

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

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by **Wayne Alan Hughes**

*Wayne Alan Hughes is CASD's President for 2009. He practiced criminal and domestic law before joining with his "significant other" Tracee Lorens to practice in various areas of complex civil litigation. Their first trial, as co-counsel, served as a chapter in Judge Ehrenfreud's book *You Be the Jury*. Currently he practices in the areas of mass torts and class actions for which he received two Outstanding Trial Lawyer Awards. He is blessed with three children: Alexander Zaharopoulos Hughes, MBA Oxford, Vice President at Wells Fargo; Cassandra Zaharopoulos Hughes, completing Vet school; and Alexandra Rose Lorens, first year college student and dynamic carbon copy of Tracee. You can reach Wayne at: waynecloud@aol.com.*

On January 7, 1971, my bar number was a rather large number. California attorneys now number more than a quarter million! Who are we to number so many?

There are 31 quotes in a book of 14,000 "words of wisdom, wry witticisms and quick comebacks" listed under the topic of "lawyers". All 31 are negative — 16 accuse lawyers of being in it only for the money, nine blame us for making the law overly complex, and four imply we are dishonest. Watch the news or late night T.V. or listen to the radio, but put on your leather hide. Our profession is thought badly of by the majority, yet polls show that clients generally hold their own attorneys in high regard.

Here are a few thoughts about attorneys and our profession:

The week before writing this article there was a meeting of a very diverse group of attorneys. A prominent defense attorney said, "Lawyers are the most generous of any profession with their time and money." Some might consider the statement overly generous, but I urge you to reflect upon the work of three local attorneys: **Mike Marrinan, Lynne Lasry and Steve Boudreau**. These three people are very modest and quietly do good works without publicity. I apologize to each of them if they feel I have invaded their privacy, but . . . well you know it is generally easier to apologize than to get permission.

Mike Marrinan is a San Diego civil rights attorney. He recently tried, for the second time, a case involving police brutality in a community where jury sympathy is hard to come by for such cases and he was in the unanimous jury, federal system with limited voir dire. His client received a very favorable outcome. When I spoke with his co-counsel, the following story emerged. Mike's office is in a tough area of town. Trial prep involved long hours and the two would walk several blocks to their cars late at night. The journey always took longer than the distance warranted. Mike would stop to talk to the homeless. He knew each person by name and their story . . . names of family members and even pets! To some he gave money and to all he gave dignity. He could have been too busy or too wrapped up with his cases to take the time. He certainly does not fit any of the quotes in that book of alleged words of wisdom.

Lynne Lasry has a diverse practice including business law and experience as a tough, trustworthy defense attorney. She is a modest woman of exceptional compassion. You may have seen her in the courthouse with a “helper dog”. She trains young dogs to be helpers to others. There is some pain involved. She grows to love her dogs only to have to give them away. Currently she takes her dogs to schools to work with shy children to whom she reads. The dogs provide a non-threatening companion to help the children bridge a social gap. About ten years ago on New Year’s Eve, she and two of her partners were talking about what they had spent on Christmas and their blessings. The three and their spouses thought life was about more than self indulgence and decided to give special gifts in the future. They formed a non-profit corporation which they have funded for a decade from their personal incomes to give scholarships to unmarried, single mothers. They help these mothers as long as they continue to pursue an education. Each year a new scholarship is given. Currently they are funding a scholarship for a mother who is a law student at UCLA. Another missing anecdote from *14,000 Quips and Quotes!*

Steve Boudreau is a past president of CASD and one of our best. He is a quiet man who for years has been the driving force behind the “Red Boudreau Trial Lawyers’ Dinner” which has raised in excess of \$970,000 for the homeless. The next dinner is on March 28, 2009 at the Mission Bay Hilton and, in these economic times, while there are more homeless, it is also much more difficult to raise money. Steve is always giving of himself and, at the same time, dodging the spotlight. For instance, though he would be the popular choice, Steve keeps refusing to be considered for the Broderick Award for civility. Steve could be the poster boy for civility. He is always there to give quiet, wise counsel.

These are just three examples of what is missing from that reference book. Perhaps it is time to throw it out?

2009

This article is being written in the middle of November. While not all plans are firm, here is a teaser. It is obvious that the economy will impact our membership. Although we have not picked a slogan for 2009, we are seriously considering “More for Less” as one guiding principle. We need to figure out how to help our members in these tough times.

Our staff and board of directors are dedicated to finding solutions. There are board members who are willing to anonymously help people who need the assistance with “scholarships” to seminars, events and even with membership. This help is provided in a confidential way without publicity as to who is being helped. If you or someone you know needs assistance, either call the staff at 619-696-1166 or e-mail me at waynecloud@aol.com with CASD referenced in the subject line. We take seriously our motto “*Never Stand Alone*”. It is not just our clients but also our members who should not have to stand alone. Likewise if you have the resources and want to be someone who helps others, let us know.

We plan to have more seminars this year which are targeted to help younger attorneys.

“Survival: How to Practice in a Cost Effective Way and Grow the Bottom Line”: a practical seminar on how to build a practice in a cost efficient way while growing the bottom line; “Your First Trial”: covers the basics of trying cases; and a second seminar on how to grow a practice is being worked

on which will bring prominent attorneys from around California to discuss the business of law.

We will also have “What’s New in Tort and Trial,” and “Haniff and Liens.” In the planning stage, consideration is being given to “A Return to Evidence” as well as seminars on employment law, elder abuse and class actions. The lab programs will continue and hopefully grow in number.

The Membership Committee, under the leadership of Tracee Lorens, has already begun working and plans a past presidents’ phone bank. Steve Boudreau has been instrumental in this effort as well. Tracee and I are a team. I am so thankful to have her energy supporting me and CASD. It will be another two-for-one year. We have many outstanding volunteers who will be the subject soon of a President’s Column. For now, let me anonymously thank you all — what a wonderful group!

Ken

Thank you, Ken, for all you did as president in 2008. A secret on the Executive Committee is that new members almost immediately check to see if their year as president will be an election year. Ken drew the short straw and had to juggle CASD, a significant trial calendar, an ill mother and, in his spare time, he helped raise money for targeted races. Calling on people to donate money is not fun. Ken did it all and did it well.