



20 WEST STREET, BOSTON, MA 02111-1204 • COMMUNICATIONS@MASSBAR.ORG

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: August 26, 2015

CONTACT: Jason Scally (617) 338-0682

Robert W. Harnais named first Hispanic president of the Massachusetts Bar Association

BOSTON, Mass. — Attorney Robert W. Harnais has been elected president of the Massachusetts Bar Association (MBA) for its 2015-16 year, beginning on Sept. 1. A general practitioner with Mahoney & Harnais in Quincy, Harnais is the MBA's first Hispanic president.

“Since its earliest years, the Massachusetts Bar Association has been welcoming of lawyers from all backgrounds. I am proud and humbled to serve as president of the state bar and further advance the MBA's historic commitment to diversity,” said Harnais. “We must always work to make sure that our profession remains an inclusive and accurate reflection of the community that our legal system serves. We have a system that represents and protects all people in this commonwealth, and the MBA will continue to strive to assure this.”

During his presidency, Harnais plans to promote a return to civility in the profession with a sense of camaraderie statewide, while also continuing the MBA's advocacy for access to justice and criminal justice reform, including the elimination of mandatory minimum sentences for drug-related crimes.

Harnais has volunteered his service to the MBA for many years, serving as an officer and as a member of the MBA's Executive Management Board and House of Delegates. He has also served as co-chair of the MBA's Crime Lab Task Force and chair of the MBA's Diversity Task Force.

Harnais is a past president of the Massachusetts Association of Hispanic Attorneys (MAHA) and a past regional president of the Hispanic National Bar Association, and remains highly involved with both organizations. In 2014, MAHA honored Harnais with its Leadership Award for his dedication to the Hispanic bar. That same year he received the Quincy Bar Association's Alfred P. Malaney Award, commonly referred to as the “Man of the Year Award,” for distinguished legal services. Harnais is also a past recipient of the Norfolk County Bar Association Pro Bono Award (2011).

In addition to receiving his B.A. from the University of Massachusetts Boston in 1984, Harnais graduated from New England Law | Boston in 1989.

Harnais has served on the Race and Ethnic Advisory Board for the Massachusetts courts since 2007. A Braintree resident, Harnais is chairman of the Braintree Planning Board and enjoys being a football official in his spare time. He lives in Braintree with his wife Leslie and their children.

Alongside Harnais, the other 2015-16 MBA officers include: President-elect Jeffrey N. Catalano, West Roxbury; Vice President Christopher A. Kenney, Sudbury; Treasurer Christopher P. Sullivan, Hingham; and Secretary John J. Morrissey, Hingham.

**(A headshot is available upon request.)*

Incorporated in 1911, the Massachusetts Bar Association is a non-profit organization that serves the legal profession and the public by promoting the administration of justice, legal education, professional excellence and respect for the law. The MBA represents a diverse group of attorneys, judges and legal professionals across the commonwealth.

— MBA —