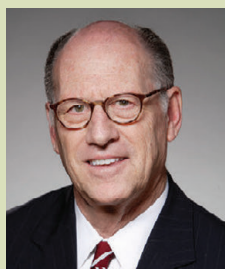


Message from the President



Rich Heffron

This will be my final President's letter, as I will be retiring on June 30. My last official function will be attending the 149th General Assembly closing legislative session, which will recess some time on the morning of July 1. This will be the conclusion of a 26½ year career with the Delaware State Chamber, having served as Senior Vice President for Government Affairs, three times as interim president, and concluding with a 3½ year term as President.

It has been an interesting experience, coupled with my time with the City of Wilmington during the administration of Dan Frawley, I spent 30 years as a lobbyist. This has covered the terms of five Governors (Castle, Carper, Minner, Markell and Carper), five United States Senators (Roth, Biden, Carper, Kaufman and Coons), four members of the US House of Representative (Carper, Castle, Carney and Blunt-Rochester), and too many legislators, cabinet officials, and city and county officials to list.

Issues I've been involved with run the gamut from economic development to workers compensation. Many successful endeavors include moderation of income on home ownership, Port of Wilmington expansion, expanding mental health insurance coverage, reform of the state's workers compensation, modernization of the Coastal Zone Act and the approval of a public/private economic development organization, to name a few. More successes than failures, but I have learned a lot from both.

Along the way I've met a lot of interesting people, many who have become friends. Success can only be accomplished with the help of others. State Chamber staff I worked with during my tenure have been extraordinary people – hardworking, intelligent and loyal. Loyalty that encompasses three attributes: giving the best advice and expressing an opinion even if it might not be in line with my thinking, admitting then correcting mistakes, and working as a team to the benefit of Chamber members.

There are many memories from my time at the State Chamber, but there is one that stands out. Back in 2006 I was contacted by a former exchange student at the University of Delaware who was pursuing a graduate degree in government at the University of Delaware. What was intriguing being that this student, Mohammed Ghanim, was a citizen of Yemen and here on a student visa. That spring he attended legislative sessions, meetings, Chamber events and bill signings. The day before heading home in July, he asked if we could visit Legislative Hall one last time. Session was over so the building was vacant. After the tour we were standing on the floor of the House of Representatives and looking around. He commented, "What happens in this place is why you live in a great country." I thought he was right, and sometimes we don't appreciate our government and political process as much as those who live under a different system of government. It has been my pleasure to make a small contribution to making it a great state and country. I am a lucky man.

I wish all the best for the new President Mike Quaranta, the staff and members of the State Chamber.

As for me to quote a line from a Frank Sinatra, "Please excuse me as I disappear."

DELAWARE BUSINESS

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