

VIRGINIA LAWYERS WEEKLY

Vol. 25, No. 24

November 15, 2010

www.valawyersweekly.com

A leader of the comp lawyers



Publisher's NOTEBOOK

Richmond lawyer Andy Reinhardt was in Miami earlier this month.

But it was hardly for a vacation. Reinhardt is the new president of the Workers' Injury Law and Advocacy Group, known as WILG (*pronounced will-ig*). The group held its national conference in South Florida Nov. 12-13.

WILG is a national bar group for workers' compensation attorneys. Founded in 1995, it now has about 800 members in all 50 states.

Its mission, Reinhardt said, is simple: To help injured workers and to advocate on their behalf.

Although workers' comp tends to be a state-oriented system across the country, WILG leaders have found themselves appearing before Congress recently, he said, seeking to educate legislators about their mission.

Reinhardt said he expects to be on the road to DC during his one-year term, and to appear before state legislatures to argue and lobby for and against legislation. Other travel will take him to meet with WILG members



REINHARDT

and groups across the country. He said he already has his first flight booked, heading to Denver for a meeting of trial-lawyer association presidents later this month.

The group also hosts CLE for its members and maintains an electric mailing list. Reinhardt said that WILG members often are active in the workers' comp section of the American Association for Justice, the national plaintiffs' bar, and in state groups such as the Virginia Trial Lawyers Association.

But the leaders in comp work opted to start their own group 15 years ago, and WILG is, he said, "an organization whose time has come."

Reinhardt said that he had heard that it takes about 10 years for a group like this to take off, and WILG now "has crossed that threshold."

The group hired a new executive director, Jennifer Comer, in January and started a new website this year (www.WILG.org).

Coming from a small firm and knowing what it will take to lead an up-and-coming group this year, Reinhardt hailed the strong support of his law partner, Stephen Harper, and his "patient and loving" wife, Monette.

"If you print that kind of thing, I'd like to thank them," he said. Sometimes we do.

— Paul Fletcher

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