

MY SUMMER WITH CSRP

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After a morning playing with my two children during our family's annual July vacation to Pawley's Island, South Carolina, I sat down beside my wife on the beach. My wife glanced up from the latest Kathy Reichs' novel to see if she could catch a glimpse of what book I had chosen to read during our summer vacation. Although the 323 page book which I chose was certainly the size of a novel, its spiral binding and green stripe cover suggested otherwise. My wife gave me a puzzled look when I held up the book to show that my summer vacation would be spent reading the course text to become a Certified Subrogation Recovery Professional.

I would like to report that by the time my family loaded into the Honda Odyssey on the following Saturday, I completed the text. Unfortunately, despite my best efforts and late night reading, that was simply not possible. The sections covering topics on which I had spent most of my subrogation career were fairly easy to read. However, my pace slowed considerably as I was introduced to no-fault medical payment subrogation, health care subrogation, inland marine subrogation and a variety of other areas in which I have limited experience. Fortunately, I came to the beach equipped with several highlighters enabling me to identify particular areas requiring more attention.

By mid-August I completed the text and began to answer the questions in the 98-page study guide. As August neared its end, my wife indicated she could not recall me studying as hard for the bar exam. I reminded her the bar exam was preceded by three years of school and a summer long intensive review class. Also, unlike the bar exam, I did not have the benefit of the wisdom or experience of the individuals who took the test in previous years.

By September 10th, I felt as though my studying was complete as I looked forward to traveling to Guilford Technical College on the afternoon of September 15th to complete the exam. I arrived at the College a couple of hours early on the 15th and spent the remaining time wondering around campus, text in hand, as I made one last attempt to memorize the formulas for velocity, stopping distance and net financial result.

As I listened to the exam proctor explain the testing procedure, I had flashbacks to the SAT, LSAT and other standardized tests I had taken throughout school. During the next two hours I answered 100 multiple choice questions and then checked and re-checked those questions where I was not sure of my answer. I felt a sense of both relief and anxiety as I walked out of the testing center after sealing the answer sheet in an envelope. Though I believed I passed the exam, I certainly did not feel like I over-prepared. Furthermore, due to the difficulty of the test, I still harbored some doubt as to its result.

Several weeks later I received an envelope from NASP. As it was marked Confidential, it undoubtedly contained the exam result. I retreated to my office where I opened the envelope in privacy. When I learned I passed the exam, I immediately walked down the hall to share my success with friends and associates.

Upon arriving at the NASP Conference a couple of weeks later, I saw others wearing the green ribbon which recognized the initial group of CSRP designees. During various events and meetings, we gravitated to each other where we exchanged congratulations as well as inquiries about the exam. I was pleased that everyone I spoke with shared my belief the exam was truly difficult and required a significant amount of study regardless of an individual's particular work experience. Furthermore, due to the difficulty of the exam, no one believed there was any embarrassment in not passing the exam.

On the morning of November 9, 2004, I joined the other recipients of the CSRP designation in the ballroom of the Hilton Atlanta where our designation was officially conferred. As the designees' names were read, I noticed the designees represented every industry involved in NASP. The designees included insurance professionals, attorneys and subrogation vendors. Many were names I recognized through active roles in NASP or as a result of claims during the 11 years in which I have been active in subrogation. Furthermore, I was pleased to see the designees were not dominated by a particular company or firm but represented a cross-section of firms and companies.

I am sure there will be a particular sense of pride in being part of the first group of designees. However, I know all designees look forward to welcoming new designees in 2005 as evidenced by each of us encouraging others to take the exam in 2005. I know that due to scheduling conflicts and demands on time, many very qualified subrogation professionals will never have the opportunity to take the exam. Certainly someone within our industry can have a lot of knowledge and excellence in subrogation without having a CSRP behind their name. That said, I think all new designees agree that you cannot be a CSRP without having a lot of knowledge and excellence in subrogation.

As next summer approaches, I encourage all eligible NASP members to take a different route in summer reading. Instead of the latest novel purchased at Barnes & Noble, I highly recommend the CSRP text. Although there will never be a movie based on the text, its benefits in your career will be long lasting.