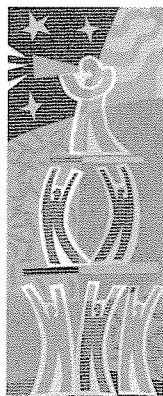




John B. Boyd

John B. Boyd is a founding member of WILG and is immediate past president. Since leaving the bench as a workers' compensation administrative law judge in 1983, his practice remains concentrated in workers' compensation, labor and personal injury litigation. He has chaired ATLA's Workers' Compensation and Workplace Injury Section, was Vice-President of the Missouri Association of Trial Attorneys, and has lectured in workers' compensation programs and seminars over the past two decades. He is counsel to the Missouri AFL-CIO on workers' issues; and is a shareholder in Boyd & Kenter, PC, with offices in Kansas City and Sedalia, Missouri. John has a B.S. from Central Missouri State University and a J.D. from the University of Missouri—Kansas City School of Law.



# Reflections on the History of WILG

By John B. Boyd, Kansas City, MO  
Immediate Past President - WILG

## Prologue

*...No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main...Any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind; and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.* John Donne, 1624



It is commonly said that history is often the best guide for the future, for if we ignore the past, we will continue to make the same mistakes. Drawing from Donne's eloquence, WILG and its coalition partners have periodically acted in union to avoid the erosion and abrogation of justice for injured workers and their families. No one group can go it alone. Any loss is felt by all, no matter which partner is in the lead. If justice for working families is to be safeguarded, WILG and organized state and national labor organizations must act as one. There is no margin for error.

## History

WILG and the National AFL-CIO ("NAFL") have participated in two 'summit' meetings held at the George Meany Center, in Silver Spring, Maryland. During the initial meeting, Jim Ellenberger, then Director of Safety and Health, NAFL, was instrumental in bringing together state AFL-CIO federation leaders, academicians, health care providers, and lawyers. His efforts were successful in getting each group to recognize our common interests and our need to work together to advance of justice for workers.

The second summit, a couple of years later, built upon those initial successes and resulted in common realizations:

- The state feds recognized that they could trust that WILG's members were committed to the common interests of advancing workers' rights and protections.
- The debate had to be turned from its focus on employer cost to whether the system is protecting injured workers and their families.
- The essential recommendations of the 1972 National Commission on State Workmen's Compensation Laws are worthy of updating to compel states' systems to be more responsive to the needs of employers and employees.
- Decades of legislative assault upon workers' compensation has been methodical and predictable, and the opposition to it has been poorly or untimely informed and organized. The cooperation between WILG, labor and its allies (such as Injured Worker Unions) needs to be further developed and strengthened.

