

## **Statement of Interest for SABA Board of Directors 2017-2019**

I am a partner at Mulqueen Karyampudi LLP (“MK Disability Lawyers”), a firm specializing in disability insurance litigation. I started my own law firm with my partner, Courtney Mulqueen, in September 2016. I litigate disability, personal injury, employment and human rights matters, as they relate to disabled clients. You can find out more about my practice at my firm’s website: [www.mkdisabilitylawyers.com](http://www.mkdisabilitylawyers.com).

Before starting my own practice, I was an associate at a leading disability law firm. I graduated from Queen’s University Faculty of Law in 2011. I became aware of the South Asian Bar Association (“SABA”) while in law school and started attending SABA events. SABA has been instrumental in my career by providing me with access to mentors who have helped and encouraged me to follow my ambitions of starting my own practice. SABA events have also been helpful in connecting me to a network of peers that has been an invaluable resource for me throughout my career.

In starting my own practice, I have honed various skills and strengths which would be beneficial to my role on the SABA board. In addition to the varied skill set required to be an effective litigator, I have developed the skills necessary to be a successful entrepreneur and manager. I am a volunteer for St. Michael’s Hospital Legal Services Project, which aims to improve access to justice and to alleviate the social determinants of health and health equity in the community. My role has been in providing legal education to health care providers at St. Michael’s Hospital.

As a SABA board member, I will work to continue SABA’s mission of supporting lawyers of South Asian descent and advocating for greater representation in the bar and on the bench. If I am given the opportunity to sit on SABA’s Board, I would endeavour to further SABA’s objectives in the following initiatives:

- 1) Supporting sole practitioners and small firm lawyers

The Law Society’s Challenges Faced by Racialized Licensees Working Group (the “Working Group”) found that a majority of racialized licensees work in practices of less than 6 people. The Working Group emphasized the need for sole practitioners and licensees in small firms to have strong mentors and networks.

My vision for SABA is to encourage and facilitate mentorship and networking amongst sole and small firm lawyers. This would involve hosting networking events and workshops geared towards the specific challenges faced by these lawyers and assist them to grow their practices. I would also work to ensure that the SABA mentorship program attracts solo/small firm mentors and mentees.

## 2) Supporting internationally trained lawyers

The Working Group also found that internationally trained lawyers face extra barriers in the profession. The report highlighted the need for mentorship for internationally trained lawyers. These lawyers feel particularly isolated and networking opportunities should be targeted towards them. My vision for SABA addressing this issue would be hosting networking events and workshops specifically addressing issues relevant to internationally trained lawyers, including assisting lawyers going through the complicated NCA process. I would work to show internationally trained lawyers that SABA is an inclusive organization that recognizes the particular challenges that they face.

## 3) Continuing advocacy for South Asian lawyers

SABA has been very successful in recent years in advocating for a strong South Asian bar and bench. I would like to continue and expand these efforts by considering the intersectionality of social identity and related systems of discrimination. As a South Asian woman, and as a lawyer who represents people who have disabilities, I have a unique understanding of how intersectionality of identities can contribute to unique sets of challenges for individuals. To this end, SABA should continue to foster relationships with other equity-seeking groups to promote equity within the legal profession.

Thank you for your consideration. I would greatly appreciate the opportunity to serve as a director for SABA for the 2017 - 2019 term.

**Rupa Karyampudi**  
Partner



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