



President's Message

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It seems altogether fitting and proper to begin my first President's Message with some words of thanks. First of all, thank you to Michael Resis, who has served admirably as the President of the IDC for the past twelve months. Mike has devoted an incredible amount of time and effort to the organization while maintaining a busy appellate practice, and he has furthered the efforts and the agenda of the defense bar with dignity, grace, and good humor.

I would also like to thank the officers who have served with me for the past year (and in some cases, the past two years or three years): Bill McVisk, who, by the time you are reading this column, is now the President-Elect; Nicole Milos, who is now the First Vice President; and Laura Beasley, the new Second Vice President. These three have devoted countless hours to advancing the mission of the IDC and, in the process, they have become my very good friends. I look forward to continuing the work of the IDC with their help and support.

Thank you to our Executive Director, the indomitable Sandra Wulf. Past IDC President Howard Jump had this to say about Sandra when asked to comment on her importance to the IDC when the organization was writing its Fifty-Year History: "Sandra is the one constant in the IDC. Presidents, executive committees, and boards come and go, and it is a great challenge for executive directors of associations to maintain the mission while providing stability and continuity amid the ever-changing leadership environment." Sandra has done just that since becoming the Executive Director in 2007. Sandra is the "glue" that holds us together and I look forward to working closely with her this upcoming year.

I owe a big thank you to my partners, Jeff Lipe, Ray Lyons, Ed Murphy, Tom Pontikis, and James Whalen, who long ago encouraged me to get actively involved in the leadership of the IDC and have supported my desire to advance through the leadership ranks to assume the presidency. They supported and encouraged me despite the fact that my increasing involvement has meant less and less time to devote to firm management, client development and billable hours.

Finally, I would be remiss if I did not give my thanks to my lovely wife, Debby Nahrstadt, who, much like my work partners, has unquestionably also encouraged and supported my involvement in the IDC. She has endured my absence when I have attended leadership conferences and DRI events, planning retreats, and out-of-town meetings. She has been my rock and I am sure she will be providing significant support in the coming year.

In late spring, I had the privilege of hosting two luncheons for past presidents of the IDC: one in Springfield for past presidents who live downstate and one in Chicago for past presidents who reside in and around the city. Both events were well attended and it was fascinating to listen to leaders spanning the last thirty-three years of the organization talk about their initial involvement in the IDC. Almost every attendee, at some point during the luncheons, talked about how they had gotten involved in the IDC as young lawyers and spoke with affection and reverence about the "older" lawyers who had first gotten them involved in the organization. Their words got me thinking.

We need to do a much better job of getting the young lawyers who work in our firms involved with the IDC. Our organization is getting old, literally and figuratively! Almost half of our members have been practicing law for twenty-five years or more. If we are to survive—and thrive—as an organization, we need to get our young lawyers actively involved in the organization.



We are at a time in the history of the profession when providing opportunities, involvement, and inclusion are of paramount importance. Decreasing enrollment at law schools has resulted in a smaller pool of young lawyers entering the profession. In the next ten to fifteen years, uncomfortably large numbers of attorneys are going to retire and leave the profession. As our numbers decline, the connection between lawyers and the bar, and thus lawyers connecting to lawyers, becomes even more important. If we are to help our bar association and profession continue to thrive, we must stay connected, and that connection must include young lawyers.

The IDC provides the perfect laboratory for young lawyers—fresh out of school or still learning their way around a courtroom or a deposition table—to build the skills they will need to be a success. For young lawyers in particular, the IDC is the ideal place to take the first small steps into speaking, writing, and improving their substantive knowledge and professional credentials. Giving CLEs, working with committees, writing for the *IDC Quarterly*, belonging to the Young Lawyers Section and even serving on the Board will help the young lawyers in your firms to develop important leadership skills—skills they will need to sustain and eventually lead your firms.

Here is one other thing to keep in mind: belonging to the IDC will allow your young lawyers to foster relationships with other lawyers outside your firm. When attorneys are connected, they have colleagues to bounce ideas off of, to refer cases to, to celebrate victories with, and to commiserate their defeats with. The IDC is more than a legal organization—it is a community that provides many levels of support and interaction to its members.

As my friend John Trimble recently said:

...You are penny-wise and pound-foolish if you are not supporting young lawyer membership in bar associations. If you want lawyers who will grow up to be partners who will have the social intelligence to impress and keep and obtain clients, there is no better training ground than bar associations. If you want your associates to have substantive legal credentials, then writing, speaking and leading in bar committees is a great place to build credentials. If you want your lawyers to grow up to receive referrals from other lawyers, then they must grow up in a bar association.

I agree with everything John said. We need young lawyers who have top-notch conversational and listening skills, a greater understanding of social roles and rules, high degrees of common sense *and* street smarts, and greater self-sufficiency. They can gain all of these things and more through active involvement in the IDC. This investment in your young lawyers is an investment in our future. Please make that investment today.

I look forward to welcoming your young associates into the IDC!

About the IDC

The Illinois Association Defense Trial Counsel (IDC) is the premier association of attorneys in Illinois who devote a substantial portion their practice to the representation of business, corporate, insurance, professional and other individual defendants in civil litigation. For more information on the IDC, visit us on the web at www.iadtc.org or contact us at PO Box 588, Rochester, IL 62563-0588, 217-498-2649, 800-232-0169, idc@iadtc.org.