



THOMAS LAW OFFICES
WHERE CLIENTS COME FIRST

9418 NORTON COMMONS BLVD
SUITE 200
LOUISVILLE KY 40059
PHONE: 877-955-7001
THOMASLAWOFFICES.COM

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Dear AAJ Family:

To whom much is given, much is expected. I have had the privilege of being a member of this organization since I joined as a law student and participated in ATLA's Student Trial Advocacy Competition. Since then, my membership in ATLA and AAJ has been one of the most valuable assets of my career. I have enjoyed the benefit of the collective wisdom of thousands of lawyers with much to teach, much to share, and an unwavering willingness to do so. I have been privileged to be protected by the advocacy efforts of a legislative team that is unparalleled and an organizational staff that goes above and beyond. I have enjoyed the comradery, friendship, and support of lawyers across the country who believe what I believe - if the public's access to the courts is diminished, we become a lesser nation.

In 2005, I travelled to Toronto to attend my first AAJ convention. At the time, I didn't know a single person in the organization. I only recognized some names from listserv emails or seeing their pictures in the New Lawyers Division Newsletter and *Trial Magazine*. On arrival, my only plan was to show up at the NLD's Friday night reception, try to meet people, and go from there. Making that trip turned out to be one of the best decisions I've ever made, not only for my career, but my personal life as well. The first two people I met that night were NLD leaders at the time, Chris Gilreath and Elise Sanguinetti. As I am sure most of you can imagine, there are no two better people to welcome someone to the AAJ family than Chris and Elise.

That was the start of my AAJ journey. Since then, I have participated in phonathons, public service projects, fundraising efforts, served on the Board of Governors, the Executive Committee, the Budget Committee, and many more. I have adopted AAJ's mission of education as my own and, for the last several years, I have flown all across the country teaching CLE's to state and local trial lawyers associations. With each opportunity I have to serve this organization, comes the desire to do more, and go a step further.

It is with this in mind—and after many hours of deliberation, calls to my AAJ family, discussions with the lawyers in my firm, and most importantly, getting the support of my own family—I have made the decision to declare my candidacy for Parliamentarian next year in Boston.

As I work to become an officer of our esteemed organization, I do so with a few priorities in mind. First, I want to make sure AAJ holds true to its roots. This organization was

founded as a fellowship of lawyers dedicated to sharing knowledge with one another in order to better serve our clients and our communities. As a new lawyer, and even today, I benefit from the knowledge of lawyers who celebrate the educational aspect of AAJ. Thanks to the knowledge I have gained through the organization, I returned from three years of public service to restart my private practice as a solo with no business and no employees, and, in only five years, I have since grown into a firm of five lawyers, with cases all across the country. My passion for education and sharing information is what drives me to travel the country educating lawyers on ways to improve their practices with technology.

Second, I believe our collective efforts would be well served with a renewed effort to coordinate with our affiliated state organizations. At its roots, our organization also facilitated a strong relationship between the states to assist in legislative fights. Today, some of the state associations see AAJ as a competitor instead of a partner. I believe this must change if we are going to combat large organizations, like the Chamber of Commerce, in protecting our clients' interests in legislative chambers across the country. Finally, I want to see AAJ continue its efforts to update the way it communicates with its members and potential members. We can work to improve our communications in online and other digital marketing. Improving in this area will benefit AAJ by growing membership, adding to our advocacy and fundraising efforts, increasing education program attendance, and much more.

Below, you will find the names of more than 100 lawyers who have already allowed me to list them as supporters. I'm sure you will see more than a few people you know. These are lawyers from big firms and small firms, big cities and small towns, mass tort firms and single event firms, leaders in sections and litigation groups, board members and former board members, and leaders in the Minority Caucus, Women's Caucus, LGBT Caucus and the New Lawyers Division. It is this sort of diversity that is celebrated in our organization, and represents the kind of leader I aspire to be - one who brings together lawyers from all walks of life, from all practice areas and from all sizes of firms for the good of our organization and the benefit of our clients.

I look forward to spending the next eleven months not just talking about what I've done in the past as a small firm lawyer, public servant, and member of this organization, but what I aspire to achieve as an AAJ officer. Thank you for your dedicated service, and I hope to earn your support.

Sincerely,



Tad Thomas