

Volunteer of the Year Speech Transcript

Tim's Introduction of Marc: "Next I'd like to honor our volunteer of the year, my good friend, Marc Johnston. Now for those who do not know, Marc created and directed OTLA's volunteer efforts to assist last year's fire victims. We had all those forest fires in August and September. And I'll tell ya, this was a herculean effort. And the dude called me and said, "I have an idea, let's do a pro bono project to help hundreds of families who have lost their houses and goods, that are sure to get screwed over by their insurance companies". Lets do it for free and let's do it in a pandemic, where we can't even meet in person. And I thought, man you are crazy! But we saw his vision and Marc, to his credit, he took that on his shoulders and ran with it, and it was a lot of background work with OTLA staff but Marc was THE GUY, I mean he was THE GUY. IT was amazing to see not just him keep his practice going, but also spent all these hours putting together this pro bono program, I mean we had online training, we had to find experts that knew what in the world fire claims involved, and what the tricks of the trade are, and what to avoid, and how to advise these people that need help and it was, it was crazy. But it was, People say oh well it was covid that was the worst experience—no it was the fire project. Like honestly, it was the fire project. And that dude right there, is the one that was at the helm, fighting, pushing, pushing this forward. And I guarantee, if he didn't have that drive, it would've never happened. So, Marc, you're awesome my friend, you are so well deserving, and I don't know if you know the numbers, but you had 70 volunteers at your disposal, and your project, your program helped over 200 hundred families, that needed help and support and guidance through that process. So, Marc, come up here bud."

Applause.

Marc's Speech: "So I got two minutes too so ill make this quick too. But um thanks Tim. You know the September 2020 fires were historic, about 3200 homes destroyed, 11 people lost their lives, and over a million acres of our forests burned. And I got the idea that we should do something about that, as an organization, when, um, my family was evacuated from Clackamas County. And my family was already at the coast, I was loading stuff up to our cars, you know, pictures, albums, birth certificates, passports, the stuff that your kids did in school, the stuff that matters to you, the little stuff. Um, as I was driving to the coast, there were so many people sleeping in the back of their cars, with their horse trailers off on the side of the roads, and at gas stations, and I said, you know, we gotta do something about that. And so that was kind of the impetus to it, it was just a historic time to help people and I guess considering the state of our forest fires, and the drought and the heat, were probably gonna have more of this coming up. But that was sort of the impetus to doing that, and there's a lot of people that really helped a lot, of course Tim and Beth, thank you for taking my call and just encouraging me to do this and run with it. And Kathleen, not sure where you are but thank you for your awesome help with the whole project. You know we tried to look at this as the state of Oregon, and where were our fires, and we found good lawyers, OTLA attorneys in every sort of area, in every region, so where there was a serious fire, there was a great Oregon OTLA attorney. And so, I wanna thank Faith Morris and Laura Johnson, Travis Prestwich, Robert Johnson, Adam Springer for taking section of Oregon near where they lived and practiced and getting together volunteers and going

out for a boots on the ground approach to meet people where they were, where they were displaced from their homes and their families and their property, and helping answer the questions. Uh, we created an awesome video series, uh it made sense to talk to the best insurance coverage attorneys from OTLA, Bob Bonapart, Clint Tapper, Fred Malard, Doug Bragg and some other people, I'm probably missing I'm so sorry if I forgot your name but agreeing to come together to make these videos, which are still online, still, I believe, still on our website, and now they're created and they're there forever. To help people deal with all sorts of property claims, all sorts of losses, um, so insurance companies don't jerk them around. I was in Arkansas doing some focus groups back in May, with an attorney buddy of mine name Sach Oliver, and I was riding up the elevator in his building and he had an awesome little poster on that elevator, and it said, Passions, plus talents, plus community needs equals your community niche. And I just thought that was really cool. So, if you can find your passions, and what you're good at, and what the community needs, then you can find your niche. And so, I just encourage everybody, that when something strikes your fancy, and you can do something about it, to find your niche, so thank you.