

MY YEAR AS PRESIDENT

The year of 2014 has been a most amazing and challenging year. My goals as President were to do the following: Further build on our education program; energize and motivate our lawyers, especially the younger trial lawyers; promote civility amongst the Bar and the Bench and engage our membership to be inspired to move into leadership.

This year, our numerous education programs set records for attendance. Our Las Vegas Convention set an all-time record for attendance for attorneys. Thanks to the hard work of Michael Arias, we had our inaugural year of the CAALA Trial College with a full enrollment. Additionally, the Trial College was instructed by an all-star cast of CAALA trial lawyers. This year, we had many young trial lawyers try their first civil jury trial. Additionally, we had five people run for President of CAALA, an all-time high number of candidates. On the civility side, we had a joint mixer of plaintiff and defense lawyers with a huge turnout by the Bar and the Bench. Finally, we had over 50 CAALA lawyers volunteer on the inaugural Court Personal Injury Settlement Program to help ease court congestion in this age of funding cutbacks.

I look back to Pancho Sanchez and the Santana cover band. I will always remember the unique and thoughtful gift of CAALA autographed baseballs provided to the Members. I will always remember many of my family members from the Northwest here to celebrate our installation dinner. It was a magical evening for me and my whole family.

When I look back on 2014, I will remember it as a year full of adventure and new experiences. I had the privilege of meeting over 500 new people this year. What I have learned as CAALA President is that the things that make CAALA special are its staff and its members and their law firms, large and small. We are a unique and special group of talented and diverse individuals who represent real people

searching for justice. I have learned that CAALA's strength is from people of substance and conviction. People who are about the "little guy." Honestly, it is the people in this organization who make America such a great Country full of hope and possibility.

Election 2014 with Proposition 46 was difficult. I didn't ask for the fight, but I agreed to step into the fray with everything I could do as your trial lawyer president. As a lawyer who represents real people and not insurance companies, I say to all the naysayers a quote from Bruce Springsteen – "Never retreat and never surrender."

I want to thank the many Past Presidents for their confidential advice and help through this year. A special thank you to Amy Solomon, Michael Fields, Bruce Broillet and Christine Spagnoli.

Thank you to my firm of Greene Broillet & Wheeler and all the partners and associates who had my back this year. Especially a big shout out to my secretary, Sheri Dempsey, for wearing numerous hats every day.

Thank you to the CAALA staff that makes the entire organization run so smoothly – Stuart Zanville, Cindy Cantu, Liz Hagan, Kwedi Moore, Bill Smith, Martha Ruiz and Margie Ruiz. You are the magic that makes our Association run so well.

Finally, I want to wish Joe Barrett all the best for 2015. I am handing over to you the membership which is strong and energized. The talent of our group of trial lawyers has never been better. To you, the Members, I want to say thank you for all your words of encouragement and support throughout the year. Stay hopeful and excited for you will achieve justice and peace for your clients. This life of a trial lawyer is one of peaks and valleys, so enjoy the ride because you might even have moments of greatness along the way. Thank you for the honor and privilege of being your President for 2014.