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2008

2008-09-04 H. Thomas Wells, Jr. ABA Presidential Speech

H. Thomas Wells Jr.

University of Alabama School of Law

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- * Wonderful to be here.**
- * Thank you and acknowledge:**
 - * Victor Marquez, president.**
 - * Juanita Hernandez, new ABA House of Delegates rep. (08-09)**
 - * Jimmie Reyna, former ABA HOD rep. (07-08)**
 - * Ramona Romero, incoming president. (I met Ramona at the ABA's annual meeting for presidents-elect of the ethnic bar associations, which foster communication, cooperation, and collaboration between the ABA and**

our valued affiliates. Was also good to see Ramona at ABA Day, the bar's annual lobbying event on Capitol Hill—where we unite to educate lawmakers on the profession's common core values, such as funding for legal services.)

*** DIVERSITY: Aside from access to justice, another core value we all share is diversity. When gifted women and men of diverse backgrounds face systemic barriers to entering law school, passing the bar exam, and rising in the profession, it's not just a lack of opportunity for**

those individuals. It's a lost opportunity for all lawyers as we strive to serve an increasingly diverse and complex society.

That's why I especially appreciate the opportunity to be here for this corporate diversity luncheon and learn from what the distinguished panelists will discuss.

I look forward to building on the valued relationship between the HNBA and the ABA not only through the Office of the President, but also through diversity entities such as our Commission on Women and the ABA Center on Diversity. One of my best appointments,

**in fact, was Fred Alvarez to chair our
Commission on Racial and Ethnic
Diversity in the Profession.**

**I've also asked Eduardo Rodriguez to
co-chair the ABA's Diversity Summit for
State Bars this spring.**

**Thank you for inviting not only me
personally to be here, but also the ABA as
an organization. Sandra Yamate, our
Commission on Diversity staff director, is
here along with her assistant, Jesus
(HEY-soos) Negron (Neh-GRONE), They
are staffing our information booth here,
so be sure to pick up the materials on**

ABA resources we have waiting for you.

**And our Executive Director, Hank White,
will be here tomorrow.**

**The ABA is here to serve you, work
with you, and be a resource for all
lawyers. Thank you for welcoming us,
and enjoy the conference.**