

My 2019 ALA Conference Experience

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The timing could not have been better to win the 2019 Scholarship Drawing to the ALA National Conference in Grapevine, TX. I was just a little over a year into the transition from Director of Information Systems to Chief Operating Officer at Marks, O'Neill, and was hopeful that attending the conference would benefit me in looking at my firm through this new lens. My week in Grapevine did not disappoint.

Of the many sessions to choose from, I chose a range of topics across my new role including Mentoring, Assessing and Changing Firm Culture, Motivating Staff, Trust Accounting Lessons Learned, Meeting Client Demands, The Future of Law Firm Office Space, and Employment Practice Risk. While some sessions were more engaging than others, I found myself taking copious notes and leaving most sessions with multiple takeaways. Upon my return I shared information with various department heads and committees. Some of my newfound knowledge was put into practice within weeks of my return, while other thoughts and ideas wove their way into longer term projects.

Throughout the conference I became engaged in many conversations before and after sessions, at meals, and during breaks. I had plenty of questions lined up about how other firms handled issues I was dealing with in my new role. While I received many viewpoints from firms across the country, as the conference unfolded I found myself offering my experiences and insight to others more often than I thought I would. The networking opportunity in this regard was one of my most rewarding experiences of the week.

I missed the Day 1 Keynote Speaker due to travel issues that many attendees encountered, however Day 2 began with USAF Colonel Nicole Malachowski whose story was beyond inspirational. "Failure is the price of entry to achieving something great" was immediately added to my list of inspirational quotes that day.

Lastly, the members of the Philadelphia Chapter could not have made me feel more welcome to be part of this year's contingent. It was great to associate names with faces as we learned and let off steam together.

Of all of the conferences I have attended in my legal administration career, this experience was one of the best. I wish to thank the chapter for this opportunity, and I look forward to Salt Lake City next year.