



Executive Director
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CONSUMER ATTORNEYS ASSOCIATION OF LOS ANGELES

My last column

FAREWELL, THANK YOU AND WORDS FROM SOME UNEXPECTED PEOPLE

When I announced in June that I would be retiring as CAALA's Executive Director at the end of the year, I said the emotions and goodbyes would come later. Well, later is here. The end of the year is only days away and so is the end of my 17 years with CAALA.

On January 1 Kwedi Moore, CAALA's Director of Development, will become CAALA's fifth Executive Director. Under Kwedi's leadership, our association will be in very good hands.

I've been fortunate to have had some great jobs in my 50-year career, but none equals being Executive Director of this remarkable association. I ask you to bear with me for a few minutes as I say thank you to those who helped make the past 17 years the highlight of my professional life. I had the good fortune of serving 18 CAALA Presidents and hundreds of CAALA Board members. Each of you left an indelible mark on me and each of you will be remembered.

Before I go further, thank you for what you do every day. When I tell people I work with trial lawyers, I often get a chuckle and a sympathetic "I'm sorry." They couldn't be more wrong. Working with America's best trial lawyers has been an incredible experience and it still bothers me that trial lawyers are demonized instead of lionized.

One of the things I already miss is trying to hold my own verbally with great trial lawyers. I took each of those debates seriously, but not personally.

Thank you for reading my columns and emails and thank you for teaching me the ways of the trial lawyer. Thank you for tolerating that I was often the only non-lawyer in the room and thank you for your patience. I did not have a J.D. but I did get daily on-the-job legal training from the best of the trial bar. Thank you for trusting me to work with

our officers and board members to move CAALA forward. I never thought of myself as leading CAALA, but instead, I liked the analogy that I was a tugboat gently nudging a battleship to stay on the correct course. I was the air traffic controller, not flying the planes, but making sure they didn't crash.

Thank you for giving me the chance to meet luminaries like a future President and Vice President of the United States, current and future U. S. Senators and members of Congress, California Supreme Court Chief and Associate Justices and even the iconic Vin Scully. Meeting them was one of the best "perks" of my position.

Thank you for allowing me to attend your most important "life events." Those included joyous occasions such as weddings, graduations, recognition dinners, investiture ceremonies, bar and bat mitzvahs and birthdays for you and your family. There were some sad occasions too, and I thank you for allowing me to share in those as well.

I thank CAALA's professional staff. They are a talented group who are dedicated to CAALA's success. CAALA is the gold standard for trial lawyer associations and all the credit goes to the staff. I am a "word" person, but I don't have the words to thank them properly.

I thank the people who design, edit, monetize and publish the Advocate magazine, without them I would not have had a forum for 17 years and CAALA members would not have one of the most important benefits of membership.

As I conclude this column and my time spent as CAALA's Executive Director, I leave you with the words of six very different people: Leo Rosten, Rick Friedman, Bob Wells Johnny Carson and Roy Rogers and Dale Evans. I am certain that these six have

never been quoted in the same magazine column. While these aren't my words, they are words that echo the feelings I have about me, you, and my CAALA years:

Author and humorist Leo Rosten wrote:

"The purpose of life is not to be happy at all. It is to be useful, to be honorable. It is to be compassionate, it is to matter, to have it make some difference that you lived."

Trial lawyer and author Rick Friedman in his book *The Way of the Trial Lawyer* wrote:

"I'm here for reasons bigger than myself. I will always remember it is an honor and a privilege to have the job I have – to be able to fight on a daily basis for things I believe in."

Television icon Johnny Carson, on his final show, said:

"I am one of the lucky people in the world. I found something I always wanted to do, and I have enjoyed every single minute of it. I want to thank those who've shared this stage with me and you people watching. I can only tell you it has been an honor and a privilege..."

Bob Wells, in the film *Nomadland* said:

"One of the things I love most about this life is there's no final goodbye. We don't ever say a final goodbye, we just say 'I'll see you down the road.'"

And finally, Roy Rogers and Dale Evans in the closing theme of their '50s TV show, famously sang:

"Happy trails to you, until we meet again. Happy trails to you, keep smiling until then. Happy trails to you, 'till we meet again."

I guess I can add one more.

Bob Hope's signature line:

"Thanks for the memory."

That's all, I'm done. Thank you. 📺