

ACREL President's Message – News & Notes – November 2018

Our 40th Anniversary meeting is behind us and for all those who attended, there's no doubt that The Good Times Were Rolling in New Orleans. With almost 500 Fellows and guests, it was the 2nd largest meeting in the history of the College. Thirty-Six of our forty-three new Fellows were part of the historic meeting.

The highlights of the meeting included outstanding educational sessions, great tours and superb food. From beignets to bourbon, with time at the incredible World War II Museum in between, and a traditional New Orleans Second Line to the Orpheum Theater on Friday evening, it was a truly memorable weekend. As always, the Programs Committee deserves enormous credit for organizing a terrific series of presentations. Special thanks to Chair Art Menor, Chair-Designate Jack Fersko, New Orleans Meeting Chair Marie Moore, the entire Programs Committee and all of the speakers. Also, the unsung heroes behind the scenes are those Fellows on the Publications Committee who carefully review all papers submitted to ensure the highest quality for the compilation of the ACREL Papers. Thanks to Chair Angela Christy and Vice-Chair De Sharp.

In addition to the educational sessions, both Substantive and Administrative Committees met throughout the weekend. Many of the Substantive Committee meetings were standing room only – even at 7:15 am on Saturday morning following our blow-out 40th Anniversary celebration at the Orpheum! The discussions at the meetings I attended were at the highest level and had active engagement from many of the Fellows in attendance. Huge thanks to the leadership of the Substantive Committees for providing these forums for focused discussions about practical and complex issues that we face every day in the delivery of the highest quality legal service.

Following the formal programming on Friday and Saturday, more than 60 Fellows and guests spent the afternoons repairing two houses in the Upper Ninth Ward as part of our 40th Anniversary ACREL Cares project in partnership with Rebuild America. Work included scraping paint (in 90+ degrees heat and high humidity), laying subflooring and tile, and completing numerous repairs to prep the houses for occupancy by two families in need of the assistance. Among the most memorable sights in New Orleans was ACREL Cares Chair Adam Weissburg delivering his report at the Saturday business meeting, asking people for donations and presenting several hundred dollars in cash contributions to the ACREL staff after the meeting. For those who have not yet answered the call for contributions to the ACREL Charitable Foundation to fund future ACREL Cares projects, please join those who generously contributed in New Orleans.

The nomination season for new Fellows has officially closed. Thanks to the incredible work of the Membership Development Committee under the leadership of Bushbeater-in-Chief, John Nolan, I am pleased to report that we have received 53 nominations. The focused and diligent efforts of the MDC Fellows -- Mike Barrett, Eric Galatz, Rob Ivanhoe, Josh Kamin, Monica Labe, David Miller, Gail Mills, Bruce Smiley, Eric Stern, Barbara Trachtenberg, David Weiner, Sara Wilson, Board Liaison Susan Talley and Advisors (and Past MDC Chairs) Bill Sklar and Pete Ezell – was remarkable. Our outstanding group of nominees includes 21 women and a

strong group of younger practitioners. Thanks to all nominators and seconders who heard our call to action.

The work of the Member Selection Committee, led by Bill Sklar and Pam Westhoff, has begun. They will be reaching out to Fellows in all states where nominees practice as part of the intense due diligence process that is a critical component of the annual election of new members. If you are contacted, please connect with the MSC representative at your earliest convenience and provide honest and unvarnished input. The MSC prides itself on the confidentiality of its deliberations. Therefore, there should be no concerns about providing the feedback that is necessary to ensure that only qualified and collegial nominees are admitted to the College. Few things are more important to the continued success of ACREL.

As 2018 draws to a close, the work of the College does not stop. Our incredible Programs Committee remains hard at work with seven eCLE programs planned with the ABA's Section of Real Property, Trust & Estate Law. In addition, two programs are planned with ALI as well as several ACREL Live programs. Special thanks to Janet Johnson for her efforts as Programs Committee Vice-Chair for eCLE Programs and to Beth Mitchell, past chair of the Programs Committee, who has stayed involved as the Board of Governors Liaison for eCLE. They have been a dynamic duo.

As I said in New Orleans, we live in a world that swirls with controversy and unsettling developments, none more significant than the recent shootings in Pittsburgh and Louisville. The Mid-Term elections are behind us and we will see what happens. As Thanksgiving fast approaches, I share with you the poignant words penned by the leader of an education non-profit that several ACREL Fellows work with in DC.

In these tragic times, it is easy to feel overwhelmed and defeated. But, we need to resist that urge. We must take action and show love. I am not talking about a fluffy, Pollyannaish love, but instead a muscular kind of love. This is the kind of muscular love that Pittsburgh native, Fred Rogers, encouraged us to exhibit and seek. The Tree of Life tragedy hit literally in Mr. Rogers' neighborhood. While it is important to encourage children to "look for the helpers" in scary times, as Mr. Rogers did, it is important for adults to BE the helpers. To be helpers, we must first take care of ourselves. Once we are ready to help, we have so many choices: we can be mentors like hundreds of our volunteers across our cities, we can listen closely to people different than ourselves and share our stories with empathy. Please stand with Higher Achievement and stand against hate. Be a helper.

Keep those thoughts in mind as you celebrate Thanksgiving with family and friends, and carry that message forward into 2019 and beyond.