

# VIEW FROM THE CHAIR

## Maximizing the Return on Your Investment

By Mike Drumke



Twenty years ago, when I was about a fourth-year lawyer, I was sent to my first TIPS general committee meeting for the Toxic Torts and Environmental Law Committee at the Hotel del Coronado in Coronado, California. The committee chair introduced me around and made sure that I went to the committee business meeting. The committee leadership was open and welcoming, and I volunteered to help by writing an article for the committee newsletter. The following year, I started working on the annual CLE program, and so it went. Back then, I thought that any group that would invite in a very young lawyer and give him some responsibility was a group worth belonging to. I still do. There is no better place for lawyers—young and not quite as young—to have opportunities to speak and write and lead. Unlike many organizations, there is always room in TIPS for immediate participation and advancement into leadership for members willing to contribute to our broad array of activities.

What is the return on your investment in being a member of TIPS? The “elevator speech” is pretty straightforward: The bottom line is that being a TIPS member will help you build your career. It will give you a competitive advantage, and also will contribute to your professional and personal growth and satisfaction. Let me make the case that the more you invest, the greater your return.

As for the specific reasons why you should invest in TIPS, there are both direct and intangible benefits of TIPS membership.

### Direct Benefits and Opportunities

First and foremost, TIPS offers stellar substantive education. TIPS puts on the legal profession’s best seminars through its Section Conference, its Annual Meeting programs, and its general committee CLE programs offered from fall through spring. TIPS programs offer unparalleled access to high quality continuing legal education at a discounted rate for our members. TIPS also sponsors six free webcasts each year, offering cutting-edge legal education delivered to your desktop at no additional cost.

If you are interested in speaking, TIPS provides its members with opportunities to speak at some of the nation’s most comprehensive, diverse, and well-established CLE programs including webinars, teleconferences, and live programs. Reach out to the general committee chair sponsoring the program (they are listed in the back of this magazine) and ask how you can get involved. Or contact me, and I will be happy to get you in touch with one of our CLE program chairs.

TIPS also offers outstanding publications. If your interest is writing, you can submit articles for consideration for publication in a newsletter from one of over 30 substantive law committees, *The Brief*, *TortSource*, or the *Tort Trial & Insurance Practice*

*Law Journal*. TIPS members also author a wide variety of books that the Section edits and publishes every year. Becoming involved and getting published is easy. Just contact the editor of the newsletter or periodical you are interested in writing for, and be prepared to pitch your piece. Got an idea for a book? Great. The TIPS Book Publishing Editorial Board would love to hear your idea.

As a TIPS member, you can join any of the over 30 practice-specific general committees for free! Committees can provide you with helpful information about your practice through newsletters, teleconferences, and networking opportunities at committee and Section meetings. Each one of our substantive law committees has a web page accessible through the TIPS website. I encourage you to find committees of interest to you, learn about what they do, and get involved to further your investment in TIPS.

If networking is what you are looking for, come to a TIPS meeting and see for yourself how easy it is to connect with your colleagues and become involved with TIPS. The Section provides a wide variety of opportunities for members to network with the nation’s top plaintiffs and defense attorneys, corporate decision makers, and in-house counsel. You can meet new contacts and develop valuable relationships through TIPS CLE programs, practice-specific committees, social media groups, and public service projects. While those relationships have the tangible advantage of potential business development, they also bring the intangible, but quite meaningful, enhancement of one’s life that comes with close friendships and interaction with interesting people from across the country. Your practice and life will be richer through

involvement in TIPS. The greater your investment in these activities, the greater the return.

As the ABA's home for emerging issues and technologies in tort, trial, and insurance law, TIPS offers you tools and opportunities that will enhance your trial skills, increase your knowledge of the insurance industry, and provide you with timely and relevant content on state and national issues in your area of practice.

### **Intangible Benefits**

The purpose of TIPS is "to promote the objectives of the American Bar Association and to serve those involved in Tort and Insurance Law by bringing together lawyers of diverse background and practice by providing leadership, inspiring professional excellence, and improving the civil justice system." Our almost 25,000 members are lawyers, judges, law students, and

non-lawyers who realize the importance of bringing together lawyers from all practices and backgrounds to advance the legal profession and keep the American civil justice and jury trial system fair, independent, and accessible for all.

TIPS is unique in that we strive for balance of the "three-legged stool" represented by our plaintiffs, defense, and insurance members. This allows us to have a unique perspective on matters of concern to our members, and occasionally gives us a platform to provide our input in ways that can assist the judiciary as well as shape federal legislation. This year we are working to raise awareness of the funding crisis in our courts. Likewise, when the Terrorism Risk Insurance Act (TRIA) was up for renewal in Congress at the end of last year, TIPS weighed in on behalf of our members by providing a detailed analysis and argument in support of renewal. The analysis

was forwarded to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, secretaries of the Treasury and Homeland Security, and other key members of Congress.

Once you realize the return on your own investment, you will want to bring your friends and colleagues to TIPS. This is particularly true for younger lawyers, who will find it easy to become involved with and benefit from being active in TIPS. Opportunities for younger lawyers to write, speak, and lead and to find mentors of all stripes are abundant in our Section. Getting new lawyers involved in TIPS is easy. You will find everything you need on our membership web page: [www.americanbar.org/groups/tort\\_trial\\_insurance\\_practice/membership.html](http://www.americanbar.org/groups/tort_trial_insurance_practice/membership.html). The sooner your friends and colleagues join, the sooner they can make an investment that will continue to pay dividends for years to come. ■