

10-15-1984

President's Report

M. F. Thompson

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Recommended Citation

M. F. Thompson, *President's Report*, 4 J. Nat'l Ass'n Admin. L. Judges. (1984)
available at <https://digitalcommons.pepperdine.edu/naalj/vol4/iss2/1>

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Hon. M. F. Thompson

Serving as President of your Association has been, for me, a unique and challenging experience. It has been quite hectic. It has been quite taxing. But, most of all, it has been an opportunity for me to learn.

During these first few months in office, I have spoken with ex-members who did not hesitate to tell me what was wrong with NAALJ. I have discussed problems and goals with present active members. I have had members and officers call repeatedly to discuss present and future plans for the Association. And, I have even had the opportunity to talk to disenchanted members who sincerely wanted to know why they should bother with NAALJ. Even though not all of these experiences have been pleasant, I have listened carefully to everyone, and have taken all criticism as constructive.

I can well remember when I joined NAALJ. I approached the Association with great enthusiasm and a conviction that the organization would help me in my career, help me to become a better ALJ and help me to be of greater service to my agency and the public.

As your president, I have learned that more than a few other members have this same passive view of the Association. I feel most fortunate that I learned quickly that the Association would return nothing more to me than I was willing to put into it. I truly feel a sense of regret for all those members who have not learned that the Association is only as strong and effective as each and every member makes it.

Among the many acquaintances I have made since becoming a member, are those persons who are disenchanted with this Association because it has not lived up to their individual expectations. In looking into their individual contributions to the Association, I have found that the most disheartened and disenchanted is invariably the member who has never served the Association in any capacity, has never contributed time or expertise, who has attended only one meeting at most, and who expects the Association to magically solve all problems.

I truly hope that you are not one of these members. The membership of the Association is guilty of inflating our ability to accomplish in many areas. I have learned, however, that NAALJ can achieve much for all of its members, and for ALJs generally, but its greatest and most tangible rewards will be reserved for those who unselfishly contribute to furthering our organization's professional goal of rendering better service to the public. The rewards of membership, for all concerned, far outweigh the burden.