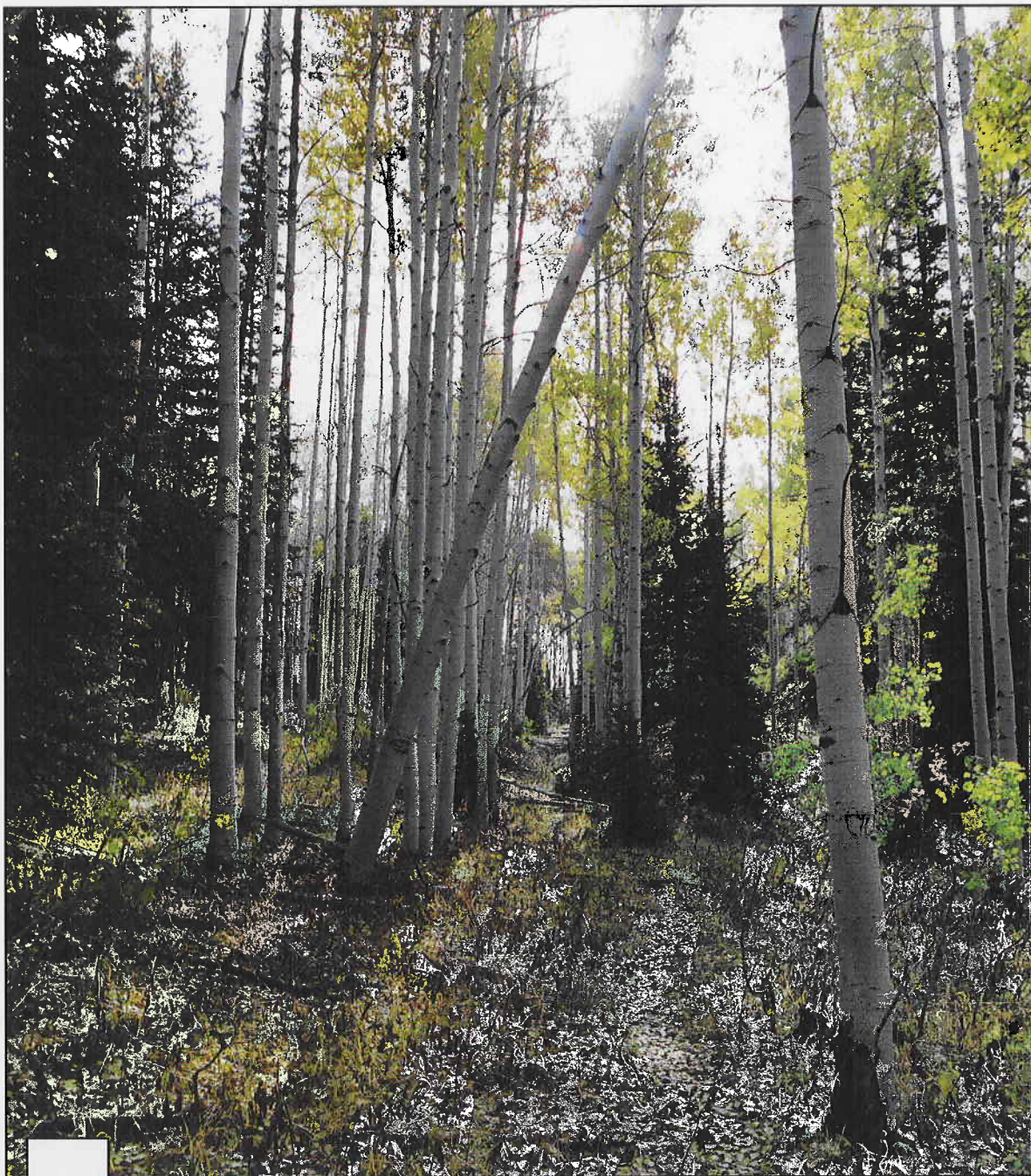


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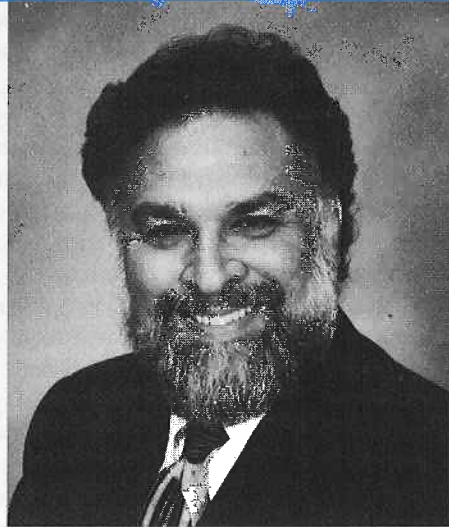
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Did You Hear the One About the Lawyer?

By Steven M. Kaufman

I just left snow in Spokane to come home to snow in Ogden. Come on, it's time for another sunny Sunday. Last week we had 100 mile winds and I was sincerely appreciative that my new home was still standing. Daylight savings time has just kicked in and I'm a little grumpy. It's an hour earlier in Spokane, and hour later here, and now I don't know what time it really is except that I keep waking up an hour earlier than I want to and can't get back to sleep because I'm not sure what time zone I'm in. Now, Washington knows what we are doing. Nevada is next.

I want you all to know that I am doing my best to represent you in a positive manner, letting anyone who will listen know that we have the best Bench and Bar in the nation. I have learned how to give a pretty good "dog and pony speech" about what we, as lawyers, are doing to make Utah a better place to work in, and when time allows, play in. Quite frankly, I barely tolerate lawyer jokes at this juncture of my Presidency because I would much rather hear about the good things we are doing than hear the stupid jokes that are no longer funny to me. I have spent this last year faithfully promoting our noble profession, and I do it with enthusiasm and a smile. This is not a difficult thing to do. Our Bar, judges and lawyers alike, has to

strut its stuff. I hear horror stories about other states' problems between the Bench and Bar, lawyers against lawyers, and the public against lawyers, and I am so thankful that we do not have their ongoing problems. Sure, we have our share of difficulties with the Bar, a misplaced moment of indiscretion or loss of integrity, but overall I can honestly convey to you that we can be proud, that our membership can hold its collective head high, as integrity and ethics are of foremost importance to us. A day does not pass that I do not have a discussion with some lawyer or judge about how the Bar is doing and how lawyers are looking, as a profession. Most of my conversations rally around a positive note of fairplay and ethical dealings, kind and appropriate interaction, and a sense of pride toward our profession. I am tired of hearing about such a select few of our membership who may not endear themselves to public or private scrutiny, when there are so many deserving of praise and positive media review. How many professions take so seriously the resolve to help others? How many professions take so much initiative to make sure their ranks follow the rules so society is best served? I know of none that go to such lengths as we do to provide the public with conscientious, diligent, educated, ethical people who can do so much good. Access to justice are catchwords which define the ulti-

mate purpose we can provide to so many. Our license to practice is something we all worked long and hard to obtain, and our intentions are noble in utilizing that license. I am always excited to tell anyone who is within earshot that I am a lawyer, and that I have the honor and privilege to act as your President. I will be proud when I am a past President, too, as it is a status I shall hold onto with wonderful memories, hopefully having done something good by trying to attend to the issue of lawyers and their cause, as a profession worth speaking out for, in a positive manner.

By the way, I am starting to sound nostalgic about my status as your Bar President, but please do not misconstrue my words. If you know me, you know I am somewhat of a sentimental type of guy, and if you do not know me, it's time you did. I really have tried to meet as many of you as possible. If you have been to any type of Bar function you hopefully know I was hoping to shake your hand and at least say hello. If you don't "do" Bar functions, well, you can't say I didn't try.

I can tell you that a day doesn't pass that I don't get some kind of personal feedback about lawyers, the Bar, judges, or some Bar related issue. People think that I am the mailbox for the Bar. I get more telephone calls and mail than I care to detail.

My trips back and forth from Ogden to Salt Lake are more like the Pony Express; I deliver the "word" for our Bar. We are an active bunch, with lots to do. Even so, we find the time to do something good for someone, often outside the confines of our daily work as lawyers and judges. I must also emphasize the wonderful work your Bar Commissioners do on a daily basis. The volunteer time they put in is without rival. I suggest you take a moment to pat "your" Commissioner on the back. It takes a great deal of time out of their already busy schedules to perform their many duties, and they too often go unsung. As some of you already know, I have had a rock band for over 30 years, and if I could put my bandmates on this message to sing those praises, I would. The work is important, and they all take the job seriously. You will never hear a Commissioner looking for that unsung praise, but since I have the bully-pulpit, and only so many messages to write, I wanted to emphasize their importance. By the way, I generally sing in tune.

As you know we promoted a media

message about lawyer volunteerism and how critical it is for all of us to provide significant charitable and pro bono work for those less fortunate. That message has now received some national recognition, and I have chosen to speak on the subject at many conferences and meetings with other Bars throughout the United States. Those Bars are now starting to catch the spirit of our work, and I have been contacted to "put out the word" for some other states. As you know I have been to many conferences this year, and the chance to promote this worthwhile cause has been something I have relished. I intend to do more of the same, even after my tenure as President drifts to the sea, because I sincerely think our profession deserves recognition for the charity it promotes. Lawyers are the leaders of our communities, and the education we have received, and continue to receive, puts us in a unique position to communicate to our neighbors about the important work we do. It also allows us to give something back to the communities that give so much to us. We are so lucky to have an opportunity to serve in such a noble

capacity.

I still love my job. I still love being a lawyer. And I cannot begin to tell you how wonderful it is being your Bar President. This is NOT my final President's message, but I'm getting close. I do take some solace in the fact, though, that I will always be a past President of the Utah State Bar. Not many can say that. I am so proud of what we do, and someone needs to carry that banner. It is important. Well, I still have one more column to prepare, at least as it pertains to this part of my Bar journey. I have a few more goodies to discuss. I really dreaded writing a message the month when I first took on this job. But, imagine having a forum all to yourself, once a month, for 12 months, where you can write anything you want; well, almost anything. I have pretty much chosen to talk about lawyers, lawyering, and the good we do. I have hoped that some of this would rub off on you. And, quite frankly, it has. Everywhere I go, lawyers have mentioned these articles with a smile and a positive "attaboy," and for that, I also thank you. This has been a grand experience, one which does not stop when I turn over the reins to Charlotte. I will still have my soap box. I just won't have this column. Oh well, maybe when I'm done with all these wonderful Bar jobs, I can run for President again. Just kidding! But, I think you can tell, and I have made my point, that I still love this job. No burn out here.

Did you hear the one about the lawyer? That has been the catchphrase we used for our message promoting what lawyers do. It was no joke and is still no joke. You are the best. It is critical that you continue to know that and that society knows it, too. Talk to you soon!



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