

CLA MEMOIRS

Steve Davidson

January 2006

Someone asked the former presidents to write down their memoirs (yes, they actually asked for “memoirs”) of the CLA. So here goes. Since I can’t think of a more compelling order than chronological, I’ll start at the beginning. I apologize in advance for any lapses or errors in my recollection.

My Introduction to CLA

It was late 1982 or early 1983. We had recently finished the *Jostens v. NCS* case – three years of my life spent learning about computers and software and making some new law about that. Extremely interesting stuff, both technically and legally, but when I tried to discuss it with lawyers I knew, it seemed that none of them understood what I was talking about. I wondered if there were others who focused on legal issues involving computers or software and where I might find them.

Lo and behold!! One day there arrived on my desk a brochure for something called “The PLI Computer Litigation Conference” to be held in San Francisco at the same time as the big “PC Fair” (as I recall, one of that year’s big announcements was the introduction of a 1200 baud modem, but that’s another story). It was chaired by a guy named Bill Fenwick in Palo Alto. I didn’t know anything about him or his firm (I wasn’t even sure where Palo Alto was), but I called him, introduced myself, and asked if he knew of any such organization. He said yes, there was one called “The Computer Law Association.” Bill was a member of its Board of Directors. He told me that the CLA had a conference coming up in Detroit and suggested I call Executive Director Barbara Fieser and register. Fenwick sounded like a really nice guy – he even asked if I wanted to come speak at his conference in place of someone who had cancelled (I declined that invitation) – so I followed his advice.

So there I was at Detroit’s Ponchartrain Hotel, attending my first CLA conference and watching in awe as one luminary after another ascended the podium. The conference was chaired by Ed Langa, a warm and wonderful fellow who would later become CLA president and subsequently depart this life during my term in office. Bill Fenwick was there and told his “Superman” joke. Gerry Davis (who totally intimidated me at that time, although he would eventually become my best friend and mentor) talked about how some judge had to be a total idiot to decide a particular case the way he did. Gary Reback said something brilliant that I couldn’t understand. I can’t remember who all of the speakers were, but they were the “movers and shakers” – the pioneers and luminaries whose names I had read and whose books and articles populated my shelf. I remember turning to the woman seated next to me (I think her name was Ruth Herring and that she had come from Oakland, California) at the end of the program and musing, “I wonder if I could ever be up there like them?” To which she abruptly responded, “Not a chance.”

My First Five Years As A CLA Member

I couldn’t resist an organization that had a babe like Sue Nycum as its president, so I joined and kept going to conferences. It soon became apparent that this wasn’t just another bar group where lawyers from different firms competed with one another for power and visibility, struggled to form political alliances, and gathered at shallow programs to network and hustle business. No, the CLA was a class act!! The founders and the officers were true thinkers, leaders and visionaries in the field of computer law. They has formed this association as a place to gather and share experiences, thoughts and ideas about a new and rapidly-evolving area of the law not served by any other national or international bar

organization. Many if not most of them were technically competitors, but they left their guns at the door. This was an association – a home – they had made for themselves. It was an organization devoted to camaraderie and mutual education and the exploring of new ideas, and they were going to keep it that way. I learned that the officers served two years terms, that there was no time limit on board membership, and that no one was nominated to the Board of Directors without first demonstrating long term commitment and contribution to the CLA and its culture.

I had no ambition in the mid-1980s to become a CLA director or officer. Thanks in part to the discouragement of Ruth Herring at the Detroit conference, that idea was only a short-lived fantasy that died before it could become a real goal or even an aspiration. I continued coming to CLA conferences because of the content and the people. The content was the best in the world. The speakers were, for the most part, those who either had achieved greatness in the field or whose real world experience qualified them as sources of knowledge for others of us who were struggling with or were likely to encounter similar issues. I knew that I would see the same people on the podium time after time, but that was fine with me because they were the best – the pioneers, the leaders and the luminaries – and I looked forward to each conference with great anticipation, wanting to hear about the challenges they had been facing in the past six months or so and what they were thinking. After all, that is why the CLA was formed, and that is why I became a member. I was invited from time to time to speak at conferences sponsored by other national or local organizations, but I never volunteered to speak at a CLA conference. Those people were the masters, and I was perfectly satisfied to learn at their feet.

I also looked forward to seeing those people because they were becoming my friends. During the 1980s, CLA held three conferences each year – one on the east coast of North America, one on the west coast, and an annual spring conference in Washington, D.C. The location and timing of the east and west coast programs moved around from one year to the next, but there were two things we could always count on – one was that there would be a core group of 50 or so people who would gather pretty much whenever and wherever CLA met, and the other was that we could always count on something special in Washington, D.C. in April or May of each year.

My reference to a “core group” doesn’t mean that CLA programs drew only 50 people. No indeed! The general attendance in those days was more like 200 people at every CLA event. It’s just that a large percentage of those who attended either came because they had a particular client problem and hoped to learn how to solve it or because they were opportunity seekers or “wannabees” who showed up once or twice, handed out a lot of business cards, and never appeared again. Some of the “wannabees” approached the CLA leadership and volunteered to speak at a program or serve on the Board, even though they had no history with the organization. Those offers were routinely rejected. The CLA Board of Directors and Executive Committee zealously guarded the culture and traditions of the organization. At the same time, they warmly embraced newcomers who impressed them as genuinely interested and sincere about wanting to share in the camaraderie and intellectual pursuits of the CLA.

My Time On The CLA Board Of Directors

I was fortunate to be one of those invited to become an apprentice to the CLA leadership, but that didn’t happen quickly. I believe it was in the spring of 1987 that CLA held its annual D.C. conference at the Crystal City Marriott Hotel in Arlington, Virginia. I was walking through the hotel lobby the night before the conference when I ran into Gerry Davis, who had just emerged from the Board of Directors meeting. Gerry told me he had been appointed to chair the CLA conference to be held in San Francisco later that year and that he wanted me to come and speak about trade secret law as it applied to computer software. What Gerry didn’t tell me was this was a kind of a test. Apparently I was under consideration for nomination to the Board of Directors, and I learned later that the members of the nominating committee wanted to see me present and interview me personally before deciding to include my name on the slate of nominees for the election that would take place the following spring.

To make a long story short (because it's really kind of a blur), I gave the speech,¹ passed the interviews, and satisfied the request for a letter formally confirming my law firm's commitment to support my attendance at CLA board meetings and conferences and my personal commitment to participate in and contribute to the activities and welfare of the CLA. My name appeared on the slate of candidates in the spring of 1988 (I remember secretly worrying whether a slated candidate could fail to garner the necessary number of check marks from the voting membership), and I attended my first Board of Directors meeting at the Vista International Hotel, which was a part of the World Trade Center that then existed in New York City.

The board meetings were awesome! In addition to taking care of business, we could always count on puns from Paul Hoffman, wisdom coupled with good humor from Mort Goldberg, vision from Gerry Davis, and entertaining banter (my statesmanlike characterization) between Gary Reback and Sue Nycum. We could also count on officers steeped in the traditions and culture of CLA, because officer terms were two years, and there was a long list of officers who moved slowly up the ladder (it seems like Mark Gordon was an officer for about ten years, but my memory could be off by a few minutes). I also recall that, over the years, one board member or another always seemed to have something special in store for me whenever and wherever we gathered. When we met in Los Angeles, Paul Bent took me sailing on his boat (fun). When we met in Washington, D.C., Ollie Smoot would take me to a drive-in in nearby Virginia for frozen yogurt (yum). When we met in San Diego, Gerry Davis took me to Tijuana (ugh!). And when we were together in Amsterdam, Ian Kyer took me on a tour of the "Red Light District" and showed me shops that sold books, magazines and paraphernalia the likes of which I had never seen before (?). There was much more, but the point is that CLA gatherings were always an interesting, entertaining and broadening experience.

My Time As CLA Program Chair

My first big assignment after being elected to the Board was to organize the CLA Conference to be held at San Francisco's Stanford Court Hotel in the fall of 1989. I spent countless hours planning that conference, and by mid-summer the program and speakers were all in place. It would be a fabulous event, a gem in the crown of CLA, a great success! Then, about a week before the program was to take place, the 1989 earthquake struck San Francisco. I remember the Executive Committee conference call hosted by president Dan Brooks during which the sole topic was whether or not to proceed with the event. We were already beginning to receive cancellations from members fearful of traveling to San Francisco, and I lobbied vigorously to cancel and re-schedule the event because I did not want my first effort as a CLA program chair to be a professional and financial disaster. But my pleas were in vein. Dan observed that CLA had never in its history cancelled a scheduled gathering, and he insisted that it would not happen on his watch. Much to my dismay, the Executive Committee decided that the conference would proceed as planned. And it did. The attendance was a bit light, but it turned out to be a great program and a great time to be in San Francisco. No crowds, no lines, and easy to get into the best restaurants in town, even without a reservation.

A few years later, President Paul Bent came up with the idea of appointing standing committees to manage things like publications, membership, public relations, and – yes – programs. Paul asked me to chair the PR Committee, which I was glad to do because it would be an opportunity to work closely with the leadership and help them promote CLA. I remember working with my firm's librarian to assemble a list of publications that we thought might be interested in the sorts of things we did, and each month we issued a formal news release announcing some CLA development or event, complete with a quote from the President (of course I had to write the quotes, but none of them was issued without the President's approval).

¹ One thing I remember vividly about that speech is that my opening line drew a great round of laughter from the audience. That would have given me much confidence, except that it was not intended to be funny.

As much as I enjoyed and appreciated the chance to be PR Chair, my real desire was to chair the Program Committee. CLA offered a lot of benefits to its members – the Membership Directory, the Bulletin, and Ian Kyer’s “bedtime” Computer Law Companion among other things – but I always felt that the programs were the crown jewels, because that was where we got together from time to time, and for me those gatherings were always the greatest benefit of all. After two years as PR Chair, my wish came true and I was appointed Chair of the Program Committee; a position in which I served until about 1999.

During my time as CLA Program Chair, I adopted four guiding principles: 1) We would maintain the high quality of our programs and seek ways to offer innovative programming. There would be no bias against repeat speakers as long as they had something new and valuable to offer. 2) We would look to our programming as a profit center and would adhere to a budgeting discipline that virtually guaranteed each conference would be profitable. In this way, our programming would subsidize other member benefits and build capital. 3) We would use our conferences as a vehicle to promote membership. And 4), for as long as I served as Program Chair, neither I nor any member of my firm would be a speaker at any CLA program. Speaking at a CLA program was a coveted professional opportunity, and I felt it was important that I not be perceived as taking unfair advantage of my position to engage in self-promotion.

We enjoyed great success during those years. Thanks in large part to the tireless efforts of Executive Director Barb Fieser (who almost single-handedly attended to the facility arrangements, dealing with sponsors, producing and mailing brochures, handling registrations, and making sure that all ran smoothly from beginning to end), we continued our tradition as producer of the world’s best computer law programs. We put money in the bank, grew the membership, and sent people home with CLA pens, paperweights, t-shirts and caps in addition to a great education and new friendships. Here are a few of the highlights I remember:

The conference in Cambridge, Massachusetts, where we visited the bridge made famous by our former president Ollie Smoot. When Ollie was a fraternity pledge at MIT, he and his classmates were assigned the task of measuring the length of the Harvard Bridge with a new unit of measurement called “Smoots.” Beginning at one end of the bridge, Ollie had to lie on the pavement while marks were painted on the pavement at his feet and his head. He then moved one unit toward the other end, and a new mark was placed. The process continued throughout the night, until the entire length of the bridge was marked in “Smoots,” from one end to the other. (The length of the Harvard Bridge is 364.4 Smoots plus an ear.) Although the bridge had been resurfaced many times since then, the Smoot marks have been preserved as historical markings. I know. We saw them.

It was also in Cambridge that I was assigned the task of planning the first CLA “retreat” conference at a location of my choice. That conference took place in Monterey, California in 1993. Thanks to Karen Casser, our keynote speaker was John Gage, a futurist and Chief Scientist at Sun Microsystems who predicted that one day we would all be talking on wireless telephones and doing business over the Internet. A lot of people laughed when he said that.

The Atlanta conference, where I was able to announce that two members whom I had introduced at the San Francisco conference a couple years earlier had fallen in love and were about to be married. It was also during the Atlanta conference that a young lady knocked on my hotel room door and asked if I was interested in “the turn down service.” Being somewhat unworldly, I didn’t know what that was. I thought it was a service offered only in the hotel bar. In any event, having been turned down sufficiently in my younger days, I politely declined.

Alan Wernick’s “Columbus, Ohio conference,” which actually took place in Vancouver, British Columbia (it’s a long story).

The D.C. conference, at which I met Roy Freed for the first time. I remember that when I approached Roy after his presentation and introduced myself, he ignored my outstretched hand and instead reached up and pinched me on the cheek.

During the mid-1990s, Steve LaCount presented the idea of planning a series of “Pacific Rim” conferences that would alternate between sites on the west coast of the United States and sites across the Pacific Ocean. The first took place at the Four Seasons Hotel in Newport Beach, California, the second in Sydney, Australia, the third at the Pan Pacific hotel in San Francisco, and so on.

The Pan Pacific conference was particularly memorable for me because a delegation of Japanese officials invited President Ian Kyer, Vice President Bill Tanenbaum and me to meet with them in a formal session during the afternoon preceding the program. Ian accepted, and the three of us received detailed instructions about how to greet the Japanese, how to treat the exchange of business cards, where to sit at the table, whom to address and in what order – and most important of all, how to communicate with them through the translator they would provide, since they did not speak English. Throughout the meeting, Ian, Bill and I were very careful to speak clearly in short sentences and to give the translator time to take notes and repeat each of our statements in Japanese before we said anything more. The members of the Japanese delegation, however, spoke in long, uninterrupted paragraphs as the translator furiously scribbled what notes she could, and even then barely gave her time to repeat their statements in English before beginning to talk again. After the meeting ended, I found myself alone in the conference room with only the translator. I thanked her, complimented her on her work, and asked if she felt added pressure because of the long statements of her Japanese employers and the brief time they gave her to translate before beginning to speak again. No, she explained. That was not the source of the pressure. The real pressure, she said, was due to the fact that all of them spoke perfect English, and they knew precisely whether her translation was accurate or not.

The Pacific Rim Conference in Hawaii was great, but the highlight for me was finding myself alone in a souvenir shop with actress Tia Carrere and pretending not to notice her. She apparently felt the same way, because she behaved as if she did not notice me either <g>. There was also a Hawaiian luau during the intervening evening of that conference at which “President Davidson” was required to take the stage and join three Hawaiian women dancing the hula. I believe all photos (including negatives) have been destroyed. It was also in Hawaii that George Chen, the chairman of the Taiwan Institute for Information Infrastructure, invited me to bring a group of experts to Taipei as guests of his government and teach a seminar on Internet law that would be co-sponsored by the CLA.

At our conference in Seattle (after Dave Bender and I returned from playing hooky at the Boeing Air Museum), member Chris Millard of London approached me and suggested that the CLA should have its own home page on the Internet. Relatively few law firms or organizations had Web sites at that time, but it seems like a good thing for a computer law association to do, so I asked Gerry Davis if he would assume the role of CLA Webmaster and make it happen. We gave him a modest budget to cover the cost of hosting the site on his firm’s Web server, and the rest is history. Kudos to Chris for his foresight and mega-kudos to Gerry (and to Natalie Norman, who took our site into the 21st century).

The CLA pens, paperweights, t-shirts and caps were a great hit, except that I may have gone too far with one version of the t-shirts. A limited number of them were printed with the slogan “CYA with CLA” on the lower back side. Mort – I’m sorry.

A very important thing happened at our conference in Phoenix. My term as president had ended by then, and President Karen Casser had asked me to resume the role of CLA Program Committee Chair. At one point during the Phoenix conference, Barb Fieser called me aside and told me that a gentleman from Madrid was looking for me because he had a proposal for us. I had something to do with planning a conference in Europe. That gentleman was Enrique Batalla (to whom David Bender would later give the nickname “our man in Madrid”). Enrique was regal in his demeanor and was accompanied by his strikingly beautiful Spanish associate (whose family we would later learn occupied a former castle in a town not far from Madrid). Enrique described his vision for a CLA conference in Madrid. He shared my beliefs that the CLA should be a truly international organization (more on that later) and that the only way to achieve a real presence in Europe was to begin holding CLA conferences there. Karen approved the idea in principle and assigned me that task of working closely with Enrique on the planning and administrative details. The rest, as they say, is history.

My Year As CLA President

I had the privilege of serving the CLA as its president from July 1, 1996 until June 30, 1997, after eight years on the Board of Directors and two years as an officer. By that time, the term of office had been shortened to one year, largely in response to pressure from members who wanted to be president but who felt that the tradition of five officers and two-year terms had the practical effect of unduly limiting those opportunities. I personally never supported that change, believing that it would cause us to burn too quickly through talented and committed candidates and that one year as president was not enough time to accomplish very much. But the one year term of office was a fact of life by 1996, and the most I could hope for was to carry on the best that my predecessors had put in motion and to lay the foundation for new goals that hopefully would be achieved after my term in office ended.

When some of my successors have come to me and asked if I had any "words of wisdom" to help guide them during their time in office, my first response has always been this: Beyond the duties that come with being the chief executive officer of an organization like the CLA, I believe that each president should bring to the organization one initiative, one vision, that will materially change it for the better, together with a plan for at least beginning to achieve that goal. My vision was for the CLA to become a truly international association of lawyers devoted to information technology law.

As I am sure will be well documented elsewhere, the CLA had its origin in the early 1970s as a small group of U.S. lawyers struggling with issues involving the intellectual property and commercial aspects of computer technology. Because the United States tended to be an early developer and adopter of that technology, many of those issues tended to arise for the first time within the United States, and the lawyers being called upon to help their clients deal with those issues tended to be situated mostly within the United States. For these reasons, and perhaps also because of the practical limitations and economics of transportation and communications, the CLA in its early years was predominantly a U.S. association.

By 1996 this had changed dramatically. The 1980s brought a few members from Canada and Europe, and during the early 1990s we began to attract members from Latin America, Asia and Australia. I believe it was during Mark Gordon's presidency that the CLA was invited for the first time to appear as an international co-sponsor of Brazil's ABDI conference spearheaded by Ricardo Barretto, and Mark also developed a close relationship with Argentina's Antonio Mille, who helped to promote the CLA in other parts of Latin America. Fred Chilton and Philip Argy in Sydney worked very hard to help CLA achieve visibility there, and by the mid-1990s our international membership had grown considerably. During the late 1980s and early 1990s our Board of Directors and Advisory Board had also developed a more international complexion, with members from the United States, Canada, Europe, Latin America and Australia. I believe that we began initially to attract international members because of the increasing adoption of computer technology in other countries and the desire of lawyers from those countries to come to the United States and learn from our experience. But by the mid-1990s, Computer technology had become ubiquitous on an international scale, and what was once viewed as a backwater of the law practiced by a group of "geeky" lawyers had become part of the mainstream of business law practiced by virtually every major law firm on the world. I believed that the world was ready for a truly international association of lawyers devoted to information technology law.

While local and national bar groups in many parts of the world had invited the CLA to be their international partner, that was not the case in Europe. In Europe there had emerged a group called the International Federation of Computer Law Associations (IFCLA). IFCLA was not a membership organization, but rather comprised representatives of local bar groups from Europe and Canada whose principal mission was to collaborate on planning programs in Europe. The CLA has cooperated with IFCLA in connection with several such conferences, all of which were quite successful thanks to the hard work and dedication of the IFCLA planning committee. However, unlike our colleagues in other parts of the world, IFCLA was unwilling to recognize the CLA as a truly international association. IFCLA urged the CLA to acknowledge that it was merely the U.S. Computer Law Association and to join IFCLA as just another national association.

In June 1996, shortly before my term as president began, I attended the IFCLA conference in Brussels, Belgium. My self-appointed mission there had two parts. First, the CLA was a cosponsor and supporter of that conference, and I felt that it was important for me to be there in my role as incoming president. Second, I wanted to meet and speak with as many of the conference attendees as possible and to learn more about their perceptions and interest in the CLA. I returned home with a dual message. The message from lawyers attending the conference was that they had a strong interest in the CLA and hoped that the CLA would increase its independent presence in Europe as an international membership association. The message from IFCLA was that the CLA should keep to its place as a U.S. association and should not do programming in Europe except under the auspices of IFCLA.

We were, in my opinion, at a significant point of inflection. I believed there was a great opportunity for the CLA to continue evolving into the world's preeminent international association of computer technology lawyers. I also understood, however, that in order to accomplish that we needed a leader on the ground in Europe whose primary interest was in promoting the growth and expansion of the CLA. My vision, my initiative, for the CLA was to achieve what I believed to be its destiny as a truly international association, including the establishment of a significant, independent presence in Europe. Thanks mostly to the hard work of others, I believe we have now achieved that.

I have many fond memories of my year as president of the CLA. They include activities as manager, promoter, ambassador and leader, among others. Barb Fieser and I spoke by phone at least two or three times a week about such things as finances, program planning, disagreements between committee chairs and board members and even occasional complaints by members. I remember Barb teasing me one day and saying that the words she heard most frequently from me were, "We can fix that." And we almost always found a way.

I was fortunate to have a great team of officers and committee chairs. Our publications, programming and membership promotion were at an all-time high and growing. We published the CLA Directory, the CLA Computer Law Companion, and several issues of the CLA Bulletin, all at no additional cost to members. I believe we also published and sold several books at that time, including a Glossary of Computer Law Terms, a book about Internet Law authored by Joe Ruh of Kodak, and a collection of contract forms edited by Paul Hoffman. I can't remember who the Publications Chair was at the time, but I do remember that Barb was responsible for the Directory, and Ian Kyer was responsible for the Computer Law Companion.

It was around that time that Jay Westermeier, who had single-handedly spearheaded our monumentally successful 25th Anniversary conference that took place in Washington, D.C. in the spring of 1996 (it drew approximately 400 people) assumed the role of Membership Committee Chair. I assigned Jay a goal that I chose not so much because I thought it was realistic, but because I liked the sound of it – 2000 by 2000. We printed "2000X2000" buttons (I still have one) and handed them out at our conferences. Over the next few years, thanks mainly to Jay's hard work and dedication, we achieved that goal, largely by growing our international membership.

During my year as president we bought the name and trademark rights of the "World Computer Law Congress" that had been founded and run successfully for several years by Dick Bernacchi, Mike Scott and Warren Reid. Mark Gordon identified and negotiated that opportunity for us, and we began immediately to use that name for our Washington, D.C. spring conference, which had become our most popular annual tradition.

We held or co-sponsored what may have been a record number of conferences during my year as president. I may not remember all of them, but I do remember our second Monterey Retreat

Conference,² our Hawaii Pacific Rim Conference, our first CyberSpaceCamp conference in San Jose,³ the ABDI Conference we co-sponsored in Sao Paulo, Brazil,⁴ the conference in San Jose that I called “Sili-Wood” (Ron Johnston’s idea for a conference devoted to the convergence of the computer technology and entertainment industries – Silicon Valley and Hollywood), an east coast conference chaired by Karen Casser in North Carolina, and of course the D.C. conference in the spring of 1997. I believe we also held a west coast conference at the Stanford Court Hotel in San Francisco that year.

We had a tradition of opening every conference by asking the Board members and officers to stand, introducing each of them to the audience, and telling the members of the audience to take the opportunity during one of the breaks to introduce themselves to us. I also maintained a personal tradition of calling Barb Fieser into the room at each conference, introducing her to the audience, and making sure everyone knew what a great asset she was to the organization.

With all of these activities, Barb has become extremely busy, so I authorized her to hire a part time accountant to help with the financial books and records of the association and to hire her daughter Emily as a part time Assistant Executive Director to help run what we jokingly began to call “the family business.”

My term as president was marked by one very sad event. During that year, our former president Ed Langs (who had chaired the very first CLA conference I ever attended), died at his home in Grosse Pointe, Michigan. Ed was a dear friend who has been deeply missed by many of us. I attended his funeral as a representative of the CLA, and his death prompted us to establish a “Past Presidents Memorial” speaker series at the Washington, D.C. conference. The first speaker in that series was noted industry commentator John Dvorak, who appeared at our D.C. conference in the spring of 1997.

The D.C. conference was, in effect, the final event for most CLA presidents. On the morning of that conference the new officers and board members would be elected, with terms to begin just a couple months later. Several things stand out in my mind about the spring 1997 D.C. conference.

First, I remember that during the Board meeting preceding that conference, Barb Fieser reported on the balance on deposit in CLA bank account. The amount (I believe it was somewhat in excess of \$300,000) was so large that we asked Dan Brooks if the accumulation of so much capital might place our not-for-profit tax status in jeopardy. When he assured us it did not, we appointed Mort Goldberg and Gerry Davis to investigate whether we should consider investment alternatives to merely keeping it in a savings account.

Second, it so happened that this conference fell on “Take Your Child to Work Day” in the United States. So I brought my youngest son, Jesse, with me to Washington. Jesse was 11 years old at the time, and it was very special for me to be able to have him join me on the podium and introduce him to

² This was where I met Warren Reid face-to-face for the first time. I remember walking Warren to the taxi when he left for the airport and his making one of his business cards appear, seemingly out of thin air. It turns out that Warren is a magician among his many other talents.

³ Member Don Cohn of DuPont inspired the idea. I came up with the name, which David Bender successfully defended when the “Space Camp” people in Huntsville, Alabama accused us of trademark infringement.

⁴ The ABDI conference and related events were my first opportunity to travel to Latin America. The quality of the program and the hospitality shown us by Ricardo Barretto, his charming wife Rene, Esther Nunes and others will long live in my memories of the best that the CLA offers.

the audience when I opened the proceedings on Thursday morning. Michele Kane also brought her daughter Emily “to work” that day, and I introduced her to the audience as well.

On the first night of the conference, Jesse and I met Warren Reid in the hotel bar, where Warren spent an hour entertaining Jesse (and everyone else who gathered around) with card tricks and other magic. On the second night of the conference, Jesse “magically” arranged for a limo driver (who had a couple off hours while his “prom” clients ate dinner) to take Michele and Emily, Gerry Davis, Jesse and me on a tour of the monument grounds, all at no charge. What does this have to do with the CLA? For me, the magic of the CLA is that we are not merely a group of professionals who gather together periodically to explore legal issues of mutual interest; it is the friendships and the family we have formed and the times we have shared that will live on in our memories for a very long time.

Epilogue

There was no mention of Europe in my memoirs of my year as CLA president. Although establishing a European presence was an important part of my vision for the CLA, it would be several more years before we would accomplish that. Perhaps it was serendipity that after my term ended, president Karen Casser asked me to resume the role of Program Committee Chair and that it therefore was I whom Enrique Batalla approached in Phoenix with his proposal to plan a CLA conference in Madrid. With my support and Karen’s blessing, and with his own unbounded energy and conviction, Enrique orchestrated a spectacularly successful conference in Madrid. And with the later blessing of president David Bender and the approval of the Board of Directors, Enrique went on to plan and chair an entire series of hugely successful annual European CLA conferences. Thanks to Enrique and to many others including Ursula Widmer, Daniel Kahn, Alex Blumrosen, Pietro Tamburrini, Ricardo Barretto, Antonio Mille, Fed Chilton, Philip Agry, Richard Horning and recently some new friends in India, CLA has established itself as a truly international association with strong, independent presence throughout North America, Latin America, Europe, Australia and Asia. I look forward with great anticipation to seeing the CLA similarly realize the dreams and visions of my successors.

My memories of the CLA do not end here – they are still being made – but my memoirs as a past president do.

Steve Davidson