When I was a youngster, our family had a card table in the den. It never saw much action for that particular function, but more often held a jigsaw puzzle with pieces piled high, or neatly sorted into piles with straight edges in one spot, colors organized in another. I would sit in that room, sometimes quietly alone for what seemed to be hours working diligently on my task. Or I might be joined by my siblings who would compete to see who could connect more pieces most quickly. Of course we had a clear picture of what the finished puzzle would look like and guided ourselves with that image.

This past February, The Foundation embarked on its own creation of a vision of what we should look like to our colleagues and the public. In our second strategic planning session, we further refined the vision that we had so diligently worked on four years ago. Essentially, we have completed most of the straight edges of our Foundation puzzle and are now working together in breakout sessions on identifying how the various pieces of our Foundation will fit together.

The Fellows are a crucial section of The Foundation jigsaw puzzle. As many of you are aware, Fellows are nominated by their peers and recognized for distinguished achievement, dedication to the legal profession, commitment to the organized bar and service to the public. Our thirteen districts are represented by district chairs. The question of what each might be able to do in their districts was addressed in the first meeting of the district chairs held in March. The conference helped to clarify the vision of The Foundation and the goal of each chair. We agreed to hold one district event each calendar year. Given the fact that some districts are small, the benefit of partnering with neighboring districts was explored. The program will become an opportunity to interact with colleagues and enjoy programming that will further inspire the group.

The tenth judicial district has completed a program this past May 15th, hosting a cocktail party at the Muttontown club on the North Shore of Long Island. The speaker, Raymond J. Dowd gave a presentation entitled “Murder, Mystery & Masterpieces: Ethical Implications of World War II Stolen Art”, with almost fifty fellows and guests in attendance. Events such as these allow the Fellows to solidify friendships and enhance professional development. Part of our focus for the future is to improve our recognition of Fellows and their accomplishments by highlighting personal and professional accomplishments including: awards, honors and notable lectures or presentations.

Such events, and publicity, magnify the opportunity to recruit new Fellows. Since Fellows and their donations to The Foundation are the lifeblood of our organization, I encourage each of you, especially those who are life fellows, to consider joining a circle, or “moving up” to a higher giving circle.

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