



From the Chair

By Michelle Thurber Czapski

For the past two years, it has been my privilege to lead this dynamic committee as its chair, and for the two years before that, I served as vice chair under “they-broke-the-mold-with-this-guy” Chris Sheean. That’s kind of a long time. 14.8 percent of the time I’ve been practicing law, to be exact. Almost 8 percent of the time I’ve been on this Earth. That’s a lot of conference calls, seminars and meeting agendas. But, when I look back on my time in CLC leadership, it isn’t the stress of getting the seminar brochure details exactly right that sticks in my mind; it is the people I have had the privilege to get to know, to work with, to rely on, to be surprised by, and to be grateful for.

Because, let me tell you what it is like to be chair...you care. You sweat the small stuff and the big stuff and you want everything to be perfect. All while representing your own clients and practicing commercial litigation yourself. So, you wonder how the newsletter content is coming together while you are rushing off to a deposition. You call a prospective seminar speaker while waiting for the mediator to meet with your opposing counsel. You flyspeck publications content while on a plane to a distant court appearance. All of this goes so much more smoothly and your blood pressure is so much lower if you have a great team supporting the committee, as we have been so fortunate to have as long as I have been involved in the CLC. The women and men involved in the CLC, especially the SLG and subcommittee leaders, are as energetic and creative a bunch as I have ever had the privilege of knowing. They are committed, they are talented, and they are fun. These fine folks have made my job of chair much easier and more rewarding. They just don’t let you down.

They have taught me plenty as well, as we have shared our expertise in our various specialties, in our seminar and Annual Meeting presentations, publications content, and social media posts. And, the enhancement of my practice doesn’t stop with knowledge, as my CLC colleagues have been a terrific source of referrals, and I always do the same if I can.

I’ve purposely avoided naming any names so far because there are so many great contributors to the Commercial Litigation Committee, and I don’t want to leave anyone out. But, we must talk about Tracey. For those of you who don’t know, Tracey Turnbull served as vice chair during my term as chair, and membership chair and seminar chair before that. Tracey is as good as it gets. She is tireless, thoughtful, and has a keen eye for detail. She is also an inspiring motivator, which is such

an important characteristic in a volunteer organization. So, it is absolutely fitting that Tracey succeed me as chair of the CLC and I know that she will do a wonderful job.

Dwight Stone, our fantastic former Membership Chair, has been named as our new CLC vice chair. Dwight has always been one of our strongest leaders, so I know that he will make an excellent vice chair.

As for me, if you missed the Annual Meeting, you may not have seen that Tracey has appointed me as the chair of the Bourbon SLG, so I won’t be just riding off into the sunset. With fewer committee details to worry about, I’ll have plenty of time to research where to conduct our next seminar after-party.

Finally, I would like to offer my heartfelt thanks to each and every member of the Commercial Litigation Committee for the opportunity to have served as your chair. It has been an honor, and enormously rewarding. If your travels ever take you to Detroit, please give me a shout; I’m always happy to network with fellow CLC members.

Cheers!

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