



President's Message

By Ellen B. Flynn



When we see the civil justice system that is supposed to be the pathway to truth being taken off course, it is easy to point out the issues with vigor! We are advocates after all. We invest incredible time, money and effort to represent our clients in cases that we believe in for clients that need our help. The civil justice system *should be* the search for truth, it should be fair, and we should all be the protectors of it.

Our job as trial attorneys is not easy. We are frequently the attorneys that help the little guy against the big organizations, hospital systems, and insurance companies that have much more power, deeper pockets and an army behind them. A win or a loss for our clients is often life-changing—the difference between getting the care they need without financial devastation, or the support they need for the family that has been left to pick up the pieces after a loved one is injured or killed. Statistically, the odds are stacked against us before we account for the defendants that hide the real evidence and throw up obstacle after obstacle to keep us from obtaining full and fair justice for our clients. I would have given up this incredibly demanding battle years ago if it weren't for many of the attorneys I have met through the Maryland Association for Justice.

The collective power of the Maryland Association for Justice gives us little guys a fighting chance, so that we can very literally create justice for our clients in the courtroom and protect the civil justice system for them in Annapolis. MAJ is full of people with courage,

and knowledge, and drive. We have tremendous energy, enthusiasm, skill, wisdom, and most of all, a willingness to band together in our battles.

As President, I look forward to working even more closely with Alison Dodge, Executive Director of MAJ, and her team: Elyssa Auerbach, Director of Programs and Events; Denise Davis, Director of Member Services; and Brandon Corbett, Director of Communications and Outreach. We have many exciting things on the horizon.

In September, we will have a strategic planning session with the Board of Governors and committee chairs. We will look at how to build on the growth and progress we have had for the last few years and look closely at how to refocus our efforts to improve the civil justice system through legislative advocacy and professional development of our members.

We are reviving the Women's Caucus so that we can continue to promote the development of women in the law at all levels of the profession. The Caucus will provide an important platform to address issues that are unique to women legislatively and in their advocacy in the courtroom.

The MAJ list serves, the *Trial Reporter* and our education programs are important tools for Plaintiff's attorneys to level the playing field for their clients. We will continue to share our trial experiences – good and bad – including what we have learned from each of our trials about the presentation of evidence by defense counsel, trial tactics, the legal arguments and what we know about the jury's reaction to what they see in the courtroom. We will help each other prepare for these situations that we encounter from many defense attorneys that have utilized similar pretrial and trial tactics.

We had a very successful MAJ Convention this past spring and are planning another MAJ Convention for the spring of 2020. It is our goal that the Convention and other programs throughout the year will support our members with programs that will meet the needs of attorneys at every level of experience.

MAJ will continue its commitment to diversity and inclusion, where the needs, perspectives and

contributions of people from all backgrounds are valued and integrated into all aspects of our organization. The best team is a diverse team including, but not limited to, women, minorities, members of the LGBTQ community and people with disabilities. We will continue to seek to work with professional service providers and vendors who share this commitment.

I want to thank all of you for your input and continued interest in raising the bar and demanding justice. I hope that you will get more involved. Bring your ideas and help us expand our reach. I welcome all of you.

Biography

Ellen B. Flynn, in addition to being the current President of MAJ, is an attorney at Dugan, Babij, Tolley & Kohler, LLC with 20 years of experience litigating complex personal injury, medical negligence and commercial cases in the state and federal courts of Maryland, the District of Columbia and Connecticut. She has served as the co-chair of the MAJ Nursing Home Section and the Trial Reporter Committee.