



Teacher, Counselor, Thought-Leader

Incoming PBA President Nancy Conrad
Reflects on Leadership

By Andy Andrews



She is a former schoolteacher and school counselor turned lawyer. She loves to travel and lives health and wellness. And she is committed to the advancement of excellence in the profession and the promotion of inclusion in the Pennsylvania Bar Association.

These life experiences and journeys have contributed to building a strong foundation and vision of incoming PBA President Nancy Conrad's initiatives. As the 2024-25 PBA president, Conrad will build on what she identifies as "four cornerstones" that will shape her vision for the year:

- To promote integrity and excellence in the practice of law.
- To encourage wellness and professionalism among PBA members.
- To ensure inclusion and belonging in the PBA.
- To extend PBA's outreach to PBA communities.



Conrad, right, consults with Legal Assistant Jennifer Pantalione.

Conrad will build on what she identifies as “four cornerstones” that will shape her vision for the year.

“It is my practice to be an inclusive thought-leader,” she said. “In leadership positions, I do not act unilaterally. I value the input of all voices, every view and, from that input, collaborate to make decisions, issue statements and take action, based on our collective view and in the best interest of our members.”

Conrad said, “As PBA president, I will collaborate with the board, committees, sections and new working groups to continue and develop programs and events related to those four cornerstones.”

Conrad, who resides and practices in the Lehigh Valley, will be the PBA’s 130th and seventh woman president. She is the second PBA president from Lehigh County. The only other president from that county dates to 1941 (Fred B. Gerner, 1941-42).

“I am honored to be the second PBA president from Lehigh County, the seventh woman president and I appreciate the opportunity to serve the PBA,” she said.

Conrad, an employment and higher education attorney for more than 19 years with White and Williams LLP, is managing partner of the firm’s Center Valley office. She is the third PBA president and first female PBA president from the firm. Prior White and Williams PBA presidents include Andrew F. Susko, who held the office in 2007-08 and Charles Eppolito III, 2018-19. “The leadership and engagement of White and Williams attorneys in the PBA demonstrates our firm’s commitment and support to PBA service and other community activities,” she said.

First Career: The Early Years

Conrad earned her bachelor’s degree in psychology from Lycoming College and a master’s degree in counseling from Penn State. Upon graduation, she pursued a career in education, taught third and fourth

grade and served as a school counselor in a public school district outside of Philadelphia.

“The opportunity to have an impact on students’ lives was a privilege,” she said. “And while I loved teaching, I became restless and, after serving as president of our teachers’ association, decided to pursue law school.”

In pursuit of her ambition to become an attorney, Conrad attended Temple Law School as a Temple Owl, where she earned her Juris Doctor.

“I taught school during the day, and attended law school at night,” she said. “It was an amazing experience. My law school classmates were mostly second-career students, and it was an extraordinary opportunity to continue my career in education, learn the law from top-notch professors and collaborate with classmates from different positions, including banking, medical, law enforcement and government. While in law school, I focused on employment law and had the honor to be selected for the trial team; we were the first all-woman trial team, and participated in regional and national trial competitions, which is where I developed my interest in litigation. My skills as a litigator were framed in large part by my teaching and trial team experience.”

The importance of balance in life also developed at that time. “As a law school evening student, I strived to balance the demands of teaching during the day and law school at night with time for family, friends and colleagues,” she said. “I continue to strive for balance today.”

Her Legal Career

Conrad began her law career with Duane Morris and worked in its Philadelphia office

for the first seven years of her legal career. She initially practiced in the litigation group, and when there was an opportunity to transfer to the employment law group, she took the leap into this arena, and has continued to practice in the area of employment law. While with Duane Morris, she worked with and was mentored by Jane L. Dalton, a highly regarded lawyer and PBA leader.

When she moved to the Lehigh Valley, Conrad said, “I found my way to White and Williams and found the best of both worlds, a local Lehigh Valley office and practice, and the resources of a large firm with our main office in Philadelphia. White and Williams provided me the resources to grow my practice in the area of higher education.”

Conrad represents employers in “all areas of workplace disputes, with a special focus on representing colleges and universities in areas related to higher education,” she said.

Start at the PBA

Conrad related that she got her start in the PBA through committees and sections.

She attended a PBA Commission on Women in the Profession (WIP) Fall Retreat as her first real engagement in the PBA. “I was warmly welcomed and immediately engaged in many WIP activities, ultimately becoming a co-chair,” Conrad said.

“I was next invited by a PBA colleague to join the PBA Labor and Employment Law Section,” Conrad said. “There, I found great value in exchanging ideas and practice issues with employment law colleagues, and ultimately served as a chair of the section.”

A law partner then encouraged her to become active with the newly formed PBA Federal Practice Committee (FPC).



Conrad, fourth from right, is the past president of the Bar Association of Lehigh County. With her are colleagues from the association.

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Conrad says her family is her joy. From left, Caroline's fiancé Paden, Caroline, Kendelle, Nancy, Brent's wife Erin and Brent.

Conrad is the third PBA president from White and Williams LLP: from left, Andrew Susko (2007-08), Conrad (2024-25) and Charles Eppolito III (2018-19).



"I continued with the FPC in many capacities, including as a co-vice chair," she said. "Whether based on my background in education or my commitment to excellence in the practice of law, I am a frequent course planner and presenter of CLE programs and want to continue the development and presentation of quality continuing legal education as well as civic education."

Pivotal in Her Path to PBA Leadership

Conrad is especially proud of her work as the PBA woman-at-large governor in 2018 to 2021. During her time in that role, she was an active member of the PBA Board of Governors and focused on board governance issues and actions/programs that advance the interests of PBA members.

"A pivotal time in my PBA path was the appointment to chair of the PBA Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Team," Conrad said. "It was the year of the George Floyd tragedy, and the team recognized the importance of engaging our board and PBA members in DEI initiatives. We developed programs that began with meaningful conversations about discrimination in our profession, our communities and our country. These were difficult, impactful conversations with the goal to open minds to lead to greater understanding and an inclusive, welcoming bar association. Continuing these initiatives will be an important focus in the next bar year."

Conrad recently finished her term as president of the Bar Association of Lehigh County. She treasured the opportunity to work with her Lehigh County colleagues to develop board governance and advance an inclusive board and association.

Exceptional Work at the PBA

Conrad looks forward to working with PBA leaders and staff. “The work of our PBA members and staff is exceptional,” she said. “Our PBA leadership, including our Board, House of Delegates and committees and sections work hard and tackle varied issues in our association and profession. Our new executive director, Matt Holliday, in connection with our PBA Membership Development Committee, has initiated several new membership recruitment and outreach programs. These programs are working, and we have seen an increase in membership and member engagement. I will support these programs as we move forward and urge all members, especially those active in committees and sections, to personally invite a colleague, a new lawyer or a local bar member to a PBA meeting, event or program, and then connect them to the benefits of that section, that committee and opportunities in the PBA.”

Conrad said, “The Young Lawyers Division (YLD) is also an exceptional leader in membership development. Their highly organized platform of activities and programs that include the Statewide High School Mock Trial Competition, Wills for Heroes and programs for early career attorneys engage young lawyers from the start of their career. Our executive director has partnered with the YLD to support and provide resources to continue and expand these programs. As we engage new lawyers in the YLD, we want to engage them with our committees and sections and other positions within the PBA. The YLD is doing it right, and I will be by their side supporting their programs, recruitment and follow-up.”



Next Steps

Consistent with the PBA mission, Conrad’s vision for the next year is to serve members across the commonwealth, to promote excellence and professionalism in the practice of law and to advance the rule of law and access to justice in our communities.

Conrad intends to ensure that the PBA is an inclusive, welcoming association with opportunities for all members to participate, including leadership opportunities.

“We are a representative organization of members from large cities to small towns, from large firms to solo and small firms, from government offices to corporations,” she said. “We are a diverse organization with members of different genders, races, sexual orientations and identities. We want all members to be invited, welcomed and engaged, whatever their background, their practice or their home, and to have a place, a voice to be heard and an opportunity to pursue leadership in our association.

“We will continue to review dues and benefits to make sure they are aligned with our members’ needs and ability to pay,” she said. “There has not been an increase

From left, Natalie Molz, Tanya Salgado, Marlena Ellis, Conrad, Joe Carr and Wes Payne of White and Williams LLP

“[In that PBA Section], I found great value in exchanging ideas and practice issues with employment law colleagues.”



Conrad at the Martin Luther King Jr. and Coretta Scott King Memorial, the first memorial in the world commemorating both activists together for their contribution to equal rights, world peace and justice. It is located on Martin Luther King Drive in Allentown.

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in dues since 2017, a result in large part due to the fiscal responsibility that we have exercised. We will continue that fiscal responsibility and explore alternatives, including payment plans for dues and additional sources of nondues revenue.

“We also want to better merge our CLE programming with our committees and sections, to work jointly with respect to the delivery of quality legal education. I have been an active CLE planner and presenter and will continue in that capacity as we expand CLE opportunities with our committees and sections,” she said.

Focused on Family, Friends and Colleagues

While pursuing her career as an attorney, Conrad was deeply committed to raising her family, and she said she is “blessed” with three children. Her oldest, Brent, is married to Erin and they live and practice law in Annapolis, Maryland. Her second child, Caroline, is engaged to Paden, and they work in the engineering field outside of

Philadelphia. Her youngest, Kendelle, has a career in marketing and, like her mother, travels extensively.

In addition to her children, Conrad values the friends, colleagues and activities in her life. Early in her legal career, she was diagnosed with breast cancer and describes it as the deepest, darkest time of her life. Following surgeries and treatments, Conrad vowed to be a stronger, healthier and more balanced person. She joined a local running program that promised to take a woman “from the couch to a 5K” in 12 weeks.

She began running with a diverse group of women. After successfully completing the program and running the 5K, they continued to meet, run and, over time, became friends. During runs and conversations, they learned about each other’s personal and professional lives. The running group, The Foxy Ladies, became a friend group, and their friendships continue in all walks of life.

That event, the Women’s 5K Classic, is another organization close to Conrad’s heart. “We are an all-female 5K event, and the funds we raise support programs and research related to breast and female cancers in the Lehigh Valley,” she said. Conrad serves as board president of the Women’s 5K Classic.

Conrad also treasures her PBA friends and colleagues, in particular, a friend group of four PBA members who call themselves “The Squad.” They reside in different locations in the state, focus on different practice areas and are from diverse backgrounds. Connecting through the PBA, they developed friendships and now travel together, attend each other’s family celebrations and, most importantly, support and challenge each other to be their best, personally and professionally.

Family, friends and colleagues have always been an important part of Conrad's life and help her to maintain balance and a personal and professional life.


The Year Ahead

Conrad is firmly focused on serving the PBA as an inclusive thought-leader and welcomes the input and engagement of all members. As part of her four cornerstones, Conrad will encourage members to engage in additional outreach and commit to a civic education or social justice program in their community.

As an avid traveler, she will continue her adventures in the PBA and beyond. She

has signed up for the PBA CLE Abroad trip to Portugal in October and encourages members to join the adventure. She is busy planning the 2025 Midyear Meeting and intends to connect PBA members to the history, the people and the culture of Barbados.

"As I reflect on the coming year, I look back and realize that I have been fortunate to experience a series of 'firsts': a first-generation college graduate, a nontraditional law student and the first lawyer in my family," Conrad said. "With this foundation, I appreciate the demands of the practice of law, whether it is from clients, the court or the office. Being an attorney and practicing law is challenging, detailed work and, like

our members, I am committed to integrity and excellence in our profession. That commitment to integrity and standard of excellence has prepared me for the position of PBA president." 

Andy Andrews is PBA senior publications editor.

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