

STARTING WITH A LOT OF CHANGES, BUT REMEMBERING WHERE WE CAME FROM

For those who do not know me or my background, I thought I would start with a brief introduction.

I was born in Seattle, Washington and grew up on Bainbridge Island, Washington (population 10,000) and graduated from Bainbridge Island High School. I believe I learned small town values while living in the shadow of the larger City of Seattle. I attended the University of Washington as an undergrad and matriculated to Pepperdine Law School. I feel like I spent most of my college years on the baseball diamond, doing bullpen sessions, running poles, hitting fungo bats, throwing batting practice or pitching in games. I have been married for 25 years to Janet Ray, who works as general counsel for Smart and Final. I have two children (Morgan and Garrett), who are both in college.

As a lawyer, I have been practicing in Los Angeles since 1986. I spent two years practicing as a defense lawyer for the firm of Dummit & Agajanian. I then joined the plaintiff's bar and practiced for five years at the Law Offices of Michael J. Piuze. I have spent the last 21 years with the plaintiff's firm of Greene Broillet & Wheeler, both as an associate and a partner. I would like to think that having worked in both a small plaintiff's firm as well as a larger plaintiff's firm will give me valuable insight into many of the issues encountered by the constituents I have been elected to represent in CAALA.

I am very excited to be your President in 2014. Initially when I ran for office some six years ago, it seemed like it would be a long time before I actually became President. However, looking back now, the time has gone very fast. Additionally, I have been fortunate to be able to learn a great deal from the Presidents I have served over the last six years. I want to be a person who is in touch with our membership and its needs.

I envision my primary role as President is to shepherd our membership through the Court Consolidation Plan that has been implemented in the County of Los Angeles. I am well aware of and in complete agreement with the statement that "justice delayed is justice denied." In order to be fully involved with the decisions made by the Court Consolidation Committee, I have been an active participant in that Committee and have attended the meetings representing our interests along with other fellow plaintiff trial lawyers. It has become abundantly clear that it is going to be very important for our membership to lend our support to the Court staff and the judiciary during this difficult period of diminished funding.

I do recall the days of answering "ready" in Department 1 back in the 1980's, when we were required to stipulate to extend the five-year statute, being issued beepers and watching our clients languish interminably waiting for more than five years after their case was filed. I experienced the Trial Court Delay Reduction Act of 1990, which changed the landscape of the courthouse and initially started with the goal of getting all cases to trial within 24 months of filing of the complaint. Over the next two decades, most cases received a trial court date within one year of filing the complaint. I realize the importance for all of us and our clients of making sure that we do not go back to the days of waiting four or five years before getting to trial.

Another goal of my presidency is to continue to grow our membership and better reach out and connect with our new and younger trial lawyers. The best way to do this is to better understand their

wants and needs and provide them with high quality free webinars and seminars that are put on by the top trial lawyers in California and insure that the topics covered are pertinent and relevant. I am going to continue to promote and expand this program as I have found it to be extremely successful and a real asset to our current membership. I also want to continue to support the List Serve, which has been such a valuable resource for experts, depositions, discovery items and advice for our membership. It strengthens our organization and opens up an all important dialogue that makes each of us better lawyers for our clients.

Another focus of my presidency is to emphasize and promote stronger civility between counsel. This includes not only civility between opposing counsel, but better civility between competing plaintiff's lawyers. I firmly believe that one CAALA member's success is good for all of our members. We need to cheer each other's accomplishments and realize that the victories of our fellow members benefit us all in championing our clients' causes.

I am also a strong supporter of CAOC and AAJ. I am very much aware of our current MICRA battle and the importance of that fight to each of our member's practice and pledge my commitment and support to fighting that battle.

I believe that we will have a strong voice at the table with the Court Consolidation Committee in Los Angeles. I believe that our Board of Governors in 2014 will do a fantastic job and we will be your voice to help protect your clients in your practices throughout the year. I look forward to meeting each and every member this year.