

MESSAGE

from the Interim Executive Director

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NDAA's "Voice of America's Prosecutors" Remains Strong, Effective and Clear

WHAT'S THIS? Another interim executive director? Why? Well, it is actually quite simple. Dean of Education Mary Galvin did a valiant job of holding down both jobs for an extended time period and was working herself to death trying to wear both hats simultaneously. So, one morning in August, I am enjoying my morning coffee, reading my sports page and plagued only by my choices for the day's activities. Will it be a round of golf, or a little softball with the guys, working on my trip to Italy, or perhaps a walk along the beach with the dog? Then Jim Fox called. "Tom," he said in his best Irish brogue, "would you be interested in being the interim executive director of NDAA?" After talking to my wife and NDAA President Joe Cassilly, I accepted.

These are both challenging and encouraging times for NDAA. In earlier articles then President Jim Fox and Interim Executive Director Mary Galvin outlined some of the significant and difficult management and organizational changes, which now include a recent move to new quarters. Although the move was just across the street and the logistics and planning was very challenging for staff, it was executed perfectly and staff deserves recognition for a job well done, especially Jean Hemphill, Mark Neil and Jason Scott. In South Carolina, Susan O'Neal has done a marvelous job of shepherding NDAA through our financial reorganization and positioning us for a strong 2009. Other challenges remain as we prepare for the implementation of a new computer system, strategize and pursue new grant opportunities and consolidate and utilize the benefits obtained from the organizational changes that have occurred. NDAA is actively recruiting for a number of vacant positions that are listed on our Web site and I am pleased to announce the recent promotion of Melissa Millican to senior attorney. Melissa, along with Suzanna Tiapula, collaborated on an article featured in the last issue of *The Prosecutor*.

Although one cannot ignore the scope of the changes, it is important for everyone to know that NDAA remains a dynamic organization and continues to effectively perform our vital role as "the voice of America's prosecutors." Fortunately, our greatest resource remains our wealth of dedicated and committed staff. Nowhere is the continued effectiveness of that voice demonstrated more clearly than in the recent passage of the Student Loan Forgiveness legislation.

Rhea Arledge, working with a coalition of partners and Senator Durbin from Illinois, was able to get the authorization bill passed that provided for \$25 million dollars in fiscal year '09 and an unlimited amount in '10. She is now participating with the same coalition to draft and implement the DOJ application, eligibility and disbursement regulations required by the legislation. Similar proactive work has resulted in obtaining \$1 million "bridge funding" for the National Advocacy Center to continue its important prosecutor training programs, another \$1.5 million on the horizon and potential legislation for \$6.5 million for prosecutor training at the NAC. NDAA is also partnering on Capitol Hill with our law enforcement partners to press Congress to fully fund the \$1.1 billion authorized by the Byrne grant legislation.

Equally impressive and undiminished is the scope, quality and range of NDAA programs offered through its three training and education divisions. Dean Galvin and Candace Mosley at the National College, Jim Dedman at the NAC and a host of dedicated program managers at APRI continue to annually present a choice of over 60 training and education opportunities to prosecutors, law enforcement and our criminal justice partners across the country. The recent resounding success of the annual domestic violence course held in San Diego is our most recent example. The common denominator of all these programs is the recruitment and participation of faculty and experts from across the nation to ensure the high quality of the training experience for participants.

Stability and continuity is important to the success of any organization. It is my goal and commitment to provide that vital leadership until the new executive director is selected at the March Board meeting. I want to assure everyone that NDAA's "voice of America's prosecutors" is as strong, loud and clear as ever. I want everyone to know that NDAA's mission to train and educate is unchanged and unwavering. Most importantly, I want everyone to know that NDAA remains capable, committed and competent to effectively and successfully fulfill its goal of providing the highest quality training, education and research to America's prosecutors and our criminal justice colleagues.