

Good evening.

Before I start must say that I truly am humbled to have been re-elected as CBA Presidentgiven the predecessors in whose shoes I am walking – some of who are present today. Past Presidents **Hon. Alden McLaughlin, Hon. Wayne Panton and Bryan Hunter**. It's very difficult to follow them, ...but I'll do my best.

I also want to thank my law firm, Maples and Calder, whose commitment to public service is one of the reasons why I can be here. So, thank you to my partners and my colleagues at the firm.

I appreciate that what you really want tonight is to socialize with your colleagues and friends. What you really want is for me to sit down not much longer after I stand up and not to deliver a formal address.

So I will be brief with my remarks – mainly touching on our obligation to young Caymanians who are brought into the fold of the Bar.

I extend my warmest welcome to the new entrants to profession who we will be honouring later this evening. I extend to them my warmest congratulations.

As the Caymanian Bar Association celebrates its 27th anniversary its relevance for Caymanian lawyers remains just as strong as it was at the time of its founding and it is continuing to have a significant impact on our profession in the Cayman Islands.

There has been a steady increase in the number of Caymanian's entering the legal profession. Total overall CBA membership at an all-time high. 220 Caymanian Attorneys.....and over a 100 Student Members.

It therefore seems to me that the first obligation we have is to those CBA Student Members who seek to join our profession. I would like to thank all firms who facilitated summer internships for our Student Members.

With over a 100 student members we need to plan to for the years ahead. As members of the bar we must examine our consciences and ask whether legal scholarships and training contracts meet the goals of training and advancement of Caymanians in the profession.

These young Caymanians need careersnot just jobs ...or scholarshipsor internships. You will all agree with me that when Scholarships and internships when simply viewed as the cost of doing business do not help the advancement of Caymanians in the profession.

In particular, it is a stain on the profession if people are trained but are unable to find suitable employment after successfully completing Articles. They are told there is no room at the inn.

A concern expressed to Council over and over again is that many firms simply do not even acknowledge applications from Caymanians. The fact that these people have spent a King's Ransom on their legal education and training without achieving their objective of securing a fulfilling legal career, means that there will be people who bear the profession ill will.

The reality now is that Caymanians now make up around 1/3 of the legal profession on Island this needs to be reflected in the work place. Some firms already exceed this ratio. It is encouraging that at one of our large firms more than 50% of their Associates are Caymanians who completed their Articles in the Cayman Islands.

Another concern for CBA council is the number of Caymanians who find themselves unemployed or under employed before they hit the 3 year PQE mark. In many cases such persons have found their competitive position further eroded by lack of proper training, limitation on the spread of Article seats and poor immersion in important practice areas such as funds and finance. The CBA council therefor identified educational outreach as a key to solving this competency crisis and, this July, launched the CBA Seminar series. I now call upon Stephen Watler, the co-chair of the CBA Student Chapter, to expand on this.

Thank you all.