ABA Section of Real Property, Trust and Estate Law
2020 Law Student Writing Contest

Contest Rules

Goals: The goal of the American Bar Association (ABA) Real Property, Trust and Estate Law Student Writing Contest (Contest) is to encourage and reward law student writings on real property, trust and estate law subjects of general and current interest. As part of this effort, the ABA will sponsor the Contest, which invites law school students to submit to the ABA Section of Real Property, Trust and Estate Law (Section), original essays on a current topic dealing with real property, trust and estate law. The essay contest is designed to attract students to the real property, trust and estate law field, and to strongly encourage scholarships in these areas.

Who May Enter: Open to any law school student in good standing, over the age of 21, who is currently attending an ABA-accredited law school within the United States and its possessions, and who is a citizen or legal permanent resident of the United States. Officers, employees, and agents of the ABA and their immediate family or household members are not eligible to enter or win.

Deadline: Entries must be received by the Section, in accordance with the specifications detailed below, no later than May 31, 2020, 11:59 pm Central Time.

Essays: To enter, submit an essay on a current topic dealing with real property, trust and estate law. “Real property, trust and estate law” is a broad category containing numerous practice disciplines. Without attempting to define the area precisely, the subject is intended to include matters within law school curricula in courses entitled: Property; Estate and Gift Tax; Wills and Decedents’ Estates; Real Estate Development; Environmental Law; Land Use Planning; Federal Taxation; Real Estate Finance; Secured Transactions; Debtors and Creditors; Employee Benefit Plans; Planning, Drafting and Negotiating Commercial Transactions; Taxation and Regulation of Non-Profit Organizations; Business Succession Planning; Life Insurance and Other Insurance Products; Trusts and Trust Law; Wealth Management; Fiduciary Income Taxation; Estate Planning; and Probate and Estate Administration. The Section will interpret the scope of the subject broadly to ensure that the Contest affords the greatest degree of flexibility in writing on these subject areas. Entrants are encouraged to write on subjects of national interest; entries that address principally the law of a single state will be considered, but will rarely be recommended for publication. Entrants must submit their own original essay. If the winning essay is found not to be an original it will be disqualified and a new winner will be selected.
Specifications: Essays must be submitted electronically, as an attachment to an email message to monica.larys@americanbar.org with the subject line, “Writing Contest Entry”, formatted for standard, 8-1/2 x 11-inch paper, double spaced, sent in PDF format. All margins must be one-inch. Essays must not exceed 50 pages of double-spaced typed text, including footnotes. Only one essay is to be submitted for each entrant. PLEASE NOTE: The entrant’s name is not to be on any page of the submitted essay. Entrants should write essays in traditional law review style, presenting a scholarly discussion with full citation to authority in footnotes. Lengthy lists and outlines normally are not appropriate within the text of an essay; however, they may be included as appendices to a textual discussion. For example, if the law of all states on a subject is surveyed, the essay may compare analytically how and why the law differs between jurisdictions. A listing of the law by jurisdiction within the body of the essay would generally not be appropriate. If such a listing of the law by jurisdiction would be of particular value to the reader, it may be included in an appendix to the essay. Entrants should write essays in the active voice and in the third person. Essays should conform to The Bluebook-A Uniform System of Citation and to the Texas Law Review Manual on Style. Entrants who do not have access to these books should conform generally to William Strunk, Jr. & E.B. White, The Elements of Style.

Only essays not previously submitted for publication by the specified deadline for entries are eligible. (Submitting, or having submitted, an essay to a student writing competition sponsored by another ABA section or specialty group, or to the student writing competition sponsored by the American College of Trust and Estate Counsel (ACTEC), will not be considered as “submitted for publication,” and indeed such dual entries are encouraged where appropriate.) Essays prepared for law school credit are eligible provided they are the entrant’s original work. Each entry shall be the original work of a single individual. Jointly authored essays are not acceptable. Although the entrant may obtain some guidance from others, the work must be that of the entrant. The ideas and work reflected by each essay must be the entrant’s own. The entrant must perform all of the key tasks of identifying the topic, researching it, analyzing it, formulating positions and arguments, and writing and revising the essay. The entrant may inform another of the entrant’s progress in performing these tasks, and accept a reasonable amount of responsive advice. For example, the entrant may obtain a professor’s opinion that a proposed topic is a good choice, that a detailed outline should be reorganized or that a first draft unwisely omits to cover a subtopic or to raise and respond to criticisms of the entrant’s thesis. The entrant must limit the amount of such guidance sought or received, so that the final essay truly reflects the entrant’s own ideas and work, not another’s. Section officers, Council members, and Section staff have no role in evaluating entries to the Contest, and hence may provide permitted guidance, if solicited by an entrant.

As for the Contest’s judges, the current panel of judges includes active law faculty, retired law faculty, and practicing professionals. It may occur that one or more of these judges will be asked by one or more entrants to provide guidance of the kind permitted under these rules. If a member of the judging panel provides guidance as permitted, the entrant so advised shall identify by name, on the entry form, any judge who does so. Any judge so identified shall not be involved in evaluating the relevant entry or, if the relevant entry is selected for potential recognition by other judges on the panel, in determining which prize (if any) shall be awarded to the entry so advised.
Submission: Entries must be submitted electronically in PDF format, as an attachment to an email message to monica.larys@americanbar.org with the subject line, “Writing Contest Entry”. PLEASE NOTE: The entrant’s name is not to be on any page of the submitted essay. Entrants’ identities will not be known to the judges. In addition to the essay, each entrant must complete and submit an official entry form published by the ABA that will provide the title of his or her essay and date, the entrant’s printed name and signature, law school, year of expected graduation, and permanent and temporary addresses and telephone numbers.

Prizes: The first-place winner will receive $2,500 cash, a full-tuition scholarship to the University of Miami School of Law’s Heckerling Graduate Program in Estate Planning OR Robert Traurig-Greenberg Traurig Graduate Program in Real Property Development for the 2020-2021 or 2021-2022 academic year, a one-year free membership in the Section, and free round-trip economy-class airfare and weekend accommodations to attend the Section’s Fall Leadership Meeting, October 1–3, 2020 in Anchorage, AK (airfare, hotel accommodations, and luncheon ticket are valued at approximately $1,000). The first-place winner will also be announced in an upcoming issue of Probate & Property, the Section’s magazine, and RPTE eReport, the Section’s electronic newsletter. The second-place winner will receive $1,500 cash, one-year free membership in the Section, and will be announced in Probate & Property and eReport. The third-place winner will receive $1,000 cash, one-year membership in the Section, and will be announced in Probate & Property and eReport. No substitutions for prizes will be permitted, except at the sponsor’s discretion, in which case a prize of equal or greater value will be substituted. Any taxes are the responsibility of the winners. Winners will receive a 1099-Misc for the full fair market value of the prize, including travel. Only one winner allowed per family or household. Duplicate prizes will be awarded in the event of a tie.

The Contest judges will only recognize entries of distinction. Accordingly, ABA gives no guaranty that there will be any Contest winners, or that all prizes will be awarded. At the discretion of the judges, one or more winning essays may be forwarded to the editors of Real Property, Trust and Estate Journal to be considered for publication in an upcoming issue. Certain entries may also be forwarded to the editors of Probate & Property and eReport for consideration.

Entries: All expenses involved in preparing and submitting an entry are the entrant’s responsibility. Winners must relinquish all rights to the ABA to reproduce entries in any medium and without restriction. Essays submitted must have been created by the entrant and must not have been submitted for publication (as of the specified deadline for entries) in any other medium. By entering, the winners give the ABA the right to reproduce any essay material submitted in any medium without time, use, or territorial limitation, as long as such is for noncommercial purposes. Entries will not be returned. All entries submitted to the ABA become the property of the ABA, although entrants retain copyright to their submission. Entries will also be shared with the University of Miami School of Law.

Entrants must submit their essays with a title page included. The title page should contain only the essay’s title. PLEASE NOTE: The entrant’s name is not to be on any page of the
submitted essay. Entrants’ identities will not be known to the judges. In addition to the essay, each entrant must complete and submit an official entry form published by the ABA that will provide the title of his or her essay and date, the entrant’s printed name and signature, law school, year of expected graduation, and all permanent and temporary addresses and telephone numbers. Forms that require signatures should be printed, signed, scanned and then attached to the e-mail message which submits the writing contest entry. The entrant’s signature verifies: (1) that the entrant has read the competition rules and accepts the conditions stated; (2) that the essay is written by the entrant; (3) that the entrant releases the ABA from all liability; and (4) that, if chosen as a winner, the entrant releases the use of his or her essay and name for publication in any medium and for editorial, advertising, and promotional usage, without compensation, in connection with the promotion by the ABA of this and succeeding essay contests sponsored by the ABA. Entrants must also submit the requisite publication release form attached to the official entry form. If the essay title page, official entry form, and the required release forms are not all fully completed, signed, and submitted with any entry, the entry will be disqualified. Proper submission of all required forms constitutes acceptance of all conditions set forth in these rules.

**Judging:** The essays will be judged on the basis of research and analysis, choice of topic, writing style, originality, and contribution to the literature available on the topic. Winners will be selected in August 2020, by a panel of judges that will include academics and practitioners appointed at the discretion of the Section’s Publications Committee. The decision of the judges shall be final. The Section will attempt to notify all winners by mail and announce the awards in the eReport and Probate & Property prior to November 2020. If a potential winner does not respond within thirty days after ABA’s first attempt to contact him or her, or if the contact is returned as non-deliverable, the potential winner forfeits all rights to be named as winner or receive a prize, and an alternate winner may be chosen. The Section will announce the awards in the eReport and Probate & Property prior to November 2020. The contest judges seek to recognize entries of distinction. Accordingly, the Section reserves the right not to award a prize if, in the judgment of the Section’s Publications Committee and/or the judges, it determines that there are no eligible entries of sufficient quality or merit to warrant award of a particular prize. The decision of the Publications Committee and the judges is final.

**Conditions of Participation:** All expenses involved in preparing and submitting an entry are the entrant’s responsibility. Winners must relinquish all rights to the ABA to reproduce entries in any medium and without restriction. Essays submitted must have been created by the entrant and must not have been submitted for publication (as of the specified deadline for entries) in any other medium. By entering, the winners give the ABA the right to reproduce any essay material submitted in any medium without time, use, or territorial limitation, as long as such is for noncommercial purposes. Entries will not be returned. All entries submitted to the ABA become the property of the ABA, although entrants retain copyright to their submission. Entries will also be shared with the University School of Law. Entrants must submit their essays with a title page included. The title page should contain only the essay’s title.

By participating in the Contest, each entrant agrees to these Official Rules and the
decisions of the Sponsor and releases and discharges the Sponsor, including but not limited to the ABA, subsidiary and affiliated entities, and each of their respective officers, directors, members, employees, independent contractors, agents, representatives, successors and assigns (collectively, Released Parties) from any and all liability whatsoever in connection with this Contest, including without limitation legal claims, costs, injuries, losses or damages, demands or actions of any kind (including without limitation personal injuries, death, damage to, loss or destruction of property, rights of publicity or privacy, defamation, or portrayal in a false light) (collectively, Claims). Except where prohibited, acceptance of a prize constitutes a release by any winner of the Released Parties of any and all Claims in connection with the administration of this promotion and the use, misuse or possession of any prize.

**Odds of Winning:** Chances of winning may vary depending on the number of entries. However, Sponsor reserves the right not to award some or all of the indicated prizes if, in any year, the judges determine that available entries are not of sufficient quality to merit selection.

**Laws and Regulations:** This Contest is governed by U.S. law and all relevant federal, state, and local laws and regulations apply. By entering, all participants agree that the Contest shall be governed by the laws of the State of Illinois, that the courts of Illinois shall have exclusive jurisdiction, and that Cook County, Illinois shall be the venue for any dispute or litigation relating to or arising from the Contest. Void where prohibited by law. **No purchase is necessary to win.**

**TN Residents Only:** The entry form for Tennessee residents will exclude the requirement that the entrants allow the use of their names in any medium, and for editorial, advertising, and promotional usage, without compensation, in connection with the promotion by the ABA of this and succeeding essay contests sponsored by the ABA.

**Opt-Out Option:** Any individual may elect to opt out of receiving future contest or competition mailings from the ABA by calling the ABA Service Center at 800-285-2221.

**Privacy Policy/Data Collection:** Information provided by entrants in connection with this Contest is subject to the ABA’s privacy policy, available at [http://www.americanbar.org/utility/privacy.html](http://www.americanbar.org/utility/privacy.html)

**Sponsor:** The ABA Section of Real Property, Trust and Estate Law, 321 N. Clark Street, Chicago, IL. 60654 Phone: 312.988.5000, [http://www.americanbar.org](http://www.americanbar.org)