

## **ABA President-Elect Stephen N. Zack Receives Gavel from Outgoing President Carolyn Lamm**

*In Speech before House of Delegates, Zack Outlines Initiatives for Presidential Year*

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On Monday afternoon of the meeting of the House of Delegates during the American Bar Association, the House of Delegates saw the passing of the gavel from President Carolyn B. Lamm to incoming President Stephen N. Zack.

During her introduction of Zack, Lamm noted, "I know you'll be in fabulous hands." She outlined Zack's rise in the leadership of both The Florida Bar and the ABA. He is an "incomparable advocate and strategist," Lamm continued.

Zack noted that, in 1961 as a 14-year old, he and his family were detained while fleeing Cuba. Separated from his family in his own cell, Zack explained that, "The last thing I could have imagined then was a day like today."

The responsibility of our association is to always speak truth to power. "Today, I would like to talk to you about four responsibilities: preservation of the justice system, civic education, protecting human rights, and preparing for disaster," introduced Zack.

"We are fighting for rule of law around the world, but we are in danger of losing it here" advised Zack. The financial crisis in America has been devastating to our judicial system, with 80 percent of this nation's poor people not being able to afford a lawyer, he said.

But beyond that, Zack continued, "We are talking about closing the doors to our courtrooms for all Americans." Access to justice begins with access to our courts. Rather than the noted Shakespearean tongue-in-cheek quote about killing lawyers, Zack said that the quote should have encouraged the killing of the justice system. For without a justice system, a society doesn't need lawyers and anarchy would certainly ensue, he said.

The Task Force on the Preservation of the Justice System will be chaired by luminaries David Boies and Ted Olson.

"Every day, our nation becomes more divided with respect to civil rights," noted Zack in introducing his Committee on Hispanic Legal Rights and Responsibilities. Zack reminded delegates, "We are a nation of immigrants. Our basic freedoms are based on the principle that the minority is protected from the tyranny of the majority."

Zack also encouraged the members of the House of Delegates, and indeed all lawyers, to be prepared for future disasters, including the possibility of a man-made disaster. Zack posed: What will be our response if that happens and the president suspends habeas? "Now is the time to reflect" and to consider what our response will be.

"In conclusion, let us remember. History has taught us that we can have liberty and justice, or neither, for there is nothing in between. In America no man is above the law. No one is beneath its protection," summed Zack.

To access video of Zack's speech:

<http://www.abanow.org/2010/08/incoming-aba-president-moves-to-increase-judicial-funding-improve-civics-education-preserve-immigrant-rights-and-advance-disaster-planning-among-goals/>