

**PRESIDENT'S COLUMN**  
**December 2005**

**“Farewell”**

**by Robert J. Francavilla**

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It seems like only yesterday I was being sworn in as president of our fine organization and yet, before I could blink, I find myself putting the finishing touches on my year and preparing to pass the presidential gavel into the able hands of CASD's next president, Richard Huver.

During this year, we faced a number of major challenges, certainly none more daunting than the potential fee cap limitation initiative sponsored by the pharmaceutical industry. Through the relentless and creative efforts of my law partner, **David S. Casey, Jr.**, and CAOC president **Sharon Arkin**, they were able to convince PhRMA to withdraw its initiative. I cannot tell all of you how proud I am of, not only our leadership, but of our membership as a whole for banding together, rolling up our collective sleeves, and digging in to fight to keep the doors of the courthouse open to consumers. All of you got behind the reason why CASD exists in the first place: To protect consumer rights. I am certain you will all support incoming President Huver and this organization again should this threat rear its head next year.

After the threat of a fee cap initiative was disposed of (for now), CASD was able to concentrate on the day-to-day aspects of this organization, that has allowed it to become and remain strong for the future battles that are certain to bring pressure to bear on our tort system. There are several people who deserve thanks for the successful year we have had, beginning with our wonderful Executive Director, SJ Kalian, and her Associate Director, Chris Van Orshoven. They along with the rest of the CASD staff have worked tirelessly to promote and achieve the goals of CASD and made my job as president so much easier and more rewarding.

Among this year's goals was a recognition and desire on the part of our Board to increase membership. We all recognized that there is strength in numbers and knew that if our organization was going to remain strong, our membership had to increase. Enter **Alex Scheingross** and **Alexys Kalafer**. My appreciation of their efforts to bolster membership is well chronicled. I have written and spoken at length about my gratitude for all of their hard work and creativity in improving membership. You guys are the best! **Wayne Hughes** and **Brad Hallen** put together an educational program that was second to none. Our members, from brand new lawyers all the way up to the very experienced, are very fortunate to have such dedicated and creative people putting together educational programs to ensure we all develop into the finest

lawyers we possibly can.

Once again, the Awards Committee, chaired by **Richard Huver**, has continued its exemplary work in investigating and identifying the outstanding accomplishments of our members. **Scott Levine** and **Tracee Lorens** have done a great job reaching out to political candidates who are friends of the trial lawyers, sponsoring fundraisers for the likes of Kelly Hayes-Raitt, a candidate for the assembly, and Liz Figueroa, candidate for Lt. Governor.

The Events Committee, chaired by **Sherry Bahrambeygui**, has done a great job pulling off the Annual Red Boudreau Dinner, the golf tournament, and the Evening With The Trial Stars.

I also want to sincerely thank **Kerry Hoxie**, a fixture on the CASD board, and the editor of the *Trial Bar News*, for not only helping me with ideas for my monthly president's column, but also for graciously extending the deadline to get those articles in.

Thanks also go out to my law partners, **David S. Casey, Jr.**, **Frederick Schenk**, **Thomas Penfield**, and most of all, **Gayle Blatt**, our vice president, for helping to make my year as president easier and more meaningful. I also owe a great deal of gratitude to Deanna Hastings, David Casey's executive secretary, who lent her years of experience and expertise in managing David's various TLA offices to help me through my office. My paralegal of 20 years, Mary Jo Cunningham, also deserves a great deal of thanks for keeping both me and our case load organized in order to allow me to be both a trial lawyer and president of this fine organization.

I am also grateful to my wife, Carla, for her love, support, patience and understanding during a year when I was trying to effectively serve as president of CASD, do my job and be a good husband. Thanks also goes out to my mother for her unending love and kindness.

Finally, I want to thank my loving father, Ernest Francavilla, for making me the man I am today and giving me the confidence and belief in myself to succeed in any endeavor I set my mind to. He was, indeed, not only a great dad, but my best friend. I love you, Dad. Rest in peace, until we meet again.

My heartfelt appreciation goes out to all the membership for giving me the opportunity to serve as your 2005 CASD President. Farewell.