

Till We Meet Again

I write my last column as President with mixed emotions. On the one hand, I greatly enjoyed serving this past year and will miss the job. On the other, I look forward to trying even more cases, committing more time to my practice, and seeing my beautiful wife and children just a little bit more. I thought perhaps I should start this month's column by recapping my year and what I hoped to accomplish. Doing so may help focus important values I believe we all share.

First and foremost, I wanted to lead by example as a trial lawyer. I always hoped that, if I were a leader in battle, I would have the courage to actually lead the charge. This year, I figured that if members saw their President jumping into trial often and on "difficult" cases, they would feel more confident doing the same. I committed myself to sharing the highs and lows, the victories and defeats of doing so. I thought that doing so might help others as well. This year, I think I accomplished that goal. I tried four cases to verdict and will have tried a fifth before this column goes to print. Each was a "difficult" one – three "slip and falls", one "soft tissue" case and two "mild" traumatic brain injury cases. The venues -- Indio, Pomona, Riverside, Vista and downtown -- might be considered challenging by some. Nonetheless, I jumped in and did what my clients needed doing. I feel very good about that. I tried to share with you all as best I could along that road. Some of you I saw in the courtrooms. Many of you read my accounts here. I hope we all shared something along the way. Maybe one of you was encouraged or inspired or motivated. If so, I feel successful.

Second, and as important, I wanted to continue my commitment to community service. I hoped to again lead by example and also develop an infrastructure within CASD that allowed members to give back, too. While there is still lots of work to do, I think we got started on accomplishing those goals as well. I was honored this year individually to receive the San Diego County Bar Association's "Community Service" award. While receipt of the award would be meaningful to me in any year, I was particularly gratified to receive it as the President of San Diego's "trial lawyer" association. Obviously, lots of money has been spent to vilify us. By walking up to the stage to receive that award in front of a packed house of lawyers and judges, I hoped I was changing that perception just a little bit. Our "Trial Lawyers Care" seminar was a huge success, and our members got together and pitched in making our community better in a number of sponsored events. My hope is that this organization continues to develop and support this critical community service commitment once my year is done.

I also spent a lot of time talking to community groups about what exactly we do. Along with other Board members, I spoke to the Kiwanis, the Rotary Club and a host of others. We did our very best to set the record straight and demonstrate that we really are just good people trying to help good people after all. While it's hard to turn hard-set minds in an hour, we did cause some folks to think just a little. Many of them approached us afterward and thanked us for opening their eyes just a little. Through good community work, honest humanity and just showing we are decent folks, we can change perceptions over time. I hope I helped do that in some tiny way.

One thing I really enjoyed as President was getting to know our members. Our organization is really made up of wonderful people helping each other. I

by John H. Gomez

A graduate of Yale Law School and Gerry Spence's Trial Lawyer's College, John H. Gomez is CASD's President for 2012. John believes passionately in improving our world though both the law and community service. John's community passions are the Latino community, kids at risk, drunk driving prevention, foster children and legal services for the indigent. CASD has twice named John "Trial Lawyer of the Year" and has awarded him six "Outstanding Trial Lawyer" awards. His Gomez Law Firm is an eight-attorney consumer law firm dedicated exclusively to community service, catastrophic personal injury and mass tort litigation. Most importantly, John is the devoted husband of Lisa and the proud father of son "JD" and twins Michael and Analise.



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have seen firsthand how we help each other. I have been overwhelmingly impressed by how we all share our work product, experiences, resources and time. I have been the thankful recipient of your giving myself. You have come to my trials, my focus groups, my reenactments and my mock trials. I have likewise seen how you have rallied to support members going through hard times. Whenever we get together, there is a real and genuine feeling of camaraderie and friendship. I travel around a lot and meet lots of lawyers. I would put our group up against any trial lawyer organization in the country. You really are that good. That itself has made it easy to lead.

Our Board is also amazing. This marks my seventh year or so on the Board and I have never enjoyed a group as much as this one. Your leadership reflects you well. There are no egos. There are no agendas other than serving you. We have criminal lawyers, class action lawyers, employ-

ment lawyers and injury lawyers. Our women are strong. This year, we began a women's caucus. I am happy we now offer our female attorneys a safe "club" for candid conversations and just plain old hanging out. Our newer Board members have amazing energy. Our more experienced members offer incredible wisdom. Your incoming President, Rebecca Lack Mowbray, is an incredible lady with an incredible story. I am quite certain that you will flourish during the next year under her leadership.

As for me, I have lots to do. I really feel like my career as a trial lawyer is just getting started. I have committed myself to maintaining a very active trial practice over the next decade or so. I hope that the quality of my cases continues to improve. I have a number of very high profile cases to try in the next year. I am hopeful they all go well. My firm continues to grow. I now have a group of very talented lawyers working with me. I am thankful for that and look

forward to being a more effective leader to them.

I need to spend more time at home. I am in trial a lot and travel a lot. Like many of you I'm sure, I struggle to find balance. I am committed to doing a better job of that in years to come. My Christian faith continues to grow as an important part of my life. God, wife, kids, my clients, trials, all of you -- that is what is going to be taking up all my time once I give up the gavel. I look forward to your continued friendship for years to come. If I can ever do a single thing for any one of you, please give me the privilege of helping. I love what we do and each one of you. It has been an honor. Thank you. Till we meet again **TBN**



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