

of allowing our clients to see and hear what we are doing on their behalf. We must do more than simply “push paper.”

The factors driving this trend are numerous and there will never be a single solution that will address them all. However, one tool being utilized by several of our federal judges is gaining traction—the adoption of standing orders/local rules that incentivize litigants to allow less experienced lawyers to participate in oral arguments.

For example, Judge William Aslup, of the Northern District of California ordered:

If a written request for oral argument is filed before a ruling, stating that a lawyer of four or fewer years out of law school will conduct the oral argument or at least the lion’s share, then the Court will hear oral argument, believing that young lawyers need more opportunities for appearances than they usually receive.

Goal of Task Force

The Federal Bar Association is committed to exploring new and innovative ways to serve our courts and better the practice of law for attorneys and clients. Consistent with that commitment, the Federal Bar Association established a task force designed to study methods to promote oral advocacy opportunities for the less experienced of our profession. I am honored to serve as the chair of this task force.

The task force will run for three years and will include attorneys and judges from across the country. Initially, the FBA’s national task force will study the efficacy of standing judicial orders similar to that of Judge William Haskell Alsop and gauge the impact they have on oral advocacy opportunities. We will measure the success of such standing orders by evaluating their utilization by parties and judges, the types of case in which such orders are utilized, and the overall increase in oral arguments as a direct result of these orders.

Our goal is to enrich the practice experience of our lesser experienced attorneys. We owe our younger and inexperienced members a duty to nurture their professional growth and provide them the experiential opportunities to make them successful.

Author Information

Glen McMurry, a partner at Dinsmore & Shohl LLP, is a National Director and Sixth Circuit Vice-President with the Federal Bar Association. He is admitted to practice before the U.S. Supreme Court, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit, and the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Ohio. His experience includes handling business, finance and contract disputes, employment issues, construction claims and mergers and acquisitions. He can be reached at glen.mcmurry@dinsmore.com.