



News Release

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SLA Mourns Warren Stanley, Former Chair and Industry Giant

SAN RAMON, CA—The Surplus Line Association of California (SLA) is saddened to learn that one of its former chairs of the Board of Directors has passed after a long and impactful career in the surplus lines industry. Warren Stanley, who served as SLA chair in 2008, was well-known and respected throughout the industry and provided tremendous service and leadership to the SLA for many years. Stanley was 75.

“On behalf of the SLA, I want to offer heartfelt condolences to Warren’s family, friends and colleagues,” said Janet Beaver, chair of the SLA Board of Directors. “Though I did not know him myself, I certainly knew who he was, as he was a longtime leader in our industry and respected by everyone who knew him. His contributions to the SLA and our industry were many, and I know he will be missed.”

“I’m tremendously sad to learn that our industry has lost one of its giants, not just in business but as a human being as well,” said SLA CEO Benjamin McKay. “I came to know Warren after I started with the SLA in 2012, and he was a terrific person who remained deeply engaged and interested in the industry and the SLA even in the late stages of his career and beyond. He was a fixture at our Annual Meeting every year, and I was fortunate to have the opportunity to talk with him and learn from him often. I will miss him, and I know countless people in the industry will as well.”

In addition to serving as the board chair in 2008, Stanley served as a board member from 2004-10, and the board’s secretary/treasurer in 2007. He was also a member of the Audit Committee in 2009-10 and the Technology Committee in 2008.

“Warren reshaped the Board of Directors by emphasizing the importance of each director’s responsibilities to the SLA and its members,” said Robert Gilbert, the SLA’s chair from 2018-

2020 who served with Stanley on the board for a time. “He was a dear friend and an amazing business partner. He will be sorely missed.”

Dennis Byrne, a former colleague of Stanley’s, worked with him on two occasions over the last 40 years, first at I-West Insurance Brokers in the 1980s, and later, Stanley asked him to come to work for him after he founded Wholesale Connection Insurance Services, which was acquired by M.J. Hall and Company upon Stanley’s retirement.

“Warren was one of those guys who was very pragmatic,” Byrne recalled. “He had a lot of logical sense and never let anything get him down. He always just stood up and said ‘How am I going to solve this problem?’ and he applied that to himself.”

Byrne remembered how Stanley had lost his home and nearly his life to a wildfire a few years ago and was asking his friends, including Byrne, for advice on what to do next. Byrne said he advised Stanley to sell his property and move on.

“Being a lot smarter than the rest of us, he decided to rebuild, and the market soared,” Byrne said. “He made out crazy good on it. He just had an excellent mind for business.”

Byrne also recalled that Stanley was very good at finding common ground and getting everybody on the same page.

“He was on the conservative side and I was left of center, and I always enjoyed our conversations,” Byrne said. “He’d get everybody together, calm everybody down and find a solution. He had a very commanding voice. If you’d never met him, you’d say ‘Is he putting us on?’ but it was just who he was.”

ABOUT THE SLA: The Surplus Line Association of California (SLA) operates as a self-governed private organization. Appointed by the Commissioner in 1994, the Association serves as the statutory surplus line advisory organization to the California Department of Insurance (CDI) and facilitates the state’s capacity to monitor and direct surplus line brokers’ placements of insurance with eligible surplus line insurers. Working with its members and the CDI, the Association assists its members’ compliance with California laws and regulations; helps maintain a healthy, fair, and competitive surplus line marketplace in California; and strives to protect the interests of California insurance consumers.

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