

insights

TYPES NOT MAPPED YET August 06, 2024 | TTR not mapped yet | Bill R. Bay

Bill Bay Begins Tenure as American Bar Association President

Thompson Coburn partner [Bill Bay](#) has started his term as president of the American Bar Association (ABA), making the official transition into the role at the adjournment of the ABA House of Delegates on August 6.

Bay was sworn in August 5 and received the gavel from Mary Smith, who had served as president for the past year while Bay filled the role of [president-elect](#). His speech to the House of Delegates at the ABA Annual Meeting in Chicago covered themes of embracing change to serve the next generation of attorneys while continuing efforts to promote democracy, diversity, judicial independence, and innovation. He stressed the importance of working together as an organization.

"Individually, we have shortcomings and weaknesses," he said. "But we are strongest when we stand together, when we lift each other up, when we put aside the differences, which the world tells us should divide us."

He also noted his goal for the ABA to improve member engagement and experience by simplifying the process needed to understand the association.

"Sometimes it feels like you need a decoder ring to understand our organization," Bay said. "Or using a *Star Wars* analogy, we need our favorite droid, R2-D2, to plug in and interpret the imperial network. We can do better."

Bay is a longtime leader in the ABA, having served as chair of the ABA House of Delegates and chair of the ABA Section of Litigation. He is a past member of the ABA Board of Governors, where he served as chair of the Board's Finance Committee. Outside of the ABA, Bill is a member of the American Law Institute and has been selected as chair of several statewide commissions examining critical issues in the practice of law.

Read more about Bay's service with the ABA in the association's press release [here](#).

Bay is a highly experienced litigator who has represented major corporations in high-stakes litigation for more than 30 years. His clients vary from major financial institutions to post-secondary institutions, and he regularly helps organizations manage and respond to large portfolios of litigation in multiple jurisdictions.

Thompson Coburn co-hosted a reception with the Missouri Bar and the Bar Association of Metropolitan St. Louis during the ABA Meeting in recognition of Bay's new role. Bay's colleagues, family members and friends joined ABA members for the celebration.

Coverage of the speech can be found [here](#), and a full recording [here](#).

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