

## With Deepest Gratitude

It is with both a tear and a smile that I write my final President's Column. Having started out as a legal secretary in 1976 here in San Diego, my legal experience introduced me to many of my CASD presidential predecessors. When I was asked to serve on the Board of Directors for CASD, it was truly an honor I felt undeserving of, having watched the legal giants in this community come before me. I'm completely humbled by the opportunity I've been given to serve this great organization, and will miss leading it, yet I look forward to becoming the Immediate Past President and I watch with eagerness as this organization continues to grow and flourish.

All of the successes this year didn't happen in a vacuum. They happened because of the extraordinary volunteers who work very hard to see that this organization extends the utmost in benefits to our members. We have the best and most dedicated volunteers. Our members so unselfishly give of themselves to each other and generously give of their time to the legal community at large.

I have many people to thank for my year as President. First and foremost, THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU to Kerry Hoxie. I thank Kerry for being my cheerleader and having more to do with getting me on the Executive Committee than I did. I also thank Kerry for her guidance and wisdom as the editor-in-chief of this publication. Without her stalwart direction and assistance, I would not have had the opportunity to research and write about so many interesting subjects.

I'd be remiss if I did not thank Dan White once again for "giving me legs." His vision of who I was in the late 70's as his secretary at Rhoades & Hollywood, and who I could become years later, was something I was blind to. Every client who is grateful to me for my hard work and dedication to them is silently thanking Dan too. Dan has earned a lot of angel's wings here on Earth in my life's path and I'm sure many others'.

by Rebecca D. Lack



Rebecca Lack is a principal at Lack Law Firm and the 2013 President of Consumer Attorneys of San Diego. She's the seventh woman President of CASD. She practices civil litigation with an emphasis on insurance bad faith and personal injury law and is very proud to call herself an attorney. CASD has recently awarded Rebecca an "Outstanding Trial Lawyer" award. She currently shares her life with her two standard poodles.

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## 30 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE SERVING OUR COMMUNITY

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Thank you to the readers of this column. So many of you have reached out to me to let me know that something I wrote touched a cord with you, inspired you, made you laugh, or helped you in some way. I was enormously relieved to find out my columns are not just kindling for your fireplace and many of you actually do read them and like them. I know many of my columns have been quite a departure from the President's Columns in the past. I wanted to show a different side of our organization - a more human, touchy-feely side - and I hope I've done that.

There is none better than the staff we have manning the offices for Consumer Attorneys of San Diego. Bonnie Benitez, our Executive Director, keeps the office organized and the business of CASD streamlined. Bonnie, a J.D. herself, is on the cutting edge of administrative law and keeps our organization in check

with our bylaws and guidelines and the laws relating thereto. Her team, consisting of Chloe Petcharaporn and Kolin Durrant, is super. Chloe is the events coordinator and organized all of the mixers around the various watering holes in the County. She also works very hard on seeing to it that our dinners are run like a well-oiled machine. Kolin is the membership coordinator who assists members with all of their issues and questions. They all work very hard to ensure that CASD is there for all of us. Under their tutelage, this organization will continue to thrive for years to come.

Thank you to each of the column editors of the *Trial Bar News*: Ian Fusselman on Evidence, Jean-Claude Lapuyade and Rocky Copley on Insurance Law, Thom Diachenko on Civil Procedure, Karen Frostrom on Property Law, Raul Cadena on Employment Law, Dick Semerdjian

on Discovery Law, Jeremy Robinson on Tort Law, and Dana Grimes on Criminal Law. Each one of them worked faithfully month after month to educate our membership on developments in each area of law written about for TBN.

Thank you to my Board of Directors. You guys rocked this year.

Raul Cadena is the President-Elect and will be your leader next year. Having him there to pinch-hit for me whenever I was unable to attend meetings or events was extremely helpful to me. With Raul at the helm, CASD will have an even better year next year.

Thank you to Julia Haus and Alreen Haeggquist. They co-chaired the Community Outreach Committee and helped make our organization more visible to the non-legal community. Thanks to them, our members got involved in Paws in the Park,

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Habitat for Humanity, The Alzheimer's Walk and Girls Think Tank. We're now in the process of signing up volunteers at the San Diego Food Bank, and we've started collecting toys for Monarch School for distribution in December. Thanks to their hard work, our members had an avenue for getting involved in many charitable endeavors. Because improving our public image is always so important, these efforts really meant a lot to me.

Thank you to Diana Khoury and Maria Palmieri for being the co-chairs of the Awards Committee. Having been on the Awards Committee myself, I know how much work there is to do. They both led with grace and efficiency, and the in-depth investigations that were completed this year were because of their gentle guidance.

Thank you to Skip Babbitt and Brett Schreiber, co-chairs of the Education Committee. Once again, our seminars were award-winning quality with as varied subjects as our members' practices. They were able to get the best of the best teach our members about the very subjects that help us be better lawyers. CASD offered its members seminars this year on business litigation, marketing your law practice, expedited jury trials, ERISA, building your credibility with judges, how to do a focus group and the ever-important liens. Our seminars are always right on topic for what we need to learn now, and I expect them to continue to be excellent in the future.

This is the first year CASD has had an organized Women's Caucus. I'd like to thank Diana Khoury and Dana Grimes for co-chairing this committee. The year was interspersed with Women's Caucus mixers hosted by Dana Grimes and

Diana Khoury. I hope to see this effort continue to grow.

Thank you to Jennifer Arnold and Raul Cadena as co-chairs of our Membership Committee. With their hard work, this organization is bigger and stronger. As of the writing of this column, our members total in excess of 975, which is about 175 more members than we had in 2009. I'm sure in the years to come we'll exceed 1200, like "the Denny Schoville days" I keep hearing about. Yay for us and I applaud our diversity in practice areas and levels of experience. There's so much strength in our diversity and it actually makes us a better organization.

Thanks to John Rice and Don de Camara, my former boss, for all their help this and every year on that very complex subject - liens. They both help out with seminars, the list serve, and phone calls on this issue. Their hard work helps us all so much!

Dana Grimes and Tim Blood co-chaired the Events Committee this year for CASD. The Events Committee put on the golf tournament, the Annual Awards and Installation Dinner and the Trial Stars Dinner. Our members were able to enjoy another successful year of fun-filled, flawless events thanks to them and their leadership.

Thom Diachenko and Drew Dunk co-chaired the Mentor Committee. Through them, our members were able to sign up to be a mentor to new or less experienced attorneys. This was the kick-off year for this committee and I hope to see this committee become more well-known so that our younger members will take more advantage of the opportunity to be mentored by our amazing group of lawyers.

Thank you to the irreplaceable George and Susanne de la Flor.

They've done so much for this organization by their support of all our events and the annual Blood Drive they organize. I hope they both know how much they mean to me for their support of my year and for their loyalty to this great organization always!

So many of our Board members are President-worthy. I hope they will make the effort to reach this pinnacle because it truly is the zenith of Board service. Kim Swierenga, a first-year attorney, did so much for the organization this year that I need to give a shout out to her. Going over the committee assignments, I see that she is on not one, not two, but three committees this year. In addition to her committee work, she's assisted the office of CASD more than any other member. Her energy, positive attitude and drive make me proud to call her a friend and I look forward to her continued growth in CASD.

I have to thank Drew Dunk, my office mate and dear, dear friend. He was able to keep me sane in challenging times during my presidency, and pitch in for me at the office when the business of CASD took me away from it.

Finally, when I think back on my life and the practice of law before I became a member of CASD, it seems like a very lonely existence. My practice of law has vastly changed from my days prior to this membership because of the benefits offered. Most of my friends today are those I met through this organization. I cherish the experiences I've been given because of my connection to CASD. I'm grateful to our members for opening up their hearts to me, for trusting the leadership of this group to me and for giving me this huge, huge honor to serve. Thank you. **TBN**