



Rich Hellerich, Principal



What's in a name?...

2017 may well go down as one of my more challenging years. If for no other reason, it was a year filled with uncertainty and absurdity, especially when viewed through the prism of the DOL Fiduciary Rule and what I'm calling the "**Battle of Great Plains**".

The Battle of Great Plains began November 10 of 2016 when I was notified that, after 16 years of existence, our company name was causing confusion in the marketplace. In that 16 year period, I was unaware of the *other* "Great Plains" existence (and believe they were unaware of ours) until a consumer called our offices looking for the *other* "Great Plains". Had our team not been courteous enough to look them up and give the consumer the correct phone number, we might still be Great Plains forever.

I have spent far too much time (and tuition) during the past 15 months being schooled about trademark law from a covey of attorneys. I've learned far more than this old annuity and life wholesaler thought possible. I have also learned and believe we have the best legal system in the world **if** you choose to afford it.

Despite continued assurances that we have a strong case and would prevail, I have decided that the cost of time, energy and money to get our day in court is not in our producers' best interests.

My instinct and heart tells me that our producers are better served if we simply embrace a name-change, one that better reflects whom we serve and what we do. Instead of suffering the immense costs and time

distraction caused by this lawsuit, we can focus on better serving our agents. This includes major commitments to communication and computer upgrades that were planned with the prospect of DOL.

My biggest concern in making this change, with the amount of AMO/IMO mergers and acquisitions that have taken place in recent months, is that you know:

- **WE ARE STILL 100% Independently Owned**
- **There are no changes in current management nor any anticipated**
- **We have no hidden "agenda" with any of our carriers or other marketing organizations**
- **We exist to help you better serve your clients - the same mission we have had for 16 years**
- **We are here to stay - while we thought our old name reflected the benefits of working with Midwest folks who do what they say they'd do, we know the name doesn't matter to the hundreds of valued producers that choose to work with us.**

We are going to use this rebranding opportunity to reflect on how we serve you, how we can improve and additional ways we can help you protect and grow your business. **THANKS for your support!**