

Call to Action

BY DANIEL J. SIEGEL

Sometimes, it is hard to fathom the impact of this magazine. Yet over the past few months, I have come to appreciate how many lawyers, judges and bar executives not only read the magazine, but also appreciate its unique focus and content.

In the last issue, for example, I wrote about my advisor, Professor Sidney Wise of Franklin and Marshall College, and the book I am writing about his many protégés who serve in government, business and other prominent positions – each of whom attributes much of his or her success to this one influential professor. Within minutes of the magazine’s appearance (and nearly a week before it arrived in my mailbox), I received numerous emails from former students and others who knew Sid, each offering yet another tribute. As a result, just a few days later, I met with a 3rd Circuit Judge whose career, in part, was the result of his close relationship with Dr. Wise. Similarly, other students offered reminiscences of how he had influenced their lives, all because they read my column.

Even more impressive, however, is the magazine’s reach to others, who are not a part of the Philadelphia legal community. While sitting in the New Orleans airport on my way home from the American Bar Association Midyear Meeting, at 6 in the morning, the executive director of a prominent state bar association saw me and complimented me about the magazine, in particular our profile of Chancellor John Savoth. He remarked how the Philadelphia Bar Association has a reach far beyond the city, and how enlightening it was to learn about the association’s new leader. As we were speaking, the executive director of another state bar association, who overheard our conversation, introduced herself and began to praise our magazine, and the fact that our content is far different, and at times far more compelling, than the information published by most other bar association publications.

Of course, the reason why *The Philadelphia Lawyer* is so popular is the result of three factors – our loyal readers, who contribute a wide array of material; our Editorial Board, who

review every article and work hard to assure that every item we publish lives up to the magazine’s rich tradition; and the Bar Association staff, who really do the major work and receive only a small share of the credit.

I am therefore calling upon you, our readers, to contribute your stories, your insights and your knowledge to the magazine. We are always in need of “department pieces,” which generally address an area of practice or an aspect of the law that may be changing. These relatively short items (normally around 750 words) can be of great assistance to the Bar. But we also welcome and encourage longer articles, on topics that can be as varied as our membership is diverse. If you have an idea, let us know, and we will help and guide you.

Turning to this issue, welcome to a microcosm of the rich tradition of our Association. We have a wonderful “10 Questions” with former Chancellor Debbie Willig, who reflects on being the first woman Chancellor 20 years after the fact. We also have a fascinating and eye-opening piece by Judge Ricardo Jackson, who brings to life the Liacouras Commission, which helps explain how far we have come as a profession, and how we arrived here.

And we also have Mike Carroll’s article about Judge Ethan Allen Doty, who at one time was the oldest sitting judge in the country. A mentor to me, Judge Doty truly

represents the good that the courts and law can do, and I have added my reminiscences to Mike’s piece. But all of these articles have a greater theme – the rich tradition of our Association and how it has in many ways been a leader in change, whether based on sex, on race, on religion or sexual orientation. No matter the topic, our legal community has never been afraid to do the right thing. Hopefully, that message comes through in these articles. Enjoy. ■

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