

VINCE DONOHUE AWARD **FRANK M. NICOLETTI, ESQ.**



The purpose of the Vince Donohue Award is to recognize individuals who have made significant contributions to the insurance industry and in particular to the Excess/Surplus Lines Claims Association. It therefore came as no surprise when the Committee announced this year's recipient as Frank Nicoletti, an individual whose involvement in the organization spans almost 20 years.

By way of a brief history, during his high school years, Frank was an All American basketball player. His proficiency in the sport continued as he entered Syracuse University on a basketball scholarship. It was here that he forged a friendship with another high school All American, Dave Bing, a friendship which has spanned almost 50 years. Shortly after his graduation from Suffolk Law School in Boston, he began his career in insurance with the law firm of Anthony Lanzzone & Associates, or as Frank considered it, a baptism by fire into the industry. Frank worked for Anthony for nine years concentrating on excess and reinsurance predominantly from the London market. It was at this time that Frank began his 20 year involvement in the A.H. Robins Dalkon Shield Litigation. As part of the litigation, Frank successfully argued for his reinsurance clients the much cited Bellefonte Re case before the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit.

In 1992 Frank took his practice to Ober Kaler, a Baltimore law firm, and agreed to manage the firm's New York office. The New York office grew from five to 25 and Frank developed the management skills necessary to launch his own firm, which he did in 1995. The firm is now Nicoletti Gonson Spinner & Owen and is located on Fifth Avenue in New York City. It has grown to 22 attorneys and is well known and respected for its expertise in direct defense as well as excess and reinsurance.

Frank is not only well known in the insurance industry but has far reaching associations in the political arena. It was only through his diligent efforts that the Association was able to make the transition from attorney and member presentations to a more sophisticated program with keynote speakers. This has clearly enhanced the image of the Association and has contributed to an increase in its membership.

We can thank Frank for bringing us such noted individuals as John Garamendi, who at the time served as the controversial California Insurance Commissioner, and who returned ten years later to address the Association again after having served as Deputy Secretary of the Interior; Dave Bing, now Mayor of Detroit, a successful supplier to the automotive industry and, who after 13 years of professional basketball, was inducted into the Basketball Hall of Fame; Honorable Lynn Martin, former Secretary of Labor; DeDe Meyers, former press secretary to Bill Clinton and Governor Bill Richardson of New Mexico. I think we can all acknowledge that Frank has worked behind the scenes to raise the level of our educational programs, seeking little recognition for his accomplishments.

In December 2005, Frank was elected to and continues to serve as General Counsel to the Association where he lends guidance and support. After many years as one of New York's most eligible bachelors Frank married in August of this year. He and his wife, Irina, live in New York City with a second home in the Catskills.

It is with pleasure and gratitude that we congratulate Frank for his contributions to our organization and to the industry.

Joanne Moore
President 1996, Vince Donohue 2005



FMN is already working on next year's keynote speaker!