EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S LETTER

A Year of Superlatives



Chuck Thompson, IMLA Executive Director and General Counsel

Our Annual Conference in Baltimore last month capped a 2013-2014 operating year that can only be described as a resounding success. The Baltimore meeting brought together a record 700-plus IMLA members to reconnect, discuss leading-edge issues of municipal law and celebrate the nation's 200th anniversary of our Star Spangled Banner—in the very epicenter of those festivities. I think it fair to say that George Nilson and the entire Baltimore Solicitor's office—along with the City's football and baseball teams, the Walter Art Museum, the Blue Angels and a massive fireworks display helped us to host a spectacular event. And based on members' evaluations, IMLA programming also hit it out of the park (we were, after all, steps from Camden Yards), providing some of the best educational programming we've ever had, from our joint Code Enforcement program with the Center for Community Progress to the inspirational keynote speech by Steve Sachs that we have included in this issue of the *Municipal Lawyer*.

To close our program we also celebrated 50 years of the Civil Rights Act with inspirational talks by Professor Larry Gibson and litigator John Rellman, both of whom have been leaders in securing civil rights over the years. Listening to Larry Gibson, Steve Sachs and John Rellman we are reminded of our founder Charles S. Rhyne and his lifetime of work to recognize the Rule of Law. Charlie was the force behind "Law Day" and worked tirelessly with leaders throughout the world to promote the "rule of law" over the "rule by force." Perhaps it is also a fitting reminder of the need for the Civil Rights Act to have had as our President, Sheryl King Benford, a person who rose above pervasive discrimination to become our President and Cleveland's Woman of the Year during 2014.

We thank each one of you for having played a part in our success this past year through your interest and involvement in IMLA on many levels.

But the past, as they say is prologue and we now begin a new operating year, inaugurating our ever-active and well-respected colleague from New York City, G. Foster Mills as our new President. We are building on last year's momentum and launching several new initiatives that we know will add value to membership and make being part of the IMLA family a great advantage to communities across the country. For example, the Construction Contract Drafting Initiative will launch model construction document amendments to standard AIA contracts. IMLA and AIA have entered into an agreement that allows our members who have licensed the AIA licensed documents to use our model amendments, which are copyrighted and may only be used by the IMLA member community. As another enhanced benefit, starting in January each IMLA member will receive ten hours of CLE-eligible distance learning cost-free, as part of their membership. And an additional 30 hours will be available to members for only $499 plus modest CLE fees in states where they apply, making distance learning through IMLA a great value. These programs will cover an ever-expanding range of leading-edge topics and will be brought to your desks by domain experts.

Foster is already under way working to energize our membership and we hope you will help him by passing along to colleagues the great value IMLA brings and getting them to join us. We'll be returning to the Omni Shoreham in Washington DC for our ever-popular Mid-Year Seminar next spring, where we plan to sponsor the admission of interested IMLA members to the Supreme Court. We'll launch our first-ever Chief Legal Officer's Forum at the Mid-Year Seminar (look for more information on the CLO Forum). And we'll host our 2015 Annual Conference next September in the excitement and energy of Las Vegas!

So, as great as 2014 has been, we expect even better things in the upcoming year. Thank you again for being part of our growing IMLA family. **M.**

