

The Last WORD

By Edward J. Walters, Jr.

IPSE DIXIT: A PLAQUE ON YOUR HOUSE
(With apologies to William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*,
Act 3, Scene 1, and with an assist from Vince Fornias)

You Have Been Nominated . . .

I'm sitting at my desk, reading emails, as usual, and one email comes across telling me that the sender is pleased to announce that I have been nominated as a potential winner of a global award in the Legal and Corporate Finance sector for 2016 — in England! How they received word about my prowess in the world of British law and corporate finance, I'll never know, but they did. There's no cost involved, so they say, BUT, should you choose to do so, you may pay dearly for a very fancy walnut or mahogany plaque to put on your wall for all the world to see.

Well, how pleased I am to be nominated — in England — for such an honour. (See how I spelled it?)

Back when I started practicing law some 40-plus years ago, there was only one “rating” service — Martindale-Hubbell — and, if you made the cut, all you got was an AV listing in its huge tome of a book. That's it.

Now there are many rating services. There's the U.S. News and World Report's Best Lawyers and Best Law Firms, the Bar Register of Preeminent Lawyers, the National Trial Lawyers' Top 100 Lawyers, the National Association of Distinguished Counsel, Avvo, the National League of Renowned Attorneys and Super Lawyers (some of whom are not so super). I'm sure there are others. All of these companies give the honoree the ability to tell the world by offering the sale of a plaque. Go in the waiting rooms of many lawyers nowadays — plaintiff and defense — and you will see many of these boastful plaques adorning the walls. You also may purchase a “badge” depicting the name of the service to install on your website to let people know about it should they arrive at your website.

All of these services brag about their stringent, unbiased, peer-reviewed, blue-ribbon-panel selection process. Some even list the Top 50 lawyers in your state, the Top



25 women lawyers and now even the Top 10 lawyers. I'm waiting for one of them to soon tell us who THE Top Number 1 Lawyer is . . . The Best of the Best.

The Cover of the *Rolling Stone*

Some of these services send out a magazine. For the right price, you can get your picture on the cover of a magazine. Suitable for framing, of course. For a lesser price, you can advertise inside the magazine.

Didn't Make the Cut?

Not to worry. Some of these sites allow other lawyers and clients to rate you, so you can get all of your clients (who still like you) and your lawyer friends to go on the site and post glowing recommendations about you, increasing your greatness quotient accordingly. So instead of the 6.6 rating you actually got, you can get by with a little help from your friends and boost your rating to 10.0 — a perfect 10!

The Plaques

Congratulations to you if you get selected. Now you will be inundated by companies

trying to sell you a plaque to put on the wall in your waiting room so you can show the world that you are one of the best . . . for 2016.

Next year, should you still be one of the best, you will again be inundated with requests to purchase the new 2017 plaque, which you must do, lest folks think you were the best last year, but not so much this year. What happened? Where's her 2017 plaque? And so it goes. Yearly plaque sales abound in a new cottage industry selling ego pieces to lawyers with egos, which, of course, includes all of us.

What we really need is a service telling the public who the WORST lawyers are — that would be useful information for the public, but it wouldn't sell many plaques.

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The Louisiana Bar Journal is looking for authors and ideas for future “The Last Word” articles. Humorous articles will always be welcomed, but the scope has broadened to include “feel-good” pieces, personal reflections, human interest articles or other stories of interest. If you have an idea you'd like to pitch, email LSBA Publications Coordinator Darlene M. LaBranche at dlabranche@lsba.org.