



With Immeasurable Gratitude

It is time for the new generation to take the lead

by: Robert C. Goldberg, BTA General Counsel

It was snowing on a Saturday in January 1977 in Chicago, Illinois, when I ventured to my very first meeting of the National Office Machine Dealers Association (NOMDA; now the Business Technology Association [BTA]) at the O'Hare Marriott. More than 200 office technology dealers from around the country had flown to Chicago to discuss the numerous problems they were experiencing in the field with Royal Bond Copiers. The major concern was heat buildup that resulted in fires. This was a problem in the copier industry and, in fact, Xerox had installed fire extinguishers in early copiers. The master of ceremonies (MC) at the meeting was Frank Fonteyn (of Kennedy Business Equipment in San Jose, California). Frank did an excellent job and it was not until after the meeting that I learned he was a dealer and not a professional MC.

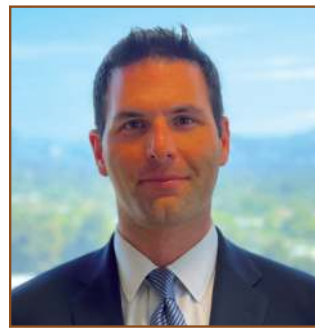
Since this was a meeting of competitors, NOMDA had sought antitrust counsel to avoid any potential issues. Unbeknownst to me, NOMDA was looking for a new general counsel. Its general counsel at the time had outlived his effectiveness and found it difficult to render a definitive answer. Jim Ayers (of Gilson-Ayers in Troy, Michigan) rose and asked a lengthy question that concluded with: "Can we do that?" I paused, reflected and responded: "Yes." Very unexpectedly I received a standing ovation. The recognition was for a definitive answer.

Now, 46 years later, I look back at an incredible journey, but at 75 years of age, it is time to cut back and enjoy life while it remains possible. My family missed out on much due to my devotion to clients, and I wish to spend as much time as possible with my wife of 53 years, Carol, our children and grandchildren.

As I reduce my workload, I ponder what the effect will be on BTA and its members. This had troubled me greatly until a perfect solution presented itself. As announced at this June's Capture the Magic event in Denver, Colorado, over the next year BTA will transition general counsel responsibilities to my son, Greg Goldberg.

At the 2023 BTA National Conference, to be held Aug. 30-31 in Boston, Massachusetts (for more information or to register, visit www.bta.org/BTABoston), I will introduce you to Greg. In the meantime, here's a bit about him. He is 43 years old and has practiced law for 18 years in the nonprofit sector, in both a small firm and a large firm. He is licensed in Illinois, Missouri and California, where he now resides. Greg is a graduate of Georgetown University and the George Mason School of Law.

I have no reservations about his capabilities and will always be available to guide him. As in the industry itself, it is time for the new generation to take the lead.



Clockwise from above left: Greg Goldberg; Bob Goldberg presents an educational session at the 2023 Spring Break event in Orlando, Florida; at BTA's 90th anniversary celebration, Jim Dotter (right), 2016-17 Select Dealer Group (SDG) president, presents a \$20,000 donation from SDG to Goldberg for the Bob Goldberg Scholarship Fund, which was established in 2015 to thank him for his many years of dedicated service to the association; and Goldberg presents at a NOMDA meeting in the 1980s.

The general counsel position at BTA has rewarded me with knowledge, friends and opportunities. The members of the office technology industry are extremely generous, always reaching out to help those who are less fortunate. The industry is comprised of individuals from blue states, red states, various ethnicities, religious beliefs and misplaced allegiances to undeserving sports teams. Regardless, we all work together to improve our lives, our businesses and the lives of others.

I wish to thank everyone in the industry for the opportunity to serve and assist. BTA is well organized and under outstanding leadership. Your association has never been stronger.

I will be working with Greg over the next year and am confident he will be a fine successor. I invite you to join us at this year's national conference to welcome Greg and share my excitement. ■

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