

**Welcoming Remarks of PBA President Kenneth J. Horoho Jr.
PBA Diversity Summit
Nov. 29, 2006
PBI Education Center, Wanamaker Building, Philadelphia**

Distinguished colleagues, jurists and guests. Good morning.

I'm a firm believer in the adage that people need to make history, not just study it.

Today, thanks to your presence and your planning, we are making history here in Philadelphia as we open the Pennsylvania Bar Association's first Diversity Summit.

For the past five and half months of my term as president of the Pennsylvania Bar Association, I have been emphasizing the importance of leadership – both to the profession and to the public.

I'd like to recognize the extraordinary leadership efforts of the chair of this summit, Sam Cooper from Harrisburg.

Sam has served with distinction as the Governor on the PBA Board of Governors representing the concerns of minority lawyers and as past chair of the PBA Minority Bar Committee.

I'd also like to recognize the co-vice chair of the PBA Minority Bar Committee, Prince Thomas from Philadelphia, and Karen Vaughn from Philadelphia, both of whom also spent considerable time and effort in making this first summit happen. With their usual leadership flair and commitment to excellence, they have brought all of us here together today for this momentous occasion, and I want to commend them and their committee for their work.

How appropriate it is that we are here in the City of Brotherly Love, home of Pennsylvania's founder, William Penn.

From his cell in the Tower of London to his founding of an American colony, William Penn was a tireless advocate for liberty and tolerance.

His vision for his "Holy Experiment" here in "Penn's Woods" was for a land where each person could pursue his or her own dream and destiny, free from the bonds of intolerance, free from the threat of persecution for their beliefs, free to contribute to the betterment of society.

These were noble goals, and goals that unfortunately still have not been realized.

Today, the headlines point out instances of injustice, pockets of intolerance, and widespread public loss of confidence in America's institutions.

Consequently, the legal profession must assume leadership in assuring that the blessings of liberty are experienced by all of our citizens.

It is of critical importance that we reach out to all Americans and help them understand how the law protects their rights and responsibilities and how they need to participate in our democracy to keep it strong.

We are all here today because we recognize one very important fact: As America's population grows more diverse, its citizens need to have officers of the court with whom they can identify.

Yet, as the ABA's Diane Abraham so eloquently said: "Our system of jurisprudence is marked by racial injustice and gender bias. Because of these genuine inequities, the law becomes a paradigm of exclusion, rather than empowerment for both practitioners and those seeking judicial remedies. As America grows into the 21st century, our profession is in danger of losing touch with reality because it fails to resemble the national population."

I can think of few other times in the history of this nation when diversity in the legal profession was as critical.

The legal profession traditionally has played an historic role in connecting society with the rule of law, and we need to face the fact that we have a serious disconnect today between our citizens and this important concept.

Today, the legal profession must be as varied and diverse as the public it serves in order to retain its role as the connecting link to the rule of law – for the appearance of justice is just as important as justice itself.

While our society is becoming more diverse, with people of color likely to reach majority status in the next 35 to 50 years, the legal profession has not kept pace.

According to the American Bar Association, the legal profession still is more than ninety-percent white.

Only about twenty percent of the students in our law schools are representative of racial and ethnic minorities.

When racial and ethnic minority law students graduate, they encounter little mentoring or opportunities for growth within law firms and often leave the profession.

Today, women account for more than 50 percent of the entering law school classes, up considerably from the 3 to 4.5 percent from 1947 to 1967. But before we pat ourselves on the back for this statistic, we must look at what happens to women after they leave law school.

In Pennsylvania, in 2006, the percentage of women equity partners and partners in law firms decreased. Women were over-represented in the lowest paying, least powerful and least prestigious positions within the firms. Not a very glowing statistic.

Within our own Pennsylvania Bar Association, we also have room for improvement. The PBA Leadership Diversity Task Force, in its May 2006 report to the PBA House of Delegates, reported that while some progress had been made to promote diversity within the leadership of the PBA, the “incremental gains achieved over the years have not kept pace with the increasing diversity of the legal profession.”

Statistically, the leadership ranks of the PBA are less diverse than they were ten years ago. The task force, which was chaired by Pittsburgh’s Carl Cooper, also said that PBA “must walk the talk and not merely talk the talk” of inclusion.

Over the years, we’ve made strides through the work of our PBA Minority Bar Committee, Commission on Women in the Profession, our Gay/Lesbian Rights Committee and our Civil and Equal Rights Committee, but more needs to be done.

In our one hundred and eleven years of history, we have had only one woman president and one president of color.

We’ve come to a crossroad within the PBA where we, too, need to do some self-examination – however painful it may be – about our commitment to diversity and our true reflection.

I believe that a “good look in the mirror” will put us on the same path as the one being set by the Pennsylvania citizens we serve. And with a 2005 estimated population of almost 12.5 million, our commonwealth continues to diversify.

Since 2000, immigration from Latin American and Asian counties resulted in an increase in almost 400,000 citizens. In 2006, five percent of Pennsylvanians were foreign-born. The foreign-born Pennsylvania population is largely from Asia, Europe, Latin America and Africa.

Pennsylvania’s reported Hispanic population has markedly increased in the past few years. As of 2000, the Hispanic population in the United States had grown to 35

million people. Experts predict that if the demographics continue to move in this direction, by the year 2050, one out of four people in this country will be Hispanic.

Women make up 51.7 percent and African-Americans make up over ten percent of our state's population. Over nine percent of our citizens speak a language other than English at home. .

We must help all Pennsylvania citizens understand how the law protects their rights and responsibilities and how they need to participate in our democracy to keep it strong.

As we move forward to address this challenge, let us remember that our mistakes and the inequities of the past must guide, and not control, our future.

Winston Churchill once said: "If we open a quarrel between the past and present, we shall find that we have lost the future."

What are the strategies, then, and the solutions, and the means to achieving the change within the legal profession it so desperately needs?

Today, we have brought together all of you who represent some of the best and brightest of Pennsylvania's legal profession to examine these challenges.

I hope that through our dialogue today we can set a course of action for Pennsylvania.

I hope that we can offer a blueprint to transform the look of the Pennsylvania Bar to reflect Pennsylvania's diverse citizenry.

Within the framework of this blueprint, we must unite our law schools, our bar associations, our law firms, large and small, in our mission to achieve a more racially, ethnically and gender diverse law profession.

We all know that actions speak louder than words. The time has come to stop paying lip service to diversity, to echoing meaningless buzzwords and making empty promises. Today, ladies and gentlemen, I challenge you to make history. Let's move from aspiration to action.

Indeed, the very future, the very fabric, of our society depends on it.

Thank you.

