

George Fraser, 1960-61

George Fraser, a retired attorney from Stoel Rives, was interviewed by Don Marmaduke in April 2005. Portions of that interview appear below.

Staff, facilities

There was no MBA staff during George's tenure, nor was there any MBA office. Phil Roth, who preceded George as president, felt that the MBA needed a public relations expert, so one was hired. He later became a legislator in Salem.

Board members

Virginia Riley, now deceased, was the only woman on the board then. She served as secretary/treasurer. William F. Bernard was first vice president, John Yerkovich was second, and Herbert Hardy was third. These were the only MBA Board members. There were no minority members.

Historic events

The MBA received an award from the ABA for being the best local bar association (with more than 800 members) in the U.S. At that time, the MBA was providing speakers for radio program called "What is the Law?" and there was an outstanding lecture program on poetry and the law by Bardi Skulason, Icelandic Consul; continuing education programs that included a film on the amputation of a diabetic person's foot, speeches by the authors of the Chicago Jury Study and Law Day USA programs. MBA membership reached 1,000 for the first time.

Funniest moment

Probably the funniest moment was how quickly the audience evaporated at the MBA-sponsored medical film on amputations.

Proudest presidential moment

Applying for and receiving the ABA award, which was presented to George by Glenn Jack, a top Oregon trial lawyer who represented us in the ABA House of Delegates.

Most difficult challenge

The challenges included quite widely held prejudices against women and minorities in the profession. Women were more readily admitted to state law schools in the 50s and before than in private law schools, but by the 70s, women were becoming accepted in law firms as associates and partners. Velma Jeremiah was Stoel Rives' first female partner and that was in about 1979. Karen Creason became a partner in about 1980. Now, there are many women in his old firm, and they are reaching partner status far more readily than was true during his tenure as MBA President.

MBA then versus now

The changes from then to now involve many things, including the organization of the OSB and the MBA as membership expanded, the way disciplinary action was being handled then by the OSB, subject to Supreme Court oversight compared to the structure now in place for that purpose.