

PUSH THE ENVELOPE

I want to thank all LCA Fellows who attended the 2009 Spring Conference and Induction of Fellows in beautiful Santa Fe, as well as our Diversity Partners and event sponsors of the conference. The conference was outstanding and the range of topics and dynamic speakers made its success reach the heights of our prior LCA conferences, held respectively in New York, Scottsdale, Miami and Napa.

I would like to take this opportunity to speak about our society in terms of the opportunities that exist for Fellows in the areas of professional development and networking. I strongly encourage our Fellows to step up and become active participants. Commitment to the LCA is a win-win proposition not only for the individual Fellow who makes such a commitment, but to the society as well. Two quotes by one of my favorite people, former Green Bay Packer coach Vince Lombardi, illustrate this principle:

“[The d]ictionary is the only place that success comes before work. Hard work is the price we must pay for success. I think you can accomplish anything if you are willing to pay the price.”

“The achievements of an organization are the results of the combined effort of each individual.”

The LCA came into being in 2006, following two years of studies and research on the nature and evolution of litigation in the second half of the twentieth century and the demographics of traditional trial lawyer associations. We are now approaching 2,300 Fellows throughout the United States and Canada. The LCA’s concept has been from day one to incorporate firm value into the prestige of LCA recognition. Our economic times demand the type of practice development that is built into the various outlets of participation, at different levels, offered by the society. As Steve Henry, our Executive Director and General Counsel, has said, “We are a work in progress, with more concepts to be created, more outstanding lawyers to be accepted, and more value to be added.” The LCA is truly unique in its tripartite mission, namely the recognition of litigation excellence, the advancement of diversity, and the continued furtherance of the ethical practice of law. No other association maintains these three pillars as the foundation for its existence.

The opportunities for Fellow participation are expansive. There are opportunities to speak at and/or attend our biannual conferences indeed, but so many other inventive marketing and networking opportunities as well. I would like to go over some of these additional opportunities. First, for the trial and appellate warriors, there are the LCA Honorary Trial Orders, which include the Order of Centurions, Order of Justitia, Order of Juris, Order of Veritas, and the Order

of Certus. The trial orders are presided over by their own officers and meet in conjunction with LCA conferences or independently.

For those Fellows who wish to concentrate their efforts on the further development of their own practice areas, there is the opportunity to participate in specialized practice institutes established under the auspices of the LCA. These institutes will develop their own by-laws, educational function, websites, meeting schedule, and agendas. For instance, our immediate Past-President, Robert Boonin, has with two other LCA Fellows developed the Wage and Hour Defense Institute (WHDI). On March 20, 2009, the WHDI met in Chicago to address issues and set its agenda for 2009. With that template in place, I plan on working with several LCA Fellows specializing in medical malpractice defense to develop the American Academy of Medical Malpractice Lawyers (AAMML). Other institutes under way, either in formation or concept, include the American Institute of Insurance Coverage (AIIC), Personal Injury Law Institute (PILI), Aviation Law Institute of America (ALIA), Institute of Natural Resources, Environmental, and Energy Law (INREEL), Institute of Appellate Practice (AIAP), the American Institute of Intellectual Property Lawyers (AIPL), Institute of Trial Presentation and the Diversity Law Institute. To receive more information about institute development, contact Jessica.Sullivan@litcounsel.org.

Given the LCA's commitment to diversity, we could really use Fellows who would like to step forward and develop diversity initiatives. Along these lines, I would like to thank Charles Griffin, Sr. who has agreed to take a leading role in founding the Diversity Law Institute. As our Santa Fe attendees already know, Charles spoke at the 2009 Spring Conference and demonstrated the skills that have served to define his reputation as a superlative trial lawyer. Hopefully, Fellows who wish to focus their efforts on fostering diversity in the profession will also be instrumental to the success of the LCA Diversity Summit, scheduled for September 17, 2009, in Atlanta.

The LCA Foundation has begun planning for a number of area fundraisers across the country this year. The fundraisers are intended to be meetings among our Fellows from a specified geographical area, such as Dallas-Fort Worth, greater Los Angeles or southern Ohio. We will ask the firms of our Fellows to host the events, create photo and publicity opportunities while doing so and, above all, generate sources of revenue for the non-profit foundation. If you or an LCA Fellow you know is particularly gifted at fundraising, we would like to know. Please contact Megan.Montgomery@litcounsel.org.

At the present time, the LCA recognizes three Corporate Diversity Partners. They are Patrick Farber/Ringler Associates (structured settlements), Encore Discovery Solutions (e-discovery) and DecisionQuest (trial strategy, jury selection, graphics). If you have a contact in a law vending capacity, we would like an introduction with them for purposes of broadening this category of LCA support. As well, the Litigation Counsel of America recognizes Law Firm

Diversity Partners. Qualifications are that any firm listed among the NLJ 250 with six or more Fellows is automatically a Law Firm Diversity Partner and any firm not so listed with four or more Fellows is awarded LFDP status as well. Also, law firm sponsors of conference or institute events in the amount of \$1,000 or more are granted LFDP status. Corporate and Law Firm Diversity Partners will be listed on new links being created for the society's website at this time.

Our authorship opportunities come through three resources of the society. The *Journal of Court* is a peer-reviewed publication designed to accommodate scholarly articles of 1,600 words or more. The *Journal* is a classic law review-type publication. For *Journal* information, contact Justin.Owen@litcounsel.org. The *LCA Commentary* is a monthly/bi-monthly periodical that is intended to showcase articles, essays and comments of a high quality that are not as lengthy or as footnoted as *Journal* articles. Some of our *Commentary* authors publish on a monthly basis. If you would like to publish in the *Commentary*, please contact Marlee.Terry@litcounsel.org. The third publication option is actually for "presentation" acknowledgement in one's biography. Articles, essays or comments written for our biannual conference manuals by conference attendees, which are included in the non-speaker portion of the manuals, may be referred to in one's biography. Also accepted are re-prints (with permission) and updated articles.

I would like to spearhead an initiative whereby we as Fellows speak at our law school alma maters on the importance of civility and professionalism in the practice of law, and in the process raise the profile of the LCA. If this idea interests you, please contact me at PStockalper@rmkws.com or Steve.Henry@litcounsel.org.

Most of the above opportunities can be found at the LCA website, but there are other great exposure possibilities and innovative ideas as well, yet to be developed. If you have such an innovative idea, particularly if it is one in which you would like to take a leadership role, please let us know.

Finally, I wish to end this piece with the LCA Creed, which I hope will motivate each one of you to find the time to make a contribution to the continued growth and success of the LCA:

“In the practice of law, there are those who reach higher.
Those who dig deeper.
Those who achieve excellence.
Through talent.
Through perseverance.
Through creativity.
Through intelligence.
And with adherence to the highest ethical standards.

It is these whom we deem excellent.
It is these who earn distinction as Fellows of the LCA.
And excellence comes from many places.
It is not bound by geography or age or gender or race.
Our purpose is to celebrate those who have achieved excellence.
To bring them together for the exchange of ideas.
To bring them together for scholarly creativity.
To provide a forum where they can share their experience, their
knowledge and their expertise.
To advance superior advocacy in the practice of law.
by shining the light of recognition upon them.
We recognize their significance.
We celebrate their diversity.
Lyndon B. Johnson said, "The noblest search is the search for excellence."
Our search is for those who find it.

LCA. *In Honor of Excellence.*