



October 23, 2013

Dear Members and Friends:

Every year since the South Asian Bar Association of Florida was founded in 2004, our organization has grown in its size, strength, and influence. In advance of our SABA Florida Annual Diversity Leadership Forum and Annual Meeting, I wanted to take a brief moment to recap some of this year's exciting developments and share some reflections as we prepare for next year.

As you may be aware, unlike many SABA chapters whose membership includes only attorneys located within a particular city or metropolitan area, SABA Florida is a unique chapter in that our membership spans our entire state, and we host both regional and statewide events. This geographic diversity presents some challenges and numerous opportunities. Though we meet "in-person" only twice a year, we have the benefit of a statewide referral network, frequent regional events, and two weekends of statewide events during our mid-year and annual meetings.

This year, we further established ourselves as a truly statewide voluntary bar association. We were able to welcome a newly active North Florida region with dynamic members in that part of the state. We had several events in Jacksonville this year – including a recent CLE entitled "*Hanging Up Your Shingle*". We also hosted numerous joint events with other voluntary bar associations in our South Florida region, including the *B'nai B'rith Justice Unit* and the *Asian Pacific American Bar Association of South Florida*, with whom we hosted two well-attended resume and interview workshops for law students preparing for interviews. Additionally, our Orlando and Tampa regions hosted multiple well-attended happy hours and other events throughout the year.

For the second year in a row, we held our Mid-Year Meeting at the Florida Bar Convention, this year in Boca Raton, Florida. We hosted Florida Bar President Eugene Pettis at our meeting – now the second Florida Bar president to attend one of our meetings – thereby cementing our relationships with the leadership of the Florida Bar. We had the largest SABA Florida delegation in our history at the 2013 NASABA Convention in San Francisco, including two past SABA Florida presidents, our President-Elect, and myself as current President. I was also able to represent SABA Florida this year at the 2013 National Leadership Retreat in Denver, Colorado.

Furthermore, SABA Florida took an active role in assisting South Asian attorneys in Florida interested in transitioning to the bench. After a comprehensive application process, we endorsed two South Asian candidates for federal judicial positions this year. This represents an incredible "next step" in increasing our influence within the bar at large. Our work pushing for diversity in the judiciary even led to an invitation to the White House for a forum on *Judicial Vacancies and the Importance of the Courts*, which I was honored to attend on behalf of SABA Florida.

Our work has not gone unnoticed. SABA Florida received, along with other voluntary bar associations, a Group Professionalism Award from the Florida Bar's Standing Committee on Professionalism. Our President-Elect, Navin Pasem, received the Young Businessperson of the Year Award at the Tampa Indo-U.S. Chamber of Commerce Annual Gala – the first attorney to

ever receive such an award. These awards reflect positively on our organization as well as the accomplishments and professionalism of all of our membership.

Finally, I wanted to tell you about the status of my two primary objectives during my term as President of SABA Florida.

First, in an effort to further strengthen our connections between members across the state, one of our major initiatives this year was to re-launch our online presence. After many hours of work, we launched a totally revamped website for SABA Florida. If you have not seen it yet, please take the time to visit it at www.SABAFL.org. Our new website boasts a clean, modern design, a clear statement of our goals and membership benefits, an easy-to-use listing of our membership, and the most up-to-date information on SABA Florida events. Most importantly, we are now able to accept membership dues via PayPal, thus eliminating the need for sending in a check to join. Our new website has been the envy of other SABA chapters across the country, and other chapters have actually asked for our assistance as they revisit their web presence.

Second, I hoped to take SABA Florida to the national stage by bidding to host the National Conference for the South Asian Bar Association of North America. Not only would hosting the conference be incredibly prestigious for our expanding organization, it could lead to a number of financial benefits for our chapter. After months of tireless work by our Officers and Board of Directors, I am proud to announce that **SABA Florida will be hosting the 2015 National Conference for the South Asian Bar Association of North America in Orlando**. This is a *tremendous* honor for our growing chapter and a wonderful opportunity for our membership. I encourage all of you to get involved and plan on taking leadership roles in this conference.

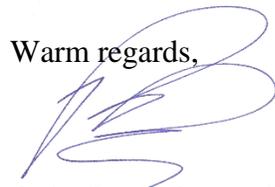
As my presidency comes to a close, I wanted to share a few thoughts regarding the future. Since joining SABA Florida in 2006 as a newly-admitted attorney, I am amazed by the steady growth in the size and influence of this organization, as well as the achievements of its members. I am proud that, despite all of the challenges we have faced to date, SABA Florida will be celebrating its 10th year in 2014 with more members, more accomplishments, and more influence than ever before.

However, our future growth and development lies in the hands of our membership.

I encourage you to take the time to become an active member. Attend our many events, happy hours, workshops, and CLEs throughout the state. If you have not yet done so, sign up to attend our **Annual Diversity Leadership Forum on November 8, 2013 at the FIU School of Law**. Finally, if you are considering taking a leadership role, I encourage you to do so – you will find a group of warm, dedicated, and accomplished individuals who will go out of the way to assist you when you need it most. With our combined efforts, SABA Florida has a bright future ahead!

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve this organization.

Warm regards,



Rishi Singh Bagga, 2012-2013 President
South Asian Bar Association of Florida