

Las Vegas Defense Lawyers Joins DRI SLDO Family

Last June, by unanimous vote, the DRI Board of Directors chartered the **Las Vegas Defense Lawyers** (LVDL) as a Qualified Defense Organization pursuant to DRI Bylaws. Thus, the Las Vegas Defense Lawyers became the latest member to join the family of DRI's 65 chartered state and local defense organizations (SLDOs). The LVDL consists of approximately 130 members, all Nevadans, and was created in 2012 to counter a well-organized plaintiff lobby that made it critical for the defense bar to organize to get its perspective out to policy makers and the general public.

M. Bradley Johnson is the current president of LVDL. He doesn't remember a time that he didn't want to be a lawyer and, more specifically, a *defense* lawyer. In an adversarial system, he felt that business owners were unfairly characterized. In fact, Brad came to his current firm of Christian Kravitz Dieter Johnson & Sluga straight from Texas Tech University School of Law in 1992.

Three things in particular appealed to Johnson about LVDL. First was their effectiveness in conveying the defense perspective to policymakers. Second was its commitment to the Las Vegas community with various projects, including the adoption of several needy families during the winter holidays. Third was their commitment to civility in the practice of law, a commitment that they demonstrate by example. As much as appropriate



Las Vegas Defense Lawyers President
M. Bradley Johnson

and possible, they try to accommodate the plaintiffs' side. "It begins by just trying to understand the pressure opposing lawyers are under," said Johnson. That civility manifests itself in advocating alternative dispute resolution where possible and putting together reasonable discovery plans. Johnson finds that if you create that sort of environment, the plaintiffs' lawyers respond, and the whole system works better.

One of the LVDL's greatest challenges is to counter the unfairness and confusion that has been created by Nevada statutes and recent court rulings regarding "joint and several" liability. "We have been fac-



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ing challenges protecting the traditional legal principle that each defendant is held responsible for only that portion of damages that coincide with its percentage of liability—several liability," Johnson says. The concept of fairness to defendants has been eroded by the concept that a "fault free" plaintiff injured in a negligence action should be able to recover jointly from two at-fault parties, regardless of their respective percentages of liability. "The result is an assault on businesses."

Johnson is happy about LVDL's association with DRI. "DRI offers us so many resources," he says. "We can work symbiotically together on defense bar problems, and we have access to DRI's library of articles and research on every imaginable topic, the advocacy of DRI's Center for Law and Public Policy, DRI's 65,000 expert witness database, its national reputation, and world class publications. We are thrilled to death to be associated with such a high-quality organization."

"The Las Vegas Defense Lawyers is a model organization in terms of its competence, the quality of its leadership, and its passion for fairness in the law. We welcome the LVDL with great enthusiasm and high expectations of our relationship together," says DRI Executive Director John R. Kouris.