

Chairman's Corner

by Richard C. Lambert, CPCU, ARM, AIM, ARP

■ **Richard C. Lambert, CPCU, ARM, AIM, ARP**, has been chairman of the Agent & Broker Section Committee since 2001. Lambert began his national CPCU Society involvement in 1985. Previously, he has been a regional vice president, director, chairman of the Chapter Affairs Committee, chairman of the Leadership Development Committee, chairman of the Annual Meeting and Seminars Task Force, and has served on several other committees or task forces.

The objective of the Chairman's Corner is usually to inform you, the Agent & Broker Section membership, about what our section committee is doing and what we hope to accomplish. This one will be informative, but from an entirely different perspective.

I would like to let you know about one of my best friends, **Richard A. Gerrond, CPCU, CIC**, who is one of our committee members. Rich passed away on January 15, 2005, doing something he was very passionate about, skydiving. If you ever listen to country music, skydiving is a prominent line in one of Tim McGraw's current songs, *Live Like You Were Dying*. I have no idea whether or not Rich ever listened to that song, but every time I hear it from now on, I will think of Rich. From my perspective, Rich lives his life like this song portrays. To borrow a sports term, he left nothing on the field after the game. His love of life is obvious and contagious.

I have known Rich for almost 10 years. He is a great proponent of the CPCU Society and anything to do with education. He has been a member of the Agent & Broker Section Committee since 2001. His other CPCU activities included membership on the Board of Governors and Committee/Task Force involvement. He is one of the original instructors for the National Leadership Institute and could always be counted upon to teach a class whenever he was asked. Maybe he spoke to one of you? He was involved at the local chapter level while working in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

His contributions to our section committee are invaluable. He brings a good, common-sense approach to any



Richard A. Gerrond, CPCU, CIC

topic under discussion. I have never known Rich to reach the "eyes-glazed-over look" that, at times, we are all guilty of displaying. He brought that same enthusiasm to teaching. I have almost completed the NLI series and was hoping to take his class as my last one.

He recently moved to Dallas, Texas, to take on a new opportunity that he was very excited about. After many years with his old employer, he wanted to take on a new challenge. His new organization was very fortunate to have lured him away from his prior position.

As things sometimes go, and unfortunately not often enough, Rich and I hit it off from the moment we met. Our joint interest in the CPCU Society is a given. We found we both had a deep love of baseball, family relationships, competition, excelling at whatever we tried, and beer. Not necessarily in that order. Our discussions are always lively and we always seem to pick up right where we left off from the last time we saw each other. We hear each

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other's problems, achievements, trials, and tribulations and always have an empathetic ear and try to help or counsel each other. Maybe it's my perspective, but we don't seem to get close enough to too many people, so I cherish my time around Rich.

I am sure you have noticed that I haven't put too many words in the past tense. It's pretty simple really, he's not gone, not forgotten, and never will be. Sure, some day I'll refer to him in the past tense, but not yet. Not ready. In some way, he'll always be around. I know he's watching.

Rich was an avid supporter of the CPCU-Loman Education Foundation. Memorial donations may be made to the Foundation in the name of Richard A. Gerrond. These memorials will be acknowledged to Rich's family. Won't you give a donation to it to honor our friend?

There is more on Rich in this newsletter, including comments from some of those who knew him and some pictures. This doesn't do justice to the feeling of loss we have about Rich, but I felt I needed to "Spread the Word!," to borrow a phrase we should all be familiar with. Thanks for your time and for reading this. He's not gone, not really . . . ■



Editor's Corner

by Chris O'Donnell, CPCU, ARM, AMIM

■ **Chris O'Donnell, CPCU, ARM, AMIM,** is the director of corporate risk insurance management for M&T Bank, which is estimated to currently be the eighteenth largest commercial bank in the United States. He remains affiliated with M&T's Property & Casualty Insurance subsidiary Matthews, Bartlett & Dedecker, Inc.

It is with a heavy heart that I edit this quarter's issue of *Agent & Broker Solutions* considering the recent passing of our good friend Rich Gerrond. In this issue our chairman Rick Lambert authored his regular Chairman's Corner as a tribute to Rich and we have included some photos for our collective remembrance.

My acquaintance with Rich was one of the great benefits of my service on the Agent & Broker Section Committee these past three and one-half years. Rich was one of the original members of the rather small and then still shocked group that formed in Seattle at the first national conference following the tragic events of September 2001.

Rich was at that and subsequent meetings, a positive, eager, supportive, and helpful guy for whatever task or issue was at hand. He was also very fun to be around.

I do not believe that I ever heard a negative comment from him nor did he ever seem to be off balance in his view of life, work, association efforts, and so forth, unlike many of us who more outwardly seem to struggle with such things. He was one of those rare individuals that will always stick with you.

Then again, those of you who had the privilege to know him better than I already know that.

I have included in this spot a few unsolicited tributes from his friends.

Anita Bourke, CPCU, wrote:

Rich and I first met when we worked together at PENCO. He was a student of the insurance business and very proud when he obtained his CPCU. He was always amazed that I took time to introduce him to so many CPCUs that year and he credits this with his continued involvement in CPCU. I would be the first to tell you this is not the case—it was Rich who reached out immediately upon meeting other CPCUs. His enthusiasm is infectious and his dedication to whatever he chooses to do is complete. When I was looking to hire a professional who knew the wholesale business, Rich is one of the first people I thought about. It was my luck that I talked him into coming to Dallas after many years in Oklahoma City. He began making an impact almost immediately. I talked to him the afternoon before the accident. I will never forget how happy and excited he was about his job, the people he worked with, the opportunity—and life . . . like Rick, I am not ready to have him gone. Rich is a 150 percent kind of guy. Anything he does—CPCU, education, sports—he does it 150 percent. He still lives in the hearts of all of us who know him and will be missed by us all.

Deborah Bindeman, CPCU, wrote:

Very rarely do you meet someone who you are immediately drawn to for no apparent reason—just “something” about that person makes you feel like you are “home”—even though you just met them.

That “something” is warmth, charm, understanding, compassion, empathy, unconditional acceptance, genuine interest, and humor and so much more—all rolled into one amazing person.



And, that is just a “first impression” when you meet him!!

Somehow Rich had a way of just drawing you in, and engaging you in conversations you would never have with anyone else. He had tremendous insight, and usually a unique perspective on most topics, that always made me think and re-evaluate my own opinions. He could be very persuasive in a low-key way!

Even though I only had the chance to see Rich a couple times a year over the past few years, at CPCU Society meetings, I have so many memories of the times we all went out to eat, drink, and be “merry” in any city we happened to be in. It didn't matter where we all were, because our CPCU Society family members were all there too. Just knowing him, and knowing how much he truly enjoyed and embraced his family, his friends, and his life, makes it so hard to accept that I won't see him again at the next meeting.

But that “something” about him still lives in my heart and mind, and although it is a cliché—I know that I am a better person for having known Rich. I will truly miss him.

Donald J. Hurzeler, CPCU, CLU wrote:

I was with Rich in late November in Dallas. We shared a hug. (We) talked about his brother. Talked about Rich's future. Tried to smile. We both tried not to tear up at the loss of his brother. In the end, we talked about a mutual love . . . the terrific people that make up the CPCU Society. Rich very much appreciated the comfort of his CPCU family during his time of loss.

That family has come together again . . . in support of Rich and his family. I will miss him. He was one of us.

Michael P. Holm, CPCU, wrote:

What a great tribute to Rich and to the Society functions that forge the “bond” and keep us in touch.

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Unfortunately, I didn't know Rich as well as some but I did experience firsthand his extremely warm personality, his infectious smile, his teaching talents, and his strong interest in helping others. I took the NLI facilitating class from Rich and he'd be proud of my continuing use of the principles he taught. You're right, he's not yet gone.

Dean L. Middour, CPCU, CLU wrote:

Rich Gerrond . . . Rich is one of those people you meet that you never forget. Always ready to do something different and right now. A smile on his face and a prank in his heart. Not once, but a number of times, he would refer surplus lines clients to me . . . a retailer. One client called me with a small problem. He had just been cancelled by his carrier and needed coverage "some of that liability stuff and building coverage if it was cheap" on his storage locker business. He had experienced eight losses . . . three fires, five break-ins, and that did not count the several vandalism losses. He said they, the vandalism losses, didn't count because the carrier had put a \$2,500 deductible on his policy. I referred the prospect to another friend.

I won't forget Rich, he was a great friend.

Marlys L. Maciona, CPCU, wrote:

I have only known Rich a couple of years but I am sure glad that I had the chance to serve on the Agent & Broker Section Committee with him. Rich's enthusiasm and outlook on life were contagious and because of people like him, it made you

glad that you became involved with the Society on the national level. While in Tampa I was able to spend some time with Rich and get to know him better. For the past two years, I attended a Tampa Yankee game with Rich and a few others. Like many others, I will miss Rich but I am glad that we will be able to keep his memory alive with the Rich Gerrond Memorial Fund.

I appreciate the chance to send in my fond remembrances with Rich.

Jerry W. Peden, CPCU, wrote:

Being a former naval aviator, I would ask Rich why anyone would ever want to jump out of a perfectly good aircraft. He would just look at me and laugh. Some people would also wonder why any pilot would ever want to land an aircraft on a moving target in the middle of an ocean; especially at night.

We both understood the passion of doing something we loved to do. Rich had that passion! It was the reason he was able to climb back into his parachute after his brother's accident. He loved jumping out of a perfectly good aircraft.

Almost daily, more tributes to Rich arrive in my e-mail inbox. Those included here are but a representative few. Clearly, our CPCU Society family has lost the physical presence of a great friend and he will be sorely missed.

Fortunately, his spirit will live on in our collective memories. ■

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