

a message from the president

I AM NOW, always have been and always will be very proud to be a trial lawyer. The great trial lawyers who preceded us in our profession defined the rights of American citizens in the Constitution, the Bill of Rights and the Declaration of Independence. As trial lawyers today, we carry that professional mantle into courtrooms across America daily as we breathe life into the Constitution by representing citizens, the accused, the halt and the lame, the widow and the orphan and the catastrophically injured.

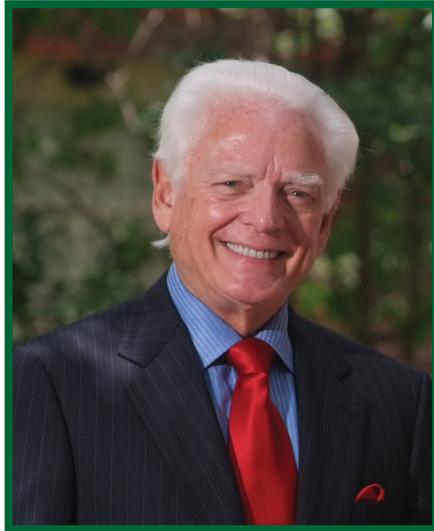
When I attend the Hall of Fame induction each year, I realize that our great trial lawyers are our leaders, our friends and our inspiration as they remind us of the great legacy and the corresponding mantle of responsibility which each of us carries as a trial lawyer. I am privileged and humbled by the responsibility of serving as president of The National Trial Lawyers and will strive to carry on the great work begun last year by Past President Michael Burg.

During this year we are charting a course to utilize the considerable collective skills of our members by providing educational and networking opportunities and by assisting the American Association for Justice in protecting the rights of our clients that depend upon preservation of the civil justice system.

The National Trial Lawyers will continue to collaborate with Mass Torts Made Perfect in presenting the conferences in Las Vegas each April and October. At the annual April conference, the association, in conjunction with our flagship publication, *The Trial Lawyer* magazine, conducts The Trial Lawyers Hall of Fame induction ceremony, where our members have the opportunity to meet and learn from some of the greatest trial lawyers in the history of our distinguished profession.

One of our educational goals is to greatly enhance the programming at the Las Vegas conferences to serve our members who are not involved in mass torts. We will begin this through the Torts Made Perfect portion of the MTMP conference on October 13th and 14th at the Bellagio in Las Vegas. We encourage all of our members to become active in the MTMP conferences. It is time well spent.

Through our continuing collaboration with Torts Made Perfect, we will provide unique educational programming, highlighted by a major National Trial Lawyers conference — The Trial Lawyers Summit at the Ritz Carlton in South Beach on January 22–25, 2012. The topics in this unique conference include a full day on the Entrepreneurship of Law, one-half day of trial advocacy skills presentation, focusing on voir dire, persuasion, cross-examination, demonstrative evidence, summation, mediation and settlement negotiations, and many other topics that are critical to legal advocate in this age of tort reform, and one-half day devoted to discussion of current hot topics in the law, including Daubert vs. Frye motions, pretrial motions, working with experts, damages, and many more topics. There will also be a live three



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President

hour interactive ethics program which will be videotaped and posted on our website to afford the opportunity to our members to meet their CLE ethics requirements.

The Entrepreneurship of Law day is designed to address the problems arising from the changing landscape of all aspects of financing and managing a personal injury practice today and in the foreseeable future. We will cover topics including case acquisition, the impact and utilization of social networking, case evaluation on intake, case financing, and a variety of ways to protect settlement assets. We will also discuss the plethora of problems involved in law office management for the personal injury practitioner.

The unique nature of the conference is that the discussions will involve brief presentations on a topic by a speaker, followed by open interactive discussion under the guidance of a professional facilitator. The format is to broach a topic, identify the problems that are common to our practices and then explore solutions that have been used, not only by the speaker but also by fellow attorneys in the audience. We will explore what has worked, what has failed or what has yet to be tried. The goal is the networking of solutions to problems common to our practices. The facilitated presentations will continue all day, but several larger firms have indicated that they will break away in the afternoon for a separate firm facilitation discussing application of the discussed principles to their own firms. We are encouraging members to bring their entire firm for a retreat in South Beach in

January, in conjunction with our conference. We are particularly interested in affording young lawyers the opportunity to learn trial skills from excellent trial attorneys.

Networking opportunities at the conference will include a reception party, a luncheon and a dinner party. The most important networking will be in the entrepreneurship conference—when we exchange ideas, solutions and experiences on solving the problems confronting personal injury practitioners today.

Finally, with respect to preservation of the civil justice system, the onslaught against the rights of our clients proceeds apace. Our most effective weapon for protection of the civil justice system is to offer our full financial and personal support to our respective state trial lawyer associations and to support AAJ's lobbying efforts in Congress.

My 40 years of lobbying for civil justice have taught me that the single most important thing that has protected the rights of our clients on the federal level has been the powerful lobbying by AAJ (ATLA). The civil justice system is best protected by the U.S. Senate, in which the filibuster rule requires only 41 United States Senators to preserve the individual rights of their constituents against the onslaught of tort reform. While a Democratic majority in the Senate currently protects the rights of our citizens, this could change in the 2012 election—there are 23 Democratic seats up for election and only 10 Republicans. Do the math.

Our best use of political funds, in my opinion, is to support Linda Lipsen and AAJ in their lobbying efforts to protect the rights of our clients and individual citizens. The National Trial Lawyers is fully committed to the support of AAJ in its lobbying efforts. Each member of The National Trial Lawyer's executive leadership is a member of and a substantial contributor to AAJ's Leader's Forum. Please consider whether it comports with your political philosophy to support AAJ's efforts and join AAJ's Leader's Forum at www.justice.org/leadersforum. Please also consider making a personal contribution to AAJ PAC at www.justice.org/AAJPAC, the only federal PAC dedicated to preserving the civil justice system. Together we can help ensure pro-civil justice candidates have the resources they need to run effective campaigns. If you have a close relationship with a member of Congress, please advise Linda Lipsen at AAJ. We are at war to protect our clients' rights, which requires our best efforts from each of us.