



CAALA President

Mike Arias

ARIAS SANGUINETTI WANG & TORRIJOS, LLP

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CAALA: An association whose hallmarks are service and honor

THANK YOU FOR THE HONOR OF SERVING YOU

As you read this column, 2018 is nearly over, and my year as CAALA's President is coming to an end. It truly seems like it's been just an instant since I was installed as CAALA's 69th President.

In my first Advocate column last January, I wrote that "It is my hope and belief that 2018 will be a good year for our country and I will work hard to make it a banner year for CAALA." I ended the column by saying "I am looking forward to serving you – thank you for the honor."

Well, 2018 has been an interesting year for our country and I hope you feel a good year for CAALA. We accomplished so much together, from moving into our new state-of-the-art office to honoring three new members of our Hall of Fame, achieving record attendance at CAALA Vegas and hitting new highs in membership. I can also honestly tell you that I had no idea when I wrote that first column just how much of an honor it would be to serve you and how gratifying the experience would be for me.

Service and honor are cornerstones of my core values and the core values of this association. I am more than pleased by the level of commitment and service so many members made this year. I asked many of you to become actively engaged in CAALA and so many of you did. Thank you!

In October, I presided over one of the most memorable meetings in my 32 years as a CAALA member; the Board of Governors and Past Presidents elected the winners of CAALA's 2018 Annual Awards. Similar CAALA awards meetings have been held every year since 1972, but this one was different: there was a record attendance of board members, past presidents and CAALA members.

When I called the meeting to order, I looked around the jam-packed room of 160 people and couldn't believe how big

and excited the crowd was. The energy in the room was amazing and it says a lot about CAALA – that so many members had driven all the way downtown to watch or vote at a meeting electing CAALA's Annual Award winners.

The meeting was first-hand evidence that service to CAALA and honoring our members are important to our association. At every board meeting I start out by introducing the past presidents. For this meeting, those introductions took a lot longer than usual as there were 14 past presidents in attendance, more than we have ever had. The fact that these past presidents continue to attend and participate in CAALA's activities says a lot about their service and dedication to this association. These past presidents continue to serve CAALA years after their terms in office ended.

Service is also the hallmark of CAALA's Board of Governors. When I looked around the room there were a record 48 members of the Board of Governors in attendance, including 18 Emeritus members who achieved that status by completing 10 consecutive years as a board member.

By now you probably know that the attorney award winners are Nick Rowley (Trial Lawyer of the Year), Arash Homampour (Ted Horn Award) and Tom Feher (Rising Star Award). The winner of the Trial Judge of the Year award is the Hon. Christina Snyder. Each of the three attorneys was extremely appreciative and it was obvious how much the honor meant to them. These awards have become among the most significant honors given within the Southern California legal community.

An example of the level of service that our members and leaders give to CAALA came at the beginning of my term as president when I asked board members and CAALA members to

volunteer to serve on more than 20 committees and task forces, many of them new for CAALA. I was impressed with the levels of engagement and how much pride they took in achieving the goals and missions we established for each of the committees and task forces.

I strongly believe that leadership and service go hand in hand. Before you can lead an organization like CAALA, you must first be willing to commit and serve. Leaders should never expect a member to do something that they have not done first. Leadership is just a continuation of someone's service to CAALA and our leaders have served and continue to serve the CAALA community. Every one of our leaders, from long-time past presidents to brand new members of the Board of Governors, have unselfishly committed their time and energy to serving CAALA. If you have any interest in becoming one of our leaders, start by attending board meetings and CAALA events and by volunteering for a committee or task force. Serving has been important to me for my entire professional and personal life, and if you are not already serving, I hope it becomes important to you.

As I conclude my year as CAALA President, I can promise you one thing: I will join the long list of past CAALA Presidents who continue to serve this amazing organization and its remarkable members. Serving is one way that I can thank each of you for the help and support you gave me during this incredible past year.

I am going to end this, my final President's column, by saying the same words that I said in my first President's column, but they mean even more to me today than they did one year ago: "I am looking forward to serving you – thank you for the honor." ☺