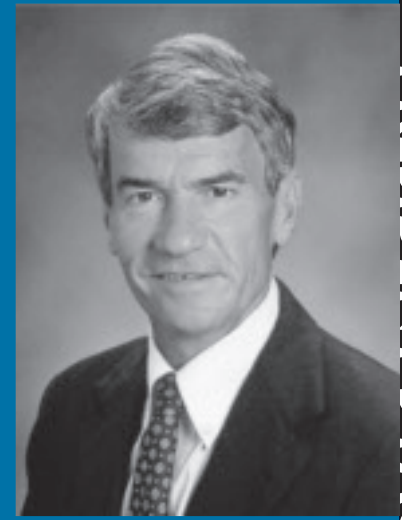




While President Sam Crosby has been burning up the roads between his home in Daphne and the far-flung reaches of Alabama he found time to sit down with *Alabama Lawyer* editor Robert Huffaker to discuss the accomplishments of his administration. Sam also addressed the additional goals which he hopes to achieve during the remainder of his administration.



(Attorneys and staff of Stone, Granade & Crosby) Front row, left to right: Shawn Alves, Carolyn Dohn and Sam Crosby. Back row, left to right: Renae Bell, Martha Newell, Brenda Roland and Conrad Kranz



SAMUEL N. CROSBY

Speaking for Those without a Voice

RAH: Sam, you're about two-thirds through your administration—what do you see as your main accomplishments?

SC: A couple of things immediately come to mind. First, in great acts of leadership, both the Alabama State Bar Board of Bar Commissioners and the Supreme Court of Alabama unanimously adopted an amendment to Rule 1.15 of the *Code of Professional Responsibility*, implementing a mandatory IOLTA plan and appropriate comparability rule for Alabama. This change will mean millions of dollars in funding for indigent legal services to Alabama's citizens. Second, thanks to the partnership of the Board of Bar Commissioners and the supreme court, we were able to increase the pro hac vice fee. All of the additional funds will go to the Alabama Law Foundation for civil legal services to indigent citizens, hopefully adding another \$150,000 per year.

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RAH: Are those both in effect now?

SC: They both took effect January 1st. With mandatory IOLTA and the new comparability rule, the increase in the interest on each individual IOLTA account is not that significant, but when you multiply the increase by the thousands of lawyers in Alabama who have IOLTA accounts, it is a substantial amount of money. It should more than double the funding for indigent civil legal services and other important charitable efforts.

RAH: Was there controversy over either of these?

SC: There was very little. We worked closely with the banks and counsel for some of the big banks and found it was just more a question of education. Thirty-four other states, including all the states around us except Tennessee, had already implemented mandatory IOLTA. Our efforts went toward making sure all the lawyers in the state and the banks understood what we were trying to accomplish.

RAH: Another goal was to promote the use of teleconferences for bar committees and task forces. How's that?

SC: It's worked out very well. We've provided a toll-free number for every meeting as the 2005 long-range plan encouraged using technology to increase participation by both young lawyers and lawyers in rural areas of the state. Every meeting held this year has included the option of teleconferencing, and it's increased involvement by lawyers throughout the state. Most of the meetings I participate in *are* by teleconference. In a few years some meetings will be via videoconference, while sitting at our computers. Because I live in Baldwin County, I'm aware of the wear and tear involved in running back and forth to Montgomery, and this made me sensitive to the issue.

RAH: What other accomplishments have you noticed?

SC: We've been blessed with remarkable success with the Wills for Heroes Program. The ASB is the fourth state bar in the country to implement, through our Volunteer Lawyers Program, a statewide Wills for Heroes Program. We'll soon become the first state to supplement the clinics being held with a program that allows lawyers to service the first-responders out of their law offices. We've gotten a

wonderful response from both the first-responders and volunteer lawyers. I believe that we will come pretty close to providing a will, a durable power of attorney and an advance healthcare directive for every paramedic, fire fighter, police officer and other first-responder throughout the state. People have been very positive about this.

RAH: What has surprised you the most as president?

SC: Three things have. My friend Boots Gale mentioned this last year, and it's true—we really do have a remarkable and dedicated state bar staff, and executive director in Keith Norman. I may



Band practice at Daphne church with Ezra Kwizera (left) and Erin Langley (right)



Sam Crosby, Jr.; Amy Crosby; Ann Crosby; Sam Crosby with Marianne Cheely; Cason Crosby Cheely with Peter Cheely; and Dan Cheely

get into trouble if I mention names, but here are a few examples. Tracy Daniel and Tony McLain have been working very hard and put in some long hours to get the mandatory IOLTA program operational. Linda Lund has worked around the clock to ensure that the Wills for Heroes program is a success. I could go through every single program we have and point to similar efforts by staff members to make sure that the Alabama State Bar programs are effective and that our members are well served. Another surprise is the outstanding public service that lawyers throughout this state are rendering on a daily basis. Virtually every church, synagogue and charity in Alabama has a lawyer within its leadership. There is a wonderful, altruistic spirit among the lawyers in this state. I benefited from this whenever I needed assistance. I was met by the response, "Sam, how can I help?" Finally, I was surprised by the magnificent natural beauty of Alabama. Traveling to almost every corner of the state for functions made me aware of this beauty.

RAH: Any task force news to share?

SC: This year we appointed the ALA Referral Program Task Force. Under the leadership of Laura Calloway, Sandy Speakman and others, the task force is working on a referral program that will be a first among state bars in the

country, with the ASB Practice Management Assistance office working with members of the Association of Legal Administrators. Administrators will be referred to young lawyers throughout Alabama to provide them with free one-on-one confidential law firm management and technology assistance. The program is designed to help lawyers who have been in practice for five years or less. Many young lawyers come out of law school with significant debt and little training in managing a firm. The program begins June 1. Then there is the Humor and History Task Force chaired by Rich Raleigh and Cooper Shattuck. Circuits throughout the state are encouraged to preserve, by videotape, the wit and wisdom of senior lawyers for historical and educational purposes. A brief three-chapter film will be the product of the interviews conducted by task force members. It will be available by mid-May thanks to the generosity of Freedom Court Reporting and the hard work of Brad Carr.

RAH: Have there been any humorous moments?

SC: Yes. A video of member benefits was produced by the bar and is available through the ASB Web site, www.alabar.org. It was ridiculous how many "takes" it took to get what was needed because Alicia Bennett and I kept flubbing up or laughing when they were rolling the tape. I

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can guarantee you that neither Alicia nor I will ever be contacted by the Academy Awards for our performances.

RAH: What's special about this year's convention?

SC: The annual meeting will begin with a short film of funny court stories taken from interviews with bar leaders throughout the state. Then there will be a panel discussion on "How Can I Be More Content, Efficient and Productive in My Law Practice?" moderated by Mark White. Panelists include Chief Justice Sue Bell Cobb, Judge U. W. Clemon, Justice Gorman Houston, Dean Charles Gamble, and Leon

Ashford. After that, we'll have a short film on leadership within the legal profession, followed by a panel discussion on "Reaching Your Goals" to be moderated by Lenora Pate. Panelists include Fred Gray, Millard Fuller, Dean Ken Randall, Helen Alford, and Tommy Wells. At the Bench & Bar Luncheon, Jan Crawford Greenburg, who is the ABC television correspondent for the United States Supreme Court, will speak. She is a bright, intelligent Alabama native. On the meeting's second day, Howard Dayton, host of the nationally syndicated radio program *Money Matters*, will speak on personal financial planning for lawyers. Later that morning, Danny Sheridan, football analyst for ESPN, will present a program on college football predictions.

RAH: What you see in the future for the ASB?

SC: I was blessed to follow a number of outstanding Alabama State Bar presidents and I have worked closely with the next two presidents, Mark White and Tom Methvin. Both of them are superb lawyers and fine people with a heart for serving this profession. Also, many leaders throughout the state will work to improve the quality of legal services in Alabama and the quality of our court system.



Sam Crosby, Norborne Stone and Fred Granade

RAH: It seems your predecessors have been concerned with changing the manner of selection of judges, particularly at the appellate level. How's that going?

SC: We are in favor of merit selection but the political reality is that we haven't been able to accomplish that. Part of the state bar's mission statement is to improve the administration of justice, so we'll continue to be in favor of that change. The Board of Bar Commissioners endorsed that change, and before that, non-partisan elections. In working closely with our lawyer-legislators, we decided to identify legislation that was important in improving the administration of justice and that politically we could get signed into law. We focused on two bills. One is a bill to protect the integrity of the mediation process. It will prevent mediators from being subpoenaed into court, having to testify and having to disclose their records. The second is a bill establishing minimum experience requirements for state court judges; so that in order to serve on a district court, you would need to have a law license for three years, to serve on a circuit court, five years, and to serve on an appellate court, ten years. Currently in Alabama a lawyer appointed to defend a death case is required to

have five years of criminal defense experience, while the circuit judge hearing the case could have only had a law license for one day.

RAH: What's on tap for you between now and the end of your term?

SC: We just finished the first Professionalism Consortium in history. It was held at Cumberland Law School and it was great. It was a joint effort of the Alabama State Bar and the Chief Justice's Commission on Professionalism. Chief Justice Sue Bell Cobb appointed former Chief Justice Drayton Nabers to the commission and they are diligently working together to improve professionalism among lawyers and judges in this state and to bolster the public confidence in our legal system. The commission's first director, Judge Harold Crow, is also involved with these efforts.

RAH: What's next for you?

SC: I have numerous speaking engagements scheduled. Serving as president involves a significant management challenge in fulfilling the responsibilities of the office while also taking care of the duties of my law practice. Travel throughout the country is also a part of it. On April 15th, I flew to Washington, D.C. to meet with each member of the legislative delegation from Alabama and encourage them to increase the funding for Legal Services Alabama.

RAH: By the way, what has been the theme of your administration?

SC: Thank you for asking, Robert. The theme is do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with our God. ▲▼▲



Gone fishin' (nice speckled trout!)



Don Siegal, Congressman Artur Davis and Sam Crosby