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The End is Only the Beginning

Career Development





Every story has an arc, with a beginning, middle, and end. And my story as ACC chair is ending. It has truly been an honor to serve on the board of an organization that has meant so much to me during my career as in-house counsel, and an organization which itself serves so well its 45,000+ members in more than 85 countries around the globe. As a member of one of ACC's newer chapters — ACC Middle East — I've seen first-hand the positive difference ACC can make in the lives of busy in-house lawyers. Apart from anything else, the opportunity to feel part of a genuine community of peers is a massive benefit, helping to overcome the feelings of professional isolation that can affect us all at times, whether we work as sole counsel or as part of a team.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, 2020 has proved an extremely challenging year for all organizations, and ACC is no exception. I certainly never expected to experience a pandemic in my lifetime; and being in lockdown was definitely not the way I planned to spend my term as ACC board chair! That said, of all of ACC's achievements during my chairmanship, I'm most proud of how ACC's staff, board, and other volunteer leaders responded to COVID-19. While many other membership-based organizations struggled to adapt, ACC's combination of prudent governance, effective management, and operational agility ensured it had the resilience to pivot rapidly to continue to meet its members' changing needs in a time of crisis. The speedy rollout of ACC's excellent COVID-19 Resource Center at the start of the pandemic, and the [ACC Research Flash Polls](#) (examining how you, our members, are dealing with the pandemic's effects), are great examples of this, as is the move to innovative virtual meeting formats for the Asia Pacific Digital Meeting in July, not to mention ACC's very first Virtual Annual Meeting taking place on our computer screens this

month. I don't know about you, but I'm excited by the virtual AM20 sessions and networking — and especially happy about the ability to attend workshops and more on my timetable. We would love to hear about your experience at the Virtual AM20 as we continue to grow our online education offerings. Email *your thoughts* to membership@acc.com.

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Through this and more, ACC, in my opinion, has proven itself to be the premier global bar association in the world. And in its quest for continuous improvement, the organization's leadership is never quite done improving its offerings — constantly looking toward the future and working tirelessly to anticipate the evolving needs of in-house counsel. Putting the COVID-19 story to one side for a time, in the tradition of the wonderful chairs who have come before me, I would like to brag a little about some of the other amazing things ACC has accomplished during my time as chair.

Membership. Expanding our global membership is vital to keeping you connected to a diverse community of in-house counsel. This is your network, and ACC continues to grow it. As I noted above, ACC has over 45,000 members in more than 85 countries. In fact, at the time of this message, your in-house network includes members in 97 countries, and approximately 7,000 of those members joined ACC in the past 12 months.

Resources. As in-house counsel, you are busy. There is no time to reinvent the wheel and we understand that you visit ACC.com to find the resources that you need to get the job done. Therefore, curating and globalizing our resources so that you can find what you need, when you need it, is important. While enhancing our offerings is an ongoing endeavor, this year we launched ACC Resource Collections, which are just what they sound like — groupings of related resources on timely topics. Collections released this year include [Brexit](#), [Sustainability](#), [Blockchain](#), and [Contract Negotiation Skills](#).

Research. The [2020 Chief Legal Officers Survey](#) was released (further solidifying the expansive role and reach of the CLO), as well as the [2020 State of Cybersecurity Report](#) (highlighting the growing role legal departments play in creating sound cybersecurity policies and practices).

Collaborations. ACC also embarked on some great collaborations this year, including our work with [Smarter Law](#), which helps legal departments apply [ACC's Global Legal Department Benchmarking data](#), as well as our work with SHRM (the Society for Human Resource Management). ACC and SHRM jointly produced timely and topical webcasts on diversity and inclusion as part of ACC Foundation's [I.D.E.A.L. initiative](#) and continue to work together sharing resources.

Advocacy. The association continues its work position the CLO for optimum success and access via the [Seat at the Table initiative](#). Through informative conversations with CLOs like [Walmart's Rachel Brand](#); support of important initiatives like [HRH Prince Charles' Accounting For Sustainability \(A4S\)](#) program; as well as defending your rights in court, ACC is keeping you informed while also advocating for your practice. For example, this past March ACC joined the US Chamber of Commerce in filing an amicus curiae brief in *RPM International, Inc. v Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC)* before the [US Circuit Court for the District of Columbia](#) regarding the admissibility of privileged evidence. This is one of the many areas where ACC is working for you.

As this chapter comes to an end, I would like to thank my fellow board members and ACC staff for

working alongside me to address the unique challenges associated with in-house practice. We continue to grow our community and produce the global resources our colleagues need — and that is something to celebrate. As I say goodbye, please join me in saying hello to your new ACC Board Chair Jo Anne Schwendinger, chief legal officer and secretary, II-VI Incorporated. Jo Anne brings much experience to this role, and I am sure ACC will continue to thrive under her leadership.

As always, a new chair means new perspectives and change, which we know can be a good thing. One thing that never changes is ACC's commitment to the in-house community and its mission to provide the global resources and educational and networking opportunities you need to further strengthen your practice. I couldn't be prouder to be a part of ACC, and I can't wait to see what's next.

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