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CBA

RECORD

Special YLS Theme Issue

PROTECTING OUR CHILDREN



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PRESIDENT'S PAGE

BY DANIEL M. KOTIN

Facing Challenges in What We Do



Summit on Violence

It was against this backdrop that I was approached by fellow trial lawyer Tony Romanucci last month inquiring about the CBA's interest in co-sponsoring a summit focusing on the fractured relationship between our citizens and police. We looked at Tony's proposed program and concluded that there is, in fact, a fractured relationship which needs to be addressed. Tony had worked toward developing this summit for more than a year. We were impressed by his efforts, and we were also moved by his explicit focus on finding answers to these problems. As we have all seen, there are plenty of "seminars" out there which do little more than rant about problems facing our legal system and our society. There are simply too few programs which devote the time and brain power necessary to identify and propose solutions.

So, we told Tony that we would be honored to sponsor this summit. We then soon concluded that the broken relationship between our police and citizens was just one symptom of a much broader problem. What about the relationship between the entire criminal justice system and our citizens? What about the relationship between our citizens and other societal institutions—families, schools, mental health providers, drug and alcohol treatment centers? What about the relationship between our citizens (gang members) and each other?

It was from this starting point, just last month, that the May 19th Curbing the Violence in Chicago Summit was born. It is well known that the key to success of any program with a focus on solving a problem is to have the buy-in and participation from

As I was planning my year as CBA President, considering initiatives to pursue, and scheduling events, the landscape in Chicago was different. The impact from the now-infamous Laquan McDonald police shooting video was still unknown. Donald Trump had not yet made Chicago his poster child epitomizing all that is wrong with our once-peaceful society. So, as we planned and organized many exciting initiatives for this year, holding a major summit on violence in Chicago was the furthest thing from my mind.

But now, a year later, life in our city is much different. Chicago recorded a record number of homicides last year, and data from January and February indicate that we are on pace to eclipse that number this year. Arguably, violence has become the most pressing issue facing our community.

At the Chicago Bar Association, we pride ourselves on remaining relevant. We pride ourselves on tackling difficult issues, and doing what we can on behalf of the legal profession to make a difference.

all stakeholders. Within days, we had the support of the Illinois Supreme Court. We had commitments to participate from the Circuit Court of Cook County, the Cook County State's Attorney's Office, the Public Defender's Office, the Chicago Police Department, and the Cook County Sheriff's Office. Just a week later, Alderman Ed Burke introduced a resolution in the City Council proposing that all City departments who share a concern about the relationship between law enforcement and our citizens should be represented and involved in this summit.

These voices, combined with those representing the perpetrators and victims of violence (religious leaders, community organizers and people living in our neighborhoods), will come together on May 19th in the Grand Ballroom of the Chicago Standard Club for a day-long summit focusing on finding a path toward curbing the violence which has so tragically impacted so many lives, taken a sig-

nificant financial toll on our government and local businesses, and has tarnished the global reputation of our great city. We also hope to learn from academics who have studied this problem, as well as folks in other cities who have addressed similar problems with success.

Topics will include:

- The relationship between law enforcement and the community;
- The affected communities: people, police, problems and progress;
- The impact of media and social media on Chicago violence; and
- Gun violence in the justice system: What can Chicago learn from other cities?

Those with experience in putting together programs such as this one tell me that planning requires a full year – not just three months. But we do not have the luxury of planning for a year. Our community cannot wait until next year. This process must start now. I use the word

WHAT'S YOUR OPINION?

Send your views to the **CBA Record**, 321

South Plymouth Court, Chicago, IL 60604, or

email us at publications@chicagobar.org. The

magazine reserves the right to edit letters prior to publishing.

“start” because that is what this summit will be—a beginning. If we can paint a path towards solutions to the violence epidemic this May, then we can dedicate future summits to implementing those solutions.

This is a tall task that we have embraced. It will be challenging. But the Chicago Bar Association has never run away from challenges. Now, more than ever, we must face this issue head-on. ■

Civil Rights and Police Litigation

Wednesday, April 19, 1:00–5:15 PM

Presented by: YLS Civil Rights

MCLE Credit: 4 IL MCLE Credits

Topics Include Federal Criminal Justice Clinic Race Discrimination Litigation In U.S. District Court; FOIA and its Role in Police Accountability and Document Production; a Community Activist's View on Transparency, Data Collection and Production of Police Audio and Video Files; Policing in the 21st Century, Technology, Independent Investigations and Policing Under Pressure; Plaintiffs' Perspective in Litigating Police Liability Cases from Investigation through Trial; a Defense Counsel's Perspective in Litigating Police Liability Cases from Investigation through Trial; the Government's Role in Police Liability Cases from an Investigation and Document Review and Production Perspective; and a Judicial Perspective on Litigating Police Liability Cases in Federal Court.

Participants include:

Professor Alison Siegler, Director, University of Chicago Law School Federal Criminal Justice Clinic; Antonio Romanucci, Romanucci & Blandin, LLC; Michael Bersani, Hervas, Condon & Bersani, PC.; Judge Gary Feinerman, U.S. District Court, Northern District of Illinois; and Moderators Nicole Schult, Uptown People's Law Center; Co-Chair, YLS Civil Rights Committee; and Anthony Becknek, Hervas, Condon & Bersani, PC; Co-Chair, YLS Civil Rights Committee. Other speakers will be announced at www.chicagobar.org.