



Sometimes it's just hard

By Sharon J. Arkin

Sharon Scott – our wonderful, what-would-we-do-without-her managing editor – asked me to submit my Editor's Message for this edition, and sent along a gentle reminder when I didn't send it in as promptly as usual. But, much as I love CAOC and the Forum, sometimes it's just hard. Hard to fight through the infuriating politics of this era. Hard to fight through judges who just don't seem to understand the law. Hard to fight through doing the hard work of the plaintiffs' bar when things are busy in your personal life. And as I get older, of course, it's hard to keep up the fight when you're tired, discouraged and have health issues.

And that's where I was this week. After taking some drubbings from bad appellate decisions rendered in cases I worked on and after just being tired and not feeling physically well (which was entirely my own fault), the last thing I could face was writing an upbeat, powerful, meaningful,

or even simply readable, editor's message for the Forum.

So here I am: Debbie Downer. And we all go through days, sometimes weeks, like this.

But just thinking about all of you – our members, our lobbying staff, our support staff, our officers and the chairs of our various committees and caucuses – makes me shake off the megrims and realize how lucky I am – how lucky we all are – to be surrounded by like-minded people fighting every single day for our clients and even for those who are not our clients, but who deserve justice nonetheless. And sometimes we lose the battles, but we have yet to lose the war. Given the shift in the federal judiciary, we are likely to lose even more battles in the future. But, thankfully, being in California state court, we will have a better chance than attorneys elsewhere in our nation, to protect civil justice and the rights of those we represent.

What is perhaps the most heartening of all is how initiatives started by various members over the last decade have fundamentally changed the composition of our organization. As I edit the Forum, both the legal articles and the news reports of various committees and local trial lawyer associations, I see so many new attorneys, so many people of diversity, so many high-energy, enthusiastic attorneys taking on important roles in our organization. I feel confident in the next generation of CAOC's leaders because they are strong, enthusiastic, vital and aware. We're in good hands, my friends. ■

Sharon J. Arkin is principal in The Arkin Law Firm, specializing in plaintiff appeals. She is a former president of CAOC and is Editor-in-Chief of the Forum. She is also a 2010 recipient of the CLAY award in appellate law. www.arkinlawfirm.com

President's Message

(continued from page 6)

by a defective car seat and improving safety for school children by revealing a bus company's negligence in a tragic bus stop accident.

Our legislative and courtroom achievements are continually imperiled by anti-consumer forces at the national and state level. As soon as the governor signed the data protection bill, critics began lobbying to pass federal legislation to take away our hard-fought victory. Likewise, our

victories for consumers on wildfire immunity and to protect victims of lead paint have been attacked on a national as well as state level by the corporate PR machine. Meanwhile, several of our other legislative victories remain under siege by foes trying to kill bills on the governor's desk.

The opposition to civil justice in California is led by the same regressive forces that have worked on the federal level to thwart justice. When the Trump Administration announced efforts to separate immigrant children from their parents, I spoke out as CAOC President and said "Some things

are just wrong." I noted then what is true now: Consumer attorneys fight every day to help families heal from tragic family losses.

Efforts to weaken consumer justice violate the most basic values that we fight to uphold. I am proud of what we have achieved so far, and just like the examples of our individual attorneys who have moved mountains for their clients and our lawyer advocates who have achieved tremendous legislative results, I know that by working together we can continue to move California. ■