

Paying the Rent

It was the late, great Muhammed Ali who once said, “service to others is the rent you pay for your room on this Earth.” I was reflecting on this wisdom as I sat down to write my final column as president of CASD; looking back fondly on a year in which I saw so many of my CASD brethren doing their part and paying their rent.

I’ve sat on the CASD board for nearly a decade. I was only a second year lawyer when then-president Ken Sigelman phoned me and asked if I’d work on a committee. I remember getting the call and thinking, “wow, Ken Sigelman is a famous lawyer and he’s calling me?” I was a nobody and Ken was taking the time to call and ask that I step up. My immediate reaction was “of course” and so began my years of service to CASD.

During this time, I’ve watched many former presidents take the organization in slightly different tacks but through it all we’ve stayed the course. When I began my time on the Board, the organization had fewer members, a much smaller budget, was lacking in basic elements of corporate governance, delivered fewer educational opportunities and networking events, and eschewed any form of long range strategic planning.

Thanks to the stewardship of past presidents like Ken, Richard Huver, Gayle Blatt, Scott Levine, John Gomez, Joel Bryant, Rebecca Lack, Raul Cadena, and Tim Blood, we’ve changed all of that. CASD is stronger – structurally and financially – than ever. Our membership numbers are up, our educational programming is cutting edge, our networking events are vibrant, and our board leadership is more committed than ever.

Over the past year, I’ve been repeatedly amazed by the great group of people who selflessly give of their time and treasure to live and breath our motto to ‘never stand alone’. Whether it was the work of our outreach committee, led by Alreen Haeggquist, serving food to needy kids and families at Monarch School; or learning from an outstanding educational panel organized by Maria Palmeri and Pajman Jassim; or “dialing for dollars” with Tim Blood

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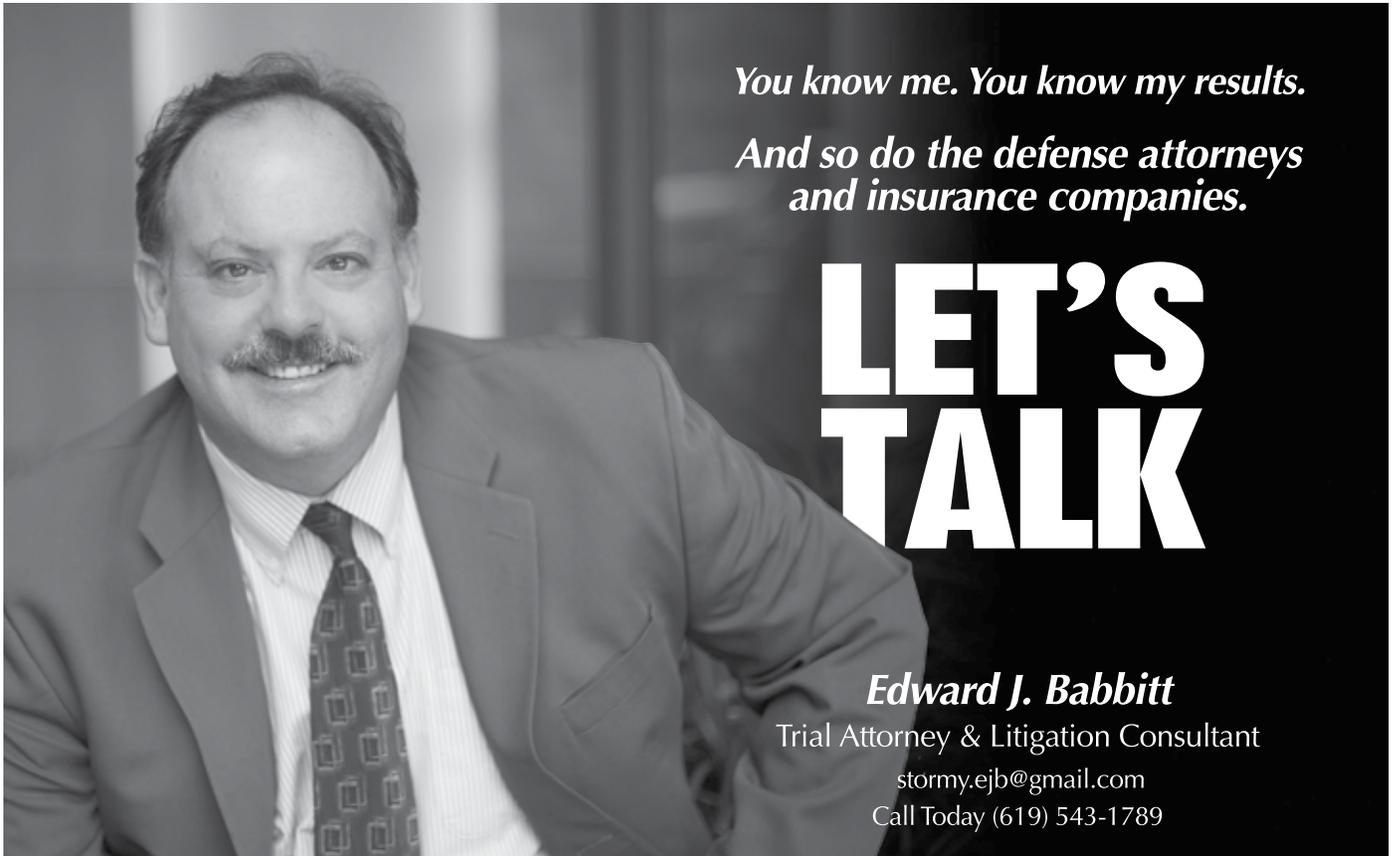
and our governmental relations folks during this critical election cycle; there was never a shortage of CASD members willing to help a cause greater than themselves.

I'm also pleased to report that the financial foundation of our organization is stronger than ever. I'm not naïve enough to believe that our organization has faced its last existential threat— either at the ballot box or by the High Court - but when we find ourselves in one of those battles in the future I'm comforted to know we'll have the financial strength to weather the storm.

As I close this final column I want to thank all of my fellow board members for their time and service. Anyone who has sat on this board over the years knows that it is significant time commitment and your only "payoff" is the satisfaction of a job well done. I want to give particular thanks to Bonnie Benitez, our executive director extraordinaire; Kolin

Durant, our membership guru; and Ilima Eastwood who has seamlessly taken over the role as our educational and events coordinator. If CASD were the Emerald City, Bonnie, Kolin and Ilima would be the wizards behind the curtain, pulling the levers, turning the knobs and making everything we do sparkle and shine.

Lastly, I want to say thank you to all the great presidents who have come before me. It was a big pair of shoes to fill but my sincere hope is that the organization is in a better place than when I found it. Jim Iagmin, you're up, my friend. I wish you and Dana Grimes all the best in your respective tenures and know that our organization will be well served by your steady hands. **TBN**



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LET'S TALK

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