

New BCBA president Gilliss will benefit from experience as former head of MSBA

by Danny Jacobs

Published: June 12th, 2011

OCEAN CITY — Attached to the lanyard around Edward J. Gilliss' neck at the Maryland State Bar Association's annual meeting is a "Past President" ribbon. It's a title he believes will come in handy when he is installed later this month as president of the Baltimore County Bar Association.

"I'll be able to tap into things I learned as state bar president and be able to apply them in my year as president of the county bar," Gilliss said.

Gilliss, a longtime partner at Royston, Mueller, McLean & Reid LLP in Towson, succeeds Court of Special Appeals Judge Alexander Wright Jr. as leader of the 1,600-member organization. The county bar presidency is the culmination of a 10-year track on the Baltimore County Bar Association's Executive Council, which Gilliss served on while president of the state bar in 2006 and 2007. The decade-long tenure gives members time to learn the ropes and allowed Gilliss to juggle his state role with his county one.

"The commitment to the local bar association is an important part of being a practitioner in your jurisdiction," he said. "Being a Baltimore County practitioner, it's a position of honor to be part of the executive council."

Though the state bar has 15 times as many members as Baltimore County's, Gilliss sees similarities between the two.

"The association has to offer a product to state lawyers or county lawyers they think is worth the time commitment and dollar commitment to participate," he said.

Gilliss wants to grow the county bar's continuing education offerings, including online programs, one of the state bar's top priorities. And he will not hesitate to adopt ideas used by the state bar.

"The fact I'm familiar with the inner workings of the state bar association means that when the county bar can rely on something the state bar already has or has done, we don't have to struggle to reinvent the wheel," he said.

One idea Gilliss already plans to incorporate a special committee of past presidents as a way of honoring the bar association's almost-100-year history.

"We'll have a ready source for [future] leadership ... to take advantage of the skill sets of the past presidents," he said.

And Gilliss is thinking about the future. Adam T. Sampson, one of the younger members of the executive council, chairs the BCBA's long-term planning committee and will work closely with incoming Young Lawyers Committee Chairman Robert K. Erdman Jr.

"They're going to be tasked with creating a blueprint to ensure young lawyers who become members of our association remain active in our association and have opportunities for leadership," Gilliss said.



Edward J. Gilliss

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