

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BAR

Helping Those in Need

By **Keith A. Birkes**

All of us are aware of compelling personal needs in our own state, country and the world. As a group, lawyers are compassionate, caring and concerned for their fellow citizens and their fellow members of the bar. This issue of *Precedent* is devoted to the impact the current economy is having on individual lawyers and law firms in Missouri.

Personally, I have had more contact with individual lawyers who are suffering in this economy in the last six months than I have had in the previous 10 years. Some members are unable to pay their bar dues, others are without the means to attend required continuing legal education programs, and some simply cannot find employment befitting their education, skills and abilities. It is a difficult time for all segments of society, including lawyers.

A variety of Missouri Bar programs and activities are available to assist, and the specifics are detailed herein. As an organization, there is much we can and will do; however, individually, there are opportunities that I hope we will all embrace. Emotional support and assistance alone is of crucial importance to those suffering a financial setback. I think all of us have had, and will have, the opportunity to offer such assistance.

There are signs that the economy is showing improvement, and we hope it will recover sooner rather than later. In the meantime, we can and should help in all ways possible. I look forward to better economic times in the future.



Keith A. Birkes is The Missouri Bar's Executive Director.