

**What's Past is Prologue;**  
**What to Come, in Yours and My Discharge<sup>1</sup>**

History sets the context for the present. This was true when Shakespeare wrote the *Tempest* in 1610 and resonates with equal force today. As we celebrate the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of DTCWV, we pause for a lookback with some of our past leaders, both to recognize their accomplishments and to provide a beacon for the coming decades.

Our program traces the development of the Defense Trial Counsel of West Virginia from the planning meeting called by Fred Adkins on August 13, 1981 in Parkersburg, West Virginia, through the early formation years in the 1980s, the membership growth in the 1990s, the turbulent economic times of the early 2000s, to the expansion of the mission and scope of the organization in over the last 15 years. Together, we have faced political, economic, and social unrest, the decline of civility within our practice, the frantic pace of electronic communications, the benefit and detriment of 24 hours accessibility, leadership challenges with the Supreme Court of Appeals, and a global pandemic. And yet, we persisted and continue to adapt, in part thanks to the common bond and connections we have formed through the DTCWV.

Our mission statement, which has guided the Organization for the past 40 years, is “[t]o bring together attorneys who defend individuals and corporations in civil litigation for the purposes of elevating the standards of West Virginia trial practice; supporting and advocating for the improvement of the adversary system of jurisprudence; and increasing the quality of services rendered by the legal profession to the citizens of West Virginia.” Every person who has served on the Board of Governors will attest to the fact that this is a living, breathing mission statement and guides the Organization’s goals and objectives. Most hotly debated issues in Board Meetings are resolved when a member pulls out the mission statement, reads it aloud and asks, “does it advance our mission?”

We posed the following six questions to our Past Presidents:

1. What is the most memorable thing you recall about your Presidential year? (This could include challenges and successes during your tenure, addressing dominant social/cultural/economic/political issues during your tenure, enhancing your leadership skills, or anything else that is memorable from that year.)
2. What value has DTCWV brought to you and your practice?
3. If you had the opportunity to give yourself advice when you began your career, what advice would you give?
4. How have you seen the practice of law and DTCWV change during your career?
5. What advice do you have for young lawyers (and to managing partners who make decisions about bar association memberships) today about the importance of DTCWV to their careers?

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<sup>1</sup> Shakespeare, William. 1564-1616. *The Tempest*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958. Act 2, Scene 1.

6. What advice do you have for future leaders of DTCWV to strengthen the organization?

While we have included the full responses below, several themes resonate through many – or even most – of the responses.<sup>2</sup>

- Judge Stamp, our third President, reminds us that the growth of the organization was glacial at first. The largest law firm had seventeen attorneys, so the pool of potential members was small. He and Fred Adkins enlisted Jimmy Morris, a Virginia attorney active in DRI and the American College of Trial Lawyers, to meet with the new organization and make suggestions on growing its membership. Forty years ago, the sole focus of the organization was securing enough members to sustain itself. Then, and now, the success of the organization depends on the willingness of firms to support it, through encouraging membership among its attorneys, and sponsoring our events. While the growth of national firms has posed a challenge, it has also provided an opportunity for growth of our organization with increased commitment by new firms.
- DTCWV has held an annual meeting every year. Even when it had few members and even fewer funds, it planned and held an annual meeting. This is remarkable and demonstrates the importance of developing sustaining relationships among the members. The annual meetings breathe life into the first four words of the mission statement, “To bring together attorneys.” In this space, we bond over shared stories, create new memories, and brainstorm about improving the practice of civil defense law. Annual, in-person, meetings are vital to the health of the organization. Thus, DTCWV has an unwavering commitment to returning to in-person meetings.
- Technology has fundamentally changed every aspect of our lives, including the practice of law. Marc Williams summarized it succinctly: “I started when faxing was new and progressed through Westlaw, overnight mail, voicemail, e-mail, mobile phones and now video depositions, hearings, meetings and trials.” While remote work gives us opportunities for increased flexibility, it has come with the price of 24-hour accessibility. Mike Fisher addressed this challenge: “Clients, attorneys, courts, and others expect and demand immediate access to attorneys and immediate attention, responses, advice, information, answers, and action 24/7.” At some level, almost every response addressed the impact of technology and the need to master it early. This is an opportunity for DTCWV that we will explore during our panel discussion.
- West Virginia has not escaped the erosion of civility. Almost every response, particularly those of the early presidents, references the erosion of civility among attorneys. Perhaps it is the influx of out of state firms, the increased competition for work, or the high stakes at issue in our cases, but the issue resonated with almost every respondent. This is an opportunity for leadership and action for DTCWV.

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<sup>2</sup> We regret that, at the time of publication of this document, three of DTCWV’s Past Presidents are deceased: 6<sup>th</sup> President, Fred L. Davis; 9<sup>th</sup> President, Dean DeLaMater; and 17<sup>th</sup> President, G.W. “Chip” Lavender, III.

- DTCWV is ground zero for professional growth and development for civil defense attorneys in West Virginia. It is difficult to think of a single excellent defense attorney in the state who is not a member of DTCWV. Firms are increasingly demanding involvement and leadership at the Board level before they will pay for membership. While this concept certainly makes sense, the arc should be longer, not shorter. There are many opportunities for immediate involvement, but Board membership is earned based on a demonstrated resume of leadership, not a single year or project. We urge firms to give their attorneys time to develop relationships, draft papers, present at seminars, plan events, and serve on the Board.

Our discussion will celebrate our collective successes and brainstorm about how we can continue to “support and advocate for the improvement of the adversary system of jurisprudence; and increase the quality of services” that we render to our clients.

Lee Murray Hall, 29<sup>th</sup> President  
Laurie C. Barbe, 32<sup>nd</sup> President  
Jill Cranston Rice, 35<sup>th</sup> President  
L. Jill McIntyre, 36<sup>th</sup> President  
Teresa J. Dumire, 39<sup>th</sup> President

## 1<sup>ST</sup> AND 2<sup>ND</sup> PRESIDENT - FRED ADKINS (1982-1984)

1. What is the most memorable thing you recall about your Presidential year? (This could include challenges and successes during your tenure, addressing dominant social/cultural/economic/political issues during your tenure, enhancing your leadership skills, or anything else that is memorable from that year.)

**Since I was the first president the toughest challenge initially was to convince defense lawyers that the sharing of information was a good thing, and that we needed an organization to accomplish that goal. Defense lawyers in 1982 were very reluctant to share information, plus they did not have an organization to disseminate information. The next challenge was to convince defense lawyers that DTCWV was necessary and the defense bar needed an organization to speak for it. At that time the plaintiff's bar was much more organized and controlled the narrative. One funny side note - two of the other West Virginia lawyers involved in the establishment of DTCWV were named Fred-Fred Stamp and Fred Davis. The DRI representative helping us organize, Jimmy Morris, asked jokingly if all lawyers in West Virginia were named "Fred."**

2. What value has DTCWV brought to you and your practice?

**The question for me at 81 years of age and being retired for 10 years – is how did the DTCWV assist me and the defense bar during my years of practice?**

- **The sharing of information through meeting, newsletters, seminars, etc. was invaluable.**
- **The companionship and getting to know my fellow defense lawyers on a personal level.**
- **DTCWV kept the defense bar updated on new trends in the law and made the defense bar, as a whole, better prepared to defend their clients.**
- **DTCWV gave the defense bar an organization to speak forcefully on its behalf. The plaintiff's bar no longer had the platform of advocacy all to itself.**

3. If you had the opportunity to give yourself advice when you began your career, what advice would you give?

**Always be honest, ethical, and respectful. We are all looking for the same thing "Justice."**

4. How have you seen the practice of law and DTCWV change during your career?

**Impossible to answer in a few words. I would be a dinosaur in today's law practice.**

5. What advice do you have for young lawyers (and to managing partners who make decisions about bar association memberships) today about the importance of DTCWV to their careers?

**Every defense lawyer should be a member of DTCWV!**

6. What advice do you have for future leaders of DTCWV to strengthen the organization?

**Join and be active in the organization and other bar organizations**

**3<sup>RD</sup> PRESIDENT – FREDERICK P. STAMP, JR. (1984-1985)**

1. What is the most memorable thing you recall about your Presidential year? (This could include challenges and successes during your tenure, addressing dominant social/cultural/economic/political issues during your tenure, enhancing your leadership skills, or anything else that is memorable from that year.)

**The primary challenge of this then young organization was just getting started. Fred Adkins, my immediate predecessor as President, did a great job pulling a few of us together from various firms who did defense work and in attracting others, but progress was very slow. Jimmy Morris, a Richmond, Virginia lawyer who was active in Defense Research Institute and the American College of Trial Lawyers, came to West Virginia several times to give our new Defense Trial Counsel of West Virginia some good advice which, fortunately, we followed.**

2. What value has DTCWV brought to you and your practice?

**While I was still in private practice before becoming a federal judge in 1990, I found it valuable just to get to know other lawyers in the defense field and to share ideas. As an example, the sharing of expert witnesses' names and their depositions and trial testimony, while common today in Defense Trial Counsel of West Virginia, was not as widely applied by defense lawyers, particularly those outside the Charleston and Huntington areas.**

3. If you had the opportunity to give yourself advice when you began your career, what advice would you give?

**To make it a point to talk to more experienced lawyers inside but also outside your firms both in the defense field and those who work as plaintiffs' lawyers. Most lawyers are willing to share their ideas and are, in fact, complimented that you asked them. I wish that I had done this more often when I was getting started.**

4. How have you seen the practice of law and DTCWV change during your career?

**I will not try to speak for Defense Trial Counsel of West Virginia but the obvious change to the practice of law has been in technology. I also know that many might point to the lack of civility among lawyers. As a trial judge I have been fortunate to be able to dodge that issue except when I have had to resolve some rather heated disputes among lawyers prior to and during the trial of a case.**

5. What advice do you have for young lawyers (and to managing partners who make decisions about bar association memberships) today about the importance of DTCWV to their careers?

**I will defer an answer to that question to lawyers who are now actively practicing and who are active members of Defense Trial Counsel of West Virginia and similar groups.**

6. What advice do you have for future leaders of DTCWV to strengthen the organization?

**Again, I do not deem myself qualified to properly answer that question except to say that Defense Trial Counsel of West Virginia and many similar groups seem to have made excellent strides in advancing the profession of law generally. Keep up the great work!**

#### **4<sup>TH</sup> PRESIDENT – A.L. EMCH (1985-1986)**

1. What is the most memorable thing you recall about your Presidential year? (This could include challenges and successes during your tenure, addressing dominant social/cultural/economic/political issues during your tenure, enhancing your leadership skills, or anything else that is memorable from that year.)

**I was the fourth president (third person—Fred Adkins held the office for two years as the first president) and had served (I think) as Treasurer for the first three years of the organization. Because those were DTC’s formative years, and I was very involved all the time, it is hard to distinguish things that happened in my presidential year—so anything I claim might well be from another’s year. I do remember our Annual Meeting in Martinsburg as being very nice and, I thought, successful.**

2. What value has DTCWV brought to you and your practice?

**The comradery, the friendships, the sense of communion has been invaluable to my both personally and professionally.**

3. If you had the opportunity to give yourself advice when you began your career, what advice would you give?

**The question suggests that I would do something differently, and I don’t think I would. I will say that my involvement in Bar work and in DTC was quite gratifying, and I would advise myself (and do now advise all the young lawyers out there) to devote time and energy to professional organizations—get involved in them and DO stuff. It is important and will make you a better person and a better lawyer.**

4. How have you seen the practice of law and DTCWV change during your career?

**As to the practice, the answer is obviously e, e, and more e—in communication, research, discovery, everything. I still have an email that I sent to my Firm’s Litigation Department (which I chaired at the time) in 1997 indicating that I had researched the issue, checked with the ABA and other professional organizations and with ethics experts, and determined that it was OK to communicate with clients via email! I was very prescient. As to DTC, I would say it has stabilized (we worried a lot in the early years, about everything, and felt more of a struggle I think), become “established” in a good way, has earned respect, and has nurtured many outstanding lawyers.**

5. What advice do you have for young lawyers (and to managing partners who make decisions about bar association memberships) today about the importance of DTCWV to their careers?

**See 3 above. Firms need to encourage and support (including paying dues and costs of meetings and such) young lawyers in getting involved in professional organizations like DTC. And I mean INVOLVED, not just “in.” The more you give, the more you get.**

6. What advice do you have for future leaders of DTCWV to strengthen the organization?

**It is ALL about bringing young lawyers in and getting them on Committees, in officer and board positions, involved in our work and activities, committed to what we do and who we are. It really is more about what they can give (and getting them to give it—time, talent, leadership) than it is what they can get.**

**7<sup>TH</sup> PRESIDENT – MICHAEL J. FARRELL (1988-1989)**

1. What is the most memorable thing you recall about your Presidential year? (This could include challenges and successes during your tenure, addressing dominant social/cultural/economic/political issues during your tenure, enhancing your leadership skills, or anything else that is memorable from that year.)

**The flow of defense-oriented information to members of the judiciary was my priority. I originated and edited the Defense Trial Counsel of West Virginia Handbook prior to my Presidency. During the Presidential year, the ATLA propaganda machine was fully functioning to the point that our judiciary was being flooded with pro-plaintiff articles. To reverse this imbalance, DTCWV provided a copy of the Handbook to every Circuit Court Judge and every Justice of the Supreme Court of Appeals. The DTCWV educational programs during that years were taught by out of state stars who traveled to West Virginia to stimulate creativity among our members and assist all in honing their trial and legal writing skills. DTCWV effectively educated both the Bench and the Defense Bar while providing a balanced analysis of legal issues. The Supreme Court of Appeals was the ultimate beneficiary because these educational efforts increased the ability of DTCWV's members to make a meaningful and fulsome appellate record.**

2. What value has DTCWV brought to you and your practice?

**Great value. The peer review provided through the organization made all of us better lawyers and better prepared trial advocates for our clients. DTCWV afforded every member a statewide network of defense lawyers who referred cases, collaborated in presenting the defense perspective on the State Bar CLE circuit and increased the prestige of the Defense Bar generally. DTCWV allowed me to identify individuals who could consult with the Governor's office and Legislative Leadership when new legislation was being drafted.**

3. If you had the opportunity to give yourself advice when you began your career, what advice would you give?

**Be a student of the law. Work diligently for your clients and devote a meaningful percentage of your time to benefit the public and those who cannot afford to retain you.**

4. How have you seen the practice of law and DTCWV change during your career?

**The practice of law is faster because technology emerged that facilitated and then demanded increased speed. When I entered the profession, copies were made on onion skin paper by using carbon paper. There were no cell phones, computers or faxes or copy machines. Because we defend cases, we have evolved in our capacity to defend mass and class litigations as a matter of course. The jury awards have made trial practice nearly a lost art. A Mediation has become the final frontier having replaced the Courtroom. DTCWV has appropriately evolved to keep pace with the demand of the profession.**

5. What advice do you have for young lawyers (and to managing partners who make decisions about bar association memberships) today about the importance of DTC to their careers?

**DTCWV is an excellent investment for any defense firm in the State of West Virginia. Young lawyers should get involved in committees and rise through the leadership ranks. The experience provides peer review and an opportunity to make lifelong friendships.**

6. What advice do you have for future leaders of DTCWV to strengthen the organization?

**Be bold and ambitious for the organization. Set high expectations and exceed them. Identify problems within the profession and make a sincere effort to solve them. Set an example by your discipline, diligence and dedication to DTCWV.**

**8<sup>TH</sup> PRESIDENT – CHARLES S. PICCIRILLO (1989-1990)**

1. What is the most memorable thing you recall about your Presidential year? (This could include challenges and successes during your tenure, addressing dominant social/cultural/economic/political issues during your tenure, enhancing your leadership skills, or anything else that is memorable from that year.)

**At that point in the Organization's history, we were still trying to grow and define membership, so that was a focus. I recall that I took office in Wheeling and left in Martinsburg/Charlestown, following the DTCWV Stakes at the Charlestown race track.**

2. What value has DTCWV brought to you and your practice?

**Primarily, I met a lot of good lawyers from all over the state, and exchanged ideas related to and in common practice as well as business issues. Generally, as defense lawyers, especially in the late 80s and early 90s, it wasn't common to have large numbers of defense lawyers in the same case so you were on your own a great deal. I knew and worked closely with and against many more plaintiffs' lawyers than defense lawyers in the actual practice of law so the group gave us an avenue for defense exchange and fellowship, similar to DRI.**

3. If you had the opportunity to give yourself advice when you began your career, what advice would you give?

**Too much to put down here. Best advice would be to not be afraid to make decisions, take chances and learn from your mistakes, because they will happen.**

4. How have you seen the practice of law and DTCWV change during your career?

**I think it has become more of a business than a profession. In terms of litigation, many more settlements now than before, mediation has changed the way lawyers in litigation interact with one another. Generally, I think the basic defense practice is the same, but the business side has changed greatly, with third party billing vendors, etc.**

5. What advice do you have for young lawyers (and to managing partners who make decisions about bar association memberships) today about the importance of DTCWV to their careers?

**I think these associations are great avenues to interact and keep up with the profession, which is everchanging. They can certainly assist in building and advancing one's career, though I think we have to be careful that they don't divert us too much from our practice and life outside the practice of law, because they can have that tendency with some.**

6. What advice do you have for future leaders of DTCWV to strengthen the organization?

**Stay in touch with your membership and be receptive to change. The days of being only a defense lawyer or only a plaintiff lawyer are numbered and the group needs to accommodate that change while maintaining the focus on the defense part of the bar. I think the challenge in the future will be to attract and keep good lawyers as defense lawyers because of the business challenges presented by clients and insurers.**

## **10<sup>TH</sup> PRESIDENT – JOHN C. PALMER, IV (1991-1992)**

1. What is the most memorable thing you recall about your Presidential year? (This could include challenges and successes during your tenure, addressing dominant social/cultural/economic/political issues during your tenure, enhancing your leadership skills, or anything else that is memorable from that year.)

**I was the DTC President during 1991-92. The most memorable thing that I believe that the DTC did during my term was to adopt a “Code of Civility” which was crafted by the Board of Governors, and which was adopted at our Annual Meeting in Charleston on Friday, June 19, 1992. Our Code of Civility was subsequently superseded by the Standards of Professional Conduct which were written by Justice Miller and adopted by the Supreme Court of Appeals of West Virginia, effective January 1, 1997.**

2. What value has DTCWV brought to you and your practice?

**The value that the DTCWV has brought to me and to my practice is primarily based upon the relationships which I have been able to form and maintain over the years with the many members of the Defense Trial Counsel. I have served with a number of our members as counsel for co-defendants in quite a few cases, and our ability to work together towards common goals has undoubtedly been invaluable to our clients.**

3. If you had the opportunity to give yourself advice when you began your career, what advice would you give?

**If I had the opportunity to look back and give myself advice when I began my career, I would emphasize two things: 1) don’t be afraid—to jump in the deep end of the pool, to try something new and different, to lose a trial—or for any other reason. 2) You will be amazed how lucky you will be over the course of your career—so don’t worry, just relax and enjoy it.**

4. How have you seen the practice of law and DTCWV change during your career?

**The changes in the practice of law during my career have been phenomenal, since I have been practicing for a long time. I wrote a Past President’s Post for the Fall, 2018 edition of The DTCWV Defender concerning the changes in litigation which I have experienced. Here are a few observations which I commented on in that article:**

**Let’s consider trials. We have gone from 12 member juries in civil cases to 6 member juries (1978), to “alternative dispute resolution,” to mediation (mid-1980’s), and finally to virtually no trials at all today. In the courtroom, we have gone from blackboards to whiteboards, to ELMO and computer projections. Court reporters have gone from shorthand reporting to steno masks and stenotypes, and now to real-time reporting. Over the last 50 years, our judges have somewhat multiplied, our Circuit Court judges are now elected on a non-partisan basis, and, of course, all our judges are new (with the exception of Judge Copenhaver!).**

**Our law offices have changed and are now as modern and technologically advanced as we can afford to make them. Our office word processing equipment has gone from manual typewriters (with carbon paper) to electric typewriters, to “mag card” machines, and now to computers. We have gone from snail-mail letters to faxes, and now to emails (and texts and Twitter). We have gone from secretaries to administrative assistants (early 1980’s) and have experienced the advent of paralegals (mid-1970’s), who perhaps are now legal assistants.**

**The number of law firms in West Virginia has multiplied considerably over the last half century. For example, the largest law firm in West Virginia in 1970 was Jackson, Kelly, Holt & O’Farrell which had 17 lawyers; Steptoe & Johnson’s Charleston office had 6 lawyers. Then we were governed by the West Virginia Rules of Professional Responsibility, but since 1989, by the Rules of Professional Conduct. To help foster civility among lawyers, we have had written Standards of Professional Conduct since 1997.**

**However, while there have been a great number of changes in the legal profession, I believe that the Defense Trial Counsel of West Virginia has not changed its course from our Mission Statement which was adopted in 1981 when the Defense Trial Counsel was formed, which is “[t]o bring together attorneys who defend individuals and corporations in civil litigation for the purposes of elevating the standards of West Virginia trial practice; supporting and advocating for the improvement of the adversary system of jurisprudence; and increasing the quality of services rendered by the legal profession to the citizens of West Virginia.”**

5. What advice do you have for young lawyers (and to managing partners who make decisions about bar association memberships) today about the importance of DTCWV to their careers?

**The advice I would give to young lawyers (and to managing partners who make decisions about Bar Association memberships) today about the importance of DTCWV to their careers is that you owe it to yourself, your clients and your profession to be the best lawyers that you can be. It is extremely beneficial to share ideas and ideals with other lawyers from beyond the walls of your office. The “sharing” possibilities through the Defense Trial Counsel of West Virginia are significant, and the relationships which you form with the other members of the Defense Trial Counsel will endure throughout your career.**

6. What advice do you have for future leaders of DTCWV to strengthen the organization?

**The principal advice that I would give to future leaders of the DTCWV to strengthen it is primarily to focus on increasing its membership. I suggest that perhaps the best way to accomplish this is to impress upon our current memberships how important it is to solicit new members from the other attorneys in their office, particularly associates and other new attorneys.**

**11<sup>TH</sup> PRESIDENT – JAMES F. COMPANION (1992-1993)**

1. What is the most memorable thing you recall about your Presidential year? (This could include challenges and successes during your tenure, addressing dominant social/cultural/economic/political issues during your tenure, enhancing your leadership skills, or anything else that is memorable from that year.)

**My fondest memory is not my Presidential year, but of being a founding member of DTCWV. We were hoping to come up with an answer to what the trial lawyers were doing. For years, they were the only organization purportedly speaking for all trial lawyers, but that voice was coming from the plaintiff's side. I believe that we accomplished our goal in being a countervailing voice in trial law.**

**I also have fond memories of working with Lisa Rose on our newsletter.**

2. What value has DTCWV brought to you and your practice?

**Being a member of DTCWV is something that we take for granted. It has been a great way for me to network with other like-minded attorneys, which has benefitted my practice.**

3. If you had the opportunity to give yourself advice when you began your career, what advice would you give?

**Join an organization like this early in your carrier for networking and educational advantages that you will have by attending seminars and by meeting and developing camaraderie with other like-minded attorneys.**

4. How have you seen the practice of law and DTCWV change during your career?

**We went from a group of attorneys who spoke civilly to one another to the dog-eat-dog relationships that we have now. We have lost something by just emailing and texting each other rather than picking up the phone and talking. The use of technology as our main form of communication has removed the personal interactions that promote civility in the profession.**

5. What advice do you have for young lawyers (and to managing partners who make decisions about bar association memberships) today about the importance of DTCWV to their careers?

**Join an organization like DTCWV as soon as you can in your career.**

6. What advice do you have for future leaders of DTCWV to strengthen the organization?

**Learn how to delegate and work closely with your team of officers.**

## **12<sup>TH</sup> PRESIDENT – ELISABETH ROSE (1993-1994)**

1. What is the most memorable thing you recall about your Presidential year? (This could include challenges and successes during your tenure, addressing dominant social/cultural/economic/political issues during your tenure, enhancing your leadership skills, or anything else that is memorable from that year.)

**I like to think that, during my presidency, we enhanced our “brand” by making sure we had a meaningful monthly newsletter published (at least I think it was monthly!). I remember slaving over my article for each one, only to have His Lordship Marc Williams hack each to death with his so-called editing!!**

2. What value has DTCWV brought to you and your practice?

**Since I am retired, I can only speak to this in retrospect. To me, the primary importance of our organization was the networking resource. It was great being able to reach out to members in other jurisdictions to obtain information about issues, Courts, demographics, etc.**

3. If you had the opportunity to give yourself advice when you began your career, what advice would you give?

**I would tell myself to keep in mind that most other lawyers have doubts about their abilities and effectiveness. I would remind myself to follow my instincts and judgments. I would encourage me to reach out for help and advice. I would tell myself not to let Marc edit my articles.**

4. How have you seen the practice of law and DTCWV change during your career?

**During my career I saw the practice of law change dramatically from a service calling to a business. Competition created cutthroat tactics and eroded collegiality. The quest for the almighty billable hour leached enjoyment from practice. Insurance companies treated the defense attorneys like marionette puppets. Same with in-house counsel. As far as Defense Counsel was concerned, I thought it rose to as many challenges as it was able to do, given the diversity of interests of the members.**

5. What advice do you have for young lawyers (and to managing partners who make decisions about bar association memberships) today about the importance of DTCWV to their careers?

**Any young lawyer planning to practice civil defense work would be well advised to join this organization. As I noted above, the networking resources are invaluable.**

6. What advice do you have for future leaders of DTCWV to strengthen the organization?

**From my out-of-the-loop perspective, I think this organization is strong and vital. My unnecessary advice is to beat the bushes for young members.**

## **14<sup>TH</sup> PRESIDENT – MARC E. WILLIAMS (1995-1996)**

1. What is the most memorable thing you recall about your Presidential year? (This could include challenges and successes during your tenure, addressing dominant social/cultural/economic/political issues during your tenure, enhancing your leadership skills, or anything else that is memorable from that year.)

**The thing I remember most about my year as President (1995-96) was the Annual Meeting that we held in Martinsburg. Professor Frank Cleckley was serving on the Supreme Court of Appeals at the time and we came up with the idea of having him speak at the Annual Meeting. I visited him in his chambers at the Capitol and asked if he would be willing to speak to our group. Not only was he willing to speak, he suggested that he give an extended lecture on Evidence for our attendees. Needless to say, we were thrilled. We had one of the largest turnouts in our history for that meeting and it was only because of Professor Cleckley's presentation. He lectured on evidentiary issues for trial lawyers for over four hours. It was fabulous.**

2. What value has DTCWV brought to you and your practice?

**DTC taught me about leadership and the importance of relationships with my fellow lawyers. It also taught me about the importance of taking a stand. The Civil Justice Report in 2003 was a groundbreaking statement by a group of lawyers. It garnered a lot of attention (not all of it positive), but it started the process of reform that has made our judicial system stronger. It never would have been possible to see those reforms come about without the willingness of the organization to stand up and say that the system needed a reset.**

3. If you had the opportunity to give yourself advice when you began your career, what advice would you give?

**You'll learn more from your mistakes than from your successes, but remember that neither will define you.**

4. How have you seen the practice of law and DTCWV change during your career?

**The technological changes have been the most striking. I started when faxing was new and progressed through Westlaw, overnight mail, voicemail, e-mail, mobile phones and now video depositions, hearings, meetings and trials. But despite this, we still have clients and litigation and discovery and trials and appeals and settlements.**

5. What advice do you have for young lawyers (and to managing partners who make decisions about bar association memberships) today about the importance of DTCWV to their careers?

**You're going to learn not only how to be a better lawyer, partner and colleague, but you'll also develop relationships with friends and colleagues that will enrich your life in so many ways. And keep in mind that these relationships will benefit you professionally with referrals of work. The best kept secret of membership in DTC is that we share work with**

**each other. In some ways we are all competitors, but in reality, we are all helping each other get along and flourish. Active participation in this organization and national organizations like DRI will be the key to your growth as a lawyer. If you want to be better at what you do, you need to be a member of DTC.**

6. What advice do you have for future leaders of DTCWV to strengthen the organization?

**The strength of the organization has always flowed from the commitment of the firms in the state to the success of DTC. That was true 40 years ago when the “Fred’s” agreed to start the organization. Firms made commitments to engage their lawyers in the programs and activities of DTC. Over the years the number of firms in the state has shrunk because of mergers, but in many ways that makes the commitment to the success of DTC more manageable. As firms mature and lawyers transition into retirement with younger partners taking over leadership positions, it is more important than ever that we build strong ties between the firms and DTC.**

**15<sup>TH</sup> PRESIDENT – STEPHEN R. CRISLIP (1996-1997)**

1. What is the most memorable thing you recall about your Presidential year? (This could include challenges and successes during your tenure, addressing dominant social/cultural/economic/political issues during your tenure, enhancing your leadership skills, or anything else that is memorable from that year.)

**I was the 15<sup>th</sup> President (1996-97) behind Marc Williams, who advised me to use the position as “Bully Pulpit.” However, it was a quiet year with good numbers, good finances, and no need to do so that year.**

2. What value has DTCWV brought to you and your practice?

**Teke Shaffer asked Al Emch and me who could go to DTC planning meeting in Parkersburg. I had depositions and Al attended. I was in the original membership and attended the First Annual Meeting at Glade Springs. As a result, I was able to meet and know all members from then on.**

3. If you had the opportunity to give yourself advice when you began your career, what advice would you give?

**Get involved early and stay involved to improve your connections.**

4. How have you seen the practice of law and DTCWV change during your career?

**No copiers, computers or faxes to now remote practice everything.**

5. What advice do you have for young lawyers (and to managing partners who make decisions about bar association memberships) today about the importance of DTC to their careers?

**Most management think that it is a waste of time and money to be involved with your competition in your home state. What they miss is that litigation work usually comes by referrals and a good reputation.**

6. What advice do you have for future leaders of DTCWV to strengthen the organization?

**You must involve youngest defense lawyers each year and give them a role to build from (and to keep their firms happy). Organizations continue to whither and new blood is job one.**

## 16<sup>TH</sup> PRESIDENT – MICHAEL BONASSO (1997-1998)

1. What is the most memorable thing you recall about your Presidential year? (This could include challenges and successes during your tenure, addressing dominant social/cultural/economic/political issues during your tenure, enhancing your leadership skills, or anything else that is memorable from that year.)
  - a. **It's been 25 years since I was president, so I have forgotten a lot. For me the most memorable aspect was the outstanding work of the Board itself. The DTCWV has consistently filled the Board with diligent, creative and intelligent lawyers.**
  - b. **I am also often reminded of our dear, departed friend and colleague, Chip Lavender (he passed away a few years after he was President). He was a friend and a leader during his entire time on the Board, in the officer rotation, and even as Past President.**
2. What value has DTCWV brought to you and your practice?
  - a. **Being active on the Board and the officer rotation really helped to get to know many lawyers (both defense and plaintiffs' counsel) around the state with whom I had not previously interacted. And, it helped me to appreciate the high caliber of both lawyers and judges around the State of WV in parts of the state which were not so familiar to me.**
  - b. **Also – and this was something I did not expect – my time on the Board and in the leadership actually elevated my profile among WV judges and lawyers who may not have been previously familiar with me.**
  - c. **Along the lines of the first two points, and as a testament to the respect the DTCWV commands, I noted that being President or Past President of the organization brought with it a measure of credibility and respect among other lawyers, both in-state and out-of-state lawyers. It was very pleasing to see that others think highly of this organization.**
3. If you had the opportunity to give yourself advice when you began your career, what advice would you give?
  - a. **Competence, character, work ethic.**
  - b. **To the degree you can do so without going too far (that line is drawn differently for each of us), take your clients' causes and cases somewhat personally.**
    - i. **When you care about what is best for the client, it makes you more loyal, more competent.**
    - ii. **And, clients can tell when you care about them; they know.**
4. How have you seen the practice of law and DTCWV change during your career?
  - a. **The growing lack of civility in the general litigation world has been frustrating to me. The number of times that I see legal arguments (both orally and in writing) wrapped up in accusatory language and ad hominem attacks upon the opposing counsel has been disappointing. Actually, I think it reflects poorly on counsel for both sides.**

- b. I believe the DTCWV has done a good job of staying current and staying relevant. It speaks well of the leadership over the past 25 years.**
  
- 5. What advice do you have for young lawyers (and to managing partners who make decisions about bar association memberships) today about the importance of DTCWV to their careers?
  - a. First, develop a plan for your development as a lawyer and for the development of client relationships. Lawyering has become far more of a business than in earlier times. Without a plan, we will falter.**
  - b. See the DTCWV as a bridge to build and develop friendships and relationships among other WV defense counsel. Without the DTCWV, I would likely never have had the opportunity to develop so many connections – at least within WV.**
  - c. To me, the real benefit to be received from this organization comes from the time and effort spent on committees, boards and officer rotation. It may not bring cases directly to you, but it will help build relationships and reputation among other skilled and respected members of the defense members of the bar.**
  - d. And, I have actually learned a ton sitting in meetings and listening to other defense lawyers discuss the law (both substantive and procedural).**
    - i. I am always reminded by this group that there much more out there that I do not know than what I do know.**
  
- 6. What advice do you have for future leaders of DTCWV to strengthen the organization?
  - a. The competition has increased greatly on the defense side of the bar (I know it has always been fierce on the plaintiffs' side). So, it takes the investment of time and deliberation to figure out how defense lawyers can better serve their clients and meet their needs, beyond just the “present legal case.”**
  - b. Keep your eye on what is important to the clients out there, find ways to communicate those issues to the members, and work to educate the members on how to meet those needs.**

**18<sup>TH</sup> PRESIDENT – H.G. SHAFFER, III (1999-2000)**

1. What is the most memorable thing you recall about your Presidential year? (This could include challenges and successes during your tenure, addressing dominant social/cultural/economic/political issues during your tenure, enhancing your leadership skills, or anything else that is memorable from that year.)

**I was President about 22 years ago, so my recollections have faded over the years. However, the most memorable aspect of my presidency was the annual meeting. As I recall it was a great success due to the quality of the CLE speakers.**

2. What value has DTCWV brought to you and your practice?

**WVDTC has been very valuable to my firm. The networking opportunities and the referral of work when conflicts have arisen has been very profitable for our firm. It is also great to be able to pick up the phone and talk to another lawyer who has had similar experience with the same type of case**

3. If you had the opportunity to give yourself advice when you began your career, what advice would you give?

**If I had the chance to practice start the practice of law all over again I would keep a diary or a log of all of the interesting and funny things that that I have experienced or observed.**

4. How have you seen the practice of law and DTCWV change during your career?

**By far the biggest change in the practice of law the practice of law has been the advent of computers and the Internet. When I started practice we still had stacks of carbon paper. Final drafts were reached in maybe two rewrites. Now, with the Internet and word processing, lawyers bat documents back-and-forth endlessly.**

5. What advice do you have for young lawyers (and to managing partners who make decisions about bar association memberships) today about the importance of DTC to their careers?

**Membership in the defense bar is vital to the health and success of both the law firm and the individual lawyers. Networking and connections are very important.**

6. What advice do you have for future leaders of DTCWV to strengthen the organization?

**It is very important for the defense bar leaders to constantly seek out ways to add value to membership. This is the key to the health of the organization.**

**19<sup>TH</sup> PRESIDENT – JAMES D. LAMP (2000-2001)**

1. What is the most memorable thing you recall about your Presidential year? (This could include challenges and successes during your tenure, addressing dominant social/cultural/economic/political issues during your tenure, enhancing your leadership skills, or anything else that is memorable from that year.)

**I remember most the privilege of working with Judge Haden, a jurist I greatly admired and respected, on the annual meeting my year, a meeting that featured Judge Haden and several other federal judges as presenters.**

2. What value has DTCWV brought to you and your practice?

**The value of DTCWV while I was active was the introduction to me of many well-respected colleagues and the ability to network with them.**

3. If you had the opportunity to give yourself advice when you began your career, what advice would you give?

**Embrace technology.**

4. How have you seen the practice of law and DTCWV change during your career?

**The practice has become less relational and more technology driven.**

5. What advice do you have for young lawyers (and to managing partners who make decisions about bar association memberships) today about the importance of DTC to their careers?

**To young lawyers particularly I say JOIN and to managing partners I say, Pay For It, there is great benefit, the newsletter and articles therein are worth the price alone.**

6. What advice do you have for future leaders of DTCWV to strengthen the organization?

**I don't feel well placed to offer advice to future leaders other than to stay the course.**

**20<sup>TH</sup> PRESIDENT – JEFFREY R. MILLER (2001-2002)**

1. What is the most memorable thing you recall about your Presidential year? (This could include challenges and successes during your tenure, addressing dominant social/cultural/economic/political issues during your tenure, enhancing your leadership skills, or anything else that is memorable from that year.)

**I was privileged to be the President of the DTCWV during its 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year. I recall we had a grand celebration at our Annual Meeting that year, and all but one of the previous 19 Presidents were in attendance. It was so great to be able to honor those past leaders.**

2. What value has DTCWV brought to you and your practice?

**The DTCWV benefited my practice in many ways. In particular, the knowledge I gained from the CLE presentations at each Annual Meeting was always beneficial. In addition, the contacts I made with other defense attorneys around the State led to several referrals for matters in my area.**

3. If you had the opportunity to give yourself advice when you began your career, what advice would you give?

**I would tell myself to speak less, listen more, and encourage other attorneys to be more civil.**

4. How have you seen the practice of law and DTCWV change during your career?

**Change is inevitable, so no matter when you begin your practice of law, you are going to see change occur over the course of your career. My career was no different. Between 1985 and 2020 (the years that I practiced law), there were numerous changes that I encountered. Obviously, the slow but steady progression of the importance of computers stands out. But I also saw an increase in the lack of civility amongst other attorneys with whom I worked both with and against. That was disheartening. I often wish I had done more to better promote civility within the Bar.**

5. What advice do you have for young lawyers (and to managing partners who make decisions about bar association memberships) today about the importance of DTC to their careers?

**I can say with absolute conviction that one of the smartest decisions I ever made was to join the DTCWV. And I would wholeheartedly recommend that every young defense lawyer join the DTCWV as quickly as possible. As the Managing Partner in my firm, I always made sure that all of our attorneys who did defense work joined the DTCWV, and I was more than happy to have our firm pay for their annual membership. To other Managing Partners, I would say that signing all of your defense attorney associates up for the DTCWV is the smartest investment you can make.**

6. What advice do you have for future leaders of DTCWV to strengthen the organization?

**I would simply say to keep doing what you are doing. The DTCWV appears to be as healthy as it has ever been. I attribute that to the significant number of wise leaders who have guided the organization these past years. I applaud their efforts and congratulate the DTCWV on being the outstanding organization it is today.**

**21<sup>ST</sup> PRESIDENT – W. HENRY JERNIGAN, JR. (2002-2003)**

1. What is the most memorable thing you recall about your Presidential year? (This could include challenges and successes during your tenure, addressing dominant social/cultural/economic/political issues during your tenure, enhancing your leadership skills, or anything else that is memorable from that year.)

**In terms of notable events during my tenure as president, the DTC that year undertook a survey of attitudes regarding the WV Supreme Court. The survey included individuals within the business community, the bar and members of the trial courts. The results were reduced to a written report that was publicized throughout the State. I like to think that it began the process of bringing the Court back into the judicial mainstream.**

**I was present at the inception of the DTC and have seen it grow in stature and influence over the course of its existence.**

**22<sup>ND</sup> PRESIDENT – WILLIAM E. GALEOTA – (2003-2004)**

1. What is the most memorable thing you recall about your Presidential year? (This could include challenges and successes during your tenure, addressing dominant social/cultural/economic/political issues during your tenure, enhancing your leadership skills, or anything else that is memorable from that year.)

**My best memories are of (1) The evolution of DTCWV from a largely social/fraternal organization, in its earlier years, to an active advocacy organization; and (2) The recruitment and hiring of Peggy Schultz as Executive Director. The advocacy evolution began in the years before my Presidency, but culminated that year with the DTCWV's Civil Justice survey and its publication to support West Virginia's tort reform initiatives at that time. Finding and hiring Peggy proved to be one of the best-timed coincidences in our history, as she drove the rollout and promotion of the Civil Justice survey report around the State and beyond. When DRI recognized and honored DTCWV for that project, it was elevated to national recognition as "the Voice of the Civil Defense Bar in West Virginia."**

2. What value has DTCWV brought to you and your practice?

**While I did not recognize it early on, and had to be encouraged by others in my firm to get involved before I really understood for myself, I soon realized the value of professional connections and camaraderie specific to the defense practice.**

3. If you had the opportunity to give yourself advice when you began your career, what advice would you give?

**Join DTCWV early on; take an active, contributing role; and exploit the mutually supportive benefits it offers to defense lawyers, their firms, their clients and the civil justice system. You'll be glad you did.**

4. How have you seen the practice of law and DTCWV change during your career?

**Immensely, and far too extensively to recount in a short narrative, pointing to another important benefit to membership in DTCWV. When I started practicing, CLE was not mandatory, there were no cell phones, and lawyers yet had no personal computers. Social and cultural changes have been sweeping and Change is inevitable, and managing it is always a challenge, so the connections and resources made available through DTCWV are invaluable.**

5. What advice do you have for young lawyers (and to managing partners who make decisions about bar association memberships) today about the importance of DTCWV to their careers?

**It's indispensable, and it should be at least encouraged, if not required. Any lawyer or firm that doesn't recognize and exploit the opportunities it provides, is missing out.**

6. What advice do you have for future leaders of DTCWV to strengthen the organization?

**(1) Recognize the value of preserving and nurturing the legacy for those that come after us, the same way it is in law firms and other professional organizations,; and (2) Promote the “what’s in it for you” value, so that we continue to attract and retain the best and brightest from the defense bar.**

**23<sup>RD</sup> PRESIDENT – THOMAS E. SCARR (2004-2005)**

1. What is the most memorable thing you recall about your Presidential year? (This could include challenges and successes during your tenure, addressing dominant social/cultural/economic/political issues during your tenure, enhancing your leadership skills, or anything else that is memorable from that year.)

**I recall that just before and during my presidential year, DTCWV went through some significant changes in which I was involved. We hired a new Executive Director, Peggy Schultz, who has continued to perform an excellent job and is responsible in a significant way for DTCWV success over the years. We published the Civil Justice Report in response to which we received significant positive and some negative response. We received a national award for the Report and work surrounding it. Certainly, my experience as a DTCWV Board Member, Officer and President were of enormous help in enhancing my legal practice and developing my leadership and communications skills, all of which played a significant role in my subsequent tenure as President of the WV State Bar.**

2. What value has DTCWV brought to you and your practice?

**Significant value to my personal and professional development, improvement in my litigation and trial skills, exposure to and networking with members of the WV defense bar, client development opportunities, and advancement of my professional reputation.**

3. If you had the opportunity to give yourself advice when you began your career, what advice would you give?

**Read local newspapers, either paper or electronic copies, daily since it is essential to know what is going on in the local business, legal and social communities. Join professional organizations within at least the first 3 or 4 years of practice, attend programs and over time participate as much as possible and try to play a leadership role if at all possible. Like everything else, the more you put in, the more you will get out of the opportunity**

**Be professional and nice and kind to everyone you meet and deal with every day, including the lawyers and staff you work with, opposing counsel and their staff, judges and members of the court system. Do not respond to difficult, unpleasant and confrontational people in kind. Try to rise above that whenever possible. Be honest and trustworthy at all times. Value your reputation. It means more than anything else.**

4. How have you seen the practice of law and DTCWV change during your career?

**Too many ways to mention, but, in particular, the pace of practice has continued to increase, often times leaving little time to think, plan, strategize and enjoy.**

**DTCWV has continued to perform an essential service to the defense bar and the bar and judicial system in general. I am very proud to have been a member, officer and President. I met and worked with some great lawyers and people.**

5. What advice do you have for young lawyers (and to managing partners who make decisions about bar association memberships) today about the importance of DTCWV to their careers?

**DTCWV is more than worth both the individual membership and time. Law firms should continue to support membership and active participation in the organization. It is and can be an essential part of lawyers' development and will benefit the lawyer and law firm in numerous, at times immeasurable, ways.**

6. What advice do you have for future leaders of DTCWV to strengthen the organization?

**Continue work of the past, but also focus on changes in the practice of law and continue to support members of the defense. Continue to support and maintain top notch Executive Director, continue the (litigation, trial, organizational, leadership and marketing) skill development programs conducted in the past and consider new ways of offering such programs, continue networking and client development opportunities.**

**24<sup>TH</sup> PRESIDENT – NEVA G. LUSK (2005-2006)**

1. What is the most memorable thing you recall about your Presidential year? (This could include challenges and successes during your tenure, addressing dominant social/cultural/economic/political issues during your tenure, enhancing your leadership skills, or anything else that is memorable from that year.)

**My most vivid recollection during my leadership term was the retention of Peggy. Henry Jernigan may have been president and I was an officer. It appeared that our long-time Executive Director needed to move on. Change is hard, but we made the decision that the organization had to make a change for the organization's health. We needed someone who would be enthusiastic and focus on us. So, I suggested that we talk with Peggy Schultz, who I thought would be a perfect fit. And, we hired that spitfire Peggy Schultz. Best decision ever.**

3. If you had the opportunity to give yourself advice when you began your career, what advice would you give?

**In terms of advice, do not be afraid to tout your own accomplishments. Perhaps because of my age and gender, or perhaps because of my personality, I did not promote myself. Very late in my career, I recognized that people who constantly have their hands in the air, citing their accomplishments or volunteering, have a significant advantage because their accomplishments are more widely known. I had it to do over again, I would have forced myself to publish my accomplishments - within my firm and outside my firm.**

5. What advice do you have for young lawyers (and to managing partners who make decisions about bar association memberships) today about the importance of DTCWV to their careers?

**If you want your firm to support your involvement with DTC, be active and take a leadership role within a committee or project, and eventually the Board. In addition, track any referrals and keep your firm advised of referrals that you receive as a result of DTC.**

**25<sup>TH</sup> PRESIDENT – MICHAEL M. FISHER (2006-2007)**

1. What is the most memorable thing you recall about your Presidential year? (This could include challenges and successes during your tenure, addressing dominant social/cultural/economic/political issues during your tenure, enhancing your leadership skills, or anything else that is memorable from that year.)

**My presidential year was the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the DTCWV and we planned a number of unique and special activities throughout the year to celebrate this anniversary. The biggest activity and risk involved scheduling the annual meeting out of state for the first time. We ultimately decided upon the Marriott Grand Dune Resort in Myrtle Beach as the venue for the meeting. We were unsure if our members would actually attend the meeting at an out of state location and knew there was a risk that an unsuccessful meeting could be financially detrimental to the organization. Fortunately, attendance was very good, as many attorneys and their families attended and enjoyed the meeting immensely. Overall, the meeting was a great success (financially, educationally, socially, and otherwise) and, as a result, the organization has continued a tradition of scheduling annual meetings in Myrtle Beach every few years.**

2. What value has DTCWV brought to you and your practice?

**DTCWV has played an important role in my career through excellent continuing legal education and speaking opportunities, the development of professional and personal relationships, referrals of legal work, and networking with lawyers throughout the state and nationally through its connections with DRI.**

3. If you had the opportunity to give yourself advice when you began your career, what advice would you give?

**I would have advised my younger self to become an expert in all things involving technology. Quite frankly, I did not fully anticipate that technology would so utterly invade and control all facets of the practice of law. While I have kept myself “competent enough”, I often find myself relying upon others more than I would like.**

4. How have you seen the practice of law and DTCWV change during your career?

**Again, the practice of law has become dominated by technology. When I first started practicing, there were no cell phones, no computers on attorney desks, no networks, no internet, no email or other messaging systems, and no social media. Fax machines were relatively new and really did not work that well. Secretaries had limited word processing equipment capabilities. As a young associate attorney, I can actually recall looking at older files in the office that contained carbon copies of correspondence and pleadings. While technology has made certain areas of the practice of law more efficient, it has had very negative influences on the practice as well. Clients, attorneys, courts, and others expect and demand immediate access to attorneys and immediate attention, responses, advice, information, answers, and action 24/7. The practice of law has become less of an art and more of a commodity. Because of my experience, I typically can handle the immediate demands of others effectively. However, I feel very concerned and sorry**

**for younger lawyers who are not given the necessary time to just think and analyze. Finally, the practice of law has lost its local and personal nature to a great extent. When I began practicing, most clients were either local or had local representatives who had worked with their chosen lawyers and law firms for decades. There was a great sense of trust and a truly team approach. Over the years, clients have become more regional and national, client representatives routinely turnover, and client relationships have become less personal and sometimes even somewhat adversarial.**

5. What advice do you have for young lawyers (and to managing partners who make decisions about bar association memberships) today about the importance of DTCWV to their careers?

**DTCWV provides excellent opportunities for learning about the law and important issues, to develop a lawyer's reputation, for public speaking, to positively shape the law, for referrals of work, to develop contacts and relationships which can provide benefits in numerous ways, to create enthusiasm for the profession and its betterment, to develop life-long friends and business acquaintances, and to have a little fun along the way.**

6. What advice do you have for future leaders of DTCWV to strengthen the organization?

**Future leaders should set at least one major goal and several minor ones to achieve during their tenure. They should also create ways of keeping older, experienced attorneys involved in the organization and attracting younger lawyers to take advantage of the many benefits that DTCWV can provide to enhance their careers throughout the years.**

**26<sup>TH</sup> PRESIDENT – ROBERT L. MASSIE (2007-2008)**

1. What is the most memorable thing you recall about your Presidential year? (This could include challenges and successes during your tenure, addressing dominant social/cultural/economic/political issues during your tenure, enhancing your leadership skills, or anything else that is memorable from that year.)

**Learning that big hats don't necessarily translate to wonderful entertainment.**

2. What value has DTCWV brought to you and your practice?

**It has given me the opportunity to interact with lawyers across the state. It has given me a fantastic opportunity to meet great lawyers and increase my personal, social and professional network.**

3. If you had the opportunity to give yourself advice when you began your career, what advice would you give?

**Don't sacrifice your personal health and well-being for work.**

4. How have you seen the practice of law and DTCWV change during your career?

**DTC has been instrumental in giving me a voice. When I started my career the playing field was definitely slanted toward the plaintiff's bar. This organization gave me the opportunity to have input into correcting those biases.**

5. What advice do you have for young lawyers (and to managing partners who make decisions about bar association memberships) today about the importance of DTCWV to their careers?

**There is no substitute for face-to-face interaction with more senior, experienced, lawyers. Get to know the leaders in the bar, and you will benefit for the rest of your career.**

6. What advice do you have for future leaders of DTCWV to strengthen the organization?

**Continue to evaluate how to provide value to the members in an ever-changing world. And continue to not only provide top quality CLE, but a voice for the defense bar in West Virginia.**

**27<sup>TH</sup> PRESIDENT – THOMAS J. HURNEY, JR. (2008-2009)**

1. What is the most memorable thing you recall about your Presidential year? (This could include challenges and successes during your tenure, addressing dominant social/cultural/economic/political issues during your tenure, enhancing your leadership skills, or anything else that is memorable from that year.)

**I was President in 2008-09 and we did some neat stuff. Judicial reform was a hot topic. DTCWV supported selection of judges by broad based, ABA style panels. I appeared before a Joint Interim Session of the West Virginia House and Senate Judiciary Committees on Judicial Selection. Governor Manchin also established an Independent Commission on Judicial Reform. I appeared for DTCWV at the public hearing on Judicial Selection in Morgantown. DTCWV was the only group that supported judicial selection. Justice Sandra Day O'Connor was Co-Chair of the Commission and I got to briefly chat with her about my grandmother, who was a lawyer. Marc Williams became President of DRI the same year and we presented him with an award at the DRI Annual meeting in New Orleans. I got to speak at the Association for Justice Annual Meeting in Charleston on "Issues Facing the West Virginia Bar." In 2008, we included programming for paralegals at the DTCWV Annual Meeting at Glade, and we also started a women lawyers group. All in all, a good year.**

2. What value has DTCWV brought to you and your practice?

**I treasure the friendships I made as a result of my involvement in DTCWV. DTCWV relationships have made me a better lawyer and as a bonus, brought some of them to my firm, and brought in some referral work.**

3. If you had the opportunity to give yourself advice when you began your career, what advice would you give?

**Learn from others, but figure out what works for you and stick to it. Keep track of your trials, major wins, and business you brought in and how you got it.**

4. How have you seen the practice of law and DTCWV change during your career?

**The practice of law has become much more focused on the business side than on the professional or collegiality side over the years. Thankfully, despite increased competition between firms, DTCWV has remained a constant as a place of collegiality and friendship, which I treasure.**

5. What advice do you have for young lawyers (and to managing partners who make decisions about bar association memberships) today about the importance of DTCWV to their careers?

**I know law is a business (see #4 above) but it remains a noble profession. Active membership in the Bar and groups like DTCWV fosters professionalism and collegiality which are the joyous parts of practicing law. These relationships will make you a better lawyer and leader and provide some joy.**

6. What advice do you have for future leaders of DTCWV to strengthen the organization?

**Continue to focus on providing value to members and market it. Experts, jury verdict info, boot camps, and case summaries all provide value. Continue to make the case that active membership provides leadership opportunities and builds relationships. These things make for happier lawyers and will result in the referral of business. Continue to expand providing information via social media, particularly member recognition. Consider a DTCWV Podcast.**

**28<sup>TH</sup> PRESIDENT – DAVID L. WYANT (2009-2010)**

1. What is the most memorable thing you recall about your Presidential year? (This could include challenges and successes during your tenure, addressing dominant social/cultural/economic/political issues during your tenure, enhancing your leadership skills, or anything else that is memorable from that year.)

**During my year as president, we were working on establishing and strengthening several programs. We were attempting to expand the relationship between our organization and law school students at WVU. We also were beginning discussion of appointing a DTCWV representative to interact with the West Virginia Legislature on matters of concern to our members and organization. Additionally, and probably most importantly, we were establishing the substantive law committees.**

2. What value has DTCWV brought to you and your practice?

**DTCWV opened interaction with other similar type practitioners and assisted in identifying and coordinating pending litigation issues.**

3. If you had the opportunity to give yourself advice when you began your career, what advice would you give?

**Be organized, be thorough and be clear.**

4. How have you seen the practice of law and DTCWV change during your career?

**At the start of practice of law, when you received a new case, you went to the library, took depositions, prepared blowups and went to trial. Now when you receive a new case, you perform online research, perform online social media evaluation of parties, take depositions, prepare electronic exhibits and go to mediation.**

5. What advice do you have for young lawyers (and to managing partners who make decisions about bar association memberships) today about the importance of DTCWV to their careers?

**DTCWV provides important networking among defense lawyers.**

## **29<sup>TH</sup> PRESIDENT – LEE MURRAY HALL (2010-2011)**

1. What is the most memorable thing you recall about your Presidential year? (This could include challenges and successes during your tenure, addressing dominant social/cultural/economic/political issues during your tenure, enhancing your leadership skills, or anything else that is memorable from that year.)

**I recall an evening in January 2011, when I received a call advising that the Trial Lawyers planned to testify the following morning in opposition to a bill authorizing the formation of Intermediate Appellate Court. This raised several issues: Did DTC have a position on the formation of an IAC? Should it openly advocate for the bill? What was DTC's role, as a defense organization, and would our members want us to testify in support of it, particularly when we knew that the WVSCOA did not support it? We had never appeared or testified before the Legislature, or even before a committee, at least in the Board's institutional memory.**

**Throughout the evening, through calls with the Executive Committee and the Board, we decided that we should take a position. We developed talking points, circulated them for consensus and appeared the following morning to address the importance of an IAC for the State. Thereafter, we researched the judicial system of every other state, compared the demographics and congressional representation of states with no intermediate appellate court and no right of appeal, and wrote to the legislators with our findings. As we know, the IAC effort was not successful in 2010-2011, but we established the groundwork for having a voice within the legislative body, where our mission supported doing so.**

**At the following Board Meeting, we asked ourselves some hard hitting questions, such as how and why did this catch us so off guard? Our focus had been entirely internal: growing our membership, developing our substantive committees, and giving value to our members. We decided that our value proposition required us to focus both internally and externally. We hired a lobbyist to keep us abreast of legislative developments. We also established a committee of current and former board members to evaluate whether and how to respond to legislative initiatives that could affect our clients or our practices.**

**The Legislative Committee would be instrumental in the many IAC initiatives that followed, as well as taxation and other issues that impact our profession, the administration of justice and, when consistent with our Mission Statement, our clients.**

2. What value has DTCWV brought to you and your practice?

**Relationships, referrals, and subject matter expertise. My involvement in DTC marked my transition from a lawyer with a job to a professional with a career as an advocate for my clients, my firm, my state and myself. Like many of our members, I am now involved in national organizations and even serve on the board of the FDCC, which I love. But my practice is now and has always been built on my DTC relationships.**

3. If you had the opportunity to give yourself advice when you began your career, what advice would you give?
  - a. **Stay open to learning new practice areas. Think about the medical malpractice, bad faith, and even deliberate intent attorneys whose practices disappeared or reduced significantly during tort reform.**
  - b. **Learn to be early. Early to work, early on deadlines, early to every Zoom meeting. Just be early.**
  - c. **Develop and maintain hobbies and friends outside the practice of law.**
4. How have you seen the practice of law and DTCWV change during your career?
  - a. **Technology and 24-hour availability, which make vacations, downtime, and even a family dinner difficult.**
  - b. **The waning interest in and expectation of partnership at law firms. This may be related to my first point.**
5. What advice do you have for young lawyers (and to managing partners who make decisions about bar association memberships) today about the importance of DTCWV to their careers?

**Show me a successful civil defense attorney in West Virginia who has never been active in DTC.**

**DTC is where you form the basis for sharing ideas on trial tactics, expert witnesses, and firm management issues. It is where you learn about new cases and emerging trends in the law. It is where you develop relationships that can lead to case referrals or information about a venue or opposing counsel. It can be where you develop reputation for expertise within a practice area by leading a committee. It can give you your first speaking or writing opportunity.**

6. What advice do you have for future leaders of DTCWV to strengthen the organization?

**Stay abreast of local, state, national, and even international developments outside the organization. Use the resources that DRI provides, but also keep your finger on the pulse of developments in the profession through the ABA, Law 360, other national defense organizations, and discussions with attorneys outside of our area. We owe it to our members to watch for national trends and inform them of the potential impact on our practices, firms and clients.**

**30<sup>TH</sup> PRESIDENT – GERARD R. STOWERS (2011-2012)**

1. What is the most memorable thing you recall about your Presidential year? (This could include challenges and successes during your tenure, addressing dominant social/cultural/economic/political issues during your tenure, enhancing your leadership skills, or anything else that is memorable from that year.)

**We had our 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting for the first time at the Greenbrier. I am glad to see us returning for the 40<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting. We made money on our meeting and the Greenbrier was very accommodating. During my tenure we retained our first lobbyist and I see that this political endeavor has continued. Our membership numbers continued to expand, surpassing the trial lawyers. It was a good year looking back on it.**

2. What value has DTCWV brought to you and your practice?

**Referrals and good CLE. I have attended most of the annual meetings over the years and picked up so many good ideas which I readily incorporated into my practice at the time. The relationships with other members were great and often led to referrals and good associations.**

3. If you had the opportunity to give yourself advice when you began your career, what advice would you give?

**I have no regrets. I worked and practiced hard. I billed many hours. I took care of my clients. I had a good career. I retired at the end of 2018 and withdrew from the BR partnership. I served in an Of Counsel position with the firm until Dec. 31, 2021. I am now inactive with the State Bar and the practice of law. I enjoy my retirement and it was well timed. I would tell others that retirement should be a personal choice but don't unnecessarily postpone too long.**

4. How have you seen the practice of law and DTCWV change during your career?

**Obviously, I saw the rise of incivility (or the decline of civility) in the practice. The early days of cordiality gradually disappeared. I also saw an increase in the number of female attorneys and greater diversity than when I started practicing in 1976. Somewhere along the timeline, technology entered our practices and paper began to disappear. E-filings were implemented. A paperless practice was a significant move. Many postponed their acceptance of these technologies. Today technology in our practices is almost universal. Technology changed the practice and the velocity of the practice.**

5. What advice do you have for young lawyers (and to managing partners who make decisions about bar association memberships) today about the importance of DTCWV to their careers?

**Keep up the good work. Set your goals and work toward those goals. Strive for civility and excellence in your practice. Keep building the relationships. The benefits will pay off. Don't disregard or overlook the inevitable political challenges that will no doubt continue.**

6. What advice do you have for future leaders of DTCWV to strengthen the organization?

**I am too far removed from the organization, so I don't really know its current status and therefore cannot recommend goals to strengthen the group. It has been a good ride.**

**31<sup>ST</sup> PRESIDENT – MICHAEL T. CIMINO – (2012-2013)**

1. What is the most memorable thing you recall about your Presidential year? (This could include challenges and successes during your tenure, addressing dominant social/cultural/economic/political issues during your tenure, enhancing your leadership skills, or anything else that is memorable from that year.)

**The most memorable thing I recall was the Annual Meeting at the Greenbrier when I assumed the presidency from Gerry Stowers and the annual meeting we planned and held the following year in Myrtle Beach.**

2. What value has DTCWV brought to you and your practice?

**DTC has helped me develop a large network of lawyers throughout the state. This has resulted in many client referrals and also led to lifelong friendships with lawyers facing the same challenges.**

3. If you had the opportunity to give yourself advice when you began your career, what advice would you give?

**Probably the same advice I received from Al Emch as a first year lawyer, “Get good at what you do.”**

4. How have you seen the practice of law and DTCWV change during your career?

**The practice of law is much more specialized now and technology has really changed the practice of law. When I first started, my secretary would take my dictation with shorthand. Now, many of the lawyers type briefs and draft pleadings without the assistance of a secretary. Emails and texts have replaced letters and phone calls as the primary methods of conversation with clients.**

5. What advice do you have for young lawyers (and to managing partners who make decisions about bar association memberships) today about the importance of DTCWV to their careers?

**DTC membership is invaluable for meeting and getting to know the lawyers who make up the defense bar of the state. It is a great source of continuing legal education and provides countless opportunities to become knowledgeable about legal issues in our state and strengthen one’s skill.**

6. What advice do you have for future leaders of DTCWV to strengthen the organization?

**Continue to present outstanding CLE programs and provide opportunities for social interaction among the defense bar.**

**32<sup>ND</sup> PRESIDENT – LAURIE C. BARBE (2013-2014)**

1. What is the most memorable thing you recall about your Presidential year? (This could include challenges and successes during your tenure, addressing dominant social/cultural/economic/political issues during your tenure, enhancing your leadership skills, or anything else that is memorable from that year.)

**While serving as DTCWV President, I tried to make our Board meetings fun and productive—so cocktails and delicious bites were served up at each meeting. In all seriousness, because I knew that each Board Member had a very busy practice outside of DTCWV, I wanted their time commitment to the Board to be fun, while also meaningful so that we could continue to build upon the good work of prior Presidents and Board Members. I learned from prior DTCWV Presidents that a good leader is one who inspires (even if via an occasional bitch-slap 😊), is proud of the successes of others, and does not simply take all the credit. It truly was an honor to serve in a leadership capacity for DTCWV, which I dearly love!**

2. What value has DTCWV brought to you and your practice?

**DTCWV has given me so many opportunities to meet defense attorneys around the state that I might not otherwise have had the opportunity to meet. This has led to referrals of work (in both directions) and an increase in the fun factor when we get to work on cases together. The work we do can be very difficult and trying at times, so seeing a familiar face is refreshing. Most importantly, I have developed lasting and important friendships with people who aren't simply attorneys by day.**

3. If you had the opportunity to give yourself advice when you began your career, what advice would you give?

**To thine own self be true. Do not try to be someone that you aren't and never let someone who is being a jerk cause you to react in a way that mirrors their bad behavior. Find a good mentor and then watch and learn. I was blessed with great mentors (thanks guys--you know who you are).**

4. How have you seen the practice of law and DTCWV change during your career?

**First and foremost, technology has completely changed the speed of the practice of law. I don't know whether that is good or bad, but it certainly has increased the amount of time we spend dealing with cases daily and at night and on weekends. Unfortunately, I think that civility has suffered over the years. Fortunately, the defense bar continues to be a safe haven for collegiality and inspiration.**

5. What advice do you have for young lawyers (and to managing partners who make decisions about bar association memberships) today about the importance of DTCWV to their careers?

**Whether your firm pays for your membership or not, the investment is more than worth it! But you should jump in with both feet once you join and get the most out of your**

**investment. Being involved in DTCWV will elevate your profile within the state, which can open all sorts of doors, including at the DRI national level. In the past, nearly all defense firms automatically signed up new associates as members of DTCWV. To the extent that is no longer the case, that is truly unfortunate but we each still have the individual power and choice to join.**

6. What advice do you have for future leaders of DTCWV to strengthen the organization?

**Never let Peggy Schultz quit!!! Communicate regularly with the membership so that everyone feels connected. Stay out front on legislative issues and build on the great lobbying work that has been done in years past. We finally have a voice!**

**33<sup>RD</sup> PRESIDENT – CHARLES F. PRINTZ, JR. (2014-2015)**

1. What is the most memorable thing you recall about your Presidential year? (This could include challenges and successes during your tenure, addressing dominant social/cultural/economic/political issues during your tenure, enhancing your leadership skills, or anything else that is memorable from that year.)

**During my tenure (2014-15), the Republicans took control of both houses of the Legislature, and for the first time, serious tort reform had traction. After discussion and debate, the DTC Board selectively supported some legislation and directed our lobbyist to let DTC's position be known. I drove to Charleston and appeared at a House Judiciary Committee meeting, hoping to be able to testify in support of one bill (without looking back, I can't recall which) and I had conversations with a few delegates. I wrote an op-ed for the Gazette in favor of the non-partisan election of our judiciary. We also sponsored a reception for the new legislators at the Clay Center.**

**The point to be made is that in that political transition year, DTCWV became a known entity to many legislators. We lobbied for selective reform legislation. Our position was solicited. We became a force to influence change. I was excited to be a part of the process.**

2. What value has DTCWV brought to you and your practice?

**Certainly, going through the chairs and ultimately sitting as president of the board enhanced my leadership skills, but the contacts I made from sitting on the board and from membership on some of the practice committees led to business referrals, assistance with local judges, and some friendships I may never have had.**

3. If you had the opportunity to give yourself advice when you began your career, what advice would you give?

**I would have told myself to join DTCWV sooner than I did.**

4. How have you seen the practice of law and DTCWV change during your career?

**I have seen our Supreme Court morph from a conservative stare decisis bench (Thornton Berry was Chief Justice in 1975) into a liberal, activist, pro-plaintiff bench for over a quarter century, and then back to a relatively conservative body again. I've seen the Legislature erupt with new laws that created more rights and often created legal traps for unwary businesses, and I've now watched the Legislature retrench and reverse or limit many of the laws it passed in the 1980's and 1990's. My practice was exposed to and benefited from this explosion of litigation, but reforms have shut down or limited many heretofore common law suits. Most of us have watched the pendulum swing.**

**Regarding DTCWV, I perceive that our membership was highest when the State was considered a "judicial hellhole." Enabling justices and judges created business trepidation, and good lawyering was a requirement. DTCWV responded by becoming more geographical in its regular and board memberships and also less big firm centric for its board. It developed substantive committees, which has probably done more for membership than any other one thing. The presidents working with their boards have implemented these changes, all for the better.**

5. What advice do you have for young lawyers (and to managing partners who make decisions about bar association memberships) today about the importance of DTCWV to their careers?

**DTCWV provides value through its substantive committees, which in turn creates statewide connectivity. Its CLE and young lawyer training programs are peerless, and female lawyers can find conversation and solidarity in the Women in the Law committee and related programs.**

6. What advice do you have for future leaders of DTCWV to strengthen the organization?

**Never accept complacency. Go local with DTCWV's message and CLE programs. Make our collective voice known through our lobbying efforts and amicus briefing.**

**34<sup>TH</sup> PRESIDENT – JEFFREY A. HOLMSTRAND (2015-2016)**

1. What is the most memorable thing you recall about your Presidential year? (This could include challenges and successes during your tenure, addressing dominant social/cultural/economic/political issues during your tenure, enhancing your leadership skills, or anything else that is memorable from that year.)

**I'm too simple to have tried to address dominant social/cultural/economic/political issues at any time, particularly during my tenure. What I particularly remember from then was Teresa becoming a new mother and the limerick I wrote for the occasion:**

**We've been told that God works at his own pace.  
Now He's brought a smile to Teresa's face.  
So joining me in praising  
The child she'll be raising  
Here's to the lovely Alexandra Grace!**

**On the less personal and more organizational front, I was thrilled with all the work the Board members (particularly Jill Rice and Jill McIntyre) put into trying to realize my vision for beefing up the Substantive Law Committees. While that did not ultimately pan out as I had hoped in terms of the Sub Law committees getting more involved in engaging our members, the effort expended trying to make that happen amazed and gratified me.**

2. What value has DTCWV brought to you and your practice?

**DTCWV has benefited me both professionally and, as importantly, personally. Professionally, the decision to get involved has led directly to case referrals and a network of collaborators from around the state. Personally, I've met some of my good friends through DTCWV and those friendships exist independent of our firms and the practice of law. I very much miss my time on the Board.**

3. If you had the opportunity to give yourself advice when you began your career, what advice would you give?

**Get involved! I spent ten years in a shell interacting with other lawyers solely while working on matters and missed out on any number of opportunities to develop the network of friends and the relationships I've made since I changed my mindset. I only wish I had made the decision to get involved much sooner than I did.**

4. How have you seen the practice of law and DTCWV change during your career?

**The overall practice of law has become significantly less civil during the 35 years since I was graduated from law school and that has been to the law's detriment, I think. With that said, it has certainly become more inclusive and willing to accept changes than when I started. DTCWV has remained fairly steady, to me anyway, largely due to the willingness of the firms to support it and the continuity of leadership at the Board level.**

5. What advice do you have for young lawyers (and to managing partners who make decisions about bar association memberships) today about the importance of DTCWV to their careers?

**Memberships in voluntary bar organizations at both the state and national level are incredible investments for lawyers willing to get involved. I very much commend the firms that still encourage/require their young lawyers to join organizations like DTCWV and DRI (and fully support the ones who tie the payment of dues to a commitment from the attorney to get involved in whatever organization they join). The benefits are not always immediately apparent or immediately financial, but the handful of billable hours it costs to join are repaid in so many ways. Any firm that discourages its members from doing so (by not paying dues, for example, or by treating time spent involved in the organization as a waste of billable time) does both itself and its young lawyers a huge disservice. And lawyers whose firms are too cheap to support their involvement in the voluntary bar associations need to consider the money and time as personal investments in their career. But this is all based on the idea that the lawyer does not just sit on the sidelines, but gets actively involved. I cannot feel more strongly about this.**

6. What advice do you have for future leaders of DTCWV to strengthen the organization?

**In an era where firms are increasingly less supportive of voluntary bar associations, DTCWV needs to ensure that its members see tangible benefits from the organization. During my time both chairing the Amicus Committee and during my time on the Board, my view was that DTCWV existed to support its members. It's one thing to say "DTCWV has been good to me" and it's entirely another thing to show those tangible benefits. But realizing many of those benefits requires engagement by the member. To that end, I sometimes wonder whether tying membership dues to engagement would help (i.e., lower dues for active involvement in committees or writing articles or whatever would help). DRI sort of tried to do this with the DRI Dividends program, I suppose, but that was so complicated that it was more of a joke than anything. The point is that engaged members are more likely to renew their membership, so while DTCWV might lose some dues money in the short term, it would gain in the long-term from sustained membership.**

**35<sup>TH</sup> PRESIDENT – JILL CRANSTON RICE (2016-2017)**

1. What is the most memorable thing you recall about your Presidential year? (This could include challenges and successes during your tenure, addressing dominant social/cultural/economic/political issues during your tenure, enhancing your leadership skills, or anything else that is memorable from that year.)

**There were a handful of things. We worked with members and other bar leaders to successfully oppose the legislature's effort to tax legal services.**

**We hosted both a planning retreat at Stonewall with Mike Weston of Iowa who did a deep dive into our organization and helped develop a short and longer term strategic plan. This also planted the seed for the Mixologist of the Year Award. In February, we hosted a managing partners' summit that brought together the states' firm leaders to hear from John Trimble of Indiana on various metrics and strategies firms can use to lead and grow.**

**Mostly, we had a lot of fun, I loved building relationships working with our board members and Peggy.**

2. What value has DTCWV brought to you and your practice?

**It has transformed my professional and personal life, opening professional doors, introducing me to mentors and opportunities; providing educational and leadership opportunities, and given me countless lasting, deep friendships.**

3. If you had the opportunity to give yourself advice when you began your career, what advice would you give?

**Don't just show up; get involved and do more than what is expected. Be kind.**

4. How have you seen the practice of law and DTCWV change during your career?

**The practice of law has become more technology-driven, and the DTCWV has become significantly more professional.**

5. What advice do you have for young lawyers (and to managing partners who make decisions about bar association memberships) today about the importance of DTCWV to their careers?

**It is transformative. It can help teach young lawyers how to become good and better lawyers; it can help all lawyers network and become credentialed; and it can build reputations and lifelong friendships.**

6. What advice do you have for future leaders of DTCWV to strengthen the organization?

**Be open-minded. An organization unwilling to change will become stagnant. Planning discussions every few years can be very helpful to re-center any organization on its mission of service to members, but the particular value DTCWV provides may need to change as the practice of law changes and members' needs and firms' needs continue to evolve.**

**DRI has a lot of really great resources and does a lot of things really well. It runs substantive seminars and substantive law committees well. It has affinity groups and tool kits. It has steering committees and a well-structured pipeline for leadership. Overall, it is an underutilized resource for our and other state organizations.**

**Spend time together - at meetings, before or after board meetings. Go to lunch. Become friends. Few people understand the lives we lead other than other civil defense lawyers. Share your life experiences with other DTCWV leaders. These lawyers (you) are my very best friends.**

**The key to our organization thriving is an engaged membership. If any of us knew what the magic formula to that is, then we would be famous bestselling authors.**

**36<sup>TH</sup> PRESIDENT – L. JILL MCINTYRE (2017-2018)**

1. What is the most memorable thing you recall about your Presidential year? (This could include challenges and successes during your tenure, addressing dominant social/cultural/economic/political issues during your tenure, enhancing your leadership skills, or anything else that is memorable from that year.)

**I remember feeling honored to follow in the footsteps of beloved mentors in my firm to temporarily lead this organization. By that time, I was no longer trying to be somebody else and believe and hope that I recognized how to make my own gifts, however humble, a benefit to the organization.**

2. What value has DTCWV brought to you and your practice?

**Being involved in DTCWV as a Notebook of Articles collector (We transitioned from paper to digital production then.), substantive law committee member, regular annual meeting participant, commenter on proposed rules revisions, newsletter editor, CLE presenter, board member, and officer permitted me to interact with other WV defense lawyers as a peer long before and in greater depth than I would have otherwise. I learned about others' practices, side hustles, families, strengths and weaknesses, and misgivings, leaving me to feel human, professional, and connected.**

3. If you had the opportunity to give yourself advice when you began your career, what advice would you give?

**Set aside time every week to write personal notes, engage in independent study (not billable), and think or meditate away from a screen.**

4. How have you seen the practice of law and DTCWV change during your career?

**When I was a senior associate, our firm handled medium-sized cases that I could manage as lead counsel. By the time I stepped away from the practice, ten years into membership, I was working primarily on large teams – including with lawyers from other firms who were serving the same client – in high stakes litigation. The client also made decisions by team. I yearned to resolve something, even a small piece of the case, without wooling it to death. But such is life in a world of shareholder derivative suits. In hindsight, it still seems wasteful and out of touch with the lives of average Americans.**

5. What advice do you have for young lawyers (and to managing partners who make decisions about bar association memberships) today about the importance of DTCWV to their careers?

**DTCWV reveres and upholds the standards of professionalism that make practicing law as a civil litigator noble and worthwhile. Participants identify worthy role models and develop friendships and alliances that prove invaluable at work and in life.**

6. What advice do you have for future leaders of DTCWV to strengthen the organization?

**Do not bow to pressure to meet virtually. Avoid extreme political correctness. Borrow from the State Bar's More Than a Lawyer campaign to help members connect with**

**humans outside our rarified existence as super-educated, wealthy (We ARE the 2%),  
business traveling, high-end vacationing superstars.**

**37<sup>TH</sup> PRESIDENT – ERIK W. LEGG (2018-2019)**

1. What is the most memorable thing you recall about your Presidential year? (This could include challenges and successes during your tenure, addressing dominant social/cultural/economic/political issues during your tenure, enhancing your leadership skills, or anything else that is memorable from that year.)

**Two things stand out: Developing a diversity mission statement for the organization, and the impressive amount of support I received from the Executive Committee when it came time to identify and lock in speakers for the Annual Meeting.**

2. What value has DTCWV brought to you and your practice?

**Besides great friendships, the opportunity to get to know lawyers in all pockets of the State.**

3. If you had the opportunity to give yourself advice when you began your career, what advice would you give?

**Be more confident. Don't be afraid to take a risk.**

4. How have you seen the practice of law and DTCWV change during your career?

**The smart phone has revolutionized everything in terms of ease and speed of communication. It is a blessing and a curse that we are now always connected to our work.**

5. What advice do you have for young lawyers (and to managing partners who make decisions about bar association memberships) today about the importance of DTCWV to their careers?

**If you want people to know who you are, you have to be a "joiner." Just having a social media presence is not particularly impressive unless you are REALLY effective in using it. You have to meet people whom you would not meet just by virtue of the cases that you are working on at a given point in time.**

6. What advice do you have for future leaders of DTCWV to strengthen the organization?

**Don't be afraid to change. Don't be afraid of millennials. Adapt.**

**38<sup>TH</sup> PRESIDENT – MARK H. HAYES (2019-2020)**

1. What is the most memorable thing you recall about your Presidential year? (This could include challenges and successes during your tenure, addressing dominant social/cultural/economic/political issues during your tenure, enhancing your leadership skills, or anything else that is memorable from that year.)

**Clearly, the beginning of the COVID pandemic and its affect on the last 1/3 of my presidential year – including the cancelation of the annual meeting – was the most memorable thing. Not a good memory. I was, however, extremely proud of the response that DTC had to the pandemic, with every one of our substantive law groups offering free on-line CLE offerings to keep our members engaged and educated. DTC also made a significant donation to Mountaineer Food Bank to help alleviate the food insecurities brought on by the pandemic. On a more personal note, I was extremely proud that the Women’s Law Committee took off during that year – mainly because of the efforts of Jill Rice and Trish Bello.**

2. What value has DTCWV brought to you and your practice?

**From a financial standpoint, there have referrals from other DTC members that are well appreciated. More importantly, I’ve learned how to be a more effective West Virginia lawyer because of the education, training and mentorship offered by DTCWV.**

3. If you had the opportunity to give yourself advice when you began your career, what advice would you give?

**GET INVOLVED. It really doesn’t matter if its with DTCWV, or the State Bar, or another voluntary bar association, getting involved in a law-related organization will enhance your professional, and personal growth.**

4. How have you seen the practice of law and DTCWV change during your career?

**Much more insular now than when I started. We rarely venture out of our offices anymore – depositions are remote, judges and clients don’t want to try cases, and the camaraderie of the bar has waned. None of these are good developments, in my opinion, but inevitable.**

5. What advice do you have for young lawyers (and to managing partners who make decisions about bar association memberships) today about the importance of DTCWV to their careers?

**The connections I’ve made with DTCWV have made the practice of law in WV easier, more fun and more effective. DTCWV also makes a very real difference in the quality of the practice of law in WV, both socially and with its efforts to work for the betterment of defense advocacy. The moves made to make the organization the face of business interests and the defense bar with the legislature and executive branch, as well as with the Supreme Court as it modifies the practice of law are all excellent. Making DTCWV**

**well known in the state isn't completed, but it's a lot better than it was when I first joined the organization in 1991.**

6. What advice do you have for future leaders of DTCWV to strengthen the organization?

**Making members understand the value of DTC is paramount. Keeping membership numbers up, mainly by relating the value of the organization, is a goal for which every leader of DTCWV should strive. I would also like to see DTCWV become better known in the non-legal community, with outreach and education programs throughout the state.**

**39<sup>TH</sup> PRESIDENT – TERESA J. DUMIRE (2020-2021)**

1. What is the most memorable thing you recall about your Presidential year? (This could include challenges and successes during your tenure, addressing dominant social/cultural/economic/political issues during your tenure, enhancing your leadership skills, or anything else that is memorable from that year.)

**COVID-19! When I took over as President at the first virtual annual meeting, I never dreamed that my entire year would be spent virtually. We were already struggling with dwindling membership numbers...especially among younger attorneys...and I was afraid that the pandemic would make that problem even worse since the greatest benefit of our organization is the networking and relationships that we have formed by engaging with each other at in-person events. So, every decision that I made during the year was with an eye toward protecting our bottom line and trying to maintain our membership. Peggy and I worked with the sponsors and created new opportunities to keep them engaged. We hosted more than 20 live webinars to keep our members engaged and active. We hosted the first virtual cooking class, which was a lot of fun!**

**Like everyone else that year, I watched the infection numbers go up and down to make decisions about whether the retreat and each of the Board meetings could be in person. Then, as the Annual Meeting got closer and closer, I decided that the risks were too high (for both health and financial reasons) for us to sign a contract with a hotel for an in-person meeting. So, Peggy and I transitioned to planning a fully virtual two-day meeting filled with high quality CLE, which was attended by nearly 100 members.**

**In addition to battling the membership crisis during a global pandemic, we also worked hard to fight against the legislative effort to tax professional services that would have been devastating to many of our practices. It was not the first time that DTCWV provided a loud voice against such an effort and it will not be the last time. However, during my presidency, we were in a better position than any other legal organization in the state to convince the Senate and the House members that taxing legal services would be bad for WV businesses. Along with the voices of other professional organizations, our voice was heard, and the bills failed to pass by a margin that was too close for comfort in the Senate. Maintaining a significant number of members is vital for DTCWV to continue to have a carrying voice at the Legislature when issues that are important to our members are being debated.**

2. What value has DTCWV brought to you and your practice?

**Being an active member of DTCWV has allowed me to develop close and long-lasting friendships with other members that are based on mutual respect. Not only have those relationships enriched my life, but they have also benefited my practice through client referrals. In addition, when I have the privilege of working on cases with other DTCWV members, our clients benefit from our ability to work together to accomplish common goals.**

3. If you had the opportunity to give yourself advice when you began your career, what advice would you give?

**Working hard, saying yes when given opportunities to take leadership positions, and devoting the time required to be active in professional organizations will pay off. However, it is important to set boundaries and take vacations. I have taken too few vacations during my life!**

4. How have you seen the practice of law and DTCWV change during your career?

**The explosion of technology, which has significantly increased the speed of the practice. When I started practicing, e-mail was new. Once smart phones were invented, an attorney's personal time, and time for reflection to provide measured responses, have suffered. We are effectively on call 24-7, which is exhausting.**

5. What advice do you have for young lawyers (and to managing partners who make decisions about bar association memberships) today about the importance of DTCWV to their careers?

**The benefits of active membership in DTCWV far outweigh the minimal cost of membership. Like everything in life, you get out of it what you put into it. Joining any organization just to put it on your resume will not benefit your practice. Being involved by participating in substantive law committees, writing articles, attending meetings, and serving on the Board will elevate your reputation in the legal community.**

6. What advice do you have for future leaders of DTCWV to strengthen the organization?

**Keep an active and engaged Legislative Committee and expand the role of our Lobbyist. For too many years, the Trial Lawyers/Association for Justice, had the controlling ear of the Legislature. Due to the current political leaning of the Legislature, DTCWV has an opportunity to step to the front because we represent the businesses that are important to our State. We want legislators to ask for DTCWV's thoughts and comments about bills rather than hearing about important issues from our lobbyist and then having to scramble quickly to present our position.**

**Also, explore new and innovative opportunities to engage and grow our membership.**