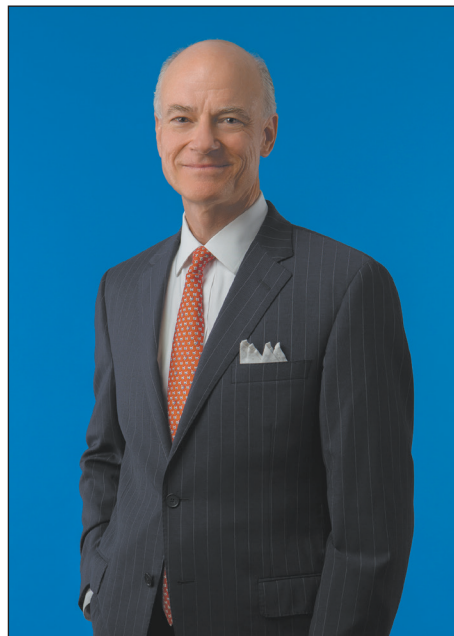
almost to his 1977 graduation from the University of South Carolina School of Law. Hubbard also has continued a major role with his alma mater, serving on the board of trustees since 1986, as he practices business and financial services law at Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough.

With his year as ABA president, Hubbard intends to address what he calls "a justice gap in our country." Too many people don't have the means to get the legal counsel they need, Hubbard notes. Ironically, this shortfall continues at a time when the field seems to have an oversupply of lawyers.

Another contributor to the gap, Hubbard said, is a lack of knowledge about people's rights under the law and the situations in which it can apply. He cites the example of an eviction notice: many families might not understand that they have legal rights and protections in such a case.

"It's simply a lack of knowledge that a problem they confront is a legal problem," Hubbard said.

Sometimes, travel and the need for signed documents delivered in person can be a barrier too, he said. Technology has transformed fields such as banking, Hubbard said, and he believes that the Bar needs to lead the way into putting modern technology to better use. Can smartphones cut into the need for paperwork? Can other legal services be delivered remotely, increasing access? He hopes to lead the Bar, working through a committee on technology, to find ways to provide legal services to more people. He hopes



William C. Hubbard

Hubbard is a partner of Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough, practicing law in the areas of business litigation, utilities and financial services. His other major roles include:

- » *President of the American Bar Association, 2014-2015*
- » *Immediate past president, American Bar Foundation*
- » *Former Chairman, ABA House of Delegates*
- » *Chair of the Board of Directors of the World Justice Project*
- » *Member of the USC Board of Trustees*
- » *Recipient of the Order of the Palmetto, 2002*
- » *Member of Board of Directors, Synovus/NBSC*

that technology will help provide legal services to address how the vast majority of America's poor, and an increasing number of middle-income families, are not able to access legal services.

The Internet is being used to meet some of those needs, though startup companies and self-serve websites. Hubbard wants the Bar to be engaged with these trends, working to make sure that more

people using such services get appropriate legal assistance, rather than the world of online law being far removed from the rest of the system. "We need to think more creatively and innovatively about how we deliver legal services," he said.

South Carolina has some specific challenges in legal access. Hubbard believes that it's time to address the many legal challenges faced by those who have served their sentence for a felony. There are about 650 legal restrictions on their rights, Hubbard said, ranging from voting rights to student loan limitations. If there are too many impediments, that forces these people to be reliant on government or charity rather than rebuilding careers, and that shouldn't be the outcome of the law, Hubbard said.

Hubbard also cites domestic violence as an area in which the S.C. judicial system needs to improve. These crimes often traumatize not only the victims, usually women, but also the children who see it happen, he said. The S.C. legal system has some areas to be proud of, Hubbard is careful to note. The sentencing reform of 2010 has brought an overall reduction in the number of people behind bars, but an increase in the number of violent offenders who are locked up. These changes are both saving taxpayers millions and reducing recidivism rates. "This is really working," Hubbard said.

Another area where change is working: South Carolina's efforts toward electronic filing and better coordination of court documents. S.C. Chief Justice Jean Toal deserves credit for making the state a national leader in this category, he said.

Such public policy concerns are key issues for the Bar, in South Carolina and nationally. Hubbard sees his work, for the Bar and for Nelson Mullins, as part of what drew him to the legal field decades ago. Growing up in Florence, Hubbard came to see the town's lawyers as people who brought people together to fix things, and he came to admire that. He cites state Sen. Nick Zeigler and attorney Mark Buyck as local leaders from the legal field. "People went to them and looked to them, if there was an issue," Hubbard said.

If things had worked out differently, Hubbard could have been a doctor instead. But as a high school student he got a peek at surgery, and that was all it

WHAT ARE LAWYERS PAID?

Lawyer population in the Southeast, in 2013

Alabama	14,303
Florida	68,464
Georgia	28,974
Kentucky	13,061
Louisiana	18,528
Maryland	23,068
Mississippi	6,955
North Carolina	21,855
South Carolina	9,587
Tennessee	17,203
Texas	82,607
Virginia	24,468

Mean salary reported by class of 2011 in smallest firms

Atlanta	\$59,296
Baltimore	\$48,636
Dallas	\$62,746
New Orleans	\$65,556
New York City	\$59,775
Washington, D.C.	\$69,204

Mean salaries reported in law firms by city, January 2013

Atlanta	\$93,140
Baltimore	\$90,622
Birmingham	\$80,577
Charleston, SC	\$50,652
Charlotte	\$99,042
Columbia, SC	\$67,042
Dallas	\$118,195
Greenville, SC	\$76,045
Jackson, MS	\$87,818
Little Rock	\$54,912
Louisville	\$70,750
Miami	\$80,750
Nashville	\$88,766
New Orleans	\$86,720
New York City	\$143,224
Raleigh	\$73,013
Richmond	\$81,263
Washington, DC	\$146,948

SOURCE: American Bar Association



Next Issue's Focus:
Architecture, Engineering and Construction

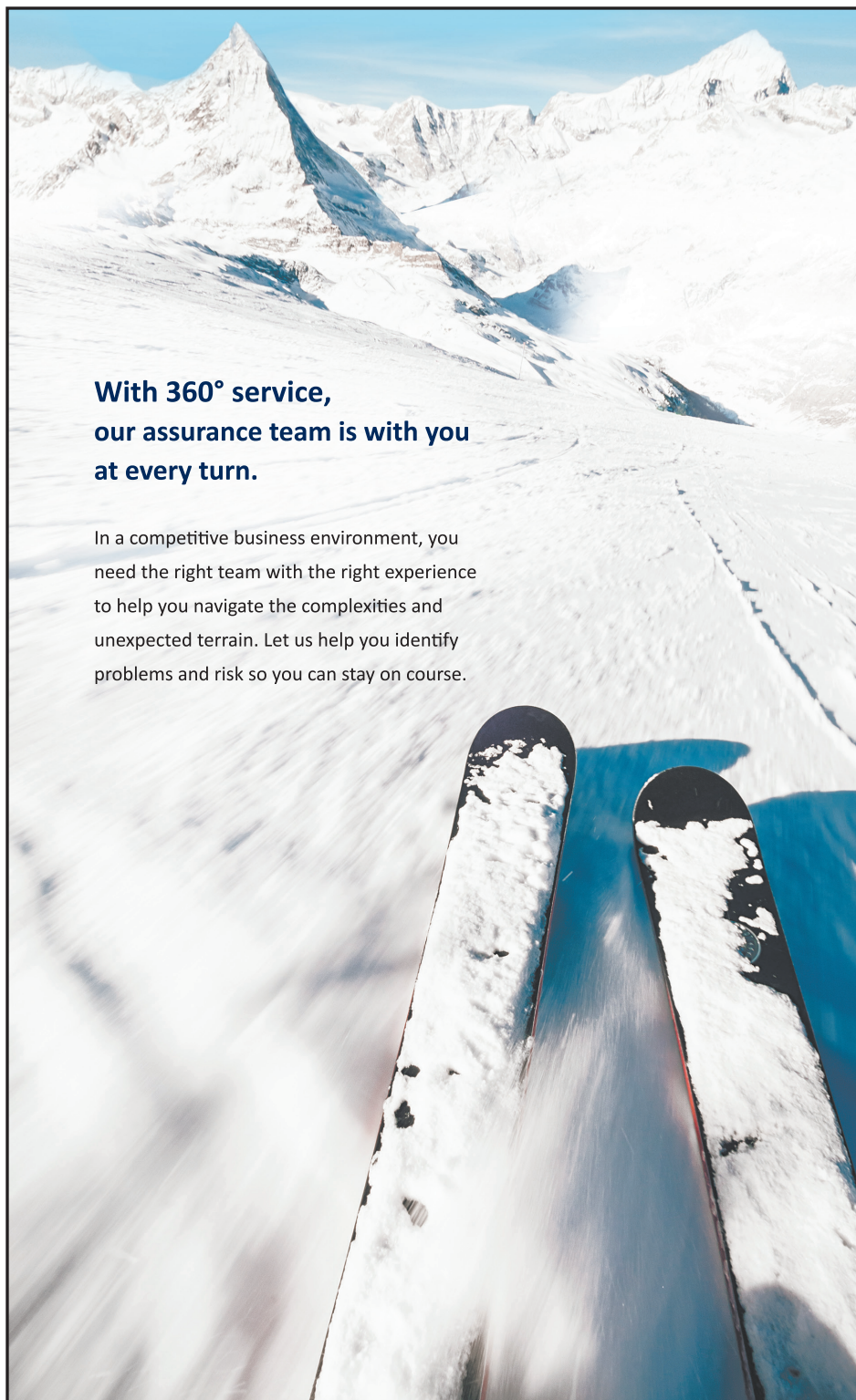


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Hutchens law firm opens Columbia office

STAFF REPORT

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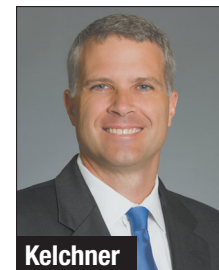
Hutchens Law Firm, a North Carolina-based law firm concentrating in default service and business law, has opened an office in Columbia at 240 Stoneridge Drive, Suite 400.

The office is led by managing attorney John S. Kay and practicing attorneys John B. Kelchner and Ashley Z. Stanley.

Kay has focused his practice in the areas of mortgage default servicing and bankruptcy, and is a frequent speaker at continuing legal education seminars on issues related to these areas.

Kay was admitted to the South Carolina Bar in 1986 and is admitted to practice in all state courts in South Carolina, and also the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the district of South Carolina, the U.S. Federal Court for the District of South Carolina, and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit. He is a member of the South Carolina Bankruptcy Law Association, and is a former board member of the Association.

Kelchner has been practicing for more than 17 years representing mortgage creditors in consumer bankruptcy and foreclosure matters. He received his J.D. degree



Kelchner



Kay



Stanley

from the University of South Carolina and was admitted to the South Carolina Bar in 1997. He is admitted to practice in all state courts in South Carolina, the U.S.

District Court for the District of South Carolina, and the Bankruptcy Court for the District of South Carolina.

Stanley was admitted to the South Carolina Bar in 2007, and received juris doctor from the University of South Carolina in 2007. She is a member of the Richland County Bar Association, South Carolina Bar, and American Bar Association. She has spent two years as a compliance attorney, focusing on ensuring legal, regulatory, and servicer compliance, and quality assurance. ■

HUBBARD, continued from Page 21 ➤

took. "I saw how much blood there was a decided that what I needed was an office and books," he said. At the outset of his legal career, he worked as a clerk for U.S. District Court Judge Robert F. Chapman, and he calls that a great education in how to work as a lawyer. Under Chapman's guidance Hubbard learned to focus on the law and the decisions without agonizing over them, and to keep his writing simple, not flowery. "I quickly learned not to hand in a show-off piece," Hubbard said.

Even as he has worked for decades at Nelson Mullins, he has pursued his involvement with both the Bar and the University of South Carolina, among other community roles. In Hubbard's time as a USC trustee, he has seen the university grow and, in his view, become better organized. During the early 1990s, the university implemented strategic and facilities planning that has given it a vision to guide its growth. "I believe we're stronger than we've ever been. It's exciting to see the progress," Hubbard said.

Among the issues addressed in his time on USC's board is getting a new building for the School of Law, after years of efforts. That has required reminding people of the importance of the law to society, some-

thing Hubbard also sees as a crucial advocacy role for the Bar. "Strong law is essential to strong commerce," he said.

All these roles plus his legal practice have made great demands on Hubbard's time, especially during this year as ABA president. He said it wouldn't be possible to do all this without the cooperation of his family, legal clients and the attorneys at Nelson Mullins. "I'm confident my practice will be there when I return."

To the firm's managing partner, such service to the profession is in line with the expectations at Nelson Mullins. "Pro bono service and service to the Bar are core values of the firm. William's 35-year service to the Bar reflects his and our firm's commitment to these values, and we are proud of what he has done for the ABA," said managing partner Jim Lehman.

All these roles also have meant major demands on Hubbard's time and attention. After his year as ABA president is up, he said he looks forward to focusing again on his practice, in particular on the one occasion when outside interests must wait: when a court case goes to trial. Trying a case is a time when everyone knows an attorney must set aside other interests, he said. "There's something exhilarating about going into a courtroom and having your total focus on one matter," he said. ■