

CABA INSTALLATION DINNER 1988 Incoming Presidential Speech

During the past fourteen years CABA has become a moving force within the legal community and the community at large. This status was achieved through the hard work and dedication of its members. Due to our unique cultural background we are in a gifted position to help those in our community which cannot help themselves. This gift creates in each one of us a special obligation to educate and inform our community on legal matters and on any other matter which may be detrimental to our cultural heritage.

This year we are faced with many important issues some of which are not popular nor have easy answers. As an organization we are called upon to express our opinions and to participate in the solutions of these pending issues. Sometimes people believe that it is better to procrastinate in the decision making and the issues will go away. I do not believe this is true. As Cuban American attorneys we must be the forerunners of any and all legal issue which affect our community. This position might not be looked upon favorably by those members who believe that we should get involved only in those issues which affect all the community. As Cuban American Attorneys we have a special obligation to the Cuban Community at large. Our participation in any issue must be one of professionalism.

One mayor issue which does not only affect the Mariel detainees but the Cuban Community at large is the normalization of deportations of Cuban National to Cuba. It is my understanding that any Cuban national who has committed a deportable offense in the United States may be deported to Cuba no matter if that individual arrived in the 1960 or during the Mariel boatlift. Are we not part of this Community? Haven't we paid our dues? Have we not contributed sufficiently to our new home? Why should I as a Cuban American be treated any differently than my neighbor who may have been born in some other part of the country ? I for one will defend the right of anyone exiled from Cuba to be deported to a country which does not respect the most element of human rights. I hope other CABA members will join me in this cause.

Another issue which we must deal with this year is the English Only Amendment. There are still a lot of people who feel offended at the sound of our language. The latest poll has shown that the English Only Amendment will pass. As an organization we must prepare the way to help interpret the new constitutional amendment in order that it will be less damaging on our elderly who cannot, at their advance age, learn a new language.

The Cuban American Bar should also strive to get more Hispanic attorneys appointed and elected to the bench. We have many members qualified to be judges. It is up to us to inspire in them to seek such honorable offices.

In order for our Association to continue to grow we must involve ourselves with the various projects some of which are: Legal Assistance Project, Judicial Poll Lawyers of the Americas Conference, Law student Recruitment and Job Placement, our Newsletter and many others.

At this time I like to thank Manny Morales for organizing this event. I would also like to thank my parents for loving me and teaching me that there is more to life than material rewards. Last and definitely not least I like to thank my wife, Aurora, for her companionship, love and for her understanding. But most of all, for giving me a son which is my main reason for living and making this community a better place to live.

Many of you are not aware of what the Cuban American Bar Association does. Therefore we have prepared a Five minute presentation which will truly make you proud of being a member of CABA.

XX

In conclusion thank you for giving me the opportunity to lead our organization and I look forward to making you proud of CABA. Now, let's have some fun.....

Jr. Garrido
2-7-1988