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H. Thomas Wells Jr.

University of Alabama School of Law

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The ABA has long held that the right to effective counsel in death penalty cases is a fundamental right. It is ABA policy.

We talk about it all the time with the media. We educate the bar and the public about the problems with death penalty counsel systems. And we urge legislators to make changes in the law.

But even more important, the ABA is committed to implementing its position on the right to counsel through direct service. We do so

through the work of the Death Penalty Representation Project.

The ABA takes no position on the death penalty itself. But we also believe that someone with a death sentence must have access to competent representation.

In other words, we do not say whether the death penalty itself is right or wrong. But it *is* wrong for our system of justice to deny *access* to justice for those who face capital punishment. And in jurisdictions that

use the death penalty, at the very least we have to ensure it's being done *right*.

There are hundreds of people on death row without lawyers. Many have no hope at all of receiving assistance.

For more than 23 years the Project has been the only national organization that recruits volunteer lawyers for death row prisoners. The Project has engaged thousands of volunteers to assist hundreds of prisoners and work toward reform.

The Litigation Section has been an important part of this success, investing both financially and emotionally in the Project's work.

No other Section has done more.

As President of the ABA and a member and former chair of the Section, your contributions give me a great deal of pride.

*AS LAWYERS, WE ARE SOMETIMES
★ PRETTY GOOD AT MAKING A DOLLAR
BUT WE ARE AT OUR ABSOLUTE BEST*

This morning I just want to say thank you for what you have done, what you are doing, and what I hope you will continue doing to make a difference.

*WHEN WE ARE
MAKING A
DIFFERENCE.*

— ROBIN MAHER —