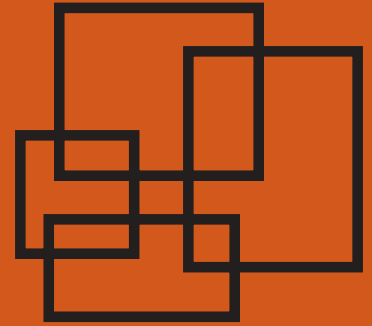


CERTIFICATION LINK

Your Quarterly ABA Specialization Connection



SPRING/SUMMER 2003

NewsLink

What's new from programs across the country



◆ The Summer Meeting of the **Standing Committee on Specialization** will take place in Lake Louise, Alberta, Canada on June 20-21. The business meeting will begin with breakfast Friday, June 20 and will adjourn no later than noon on Saturday, June 21. The meeting will take place at **Fairmont Chateau Lake Louise**, 111 Queen Lake Louise Drive, Lake Louise, Alberta, Canada; phone: (800) 257-7544 or (403) 522-3511). For more information, call Tori Wible at (312) 988-5753.

◆ The **National Board of Trial Advocacy (NBTA)** will conduct the fall administration of the national trial certification examination on October 11, 2003 in various locations throughout the United States. Applicants will be tested on their knowledge of trial practice, ethics and evidence relevant to their chosen specialty area. For locations and information on applying for certification, go to www.nbtanet.org.

2003 Roundtable Roundup

What do you get when you add certification programs administrators, lawyers and the Arizona sun? This year, the answer was another successful Roundtable.

Reviews ranged from "Thoroughly informative and enjoyable, good topics and participation" to "Overall, the Roundtable is excellent and provides and opportunity to review, refresh and exchange ideas and determine best course of action to support specialization."



A Taliesin West tour guide explains the philosophy and landscaping of Frank Lloyd Wright's winter studio.

Topics covered basic certification and a Program Administrators Workshop, as well as "Managing Certification Information Through Technology" and "ADR and Trial Certification."

At the annual social event, attendees enjoyed a tour of Taliesin West, Frank Lloyd Wright's winter studio in North Scottsdale that continues to be a center of study in



The setting sun highlights Wright's choices of color at his Western studio in North Scottsdale, Arizona.

unique American architecture, followed by dinner at the Coyote Grill.

Every year, attendees find the Roundtable to be the best place to network, share ideas and meet other administrators of certification programs, both state-run and national. The Standing Committee on Specialization, which is meeting in June, will be discussing where to hold the 2004 Roundtable. Watch our web site for details and we hope to see you next year! ◆

Log on to www.LegalSpecialists.org for program updates and links and the latest certification news



Message from the Florida Supreme Court by Chief Justice Harry Lee Anstead

Tech Tip

Making It Easier to Open Recently Used Files

Microsoft Word 2000, Excel 2000, and PowerPoint 2000 by default keep track of the last four documents you recently opened and list the documents at the bottom of the **File** menu.

You can easily and quickly open a recently used document by simply clicking on the name of the document you want to open.

If you want to list more documents on the file menu, you can customize Word, Excel, and PowerPoint, to allow for as many as nine documents to be listed.

To list more documents on the File menu:

1. Click

Tools>Options>General tab.

2. Select the **Recently used file list** check box, and then choose the number of files you want displayed (1-9) in the **entries** box.

3. Click OK.

Now the **File** menu will list the quantity of files you selected.

Dear Colleagues:

In 1998, when The Florida Bar's certification program was celebrating its 15th birthday, I was privileged to speak to the Bar's certification leaders. I believed then as I do today, that board certification is one of the crown jewels of the Florida justice system. As the first chair of the Supreme Court Commission on Professionalism, I was particularly interested in the interplay between board certification and the Court's efforts to promote professionalism.

Since 1998, there has been marked progress in the number of lawyers certified and the number of specialty areas available for certification. However, a key factor in maintaining and improving the quality of the board certification process is extending the program to a greater percentage of the Bar. We have now reached 20 years of board certification, and we still have much work to do, both on certification and professionalism.

The Court originally sanctioned board certification because the program serves the public by promoting excellence and professionalism among Florida lawyers and providing a benchmark for informed decisions for clients, referring attorneys, and hiring attorneys. While the public good was and is the most important component of the Court's objectives, the benefits to lawyers and the effective administration of justice in Florida cannot be overstated.

The public's perception of lawyers, the climate of our adversary and other legal processes, and the administration of justice all benefit from enhanced professionalism and certification. In fact, in its own attempts to improve the administration of justice, the Court has identified its initiative on professionalism as the most effective means for consistently striving to improve the system. What better way to improve the system than to improve the conduct of those responsible for its administration.

Certification should be the capstone for a lawyer's professionalism goals. The character, competence, and commitment that define professionalism also constitute the essential formula for certification. A lawyer who specializes should aspire to become certified as a visible way to demonstrate that lawyer's commitment to professionalism and excellence. Board certification is reliable proof of the character and commitment that sets a lawyer apart. Your oath as an attorney and your commitment to your clients and your profession require that you be the best lawyer you can be and that you assist others to do so. An effective way to do that is to participate in and promote the board certification program. I sincerely encourage you to do so.

Judges, lawyers, leaders of the Bar, mentors, and law firms must be committed to the standards and ideals of professionalism, excellence, and service that we cherish for our profession and our justice system. Let us keep the jewels of certification and professionalism brightly polished so they shine for all to see.

Respectfully,

Harry Lee Anstead
Chief Justice

Reprinted with permission from the Florida Bar Journal, April 2003

Bright Ideas from the Specialization Listserv

What is the biggest challenge to expanding your certification program? What are some of the ways you try to overcome them?



Our biggest challenge is convincing the lawyers that board certification for them is just as important as board certification for doctors. The concept is the same! Now if we could just get the judges to require a certified specialist to appear before them; just as the doctors need to be certified for hospital admitting privileges. I don't see that happening in the near (or distant) future. So, what do we do: ask the states to accept and encourage certification! A good number of states have but our lobbying efforts need to be heavily concentrated at the state bars and Supreme Courts.

Roberta Hugus
Executive Director
National Board of Trial Advocacy



Some state regulations are not favorable to certification. In addition, the national programs must complete accreditation processes in a handful of states. The processes are time consuming, and some are associated with hefty fees. They typically duplicate the ABA accreditation process. These resources could be used to promote certification and enhance benefits to certified attorneys.

Michelle L. Anderson
Executive Director
American Board of Certification



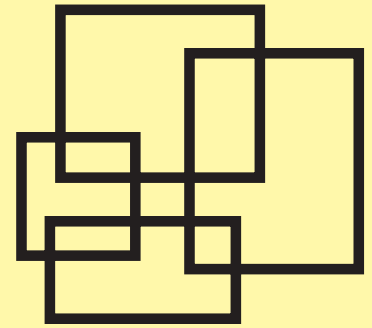
"Unofficially" the biggest obstacle to creating a new area of specialization is the resistance of the local bar associations. My experience is that the officer positions of the local county bar associations perceive specialization as a threat to their political influence and therefore oppose specialization. My experience with the process has been limited to: 1) Labor and Employment Law, and 2) Real Estate Law.

Robert Henderson
State Bar of California, Office of Certification



Biggest challenge: getting our governing body (NC State Bar Council) to support specialization, particularly the creation of new specialties. To overcome this challenge: talking to members of the council in an effort to address their concerns; constant reiteration of the public purpose for specialization.

Alice Mine
Executive Director
North Carolina State Bar Board of Legal Specialization



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The views expressed in *Certification Link* are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the policies of the American Bar Association. The contents of this publication have not been approved by the ABA House of Delegates and do not constitute ABA policy.

Be a part of the action!

The Specialization Listserv is an active online forum for ideas, questions and tips.
To join, email specialization@abanet.org.