

# Certification Link

Your ABA Specialization Connection

## 2009 Roundtable Visits the Deep South

Special Celebrity Guest Speaker - read below for details....

Will "ya'll" be joining us in Savannah in March? If not, you will be missing out!

This year, the Roundtable visits Savannah, GA, a town with not only southern charm, but a rich history that will leave you feeling just a little bit smarter!

The historic Mulberry Inn, our host hotel, is right across the street from the quaint riverfront shopping area, and nestled within the the famous Savannah Squares.



This year's program content appeals to anyone involved in the certification field, including, but not limited to sessions on how social networking and Web 2.0 can work to your advantage with regards to communication, certification testing and how best to address the goals and objectives of the various levels of learning, and special guest lunch speaker

**Sonny Seiler**, the defense attorney from famous book and movie, *Midnight in the Garden of Good an Evil*. So make sure you get read the book or rent the movie before you get there! To learn more about Sonny Seiler, [click here](#).

In addition, the Friday night event will take us deep into the haunted history of Old Savannah with a trolley tour that will leave your toes curled and minds opened to new wonders, as well as dinner at the infamous Pirate's House.

Lastly, we're offering



The famous Mercer Home where the incident took place.

another opportunity for you to volunteer with colleagues at a Habitat for Humanity community service project. Registration and details about all the events can be found at <http://www.abanet.org/legalservices/specialization/round.html>

**Registration NOW OPEN!**

**[Click here](#) for details.**

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## What's Going on in the Sunshine State?

Florida Launches New Logo for 25th Anniversary. In July, Florida's certification program launched a new logo that is simple, memorable and more easily identifiable than the previous scales of justice logo. Lawyers may download the logo at [FloridaBar.org/certification](http://FloridaBar.org/certification), and will transition to its use over the next year.



Alan G. Greer received the 2008 Justice Harry Lee Anstead Award for The Florida Bar Board Certified Lawyer of the Year, which recognizes exemplary professionalism, excellence, character and commitment to the certification program and to the practice of law. Board certified in civil trial and business litigation, Greer is a shareholder with Richman Greer in Miami. He has published numerous professionalism articles and has served as a member of the ABA's Standing Committee on Professionalism. The Spohrer & Dodd firm of Jacksonville won the Award for Excellence in the Promotion of Board Certification. The firm was selected for its ongoing commitment to raising awareness of board certification by producing educational videos for use by The Florida Bar's board certification program and promoting board certification on the firm Web site, in newsletters and in news releases. Mr. Greer is a partner of former ABA Standing Committee Chair, John M. Brumbaugh.

Ervin Receives Special BLSE Commendation. The BLSE at its annual convention reception presented chief legal counsel Thomas M. Ervin Jr. a plaque of commendation in "recognition and grateful appreciation" of his diligence and commitment to The Florida Bar's Board of Legal Specialization and Education. Legal Specialization and Education Director Dawna Bicknell lauded Ervin's professional achievements and hard work on behalf of the certification program and expressed her gratitude for his commitment to excellence. Ervin served on the Supreme Court Nominating Commission, the Appellate Court Rules Committee, the Florida Bar Board of Governors and the Florida Bar Foundation. He was President of the Florida Council of Bar Associations, chaired the Professional Ethics and Fee Arbitration committees and was a member of the Amicus Curiae Committee for the Academy of Florida Trial Lawyers. Ervin is a member of the Ervin Kitchen & Ervin law firm in Tallahassee and is American Bar Foundation and American College of Trial Lawyers fellow.

The Board of Legal Specialization & Education announced that 207 lawyers in 22 specialty areas of legal practice recently earned Florida Bar board certification. Almost one-fourth of the newly certified lawyers are Young Lawyers Division members.

As of Oct. 1, 2008, there are 4,259 Florida lawyers who are board certified in one or more of the 22 practice areas.

"Polish Your Practice" CLE Seminar Available For Local Bars. Florida's legal specialization program is offering a free-of-charge CLE seminar called Polish Your Practice: Integrating Technology, Quality of Life, Professionalism and Board Certification. Certified lawyers facilitate the program at voluntary bar association meetings statewide. The materials explore quality of life principles that can enhance lawyers' lives, legal careers and professionalism, review Florida professionalism codes and creeds and touch on new trends in legal practice – Internet practices and blogs – and how to handle professionalism conflicts they might raise. Presenters also discuss board certification's merits and professionalism elements. The seminar originally was presented as a joint project of the BLSE and the 10th Circuit Judges Professionalism Committee. For more information, please contact BLSE consultant Lisa Garcia at 850/561-5769 or [lgarcia@flabar.org](mailto:lgarcia@flabar.org).

# Minnesota State Bar

In 2008 the MSBA Real Property Certification Board certified a record number of 31 new specialists. To celebrate this achievement we hosted a reception the evening before the annual Real Estate Institute. To help defray costs we invited law firms with newly certified specialists to become sponsors. Four levels of sponsorship were developed and included a listing with the firm's name and logo on a thank you poster at the event, the firm's name and logo in a sponsor recognition ad in the December issue of the MSBA's Bench & Bar magazine and an opportunity to purchase reduced rate display ads to congratulate their specialists (similar to a "super lawyer" ad). The goal was to congratulate the new specialists on their achievement as well as to promote certification in Minnesota by having well-respected law firms advertising the importance of certification.



Chuck Hoyum of Old Republic National Title Insurance and Chair of the Real Property Section Council and Meaghan Harper, MSBA Director of Section Services

The concept was very well received. More than \$4500 was pledged by sponsors, covering 100% of the cost of the reception and promotion. The turnout was terrific with the newly certified specialists as well as members of the Real Property Certification Board and the Real Property Law Section Council and their guests attending. All of the newly certified specialists were introduced and a special recognition was given to our out-going Board chair after 19 years of service.

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## Changes at the Minnesota State Bar

On December 12th 2008, the MSBA Assembly approved the Criminal Law Section's Report and Recommendation and authorized them to file a Certification Agency Application with the MN Board of Legal Certification. This is the first time a new MSBA certification area has sought accreditation since 1989.



# Attention Hurricane Ike Victims!

Approximately 1/3 of the 2008 applicants approved to take the TBLS exams lived in the counties in and around Houston which were hit the hardest by Hurricane Ike. Many had homes or offices (sometimes both) without power for 1-3 weeks. TBLS has arranged for a special administration of the exam in Houston three weeks after the regularly scheduled exam date to accommodate those affected.

TBLS is developing an exam database which catalogs exam questions by specialty area and subject matter. This function will allow TBLS to "build" an exam from items stored in the database. TBLS hopes this will limit the amount of time spent in drafting an exam, help eliminate duplicate or similar questions and more easily allow TBLS to determine if the specialty area topics are covered in the appropriate proportion. It will also allow TBLS to better track the performance on essays and multiple choice questions. It is anticipated that this component of the database will be in place for development of the 2009 exams.

## Being Green is Easy (well not always!)

Green lingo is everywhere! Confused? Check out this list of commoning used "green" words.

**Greenwashing** - the practice of making an unsubstantiated or misleading claim about the environmental benefits of a product, service or technology

**Carbon footprint** - is a measure of the impact that human activities have on the environment in terms of the amount of greenhouse gases produced, measured in units of carbon dioxide.

**LEED Certified** - The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System™ encourages and accelerates global adoption of sustainable green building and development practices through the creation and implementation of universally understood and accepted tools and performance criteria.

**Clean Coal** - is an umbrella term used in the promotion of the use of coal as an energy source by emphasizing methods being developed to reduce its environmental impact. The concept of clean coal is said to be a solution to climate change and global warming by coal industry groups, while environmental groups maintain that it is greenwash (definition above), a public relations tactic that presents coal as having the potential to be an environmentally acceptable option. Some groups oppose the concept because emissions and wastes are not avoided, but are transferred from one waste stream to another.

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