

Law Offices

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Dear Friends and Colleagues,

The strength of a determined and dedicated volunteer is mighty. As Linda Lipsen has often told us, Trial Lawyers are the greatest fighters in the world. Therefore, as volunteer leaders of AAJ, we all belong to the greatest Army on Earth.

Though outspent and outnumbered in courtrooms around the world and the halls of Congress, we prevail because of the strength and determination of our volunteers and because our cause is just.

*"We are lawyers on the side of people. Never let us forget that the law is never settled until it is settled right, it is never right until it is just, and it is never just until it serves society to the fullest," -Harry Philo*

Thanks to each of you for not only fighting in the courtroom but giving of your time and money to serve AAJ and help preserve the Civil Justice System.

I have fought Tort Reform on the state level and national level for over thirty years. Throughout my career I have lectured and taught to help educate lawyers. A well-educated and well-trained Bar helps all of us and our clients. For decades, I have raised money and worked to increase membership for both my state TLA and AAJ. **Today, I ask for your support to be the next Parliamentarian of AAJ when we elect our Officers in Boston at the 2017 Annual Convention.**

I have no memory of ever wanting to be anything but a lawyer because I have always believed that individuals deserve a strong voice against wrongdoers. In 1982 I became a lawyer and in 1985 I opened up my own law firm. Even from day one, I strictly limited my practice to personal injury cases. In 1987 I joined my state TLA and the American Association for Justice (then ATLA). I understood the importance of fighting tort reform and though a young lawyer, I immediately began contributing to my state TLA PAC and ATLA PAC. During the 1990s I became a leader on a state level holding important leadership positions as an officer, committee chair and a leader against tort reform in Maryland as the longtime Chairman of the Maryland Trial Lawyers Legislative Committee. In 2001 I became one of the youngest presidents in MAJ history.

That same year I became active in AAJ on two levels. First, after the 2001 attacks, AAJ had one of its finest moments when we were instrumental in the establishment of the Victims

Compensation Fund and Trial Lawyers Care. I served as the State Leader and State Liaison from Maryland to Trial Lawyers Care and coordinated the support and efforts from Maryland as we had many residents affected by the attack on the Pentagon. That same year I became active in the Council of Presidents and in 2002 was elected President of the Council of Presidents. I was often vocal at board meetings and executive committee meetings about the importance of the relationship between AAJ and its state affiliates. I was concerned and remain concerned that AAJ meet the needs of small firms around the country as well as large firms.

Since 2002 when I served on my first AAJ Executive Committee I have been inspired, energized and impressed by the leaders of AAJ and the members of our Board. During that time many of you have become my closest friends.

For the past thirty years trial lawyer organizations have been a priority in my life. First on a state level where I still attend monthly board meetings and have served as the Maryland PAC Chairman for the past fifteen years where I have built the MAJ PAC into the strongest PAC in the State. Since 2001 I have made AAJ a priority while continuing my efforts in Maryland. My wife, Tanique, understands that vacations, family events, and social occasions must be planned around AAJ conventions, board meetings, and Executive Committee retreats. I have proselytized throughout Maryland on behalf of AAJ and encouraged many prominent Maryland attorneys to attend AAJ conventions and become leaders themselves in AAJ. Through this important work I have been honored to work with State leaders at the highest levels. Martin O'Malley, former Governor of the State of Maryland, has offered the following,

*"Bruce is a tremendous lawyer and a very effective leader. He is one of those rare individuals who can raise funds, motivate people, and keep the cause of Justice always at the center of the effort."*

Since 2001 I have been either chairman, co-chairman, regional captain, or state captain for every important AAJ fundraising project. I understand the importance of fundraising and have always met or exceeded my goals. Linda Lipsen has said that just meeting your goal earns you a grade of "C." I have always strived to earn an "A." Most recently, I was the sole chair of the Maggie Hassan fundraising event held at our Chicago board meeting and was a co-chair with Gary Paul and Navan Ward for the very successful Justice 2016 event held in Los Angeles. Both events greatly exceeded the targeted goal. Whether we like it or not, fundraising is an increasingly crucial duty of our officers. If given the opportunity to serve as an officer of AAJ, I will continue to be an effective fundraiser.

In addition to fundraising, I lead by example and contribute regularly. I have been an AAJ PAC donor since 1987, I have served on the National Finance Committee of AAJ since its inception, my small law firm has been a member of Leaders Forum since 2007, I am a long-time PAC Eagle and have served as a member of the PAC taskforce since 2010 and have been a PAC Trustee since 2012. I am a multiple donor to Evergreen and have been honored three times by AAJ with a Wiedemann & Wysocki Award for my PAC leadership.

My contributions to AAJ are not limited to raising money. I joined the Convention Planning Committee in 2002 and served as the chairman of the Convention Planning

Committee from 2007 through 2013. During that time, we studied how to make the convention a better experience for our members and made certain changes including the addition of a closing party instead of the staid seated dinners that used to conclude our conventions. Other changes were made to benefit vendors and we did our best to improve the convention experience, including making sure the convention was held in dynamic locations, ensuring that members wanted to attend. I believe the convention experience is an invaluable one. Once members attend our convention, they become hooked on AAJ. Convention attendance leads to increased membership and fundraising.

In 2004 I was elected to my first term on the Organizational Review Committee (ORC). In 2013 I was elected Chairman of ORC where we seriously study the organizational structure of AAJ. Recently as Chair of ORC, I was proud to make the motion at our annual meeting for the approval and establishment of the LGBT Caucus. As a long-time AAJ leader, I am enthused and impressed by the leadership of not only our revitalization governors, but the positive energy and strength of our caucuses including the Women Trial Lawyers Caucus, the Minority Caucus, the New Lawyers Division, and the LGBT Caucus.

If elected Parliamentarian I will continue to serve AAJ and its 20,000 constituents with the same dedication and time that I have given to the cause of Civil Justice over the past thirty years, and use my experience to continue to improve the balance of power in and outside of the courtrooms of our nation.

I have served side-by-side with the leaders of AAJ and am proud to say I've earned the written endorsements of the following AAJ Presidents:

- Mary E. Alexander
- Lisa Blue
- Leo Boyle
- David S. Casey, Jr.
- Roxanne Conlin
- Mike Eidson
- J. Burton LeBlanc
- Mary Alice McLarty
- Barry Nace
- Gary M. Paul
- Kathleen Flynn Peterson
- Todd Smith
- Kenneth M. Suggs
- Anthony Tarricone
- Les Weisbrod

This is what some of them have said:

*"Bruce, Thank you for making the decision to seek office at AAJ. I have long admired your leadership and commitment to the organization. You have my support!" -Kathleen Flynn Peterson*

*"Bruce - Just a quick note to say congratulations on your election to the executive committee for this year, and to say thank you for your great work on making our NFC fundraising efforts a fabulous success, and lastly to tell you that I support you enthusiastically for Parliamentarian. You are a great leader of AAJ and you will be a great officer and president. Thanks for everything." - Gary M. Paul*

*"Bruce - I am happy to endorse your candidacy, as I've told you in the past. So here it is in writing. I have every expectation that you'll do the work required to make a difference and be a superb leader of the trial bar." -Anthony Tarricone*

*"This is to confirm my enthusiastic support of your candidacy for Parliamentarian of AAJ!" -Mary Alexander*

*"Dear Bruce--I am so happy for our beloved ATLA/AAJ and for the people whom we represent that you are willing to make this sacrifice. Like a tireless firefighter, you have been on call for every emergency and assignment, no matter how big or small, for decades, and you have answered the bell every single time with distinction. You could not be better prepared or better qualified to lead us. It is my privilege to endorse you."-Leo Boyle*

*"Bruce, I'd like to add to my earlier endorsement.*

*When this organization was founded, the landscape for innocents injured by the carelessness of others was bleak. Our forebears faced contributory negligence, sovereign immunity, charitable immunity, parental immunity, and even privity of contract defenses. A passenger in a car, injured by the conduct of the driver, could only recover if recklessness could be proven.*

*Lawyers like you got together, formed a formidable organization, and began an assault on the citadel of unconstitutional privilege. And they succeeded. One by one, the barriers to justice began to fall.*

*Then the tide turned. In a society that increasingly favored the rich and entitled over ordinary working folks, limitations (not on liability but on responsibility for liability) became the norm. Chambers of Commerce embarked on court packing programs. And the big lie of frivolous lawsuits and outrageous awards was told so often and so loudly that it became conventional wisdom, polluting the jury panels and fooling citizens into voting against their own interests.*

*It must be our mission to swing the pendulum back. Dr. King was right when he said, "the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice."*

*The metal of that arc will not bend, though, unless we apply the heat of truth and the leverage of dedication.*

*I truly believe that you, Bruce, are ideally situated to lead us in this fight. I have never known you to lose heart, to shrink from a challenge, or to fail in whatever you have tried to do. Your experience on the state and national level uniquely qualify you to be an AAJ officer. Your good judgment and willingness to learn and to apply what you have learned with hard work will serve us well. You have my unconditional support." -Ken Suggs*

In addition I am honored to have the support of so many of our board leaders. I have received written endorsements from,

- W. Coleman Allen, Jr.
- Mike Arias
- Andy Bederman
- Ronnie Berke
- Miriam Bourdette
- Beverly Bove
- Bruce Braley
- Drew Britcher
- Greg Cusimano
- Maria Diamond
- David Diggs
- Sean Domnick
- Robert "Bob" Edwards
- Mike Foley
- Fayrell Furr
- Troy Giatras
- Sid Gilreath
- Betsy Greene
- Rod Gregory
- Richard Gurfein
- Jamie Holland
- Mark Kitrick
- Marianne LeBlanc
- Chuck McRae
- Marion Munley
- Christopher Nace
- Wayne Parsons
- Seth Price
- Patrick Regan
- Dan Rosner
- Sandra Robinson
- Herman Russomanno
- Patrick A. Salvi, II
- Rodd Santomauro
- Fred Schenk
- Doug Sheff
- Vicki Slater
- Don Slavik
- Frank Verderame
- Tom Watson
- Joe Weik
- Sol Weiss
- John Eddie Williams
- Wayne Willoughby
- Zachary Wool
- Tom Yost
- Robert Zarbin
- Ed Zebersky

*"Bruce, I echo what has already been said about you and it is my great pleasure to reiterate my endorsement for your candidacy! We are lucky that someone with your talent, energy and passion is willing to make this commitment. Thank you for your willingness to serve on our behalf." - Marianne LeBlanc*

*"Bruce, you have been a great leader of the AAJ . . . whether it is in fundraising, devising and implementing our policy agendas or ensuring that our conventions*

*are well-run and organized. I am confident that you are the right person for the job." -Sean C. Domnick*


*"Dear Bruce, having had the opportunity to serve with you for fifteen years on various AAJ committees, including the executive committee, I have seen your leadership qualities as well as your deep and long-standing commitment to this organization and its mission. I enthusiastically endorse your candidacy for Parliamentarian." -Maria Diamond*

*"Bruce, I commend you on your unwavering commitment to volunteering to improve the Civil Justice System. You have my full support in your endeavor to be Parliamentarian of the AAJ. Your tireless support of MAJ is duly appreciated. I know of no other MAJ member who has ever done more in the areas of fundraising and legislative advocacy than you. I thank you for educating me on how to make a difference too. If you do step down as the MAJ PAC Chair after some fifteen years, you will be seriously missed. Thank you for all your counsel, advocacy, and enthusiasm throughout the years." -Tom Yost, Current President of the Maryland Association for Justice*

I am excited and energized about the opportunity to become an AAJ officer this year. I hope I can count on your support. I promise I will not let you down.

With best wishes and appreciation of everything you do,

PLAXEN & ADLER, P.A.



Bruce M. Plaxen