



# MACDL

## *Action Report*

*Newsletter*

MISSOURI ASSOCIATION OF CRIMINAL DEFENSE LAWYERS

## **Newsletter SUMMER 1988**

### **REPORT FROM THE PRESIDENT**

*Dear Member:*

*I would like to take this opportunity to welcome all past members of MACDL and also to welcome all those new members who have joined our family!!! Welcome!!!*

*The business of criminal defense is tough. We are asked to sacrifice time which others reserve for family. We are asked to endure the vipuperation of society; and worse, the alienation of our own brethren. And yet, it is a business of which to be proud.*

*To that end, let me outline the basic goals of this administration:*

- 1. Grand Jury Reform Bill*
- 2. Increase of membership by at least 100*
- 3. PAC contributions to an effective level*
- 4. Continuation and increase in CLE efforts. We should be sponsoring not only our annual seminar but also at least three mini-seminars per year*

*The listing is not indicative of importance. All are vital to the continued viability and growth of our association.*

*If you are interested in any of these objectives, contact me or any other member of the board, to aid us in accomplishing these goals. They simply cannot be accomplished without membership help!!!*

**"RICH MAN EATS WHEN HE WISHES  
POOR MAN WHENEVER HE CAN"**

*Hugh D. Kranitz, President*

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# YOU ARE THE CRIMINAL DEFENSE LAWYER

by Robert Ritchie

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Have you given of yourself until there seems little left to give? Have you spent the last ounce of energy, effort and devotion defending a client and felt there was nothing left to spend? Have you cried with a client or client's family when they were separated by incarceration? Have you felt the barbs of injustice when excessive punishment was imposed and you were powerless to prevent it?

On the other hand, have you felt the exhilaration of the sound of the words, "Not Guilty?" Have you seen a life fragmented by criminal charges put back together because of your efforts on your client's behalf? Have you walked out of a courtroom with your client after sentencing when you knew there was a chance that you would walk out alone?

If you have experienced these things, you know what it is like to live the life of a criminal defense lawyer. You give a lot and likely you give every day. Often you give at great sacrifice, sacrifice to yourself and to your family. Your hours are long. While corporate and tax lawyers may keep fairly regular hours, you do not. You live with the knowledge that if you leave some preparation undone, or make a mistake, a client may be imprisoned or worse. Maybe he or she would have been found guilty anyway, but you are forced to wonder. Some of your colleagues have tried criminal law but could not take it. They became real estate lawyers or otherwise joined the silk stocking set. Some stay with the criminal law but become alcoholics or seek release through equally destructive chemical substances or behaviors.

You have stayed with it. You are a criminal defense lawyer and you expect to remain a criminal defense lawyer for the rest of your professional life. Why do you do it? Why do you endure the pressure? Why do you disregard the barbs of not only unsympathetic laymen, but even fellow lawyers who certainly should have some understanding of the rights of citizens? Why do you keep on, knowing that this life renders you less effective as a parent and as a spouse? Obviously there is no one answer except the punishment you endure. The pleasure must, somehow, exceed the pain.

There is something about you. You love people. There is no way that you could regularly fight the battles of the citizen accused and not love people in spite of their frailties, in spite of their shortcomings. You understand those frailties because you see them in yourself.

You do not surrender to intimidation. The power of intimidation is inherent in the criminal justice system. Law enforcers, prosecutors and often judges use it to its fullest against citizens accused and their counsel. You are aware of it yet you stand up to it. You surrender no advantage or right simply because of their efforts to intimidate.

You are tenacious. You keep coming back. In spite of your best efforts, there are cases which you will lose. One of the most difficult aspects of practicing criminal law is getting out of bed the morning after a loss, going to the office and preparing for the next battle, already scheduled to begin. But you do it and you keep on doing it day in, day out, year in, year out.

You truly believe in the rights and liberties of citizens. You do not believe these should be sacrificed on the altar of law and order. You do not believe exceptions should be made because the media and the public have decided that a particular defendant is a "bad" person. You, with Thomas Jefferson, believe that eternal vigilance is the price of liberty.

You are one of us. As a member of NACDL you know you have joined together with fellow criminal defense lawyers who understand the pressures, the sacrifices, the hurt and the joy. Collectively, we can do more to advance the principles in which we believe than we could ever do individually. If the goals of the Association are met this year we will be in a position to have a substantial impact on the criminal justice system. Help us meet those goals. Participate in the membership efforts. Enlist those fellow criminal defense lawyers who share our vision and have the capacity to become-capable criminal defense advocates. We are now

in Washington, D.C. and plan to make our presence felt. Stay aware of the developments in legislation and be prepared to contact your representatives on important legislation. Give us the benefit of your thoughts on how we can be more effective in any way to achieve the goals of the Association.

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