

Celebrating Our Nonresident Lawyers

Raise a toast to our Nonresident Lawyers Division (NRLD) members who apply their legal skills and talents to serve justice across the globe, while continuing to stay engaged and involved with our legal community.

BY LARRY J. MARTIN

One of the strengths of the State Bar of Wisconsin is that it brings together the entire legal profession. Under our organizational tent are judges and lawyers from every practice area and every demographic. Including our certified paralegals and law student associate members, the State Bar is the voice for Wisconsin's legal community.

What may come as a surprise to some is that a significant and vital part of our membership is made up of members who reside and practice outside Wisconsin. Nearly 30% of our members (7,300 out of 25,000) are nonresident lawyer members. These members bring a high level of engagement and contribute to the organizational life blood of our organization.

In many ways, our Nonresident Lawyers Division (NRLD) is the voluntary part of our State Bar. Most division members belong to other state bars, but for a variety of professional and personal reasons, choose to maintain their license in Wisconsin. We are the beneficiaries of their choice.

During my time at the State Bar, I have seen the contributions and leadership that our nonresident members have made, both individually and collectively.

The NRLD has a strong board with members from across the country who meet regularly, planning programs and services for their out-of-state colleagues. When the State Bar's Annual Meeting & Conference was brought back, after years without an organization-wide gathering, the NRLD was one of the first to commit to help organize programming and encourage their members to join us.

Our nonresident lawyers have produced talented and engaged leaders in the State Bar

of Wisconsin, serving on countless boards and committees, including a recent and the current chair of the Board of Governors.

Each month I personally sign thank-you notes to our numerous contributors to the Wisconsin Law Foundation. I am always delighted to see support from members not only from around the country, but in places like London, Hong Kong, Seoul, Berlin, and Tel Aviv. In fact, our nonresident members contribute as frequently as our in-state members.

It only seems appropriate then that the Law Foundation recently expanded qualification for our Belle Case La Follette awards to include members practicing in other states. The \$2,800 award is given annually to three recent law school graduates who are State Bar members and represent underserved populations, such as people of modest means and those who live in rural areas and have limited access to legal representation.

I am proud to say that this year, for the first time, the Law Foundation has given a La Follette Award to a nonresident lawyer, Travis Nathaniel Hasteen Nez. Travis works with one of the poorest groups of people in our country – Native Americans in rural Arizona, where legal resources are all too scarce. Despite the financial challenges, Travis has chosen and is committed to serving his community. He will use his award to help with law school debt.

Our NRLD members are bringing their legal skills and talents in service to justice across the globe, while continuing to stay engaged and involved with our legal community. Let's raise a glass of Wisconsin milk or mug of beer in honor of our NRLD members. We are stronger for their membership. **WL**



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