

A Look Back and Ahead

During the course of my year as President, I have described ACR as an orchestra focusing on three characteristics: commitment, collaboration and cohesiveness. As I take a moment to look back over the last 12 months, I see the orchestra analogy playing out in a number of areas.



ACR members have continued their commitment to excellence by increasing the ranks of our Advanced Practitioner designation and taking advantage of association-wide and section-hosted teleconferences on important topics. Increased clicks on the ACR Weekly Update are evidence that those articles are being opened and read, and the four editions of *ACResolution* provided another tool for members. The Board of Directors is piloting a Professional Development Program which creates an alliance between high quality trainers, educational institutions and conflict resolution organizations to produce advanced training opportunities to audiences within and beyond conflict resolution practice.



Collaboration is essential to the success of an orchestra. The same note played by the various sections is different, but the right notes played together sound extraordinary. Like an orchestra, ACR is uniquely positioned to create harmony among a vastly diverse set of members who representing every facet of the appropriate dispute resolution community. Our commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion is what makes us the premier organization for all conflict resolution practitioners. This year ACR has also seen collaboration occur with outside organizations, and I want to highlight two instances. First, during this year we have had the Burn the Lease campaign designed to retire a negotiated lease liability owed to our former landlord. Many of you responded to the call making donations, and I thank you. One day I received an email from ACR staff indicating that the Board of Directors of the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts' (AFCC) had sent a check for \$2,500 for the campaign. This is a visible demonstration of collaboration among like-minded organizations. We made the last

payment to the landlord and we “burned” the lease at the 2014 Annual Conference in Cincinnati.



The second example of collaboration is the partnership between the Judicial Arbitration and Mediation Services (JAMS) and ACR. Earlier this year the two organizations entered into an agreement for ACR to manage JAMS Conflict Resolution Education Grant Program. ACR is developing a process that will include the reviewing of grant proposals and making recommendations to JAMS for funding consideration. JAMS decided that ACR was the right home for this project, due to the diversity within the organization.



Finally, an orchestra has a high degree of cohesion, a sense of unity. There is the recognition that they are in this together. There is a genuine respect for the skills, talents and expertise of the other members of the orchestra. That is not to say they always agree or that they don't hit a bad note every now and then. When that happens, they practice a little harder and collaborate a little more because they recognize that the success of the whole is tied to the success of the individual. Our new website enables members to put up more of their own information, creating better opportunities for them to connect with each other, as well as with staff, sections and chapters all contributing to the cohesiveness of the organization.



ACR is an orchestra with the ability to change the world and frankly, the world needs the music that is ACR. Thank you for the extraordinary privilege of serving as conductor during this past year.



When you read this, the 2014 Annual Conference will be in full swing and I will be preparing to turn over the baton to Nancy Flatters, the President-Elect. I ask each of you to make a commitment to Nancy and a renewed commitment to the association to help move it to the next level. There is a great deal of work to be done and since an orchestra has no silent members, I encourage you to get involved.



Best wishes and continued success.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Cheryl L. Jamison". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Cheryl L. Jamison, Esq.,
President, ACR