

Closing Circle: From Scholar to Co-Chair

Being a lawyer. Being an international lawyer ... Dreams of young graduates who wish to 'leave their stamp' on a legal world already so heavily populated with many talented lawyers from their own jurisdiction and from other countries.

That's how I remember myself 14 years ago, having just completed my legal training and becoming a lawyer in Israel. Striving for success. Striving for recognition. Striving for knowledge. Striving for a network and mostly ... striving for clientele.

So, how to start my practice and achieve the great challenges I targeted? One thing I was sure about: hard work pays!

Joining a medium sized law firm was a great starting point – as was opening a corporate immigration department that would hopefully attract foreign companies to provide us with commercial & corporate legal work. The most beneficial part of the immigration practice was that it brought us corporate clients who were starting their businesses in Israel (or opening a branch of a foreign company in Israel).

The starting point involved hard work, late nights and research, while focusing on not compromising the quality of services provided to the firm's clientele. To attract international clientele, I published several articles in international magazines about Israeli law in general, and immigration law in particular.

And then came the IPBA. I still clearly remember the day that I saw the advertisement for the IPBA 'MS Lin Scholarship' for the Korea Conference in 2004. This, I thought, was a great opportunity to develop my international network, especially in a region that shares so many of the technological cross-border commercial relations based in the Pacific region. One thing led



to another: the article I published in a well-known international law review, together with a strong legal interest in the Pacific region, led to my selection as a scholar to travel to the Seoul Conference in 2004.

To the best of my knowledge, I was the only Israeli-based lawyer that was at the Conference. The IPBA was not really well known in Israel at that time. The conference provided me with a great opportunity to meet many lawyers from the Pacific region. It opened my mind to the region's legal practices in a way that later assisted me so much in developing my legal practice in my home country.

Boosted by my very positive impression of the IPBA, together with the motivation to spread the word to other colleagues in Israel, I have highlighted the presence of the IPBA to the Israeli bar on many occasions through articles I have published in the Israeli bar's various publications.

Raising the funds to attend the second conference was not an easy task ... but in the end I made it with the belief that it will one day pay off. And indeed I have found myself increasingly saying 'hi' to people I already knew from previous conferences. The great dinners and social events contributed much to my network. Later, I learned that persistence creates relationships of trust between the lawyers in the organisation.

Upon my return to Israel after this second conference, I suddenly started to receive calls and emails from IPBA members, asking for my opinion as a person they knew and could trust about Israeli based disputes and legal issues. One thing led to another, and I started to get more and more inbound immigration, commercial and corporate work from the IPBA's great network of talented lawyers. This benefit was received from only the second conference I attended.

During the years, I have travelled to many other IPBA conferences in Sydney, Beijing and New Delhi. The work our office has received as a result compelled our management to create a special department to deal and liaise with IPBA members regarding legal issues in Israel.

Summarising my career since joining the IPBA, I have seen great progress in my professional career and legal network. From a young associate in

a medium-sized firm, I became a named partner in the firm, having generated so much work from IPBA members.

Appreciating the great opportunity given to me by the IPBA Scholarship, I started to look for a way to be more involved where I can give back to the IPBA. As such, I was nominated as Vice-Chair of the Immigration and Labor Committee and later Vice-Chair of the Scholarship Committee. This is where I fell in love with giving other young lawyers and those of developing countries the same great opportunity I had received, hoping to bring them to the same starting point I only dreamt about when I applied for the scholarship a few years ago. What more can I ask? Together with Varya Simpson, who served as Chair of the Scholarship Committee, and other great Vice-Chairs of the Committee, we have developed an unbiased system of scholar selection and elevated the scholarship programme to include jurisdictional presentation in the course of a forum open to all IPBA

members during the conference.

This year at the Seoul Conference (2013), I was appointed as Co-Chair with my friend and colleague Varya Simpson. This is no doubt the closing of a circle: from being a scholar at the first Seoul conference, to becoming the Co-Chair of the Committee at the most recent Seoul Conference.

I am thankful to the IPBA organisation and members for the opportunities given to me. I will try my best to give the same opportunity to new scholars.

How can you help? Simply come to the IPBA Scholars Reception and the scholars' presentation session in Vancouver! That is the starting point for these great scholars and, on behalf of the Scholarship Committee, we promise to continue selecting great talented and promising young lawyers that will hopefully be a great addition to the IPBA and serve as ambassadors for the IPBA in their respective countries.



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