

As published in

| **The Art of Advocacy** |  
Online with **ACT of Communication**®  
April Issue 2011



For more articles and resources, visit our Knowledge Tank at [www.actofcommunication.com](http://www.actofcommunication.com)

### **The play's the thing...**

**By Nancy Adel & Barry Pollack**

*Tort law is the primary emphasis of Adel & Pollack. By fighting these battles on a no-recovery-no-fee basis, Adel & Pollack joins with other trial attorneys to protect the rights of consumers. [www.apinjurylaw.com](http://www.apinjurylaw.com)*

We at Adel & Pollack have known for a very long time that there is an overlap between acting and effective advocating. It's been 25 years since we first met our dear friends, actors Alan Blumenfeld and Katherine James, when they were teaching "What Lawyers can learn from actors."® Since then we have taught with and learned from them in the classroom, the office, and, of course, the courtroom.

People are often offended when lawyers talk about acting. Isn't that exactly what makes lawyers hated – that snake oil charm that tries to convince from a place of hypocrisy and greed? Aren't we truly inspired by the ideal of justice and wanting the best for our client? If so, then why do we need to "act"?

In response, we have learned that we are always acting, especially in the courtroom. We need to learn from actors how to be natural, to be ourselves, to let the natural advocate loose, so that the jury instinctively recognizes our sincerity and the rightness of our position.

Recognizing the value to our clients of our developing our acting skills, we also had a hunch that it would be tons of fun. So Barry and Nancy, with no past experience, decided to put on a 1-scene play at a family reunion last year. Katherine and a non-acting but savvy friend gave us a few tips. The entire family, a group of 50, showed up for this period piece about lost lovers from World War Two.

While the audience seemed more puzzled than entertained, Barry and especially Nancy kind of got the acting bug. So, being convinced that if you're a lawyer, you should be a trial lawyer, it makes sense that if you're going to act, it ought to be Shakespeare.

So, she enrolled in an “intensive” 3- weekend course though the talented folks at Will Geer Theatre at Theatricum Botanicum. This was a 6-day course culminating in the presentation of a monologue by each of the 9 students. Amazingly, the curriculum did not even deal with the specific monologues until day 5. The first four days concentrated on voice, body, poetry, rhetoric, history and dance.

Who knew that these items were important to acting?

If you could see the difference between Nancy’s monologue presentation at the beginning of the course to what it developed into at the performance on the evening of the 6<sup>th</sup> day, you would be one who knew.

Thanks to this experience, we have a new appreciation for the body and its use in communication; for the voice and the ways in which it can be strengthened; for poetry and how a lawyer can utilize poetic imagery.

As lawyers, we write much of the script, and we direct the production. As actors, we focus on presentation and communication. As a result of our acting experience, we at Adel & Pollack will add an emphasis on voice, movement, and artistic use of language to the long list of things we are already thinking about in order to communicate with our opposition, judges and jurors – and thus to maximize the result for our clients.

Nancy Adel & Barry Pollack  
Adel & Pollack

---

*Adel & Pollack was formed in 1978, after Barry Pollack and Nancy Adel had each developed skills and experience while working for other firms in California. Barry’s experiences included business litigation, as well as transactional corporate and commercial matters. The firm has the experience and resources to take on the medical profession, the automotive industry, drug companies, and, most importantly, the insurance industry.*  
[www.apinjurylaw.com](http://www.apinjurylaw.com)