The parting glass

By Niall McCarthy

The Parting Glass is a traditional Irish Song which is sung at the end of a gathering of friends. It signifies that your time at this place has come to an end. We have reached that time for my tenure at CAOC. This has been a year of successes and disappointment. Battles have been waged. Friendships have been forged stronger. Our collective efforts in 2012 are something we can reflect on with tremendous pride.

Legislatively, we enacted a deposition bill that will stop the abuses of defense counsel in taking endless days of depositions of plaintiffs. It was a much needed bill, and long term will be a tremendous asset for plaintiffs’ lawyers. The governor’s signature of that bill, which takes effect Jan. 1, was a significant day for CAOC. We also defeated bills, including ones set for plaintiffs’ lawyers.

The governor’s reform bill went down at the end of the legislative session. Bills of that magnitude rarely pass the first time. When I became President, I promised to pick a few fights. We did. I am particularly proud of the fight we waged on Howell. I thank Bruce Brusavich, the oracle on medical billing, for joining the battle. As an organization, we can only achieve greatness by striving for it.

In the state elections, there were significant gains in both houses electing pro-civil justice legislators. CAOC was integral in that success. In 2013, the Legislature will be a better place for those who believe in the civil justice system.

CAOC’s membership has reached its highest point in many years. Our education programs and our convention had record attendance. Financially, the organization is on extremely solid footing. The state of our organization is strong.

I have enjoyed speaking with and getting to know our members throughout California. Your devotion to your clients and their causes is a model for all attorneys. Your stories are inspirational. Thank you for sharing them.

Let me thank my colleagues in CAOC leadership. Brian Kabateck, John Feder, Brian Chase, Chris Wood, Lisa Maki, Ingrid Evans, Jack Denove, Lee Harris and Greg Bentley have all served with distinction. In particular, I want to thank Brian Kabateck for being my trusted compatriot throughout the year. He has been involved in our strategic moves in and outside the Capital, and will be a president who gives maximum effort. Next, our management team has been remarkable. Nancy Drabble, Nancy Peverini, Lea-Ann Tratten, Eric Bailey, Lori Sarracino, Laurie Klimchock and the rest of the Sacramento team bravely fight against heavy opposition to preserve our civil justice system and educate our members. They are the foundation for our success.

It has been a tremendous honor to serve as CAOC’s President. I am grateful for the opportunity. The fellowship of the plaintiffs’ bar is very special. It is created from a common purpose and the shared experience of fighting for your clients against powerful interests. Each president hopes to leave CAOC just a little better than we found it. With a lot of help from my friends, I can fairly say that I met that goal. As the Irish song goes:

“So fill to me the parting glass
Good night and joy be with you all.”

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