

Make It Happen

CASD is now 50 years old and embarking on its 51st year. Like many CASD Presidents before me, I start the year with high hopes for CASD and a strong appreciation of everything that CASD has done for me over the years. CASD has had 10 different presidents since I was appointed to the board of directors and I have learned something from each one of them, some more than others. During my 10 years of service to CASD, I have met many new friends, had a bunch of fun and learned much about the law and being an effective trial attorney. There have certainly been challenging moments as well, but if I had to do it all over again, I would not change a thing about my involvement in CASD.

At the same time, however, I am very cognizant of the challenges that lie ahead for us trial attorneys and our clients. Although action is necessary to overcome the challenges, we first need to talk about the challenges.

The Challenges

Prior to writing this column, I read the first President's column for the last ten CASD Presidents. I was struck by one thing. Consumers and their attorneys (*i.e.*, trial lawyers for the people, aka consumer attorneys) have always been under attack by the well-funded foes of liberty and justice for all. Suffice to say that this fact will not change in our generation. That being said, we are still standing. If winning was all about money, we would have been defeated long ago. We are still standing because our cause is just and we are committed to doing whatever is necessary to enforce and preserve our clients' rights against those who seek to destroy or severely limit those rights. Our choice now, as always, is either to wilt under the pressure of our adversaries or to stand and fight. Fortunately, since CASD's inception and for many years before that, plaintiff attorneys just like us have chosen to stand and fight.

There is no doubt that the foes of liberty and justice for all are many. Among them are insurance companies and other large corporations which have spent billions, and will continue to spend billions, attempting to brain-wash potential jurors with false, misleading, anti-trial lawyer, anti-lawsuit propaganda, and billions more "influencing" politicians to enact laws which restrict or take away entirely individual's right to receive fair and just compensation for harm caused them or their loved ones by the wrongful conduct of others. Other foes include pro-business judges, appointed by those same "influenced" politicians, who ignore the applicable law to rule against injured plaintiffs and in favor of letting the defendants escape responsibility for the harm they have caused. The question is what can we do to prevail against the challenges posed by our foes. As set forth below, the answer is action and CASD can help you in that regard.

Action and How CASD Can Help

Become a More Effective Attorney. Making a positive difference in the legal community one case at a time, one client at a time, by continuing to become a more knowledgeable and skilled attorney is an important part of prevailing against the foes of liberty and justice for all. The best attorneys are always working to keep abreast of the ever-changing laws and to improve their litigation skills. To achieve the results that our clients deserve, we must be able to not only talk the talk, but more importantly, to walk the walk. If we are to obtain fair and just compensation for our clients via either a settlement

by Joel R. Bryant

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or a verdict, then we must be prepared in every case to prevail at trial. Where does CASD fit in?

A. CASD's Educational Programs.

CASD has, and will continue to have, outstanding educational programs designed to bolster your knowledge of the law and sharpen your trial skills. CASD's 2011 educational lineup will include the following: Voir Dire, Liens, Evidence III, Class Actions, Cross-Examination of Defense Doctors, What's New in Tort and Trial and several labs regarding the various stages of trial. As always, our seminars will have locally and nationally known lawyers who are skilled, experienced advocates with a track record of exceptional results for their clients.

B. CASD's List Server. The List Server exemplifies CASD's motto of Never Stand Alone. It has made CASD, in effect, a 900-member law firm whose attorneys can obtain comprehensive answers to a wide

array of legal questions in a matter of minutes. Whether you seek information regarding expert witnesses, judges, arbitrators, mediators, personal injury law, insurance law, real estate law, employment law or medical malpractice, the answers can be found quickly on our List Server. It is so valuable because our members are men and women from diverse backgrounds with diverse personalities who practice in diverse areas of the law. Such diversity is one of the key strengths of our organization.

C. Trial Bar News. Our Monthly Magazine contains numerous articles by knowledgeable attorneys regarding the latest statutes and case law which impact our cases. A review of the articles in *Trial Bar News* every month when it arrives is a must for effective practice.

D. Trial Mentor Committee. This new committee will be comprised of CASD Board Alumni who have significant jury trial experience and

have demonstrated excellence in advocacy over the years. The committee will meet with CASD members who are preparing for trial and provide them with trial strategy, tips and insight to better prepare them for trial.

E. Data Banks. CASD's document bank contains hundreds of motions, briefs and other documents that are available for free download by members. Additionally, our expert bank has information regarding several of the lawsuit doctors regularly hired by the insurance defense attorneys we are up against. CASD is also linked to TrialSmith through which a nationwide database including expert depositions, briefs and motions, legal forms and other documents can be accessed.

Get Involved in the Legislative Issues. Supporting pro-consumer legislators and learning more about what goes on in Sacramento and how

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what happens there can significantly impact our lives and the lives of the people we represent is an important part of prevailing against the foes of liberty and justice for all.

A. Lobby Day. Each year, members of CASD join attorneys from across the state in Sacramento to participate in Consumer Attorneys of California's Lobby Day. This involves meeting face-to-face with many of California's legislators to educate them as to why they should vote for or against certain pending legislation that can significantly impact the lives of the people we represent. There are always several fun parties the night before and night after Lobby Day. All CASD members are encouraged to attend.

B. Legislator Coffee Hour. Every month or so, CASD's legislative committee arranges a coffee hour with a legislator. This provides an invaluable opportunity to meet face-to-face with an influential legislator in an informal setting and find out where he or she stands on issues affecting us and the people we represent. All CASD members are encouraged to attend.

Know That You are Not Alone in This Fight. Just as team chemistry is a vital part of a winning sports

team, it is also a vital part of a winning organization. CASD's greatest strength is, and always has been, the overall camaraderie and team chemistry among its members. Such camaraderie and chemistry enables us to come together and fight as one.

A. List Server Parties & Mixers. Our list server parties and mixers are held throughout the year at various locations around San Diego. They offer quality time to relax, catch up with old friends and make new ones.

B. Golf Tournament. Our annual golf tournament is a great opportunity to close the office for the afternoon, hang out with your buddies on a sunny spring day at a local golf course, and take out the week's frustrations by hitting a little white ball with a golf club or a shillelagh as hard as you can. Well, that is how some choose to do it anyway.

C. Trial Stars Dinner & Installation/Awards Dinner. These two dinners are a great opportunity to meet other members and learn winning trial and advocacy strategy from the attorneys being honored. The presentation of awards at the dinners is inspirational and even humorous at times. The cases we learn about at these dinners remind us why we chose to become trial

lawyers and show us what a positive difference we can make in the lives of the people we represent.

Okay, it's now 1:15 a.m. The time for talking about CASD is over and the time for action is upon us. The time for sitting on the sidelines and watching others do the heavy lifting is over. As set forth above, there are many ways to get involved in CASD, make it better, and make a positive difference in your life and the lives of those you represent now and in the future. There are no more excuses to justify doing nothing. Decide now to get more involved in CASD and then make it happen. **TBN**

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