

"From the Chair"

Column by Honey Kessler Amado

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The Baby Boomer generation, my generation, has often been criticized as the most self-indulgent and permissive generation in American history. Such characterizations make it easy to dismiss us as effete, sophistic, and ineffectual. But we are not so easily dismissed. While I have unending respect for earlier generations who came to this country yearning for freedom and a better life, and for earlier generations who fought in wars throughout our history to defend that freedom, I am proud of the work of my generation, which has also served the cause of freedom.

We Baby Boomers walked in Freedom Marches in the South, marched in demonstrations to end the war in Vietnam, organized rallies to free an oppressed people in the then-Soviet Union and peoples elsewhere, and have worked for a variety of issues and candidates that we believed furthered the values of our country. Baby Boomers have gone to other countries to help people striving for freedom within their borders. We served and continue to serve in the Peace Corps, VISTA, Americorps, and similar programs to bring education, food, housing, and medical services to people in our country and around the globe. Yes, we confounded our parents as we challenged authority figures and the infallibility of the government, and as we experimented with life beyond the values of our parents. But, for the most part, we burnished those values and modified them to reflect our experiences.

The legal profession reflects our generation, too, as many of us thought that the most effective avenue for change was through the legal profession. Even as we challenged the Establishment, many of us saw the Constitution as our birthright and as the vehicle to improve our society. The Constitution ignited our imagination and our devotion to the goals stated in the Bill of Rights. Many in my Baby Boomer generation have worked toward the goals of the Constitution by volunteering with or practicing law in legal services organizations, such as the California Women's Law Center or Public Counsel, and, nationally, in organizations such as the Southern Poverty Law Center and others across the political spectrum.

Many have sought to serve these goals through other and different work. For example, this past August, my 18-year-old daughter, Jessica, and I spent a week working at Habitat for Humanity, in Americus, Georgia, joining others who have spent years in that endeavor. (Many of you will recognize Habitat as an organization devoted to building housing for working, poor families who live in substandard housing.) I felt that I was acting on the mandate to make the world a better place, a lesson that unquestionably I learned from my parents (and they from theirs), and one that many of us Baby Boomers have incorporated into our life *leitmotifs*.

Baby Boomers as a whole may be the most affluent generation in American history; we may be the first generation with so many opportunities available to us, but a good many of us who chose the legal profession have used our legal skills and interests well to serve the needs of our society and to preserve the freedoms of its citizenry. Without apologies, we will leave a legacy that goes beyond our material wealth and adds to that of previous generations who have valued the Constitution, defended it, and sought to have it applied with equality and humanity.

Your thoughts, ideas, and concerns regarding this magazine are welcome. You can reach me through the Los Angeles Lawyer magazine offices (213/896-6503) or at my e-mail HoneyAmado2@gmail.com.

I hope Los Angeles Lawyer is and continues to be a valuable tool to you in executing your duties as one able and entrusted to advocate in our government of law.

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