

“As Time Goes By - ‘Stability in Times That Are A Changin’ “

“by Dale Carlson

As my fifth year of serving as our Association’s Historian draws to a close, there’s an opportunity to reflect on where we’ve been, and where we’re headed as an Association.

Nationally, the last five years has been nothing short of a roller coaster ride in terms of economic swings – up-cycle followed by down-cycle. Thankfully, our Association continues to be financially stable and structurally sound. This stability and soundness allows our Association to steadfastly protect, not one or another group of clients’ interests, but rather the best interests of our national patent, trademark and copyright systems as a whole, as reflected by the majority of our Board members speaking in a collective voice on our members’ behalf.

The Association’s voice can be heard above the fray in numerous amicus briefs submitted to the Federal Circuit and the Supreme Court, as well as in periodic commentary to the Patent and Trademark Office and testimony before Congress on issues of relevance to our IP systems and our profession. The soundness and sophistication of our Association’s voice is largely attributable to the diverse IP expertise of our members, as well as to their wisdom, individually and collectively.

As true New Yorkers, our members thrive on speaking out on important IP issues of the day. One of our senior statesmen, Sam

Helfgott, recently offered a compelling lecture on how the Supreme Court has reframed its approach toward patents in response to political changes over the half-century window of time coinciding with the length of his career so far. Sam presented the lecture, entitled “The Supreme Court’s Reshaping of the IP Landscape in Recent Years,” to a full house paying rapt attention, at the AIPLA’s 2010 Mid-Winter Institute.

Now it’s time for me to change hats from that of serving as our Historian to that of President. In doing so, I hope to follow in the footsteps of President Mark Abate in terms of keeping the Association on an even keel financially and organizationally. Mark has done an excellent job in both respects, and he has done so with good grace, decorum, and a kindly sense of humor.

I cherish my role as Historian, and am most thankful to Past President Ed Vassallo for making that opportunity possible in the first instance. So it is with reluctance, albeit of necessity, that I step down from it now.

Thankfully, my stepping down may be only temporary. The reason is that Past President John Pegram has expressed a willingness to serve as “Interim Historian” for one year during my presidential term. I am most pleased to have John serve in this role, and look forward to the wisdom that he is sure to impart to us.

As we peer deeply into the Association’s crystal ball, we can be confident that Terri Gillis, Tom Meloro and Charlie Hoffman will perform their leadership roles well during their successive administrations, always mindful of their fiduciary obligations to the membership.

Irrespective of whether we encounter smooth sailing or rough seas, the helm of the ship we call “NYIPLA” is in steady hands for as far ahead as the eye can see. Bon Voyage!



Dale Carlson, a partner at Wiggan & Dana, serves as the NYIPLA Historian, and as President-Elect.