

Chartered Property & Casualty Underwriters Society Meetings

Remarks for Executive Director

"What We Can Learn from Walt Disney"

Good morning! It's great to be with you today. I always look forward to this opportunity to get out of my office and see firsthand what's happening in the chapters. And I'm happy to see how well the _____ Chapter is doing. (Comment on membership, other activities.)

One of the great things about the CPCU Society is the diversity of our membership. Our members have many different kinds of jobs and responsibilities. But I'm certain that we all share one thing in common -- that's the desire to grow and be successful in our work. And that's what CPCU Society is all about -- helping you grow in your career and attain your professional goals.

Today I want to tell you how the Society can help you get where you want to go in your career. I'll also talk about how you can contribute to the growth of our organization -- and how that will help you personally.

Let me start by asking you a question. Why did you join the CPCU Society? (Ask for audience to respond. Anticipate that answers will include continuing education, professional recognition and networking opportunities.)

It's no surprise that continuing education, professional recognition and networking opportunities are among the top reasons why you became members. I'd like to focus for a moment on networking -- one of the most valuable aspects of your membership in the Society. Networking provides you with valuable business contacts that can help to enhance your career in many ways. It also stimulates creative thinking about your work. By exchanging ideas with others, you may find new ways to approach old situations that will breathe new life into your work.

It may surprise you to know that one of the best networkers of all time was Walt Disney. Disney knew that his strength lay in his ability to think up ideas for engaging characters, develop plots and make imaginative use of technical resources. But he readily admitted that he wasn't a great draftsman -- even though he drew the first Mickey Mouse -- and after 1926, he didn't do any of the drawing for pictures coming from his studio. Instead, he relied on the talent of Disney studio artists. He also drew others into the creative process, molding and meshing their ideas to build and perfect the finished product.

There's a story that a little boy once asked Walt Disney, "Do you draw Mickey Mouse?" "Not anymore," Disney replied. "Then you think up all the jokes and ideas?" persisted the boy. "No, " said Disney. "I don't do that." "Mr. Disney," said the boy, puzzled, "just what do you do?" "Well," Disney said, "Sometimes I think of myself as a little bee. I go from one area of the studio to another and gather pollen and stimulate everyone to think and create new ideas."

(Pause)

What would it be like if Walt Disney belonged to the CPCU Society? The first thing that comes to mind is that we'd all get free passes to Disney World! But seriously, let's think about the value of networking with someone so creative. We can only imagine the new ideas he would stimulate among us. We all know he was a true visionary who was way ahead of his time. Soon after the completion of Disney World, someone remarked, "Isn't it too bad Walt Disney didn't live to see this?" Mike Vance, the creative director of Walt Disney Studios, replied, "He did see it -- that's why it's here."

We all need vision to move forward in our individual careers and as members of this organization. Our founders had a vision in 1943 when they started the CPCU Society. Those six individuals envisioned an organization of people who would try to make a difference in our industry and the world. . . who would take their profession very seriously . . . who would be life-long learners by continuing their education throughout their careers . . . and who would place more value on doing what's right than making a profit. And they built an organization that has stood the test of time -- even though they never could have guessed the issues we'd be dealing with 55 years later.

I'm sure they never thought that insurance would be sold over something called the Internet. And they never would have believed that consumers would buy insurance from the local bank instead of their insurance agent. And they certainly never entertained the idea of environmental liability. But the CPCU Society was created as a dynamic organization that would respond to the changing needs of its members. Today, we continue to be a vigorous, forward-thinking organization with high expectations for the future. We continue to expand our programs and services to provide you with the support you need to grow in your careers as our working environment continues to change.

When Walt Disney envisioned Disney World on 28,000 acres of Florida swampland, he said it was a project that would never be complete. He planned to add new attractions every year, reflecting the interests and trends of the world as it evolved. And his successors have done just that. If you've been to Disney World, you know that there's something new to see every time you go. In fact, Disney's current CEO Michael Eisner recently said, "If it's not growing, it's going to die."

That's a powerful philosophy to keep an organization vital. We share it. And we have a strategic plan to keep the CPCU Society dynamic and responsive to your needs. It has four parts and they are amazingly in sync with what Disney referred to as the four C's --

curiosity, confidence, courage and consistency. Disney considered these four ingredients to be the secret of success, or, as he put it -- "to making dreams come true." Let me tell you how they mesh with our strategic plan.

The Society's first goal is to pursue excellence in education, information and research -- and your curiosity about new ideas and developments in our industry fuels this goal. Continuing education has long been the cornerstone of the Society's mission and will continue to be integral to our success -- and yours -- in the future. From videoconferences to timely seminars and workshops planned throughout the year, we will ensure high-quality educational programs to enhance your career growth. This year, we're also providing two complete programs for your use at local chapter education events. They focus on two cutting edge topics -- "Coverage & Risk Analysis of the Sports Industry" and "Managing Risk for the High Tech Industry."

We will continue to develop new educational programs for you. . . just as the folks at Disney keep adding new exhibits at EPCOT and educational programs like the Disney Institute to provide new learning opportunities for their visitors. Curiosity and lifelong education will keep you -- and the Society -- on the leading edge of our industry.

Our second goal is to continue promoting the CPCU designation. We will do this by building corporate support, public relations, candidate recruitment and development programs. Our goal is to elevate the status and visibility of our members both within the industry and with customers so that our members will be rightfully viewed as industry leaders. This builds confidence -- Disney's second "C" for success -- in two ways. First, our members grow in confidence as the designation increases in stature. Second, your customers' confidence in your service grows when they realize they're dealing with the best qualified people in the industry.

Our third goal is to promote ethical behavior and high professional standards. Our commitment to an enforceable code of ethics is a requirement of the CPCU program and a key part of our professionalism. We will reinforce this commitment by increasing chapter participation in ethics awareness programs. We are also working to obtain industry-wide support for a code of ethics for all insurance professionals, not just our own Society.

Solid ethics requires the courage of your convictions -- Disney's third "C". Disney once said, "People look at you and me to see what they are supposed to be. And, if we don't disappoint them, maybe, just maybe, they won't disappoint us." That's what the CPCU Society is all about. We want people to look upon the Society and our members as examples of the best ethical standards in the industry -- and have the courage to aspire to the same standards.

Disney's fourth "C" was consistency . . . and most of us would agree that the Disney organization provides entertainment of consistently high quality. Let's face it . . . have you ever heard anyone say they had a bad time at Disney World? The Disney people make it their business to see that every visitor has an outstanding experience. . . it's part

of their core beliefs as an organization. And the CPCU Society shares that belief. Our organization exists to provide a consistently high level of service to you, our members -- just as you provide consistently outstanding service to your customers. This includes networking, career enhancement opportunities and other services. We're working to increase membership and to improve member communications and networking through the Internet and our Web site. You can count on the Society to provide the support you need to move forward in your career.

I've talked a lot about how the Society can help you grow professionally. Now I'd like to take just a few minutes more to show how you can help us to help you. That's by contributing to the growth of our organization. The more you spread the good word about the designation and the Society and encourage new members to join, the more you'll benefit from increased services and networking opportunities. We also encourage you to seek out opportunities to volunteer.

Remember how Walt Disney described himself as a bee gathering pollen and stimulating ideas? That's the role of the Society. We can't create all the ideas and programs and networking opportunities in a vacuum. We need your help and feedback to make the Society the best it can be. Whether you serve as a local chapter officer or a Society committee member or a national director, your ideas and contributions are crucial to the continued growth of our organization.

You can also help by getting involved in your local community -- as many of you probably have. The Society sponsors the Chapter Good Works Program which encourages CPCUs to serve the public through community service activities. Everybody wins with this program. Your local community receives much-needed help. You experience the personal satisfaction of helping others. Community awareness of your chapter and the CPCU designation is enhanced. Chapter members and new designees get to know each other as they work side-by-side toward a common goal. And we've found that chapter participation increases when members are involved in the Good Works Program.

The possibilities for community service work are endless. In the past, we've had chapters distribute smoke alarms, construct a playground in a city park, plant shade trees, volunteer at the Special Olympics, and even clean up a local beach after a damaging storm. These are just a few of the many good works done by our chapters nationwide. And all those who have participated will tell you that they've reaped abundant benefits in community recognition and goodwill as a result of these activities.

By the way, our friend Walt Disney also knew the value of community service. He received the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian award presented by the president of the United States to honor those who contribute significantly to the quality of American life.

(Pause)

Walt Disney had one very powerful voice . . . a voice that continues to have a profound

influence on the entertainment industry and the world at large. He made an enduring, positive contribution by providing good, wholesome entertainment for families to enjoy together.

In a very different way, we have the opportunity to make a positive contribution to our industry and the world as members of the CPCU Society. We have 28,000 voices to represent all that is good in our industry. Each individual voice contributes to the whole and each voice is important. Whether you are a new designee or a member for many years, I'm confident that all of you here today can and will play a vital role in helping to achieve our goals as a Society.

So I encourage you to get involved. Don't just come to the chapter meetings -- really get involved in helping to shape our future. I can promise you this -- you will get back far more than you give in terms of personal satisfaction and growth.

Together, we have the power and influence to do good, to develop our profession in a positive way and to make a valuable contribution to our industry and the world. Let's work together to make our vision of the future come true.