

Land of Hope and Dreams

Energized by the CBA Experience and Springsteen

By DANIEL J. HORGAN

As I sat down to write my last President's Message recapping the highlights of all the goals the CBA accomplished this year, I loaded Spotify with my favorite band, poured myself my favorite IPA (Fox Farm), and as I often do, became empowered and energized by the music of Bruce Springsteen and the legendary E-Street Band. I dispensed of the idea of recapping what I believe was a very successful CBA year as I had told those in attendance at our annual CLC on June 5. *The State of the CBA is Strong!* Instead, I wanted to share with you, our members, how I was transformed and energized through my work as CBA president and all the good people I was lucky to work with.

While I had been involved with the CBA on the Board of Governors, I spent most of my time over the last 30 years focused on building up my small litigation practice in New London. Anyone who has operated their own law practice knows it can be all consuming of your time if you allow it. For long stretches of time, I did allow the practice to become my life. I fed off the satisfaction of being available for my clients 24/7. I fed off the satisfaction of fighting tooth and nail for the rights of my clients. I fed off the satisfaction of being recognized and greeted by owners of restaurants and bars when I entered and talking with colleagues that you usually ran into. (Think "Out in the Street" from Springsteen's album *The River*.) Seeing your hard work have a positive impact on the lives of your clients while earning a comfortable living was the bomb. Trials were an absolute

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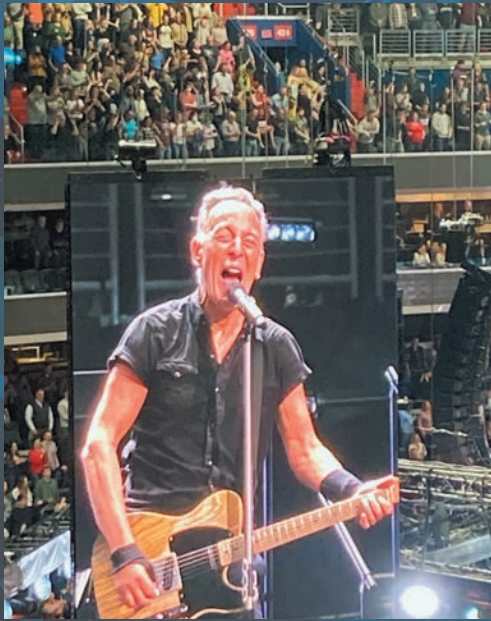


President Horgan with longtime friend and colleague, Dan Schwartz, at a Bruce Springsteen concert while in Washington, DC for ABA Day this past March.

adrenaline rush even though they were physically and mentally exhausting and I consumed nothing but coffee and carbohydrates while on trial. I have fond

memories of frantically pacing outside the courtroom while waiting for the jury to come back and render their verdict. (Thankful to our Well-Being Committee for helping us with strategies to lead a healthier lifestyle: even if you are on trial or engaged in a stressful case, remember to exercise and eat healthy!)

A few years ago, however, I felt a bit worn down and sort of going through the motions. (Think "Factory" from Springsteen's album *Darkness on the Edge of Town*.) I still had mass quantities of energy for family and life in general but not so much for the practice of law. I needed a different challenge; something that would lead me out of my comfort zone. When asked to toss my hat in the ring for CBA leadership a few years back, I hoped that it would be the challenge I needed. My journey through the ranks of the CBA Executive Committee, culminating with my presidential year, has indeed provided those challenges, new experiences, and pushed me out



Bruce Springsteen at his March 27 concert in Washington, DC.

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of my comfort zone. It may not have seemed it to you because, like many of my colleagues, I come from the “never let them see you sweat” school of smoke and mirrors, but I truly felt like a fish out of water. Learning from top to bottom how the CBA functioned and understanding the role of committees, sections, CT Bar Institute, DE&I, YLS, budget projections, and collaborating with affinity bars was overwhelming. Preparing remarks at important events such as the CLC, Civics Academy, Law Day, managing partners’ meetings, Judicial Branch Events, and writing articles for the *CT Lawyer* were also daunting at times. Through support from my fellow officers, CBA staff, and our members, I started to trust in what we were trying to accomplish. (Think “**Leap of Faith**” from Springsteen’s album *Lucky Town*). Through this CBA journey I became focused, energized, and excited to fulfill my duties and to bring a renewed spirit to my practice of law—the greatest profession ever created. What was it about the CBA leadership journey that revved up my engine? (Think “**Born to Run**”). I believe it was the ability to work with generous lawyers in a team setting to accomplish so many goals, especially when it came to mentoring young lawyers and creating pro bono opportunities for them to hone their skills while helping the public deal with their weighty legal issues and gain ac-

cess to justice. I have seen CBA members fulfill our obligations as embodied in Professional Rules of Conduct 6.1. We give selflessly to those who desperately need our assistance. Our legal minds and our human hearts have been on full display as our pro bono efforts have increased exponentially over the last few years. Civil Gideon efforts in housing and family court have seen an increase of attorney participation as well. (Think “**The Ghost of Tom Joad**”). Efforts are under way for a rule modification to earn CLE credits for pro bono hours as well as credits for involvement in mock trial competitions, which undoubtedly will help close the access to justice gap.

Just as at the end of every Springsteen concert, I feel my experience the last few years with the CBA has renewed my spirit and faith in humanity and in our profession. Justice Brandeis characterized our profession as “an occupation for which the necessary preliminary training is intellectual in character, involving knowledge and to some extent learning as distinguished from mere skill, an occupation which is pursued largely for others and not merely for one’s self, an occupation in which the amount of financial return is not the accepted measure of success.” The CBA is a collection of lawyers, judges, and law students who give generously of their time to advance and protect the princi-

ples of liberty and justice while assisting our neighbors who are less fortunate. Of course, the CBA’s mission to better serve our members at large through the advancement of justice and the protection of liberty while delivering legal services and activities to those most in need to help the downtrodden in our society will face challenges, obstacles, and naysayers along the way but let that not deter us from using our skills as problem solvers to create positive changes in our profession and in our communities. In the song “**Land of Hope and Dreams**,” Springsteen sings of hope for all immigrants following times of despair: “*This train carries saints and sinners/This train carries losers and winners/This train carries whores and gamblers/This train carries lost souls/I said, this train dreams will not be thwarted/This train faith will be rewarded/This train hear the steel wheels singin’/This train bells of freedom ringin’.*”

We have made progress as an association to achieve our goals set forth in Article II of our Constitution, but our work is not done. I invite each member to engage as equal partners with the CBA to reimagine and re-energize our association as a place of growth and opportunity for all members, regardless of your practice area, skin color, religion, sexual, or political orientation. The CBA train has enough room for all.... get on board. Thanks for all your support. ■