

The Key to Job Security: first of a three-part series

by Bruce L. Marcus, Esquire

I had the privilege of addressing your November meeting and spoke on the issue of job security for members of your association.

Under the laws of Maryland, the District of Columbia, and Virginia, employees have little or no right to their jobs if the agreement with the employer is based on an "at-will" arrangement. Simply stated, where no written contract exists between an employer and the employee, either party may terminate the relationship at any time for any reason. One exception would be those instances where discrimination or "whistle blowing" is alleged by the employee as the basis for termination. Surprisingly, I learned that very few members of the Association are employed under written agreements with their respective clubs and/or owners. This situation places Association members in the position of "at-will" employees. In an effort to raise the level of job security and improve the lot of superintendents, I would propose that the Association undertake to review its current Member Service Program to initiate and facilitate written contractual relationships between professionals and their employers.

In furtherance of this goal the first hurdle is raising the issue of a written agreement with an employer who has not previously been faced with contract negotiations. This article is directed at this problem.

Your association should adopt a resolution supporting the concept of written contracts for all of its members and should send letters to all clubs in the Section so stating. Initially, we should expect a negative response, as I do not

believe that this type of campaign will prove to be an overnight success, but will begin a process which is long term in nature.

However, it is intended to provide measurable benefits to association members in the future.

The linchpin of enhanced job security is upgrading the perception of superintendents as "Professionals." This essential ingredient must permeate your relationship with members, club owners, committee chairpersons and all those with whom you deal. Professionalism is something which aids and assists an individual in commanding respect. It begins with the way that you dress, the way that you carry yourself, the way that you project yourself on the job, and the manner and methods by which you undertake and perform your duties and responsibilities. By increasing the level of professionalism on the course and in the workplace, employees place themselves in a position to be a more vital component of a successful operation. It also affords the individual the opportunity to be taken more seriously by others when critical decisions are made on a day-to-day basis. The concept of professionalism is to be incorporated in discussions relating to the issue of a

written contract. Essentially, we will try to convey a message that: (1) the position of superintendent has widespread, varied and large responsibilities; (2) that a highly trained, well-educated person is required to staff the position in order to insure maximum levels of proficiency; (3) that persons who are well trained and who are successful in their field of endeavor are entitled to the same job security as other professionals; and (4) that the level of security required by a superintendent can only be achieved through some written agreement.

In the next issue, I will discuss the specific aspects of the contractual relationship.

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