



Quarterly E-Newsletter

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Get to Know the Commission



Richard Evangelista, Esq.

In this section of each E-Newsletter, we will introduce you to a member of the ABA Commission on Domestic Violence to increase an understanding of the Commission, its members and its work. In this edition, we hear from Ricky Evangelista about his longstanding commitment to the Commission and his reflections on how his involvement has impacted his work and life.

Ricky currently works as legal counsel for the Public Employees Relations Board in St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands. In 2002, he began his service on the ABA Commission on Domestic Violence as a Liaison from the American Bar Association's Young Lawyers Division of which he was an active member. Then, in 2003 he was appointed as a member of the Commission.

Ricky first became aware of the Commission in 2001, when he worked as a civil legal attorney at Legal Services of the Virgin Islands and organized a domestic violence workshop for attorneys in private practice entitled, "How to Represent a Domestic Violence Victim." In preparation for the workshop, Ricky contacted the ABA Commission on Domestic Violence for assistance and the Commission helped Ricky assemble a group of attorneys with expertise in domestic violence for the workshop. Then, in 2002, Ricky attended a National Civil Law Institute that the Commission hosted in Tucson, Arizona of which he states, "I had never been to such an impressive conference." It was at this conference that Ricky met several current members of the

Commission who were presenters at the Institute and who would be presenting at his workshop in the U.S. Virgin Islands. It was then that Ricky said to himself, “Wow, I will diligently work at honing my legal skills in the area of domestic violence so that one day I may work with a group of esteemed individuals at the Commission to improve the legal response to domestic violence.”

Ricky notes that since he began his involvement with the Commission in 2002, it has increased its scope of work to not only include victims of domestic violence, but also victims of sexual assault and stalking. He describes the work of the Commission to educate as many attorneys as possible about domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking as well as provide attorneys with the tools to represent victims. He also sees the Commission as encouraging more attorneys to commit to representing victims as a part of their practice. Ricky believes that without adequate legal representation, domestic violence victims remain in the cycle of violence and batterers remain unaccountable for their behavior.

Ricky is proud of the national institutes and teleconferences that the Commission has hosted. The information delivered by the presenters on aspects of domestic violence and the law is always the most cutting edge and relevant to participants.

Working with the ABA Commission on Domestic Violence has reinforced Ricky’s belief that he needs to strive to convince every attorney in America to assist at least one domestic violence client at all times. As a member of the Commission, Ricky recognizes that he cannot personally end domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking, but he can continue to educate attorneys to do whatever is legally necessary to ensure a victim’s safety.

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