



President's Message

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Membership in IDC offers a wealth of opportunities for professional growth—one of them being CLE credit opportunities. With all of the options available today for CLE, leaders of defense firms may question why they should encourage or support their young attorneys in joining and participating in IDC. Clearly, IDC does help attorneys fulfill their CLE requirements. It offers many ways to obtain CLE, including seminars, webinars, and the IDC practice series. But the benefits of obtaining CLE credit through IDC extend far beyond the CLE credit itself. One of the most important benefits of joining and participating in CLE is networking with other defense attorneys. IDC's members are from across the state, and it is hard to overstate the importance of networking with defense attorneys throughout Illinois.

One IDC officer told me that she was assigned a case in southern Illinois and the plaintiff's attorney noticed her client's deposition for the day after Thanksgiving. She responded that she would not produce the client on that date since it was a court holiday and suggested other dates when she and the witness could be available. The plaintiff's response was to file a motion to default her client as a discovery sanction because she did not agree to appear for the deposition on the date of the notice. The motion seemed so meritless that she was not going to give it a lot of attention, assuming it would be easily denied. However, she mentioned the motion to an IDC colleague who practices in the jurisdiction who told her that in view of the jurisdiction and the identity of the plaintiff's attorney, the motion was likely to be granted unless she could provide the judge with a case directly on point. As a result, she came prepared to the hearing, and as her colleague had predicted, the judge made it clear that the motion would be granted and her client defaulted unless she could persuade him that he would otherwise be reversed. She was able to avoid this result, largely because of the advice she received from her IDC colleague.

This is not an isolated example. Participation in IDC events gives attorneys the opportunity to earn required CLE credits while making connections with other defense counsel throughout the state. This can lead to referrals where there are conflicts or geographic reasons someone cannot take a case. It can also provide attorneys with a source of experience far broader than they can obtain by relying solely on the members of their firm. Participation in IDC also gives members opportunities to demonstrate their expertise by contributing to CLE presentations hosted by the IDC, including speaking at IDC seminars or webinars.

Aside from the CLE opportunities that IDC membership offers, IDC offers its members the opportunity to contribute to publications such as the *Quarterly* and *Survey of Law*, which are provided to IDC members and all Illinois judges. Publication through IDC provides members with another excellent opportunity for networking and client development. It is simple to provide a copy of an article written for the *Quarterly* to clients or prospective clients. Similarly, an IDC article can be used to establish expertise in a subject to convince other organizations that you are the best person to speak on a topic, either at a seminar or at a client's office.

This is particularly true for young lawyers. It is often difficult for a young lawyer to be chosen to speak at a seminar for a national organization. However, IDC often has young lawyers speak or write, and doing so for IDC can help convince a national organization that a young lawyer would be a great choice for a national or regional symposium.

Membership in IDC is also important because IDC is the voice of Illinois defense lawyers and their clients. The plaintiffs' bar is well organized and strongly supported by the major plaintiffs' firms and has demonstrated the ability to



advance the interests of plaintiffs. IDC is the only Illinois organization that represents defense lawyers both in the Illinois legislature and before the Illinois Supreme Court. The IDC Legislative Committee is one of IDC's most active committees, as it tracks all proposed Illinois legislation that could affect defense attorneys or their clients. For example, this year IDC has taken positions opposing:

- HB 4837, which would prevent employers from refusing to hire or terminating an individual because of an individual's criminal history unless there is a direct relationship between a conviction and the job sought. IDC's position is that the definition of what constitutes a direct relationship is too vague and difficult to apply in many situations, as further discussed in John Eggum's Legislative Column in this issue of the *Quarterly*.
- HB 2233, which would effectively eliminate special interrogatories, which can be used to ensure the integrity of a jury's verdict.

Also, IDC has promoted SB 3148, which would preclude the court from instructing the jury about the consequences of any findings of fault of either the plaintiff or any defendant, and would provide that defendants who are less than 25% at fault will be severally liable for non-medical damages. Similarly, the Amicus Committee regularly submits amicus briefs to the Illinois Supreme Court and the Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit to ensure that the courts have a full understanding of the impact their rulings will have on civil defendants, insurers, and defense counsel. IDC strongly advocates positions needed to level the playing field and to ensure that the courts and legislature do not enact rules or laws that harm defense attorneys or their clients.

In short, IDC educates its members, advocates for its members, and provides a community for its lawyers. It is an organization that defense firms throughout Illinois should support.

Finally, this is my final column as President of IDC, and it is being written at a time when all IDC members are struggling to cope with the disruptions to their practices and to their daily lives due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It has been an honor and privilege to lead IDC and to work with the incredible attorneys who make IDC such a great organization.

My hope is that by the time this column is printed, the worst of the disruptions from the pandemic will be over, and things will be beginning to return to normal. Meanwhile, IDC will do everything it can to help its members respond to the crisis by providing online CLE to those who cannot attend CLE in person and by providing CLE and other information addressing the legal effects of COVID-19. We hope to see you again soon.

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.idc.law or contact us at PO Box 588, Rochester, IL 62563-0588, 217-498-2649, 800-232-0169, idc@iadtc.org.