

## Introducing the 2013-2014 Fellows Chair: Don Slesnick, Coral Gables, Florida



We are delighted to welcome our new Fellows Chair, Don Slesnick!

Who is the real Don Slesnick? We sat him down for a Q&A session to find out!

**Q: Where were you born and raised?**

**A:** Born in Harlingen, Texas (in the Rio Grande Valley on the Mexican border). Spent some years in Buffalo, N.Y. after my father returned home from WWII - moved to Miami when I was 10 years old.

**Q: What is your favorite Fellows event memory?**

**A:** The Awards banquet in New Orleans at the WWII Museum. My Mother (who met my Dad at Maxwell Air Field in the midst of the war) joined us for that evening, and touring the exhibits with her was a very moving experience. The evening was delightful with warm Southern-style hospitality and an entertaining keynote address by a Supreme Court Justice. What more could a person desire?

**Q: If you could meet anyone, dead or alive, who would it be?**

**A:** As a graduate of the University of Virginia - I would have to relinquish my degree if I didn't say "Mr. Jefferson" - truly a renaissance man (farmer, architect, wine connoisseur, diplomat, lawyer and statesman). Recent biographies have highlighted the complicated nature of his being and the contradictions of authoring a document which proclaimed the equality of all humans while being a slave owner. It would be a truly enlightening experience to have him respond to such questions.

**Q: What is the title of the last book you read?**

**A:** A Curious Man: The Strange & Brilliant Life of Robert "Believe It or Not" Ripley by Neal Thompson. A very interesting and entertaining look at a real American "personality."

**Q: What are you most looking forward to during your term as Chair of The Fellows?**

**A:** I am dedicated to work with the other officers (Cheryl Niro, Kathleen Hopkins and Myles Lynk) to exceed our fundraising goal to insure the continuation of the Foundation's award-winning research. We look forward, also, to working with our State Chairs to bring new vitality and enthusiasm to The Fellows organization through increased programming and communications. Finally, we will work with the Foundation Board to evaluate the value and pertinence of current research projects to insure that the ABF is having a meaningful impact on the legal profession and "the rule of law."

**Q: If you did not decide to go into law, what would you have done?**

**A:** I almost became a career diplomat. I had studied International Relations in college, was a NATO advisor in Europe and took the foreign service exam in Da Nang, Vietnam. But when I received the State Department's invitation to join the FSO class, Jeannett and I had just bought our first home in Coral Gables and were expecting our first child. Staying in South Florida to practice law seemed to be the right decision for the moment and I have never regretted that choice (although we have many times wondered what it would have been like to spend our life in various locations around the globe).

**Q: Which ABF research initiative are you most interested in?**

**A:** At the moment, I am excited about the newly established William H. Neukom Fellows Research Chair in Diversity and Law and the role it will play in the future of the Foundation's programming. All Fellows can be proud of this valuable addition to the Foundation's research capabilities.