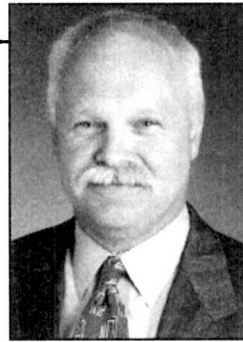


President's Page

Reflections on the Recent Year and Plans for the Future



By Bruce R. Parker

As I think about the year just completed under Greg Lederer's leadership, it occurs to me that two events best characterize the IADC: the Annual Meeting and the Trial Academy. By a coincidence of timing, both occur within one month of each other. The Annual Meeting represents an opportunity for members to obtain excellent legal education, experience professional development, and strengthen business and professional relationships in an atmosphere that our families can enjoy with us. The Trial Academy best exemplifies the IADC's core strength of members with outstanding trial skills who are passionate about their commitment to further develop their craft and share it with young lawyers.

If the Annual Meeting and the Trial Academy best characterize the IADC, then we had a very successful year under Greg's leadership. The Annual Meeting in Rome succeeded in delivering high quality legal programming that was well attended by the membership. Both organizationally and individually, we were enriched by Rome's history and its opportunities.

The 2006 Trial Academy, under the direction of Joe Ryan, was another success. I had the privilege of attending the "graduation ceremony" for the Trial Academy. During the ceremony, more than one hundred young attorneys stood and gave Joe and his faculty an emotional and heartfelt ovation to express their appreciation for what they had experienced. This was a powerful statement about the quality of the program that Joe and his faculty conducted. As I listened to the accolades that the young attorneys offered to each of their faculty members, I couldn't help but feel proud to be a member of an association that within one month had successfully completed both the Annual Meeting and Trial Academy with such high levels of excellence.

Looking Ahead

Last month in the *IADC Docket*, I wrote about innovation and a passion for excellence. The relevance of those concepts for the IADC is best understood in the context of discussing the goals that the leadership is driven to achieve. There is a correlation between the probability of an association achieving its goals with how well the leaders of the association explain those goals to the membership. Consequently, the balance of this message and my next one will discuss our strategic goals and how the programming that we offer throughout the year seeks to pull us closer to achieving our goals.

The IADC's ultimate goal is to be widely recognized as a preeminent organization of experienced civil defense trial lawyers. We've identified six strategic goals that, when achieved, will move us closer to our ultimate goal:

1. Enhance the prestige and diversity of our membership.
2. Improve business opportunities for members.
3. Provide exceptional professional development opportunities.
4. Increase our impact on Civil Justice Reform.
5. Strengthen community (relationships) among our members.
6. Ensure sound administrative and financial management of our resources.

Each strategic goal is not merely a nice sounding platitude. We are serious about each of them, and the Board has assigned objective measures to gauge the performance of our staff and members. The following briefly summarizes the first three goals. My next message in the January issue of the *Defense Counsel Journal* will discuss the last three.

Membership

The IADC membership currently stands at approximately 2,450. We are very close to the point at which serious discussions must begin whether to cap membership of outside counsel in the IADC. More important than our general membership goal, however, is our goal to achieve greater ethnic and gender diversity. Membership subcommittees chaired by Laura De Santos and Susan Roney are responsible for leading our efforts in this area. We also have established targets for generating younger members who meet our membership qualifications and, as always, we continue our efforts to expand our international base of members. Anton Mauer, as Vice Chair of Membership for the International Committee, was exceptionally successful last year at finding highly qualified international members. The Board looks forward to a continuation of his success. As discussed below, quality membership growth is important not only for organizational financial stability, but also for enhancing opportunities for business development.

Business Development

A strong case can be made for the argument that members' ability to interact on a social level at our Midyear, Annual, and Regional Meetings, regardless of one's position as an in-house or private practitioner, offers opportunities to build stronger professional relationships. However, the IADC offers much more than networking at meetings. Arguably, the best opportunity among all types of members occurs at the two-day Corporate Counsel College ("CCC") held each April in Chicago. The Dean of the 2007 CCC is Will Cleveland who is already at work planning an exceptional meeting. The CCC offers outside counsel an excellent opportunity to spend time with a client in a high quality program that is designed by the in-house corporate and insurance members of the IADC. It is not surprising that few guests leave the meeting without first offering strong praise for the program.

IADC programs offer members the opportunity to network. Having members who are responsible for recommending or retaining counsel attend those meetings is ultimately what makes networking successful. To achieve this goal, I've asked the committee chairs to step up their effort to identify such highly qualified in-house and outside counsel in their respective practice areas.

In addition to improving networking opportunities, this year we will offer workshops on business development. The first workshop will be conducted at the Midyear Meeting in February 2007. It will train attendees how to respond to RFPs. Workshops also will be offered exclusively for in-house members. This will give in-house members greater opportunities to candidly discuss issues of importance to their practices and companies. We also will expand the in-house training program that we developed last year on a trial basis. We currently offer to corporate and insurance members an excellent in-house training program on a variety of employment issues for no fee. The in-house training concept is an attempt by the IADC to create added membership value for in-house members.

Professional Development

Professional development encompasses increasing one's understanding of both the substantive law and advocacy skills. The IADC historically has offered its members quality CLE programming at its Midyear and Annual Meetings. We will continue doing that this year under Jim Simpson's leadership of the CLE Board. Our commitment to quality CLE is evident in our programs such as the Corporate Counsel College, Regional Meetings, and the Professional Liability Roundtable. In addition to expanding our legal knowledge, the IADC also endeavors to improve the advocacy skills of its members. The 35th Annual Trial Academy in July, 2007 is directed by Dan Scully. The program offers the faculty opportunities to learn from their fellow faculty members as they in turn teach the students. The 2007 Fidelity and Surety Trial Practice Program, directed by Steve Strawbridge with assistance from Board member Chris D'Angelo, offers additional opportunities for members who participate. The Open Forum, under Fritz Zimmer's direction, will entertain and educate us at the 2007 Annual Meeting in July with demonstrations of *voir dire* and opening statements.

Last year in Boston, we conducted a pilot program called the "Satellite Trial Academy." On a Friday afternoon and Saturday morning, eight IADC members taught a small group of young lawyers one aspect of trial skills (witness examinations). The program was well received by both the faculty and students. This year, Board member Lyn Pruitt will organize two Satellite Trial Academies using the same format. I've also asked Board member Bob Manlowe to work with the Technology Committee to conduct small workshops at both the Midyear and Annual Meetings on computer skills. The workshops are designed to improve our technology skills that are relevant to a trial practice.

In addition to offering additional programs, I have asked several committee chairs to develop new practice groups. Board members Jim Campbell, Jerry Galante, and Elizabeth Ryan will work with committee chairs to launch new practice groups in health care law, nursing home litigation, white collar crime, IP litigation, health and disability coverage, and transportation. Increasing our practice groups gives us the opportunity to find highly qualified attorneys practicing in each of these new areas. It also offers current members a means by which to learn a new area of law and thereby diversify their practice.

We can achieve these goals with commitment and effort. I appreciate all those who have approached me since I began my term as President with offers to help. The most immediate thing that you can do to help the organization is to get actively involved with one or more committees. As our committees get stronger, so will the organization.

The year promises to be busy, and we are off to a very good start. I am impressed by the level of enthusiasm among the members. I look forward to discussing our progress in future messages and personally as we see each other during the course of the year.