

From the President's Desk

by Chris Heil, Esquire
ATLA President

It has only been a little over two weeks since I became the President of ATLA, and suffice to say it has been an eye opener. Although I have served on the Executive Committee as Secretary-Treasurer through the ranks up to President and have had the opportunity to work with and observe some of our finest Presidents to date, I did not realize just how “popular” a President can be. I’ve received dozens of phone calls, e-mails and letters from members, vendors and the occasional life insurance salesman, which had me worried for a second when I thought more about it! It seems everyone has an opinion they’d like to share on how I should handle this issue or that issue. Unfortunately, for each person who indicated they liked how “A” was being handled, and equal number thought “A” was the wrong thing and preferred “B”. I suppose I should have expected as much from a group of highly motivated and intelligent professionals.

As I reflected on the diverse nature of opinions presented to me on just about every subject, a thought bounced around in my head that I have only recently been able to corral and put into words. Its not very original, but it is famous, so at least I chose well: “Ask not what your (President) can do for you, ask what you can do for your (President)”. All right, so I took a few liberties with the quote (two to be exact), but the sentiment is instructive. I will dedicate my heart and soul this year to improving ATLA in any way that I can, but I need your help. For every opinion or complaint presented to me I have but one request: bring a solution with it. Those of you who know me well know that I can only do so much, and even what I can do is often less than inspiring, so I need you. Words without actions are hollow indeed. Before one complains that x or y needs to be done, or not done, I’d ask that you assess the situation and come up with a proposed solution. Your Executive Committee members, with my notable exception, are talented, motivated and intelligent folks, but they cannot do it alone.

Additionally, I’d ask that each of you get involved in ATLA as much as your time will allow. Each of you has a talent or skill set that can be brought to the table to improve not only ATLA as an organization, but the individual members in



it. Too often we are either afraid or unwilling to get involved beyond just membership, or attendance at one of our fine CLE programs. If that is the case for you, that’s fine, but you really don’t know what you are missing. In my many years being active in ATLA, from first just attending committee meetings, then chairing a committee or two and finally through my leadership track, I have become a better lawyer and a better person. I’ve learned professional and personal skills from folks like Ralph Cloar, David Williams, Chip Welch, Brad Hendricks and so many others and I am the richer for it. That is available to you, and you will also benefit, whether it be by networking and receiving referrals or just fellowship. Your membership in ATLA is what you make of it. Take advantage of the opportunities presented to give back to the organization and to take a leadership role. You will be the better for it, and so will ATLA. •