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## Attorney Alice Sherren asks:

# What change do you hope to see in the legal field?



**Joshua W. Laabs**

"One major change I hope to see in the legal field is the level of gender inequality between men and women lawyers. Aggressive advocacy is often seen as a professional trait in male attorneys, but a personal deficit in female attorneys. And it is a reality that legal professionals generally comment more often about what female attorneys wear as compared with their male counterparts. I know I have been guilty of these same biases, but I hope to improve, just as I hope the legal field continues to improve."

**Joshua W. Laabs**

Attorney; Robert Wilson and Associates

"I would like to see more judges prioritize social justice in their decisions, instead of making easy decisions based on the status quo. We all grow tired at times and can lose our direction. I would like to see more resilience in our judicial system, more judges willing to reject the path of least resistance. In order to transform and restructure the law, you have to push and critique the law."

**Nysha Cornelius**

Attorney; Paschal Nwokocha & Chukwu Law Offices



**Nysha Cornelius**

"I would like to see attorneys have more fun, despite the hostility that is often inherent in litigation. We have all faced adversaries who are angry and downright mean and nasty (e.g., we dubbed one of our favorites "Cruella De Vil"). It is important not to take it personally, maintain civility, and even show compassion. Then, have fun trying to beat them fair and square. Unrelatedly, it would be great if the law changed so we can shop for new cars on Sundays."

**Michele R. Fisher**

Partner; Nichols Kaster

"I'd like to see changes in the licensing requirements for admission of foreign-trained lawyers. Overly restrictive rules do not protect the public, are unnecessarily burdensome to applicants, are expensive and do not recognize valuable skills and perspectives that these new lawyers bring to the bar. I and many of our colleagues had to expend substantial resources and time in duplicating formal legal education. As we witness demographic changes, well-thought out processes would not only increase access to justice by traditionally underserved populations – such as communities of color and immigrants – but also better respond to 21st Century challenges. The diverse experiences and skills of these non-traditional lawyers would also enrich the bar."

**Henry M. Ongeri**

Principal Attorney; Antolak & Ongeri



**Henry M. Ongeri**

"I believe attorneys need to find creative ways to build the confidence of their immigrant and other minority clients in the legal system. Showing genuine compassion and empathy is key to providing exceptional service to people who experience difficulties with communication. Legal language is complex enough for native English speakers and can be that much more difficult for people who do not understand English well. In this sense, it is incumbent upon attorneys to serve as translators for their clients so that they genuinely understand what is happening and the full range of their options. I should also note that, in many cultures, verbal communication is essential. In addition to written follow-up, direct verbal communication helps to ensure that clients know what will happen next, as well as to reassure clients that their attorney considers them high priority."

**Abdulwahid Osman**

Founder/Principle Attorney; Abdulwahid Law Firm

"I would like lawyers to become more bold and take more risks in their volunteering. People who cannot afford lawyers are forced to represent themselves in court all the time. They don't have the choice to be bold or not. We do. We can choose to help someone who otherwise would be forced to navigate their way through a confusing system without the privilege of a law degree and access to the resources from which many lawyers benefit."

**Muria Kruger**

Housing Program Manager/Resource Attorney; Volunteer Lawyers Network



**Abdulwahid Osman**



**Muria Kruger**