



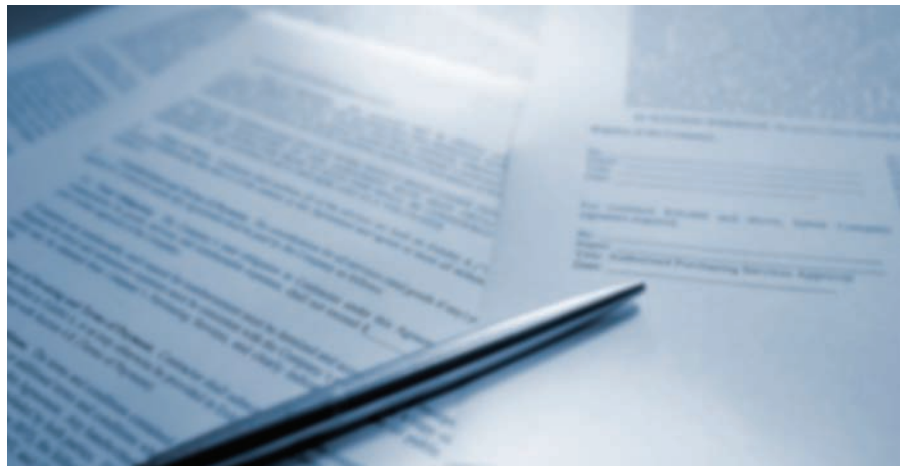
executive directions

JOHN J. MICHALIK
ALA Executive Director

An Important Amendment to ALA's Bylaws

In late 2007, ALA's Board of Directors approved three amendments to the Association's Bylaws. Under the Bylaws themselves, amendments are not effective unless ratified by a majority of ALA chapter presidents casting written ballots. The presidents of 89 of ALA's 100 chapters participated in this process, and each of the three amendments was ratified by at least 85 of the 89 chapter presidents who voted.

One of the amendments carries into ALA's membership criteria language that already appears in another part of the Bylaws authorizing removal from membership for cause "including but not limited to conviction of embezzlement, theft or other crime." Under the amendment, those same considerations may now specifically be considered in evaluating initial applications for membership. The second amendment to the Bylaws relates to eligibility requirements for persons seeking the position of President-Elect and, therefore, ultimately, the position of President. For many years, the eligibility requirements have specified that nominees for President-Elect must be currently serving or past members of the Board of Directors. The newly adopted amendment extends or refines that requirement by specifying that a



person nominated for the position of President-Elect must have *actually completed* at least 12 months of service on the Board.

It is the third amendment to the Bylaws that I think has the broadest impact. For many years, terms of members of the Board of Directors (exclusive of officers) have run for two years, and an incumbent Director could run for a second consecutive term. Under the amendment, Directors will be elected for three-year terms, and no person may serve as a Director for more than one three-year term without leaving elective office for at least three years, unless he or she is named President-Elect or named to fill a vacancy on the Board.

There is a simple rationale behind this change. A set three-year term –

with a staggered rotation – will ensure greater continuity on the Board, which is increasingly important given the complex issues the Association faces. The longer term will allow Board members, who typically hit their "full stride" after the first full year of service, to take greater advantage of the Board experience they gain, leading to a more seasoned and insightful Board. At the same time, once the new rotation is fully established, the three-year term system will actually guarantee greater opportunities for new faces and new ideas each year, as one-third of the Board (excluding officers) will change each year – and newly elected Board members will automatically benefit from the mentoring afforded by the seasoned continuing members of the Board.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

The new system will begin to phase-in with the positions on the Board that will be open in 2009 and selected in 2008. In order to keep Board terms evenly staggered and accomplish the intent of the amendment, while at the same time protecting the due process rights of current first-term Board members elected under the former system allowing a second consecutive term, full implementation of the new system will take two years and will not be accomplished until 2011.

This issue of *ALA News* contains a call for nominations (see pages 20-21) for persons to be considered for Regional Officer and Board positions beginning in 2009. The terms of Regional Officers are not affected by the amendment. To carry out the

amendment and set up the new staggered system on the Board of Directors, three of the four open Board positions will be for *single 2-year terms*: involving one At-Large Director position and the Regional Director positions in Regions 1 and 5. The Region 3 Director position will be for a *single 3-year term*. A similar process will occur in the following year, and beginning in 2011 all Regional and At-Large Director positions on the Board will have evolved into single 3-year terms.

It may seem quite complicated, but the end result will, as noted, set up a Board that will always be characterized by continuity, the guaranteed presence of experienced Board members to mentor new Board members, and greater assured opportunities for new faces and new ideas each year. ♦

The end result will ... set up a Board that will always be characterized by continuity, the guaranteed presence of experienced Board members to mentor new Board members, and greater assured opportunities for new faces and new ideas each year.

What do 20 of the firms listed on The Am Law 200 have in common?

They each have employees on the NALS Leadership Team!

Find out what these top firms already know, use NALS as your resource for education and certification. NALS offers all members of the legal support industry an arena to learn and grow in the profession. Education for Paralegals, Legal Assistants and Legal Secretaries allows members to cross train and gain the knowledge needed to help your firm.

Maximize Your Potential!

In 1929 NALS was formed by legal professionals and today it is still the association for legal professionals guided by legal professionals.



www.nals.org