

**Morris K. Udall Inn of Court  
Orientation  
August 28, 2006**

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A message from our president, Hon. Deanell Tacha.



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## General Information

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American Inns of Court (AIC) are designed to improve the skills, professionalism and ethics of the

bench and bar. An American Inn of Court is an amalgam of judges, lawyers, and in some cases, law professors and law students. Each Inn meets approximately once a month both to "break bread" and to hold programs and discussions on matters of ethics, skills and professionalism.

Looking for a new way to help lawyers and judges rise to higher levels of excellence, professionalism, and ethical awareness, the American Inns of Court adopted the traditional English model of legal apprenticeship and modified it to fit the particular needs of the American legal system. American Inns of Court help lawyers to become more effective advocates and counselors with a keener ethical awareness. Members learn side-by-side with the most experienced judges and attorneys in their community.

An American Inn of Court is not a fraternal order, a social club, a course in continuing legal education, a lecture series, an apprenticeship system, or an adjunct of a law school's program. While an AIC partakes of some of each of these concepts, it is quite different in aim, scope, and effect.

American Inns of Court actively involve more than 20,000 state, federal and administrative law judges, attorneys, legal scholars and third-year law students. Membership is composed of the following categories: Masters of the Bench—judges, experienced lawyers, and law professors; Barristers—lawyers with some experience who do not meet the minimum requirements for Masters; Associates—lawyers who do not meet the minimum requirement for Barristers; and Pupils—third-year law students. The suggested number of active members in an Inn is around 80.

Most Inns concentrate on issues surrounding civil and criminal litigation practice, and include attorneys from a number of specialties. However, there are several Inns that specialize in criminal practice, federal litigation, tax law, administrative law, white-collar crime, bankruptcy, intellectual property, family law,

or employment and labor law.

The membership is divided into "pupillage teams," with each team consisting of a few members from each membership category. Each pupillage team conducts one program for the Inn each year. Pupillage team members get together informally outside of monthly Inn meetings in groups of two or more. This allows the less-experienced attorneys to become more effective advocates and counselors by learning from the more-experienced attorneys and judges. In addition, each less-experienced member is assigned to a more-experienced attorney or judge who acts as a mentor and encourages conversations about the practice of law.

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## Mission and Goals

### Mission of the American Inns of Court

The Mission of the American Inns of Court is to foster excellence in professionalism, ethics, civility, and legal skills.

### Goals of the American Inns of Court Foundation

- I. To promote the American Inns of Court mission by encourageing members of the legal profession to participate in an American Inn of Court.
- II. To help ensure the vitality and continuity of local Inns.
- III. To communicate a culture of excellence in professionalism, ethics, civility and skills to the legal community and generally.
- IV. To ensure the long-term financial viability and growth of the American Inns of Court.

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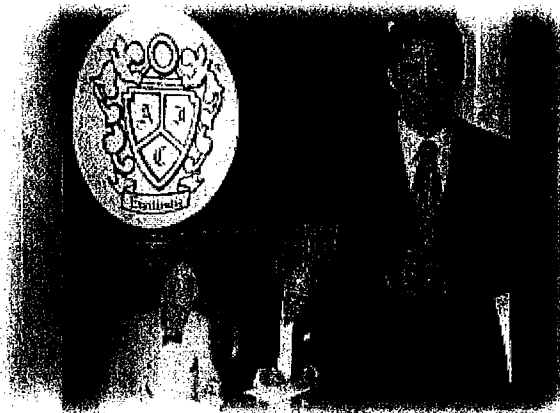
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## History



The American Inns of Court concept was the product of a discussion in the late 1970's among the United States' members of the Anglo-American

exchange of lawyers and judges, including Chief Justice Warren E. Burger and Chief Judge of the Ninth Circuit J. Clifford Wallace. Chief Justice Burger subsequently invited Rex E. Lee (then Dean of the J. Reuben Clark School of Law at Brigham Young University and later United States Solicitor General) and Dallin Oaks (then president of Brigham Young University and later Justice of the Utah Supreme Court) to test the idea.

At the suggestion of Rex Lee, a pilot program was entrusted to Senior United States District Court Judge A. Sherman Christensen (pictured at right), who honed the idea into a feasible concept. The first American Inn of Court was founded in 1980 in the Provo/Salt Lake City area of Utah, and included law students from Brigham Young University. Within the next three years, additional American Inns formed in Utah, Mississippi, Hawaii, New York, and Washington, D.C.

In 1983, Chief Justice Burger created a committee of the Judicial Conference of the United States to explore whether the American Inn concept was of value to the administration of justice and, if so, whether there should be a national organization to promote, establish and assist American Inns, and promote the goals of legal excellence, civility, professionalism and ethics on a national level. The committee reported to the Judicial Conference affirmatively on the two questions and proposed the creation of

the American Inns of Court Foundation. The Judicial Conference approved the reports and, thus, endorsed the American Inn concept and the formation of a national structure. In 1985, the American Inns of Court Foundation was formally organized.

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### Professional Creed

**Whereas**, the Rule of Law is essential to preserving and protecting the rights and liberties of a free people; and

**Whereas**, throughout history, lawyers and judges have preserved, protected and defended the Rule of Law in order to ensure justice for all; and

**Whereas**, preservation and promulgation of the highest standards of excellence in professionalism, ethics, civility, and legal skills are essential to achieving justice under the Rule of Law;

**Now therefore**, as a member of an American Inn of Court, I hereby adopt this professional creed with a pledge to honor its principles and practices:

- I will treat the practice of law as a learned profession and will uphold the standards of the profession with dignity, civility and courtesy.
- I will value my integrity above all. My word is my bond.
- I will develop my practice with dignity and will be mindful in my communications with the public that what is constitutionally permissible may not be professionally appropriate.
- I will serve as an officer of the court, encouraging respect for the law in all that I do and avoiding abuse or misuse of the law, its procedures, its participants and its processes.
- I will represent the interests of my client with vigor and will seek the most expeditious and least costly solutions to problems, resolving disputes through negotiation whenever possible.
- I will work continuously to attain the highest level of knowledge and skill in the areas of the law in which I practice.
- I will contribute time and resources to public service, charitable activities and pro bono work.
- I will work to make the legal system more accessible, responsive and effective.
- I will honor the requirements, the spirit and the intent of the applicable rules or codes of professional conduct for my jurisdiction, and will encourage others to do the same.

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### Frequently Asked Questions

#### **Is the AIC in competition with other legal organizations?**

No. The American Inns of Court is a unique organization and does not try to duplicate the role of a bar association, or legal trade association. In fact, many local and state bar associations, and other legal organizations, have endorsed or sponsor Inns of Court.

#### **What does it cost (in terms of both time and money) to join?**

Membership in an Inn of Court requires active participation. Most Inns hold monthly meetings from September through May. Additionally, members are expected to participate in pupillage teamwork to develop one of the monthly programs. Many Inns also have structured mentoring programs that require additional time.

Inns of Court must charge dues to cover the cost of meals at the monthly meetings, other local costs and dues to support the national organization. The amount can vary widely, depending on location, member type, and the style of meals served at meetings.

If you are interested in joining an Inn, be sure to ask what the time commitment will be, as well as the dues that must be paid.

#### **How do I Join?**

Please visit the "Join an Inn" section of this web site.

#### **How Does it Work?**

Please refer to the "General Information" section of this web site.

#### **Does the AIC offer a certification program or registry of qualified lawyers?**

No.

#### **How many judges/lawyers are in the AIC?**

The American Inns of Court is one of the fastest growing legal organizations in the country. Today, there are nearly 25,000

judges and lawyers actively participating in an Inn of Court. There are also nearly 50,000 judges and lawyers who are alumni of an Inn.

**How many law schools are affiliated with the AIC?**

There are more than 100 accredited law schools participating with one or more Inns in some way.

**Does the AIC have a political action arm?**

No. The American Inns of Court is a 501(c)(3) organization and, as such, does not do any political lobbying or take positions on political issues.

**Are the American Inns tied to the English Inns?**

While the American Inns of Court were inspired by the English Inns and we share a collegial relationship, there is not formal or legal relationship.

**Can I visit the English Inns of Court?**

Members of the American Inns of Court enjoy visitation privileges established by a Declaration of Friendship signed by the English and American Inns of Court. [Click here](#) for more information.

**Can I purchase on line CLE from the AIC?**

Not at this time.

**Is the AIC just for trial lawyers?**

Originally, the Inns were started as a way to improve trial advocacy skills. The mission of the American Inns of Court today, however, is broader and focuses on ethics and professionalism: issues that all legal professionals share.

**How do I nominate someone for a national award?**

Nomination procedures and deadlines vary by award. [Click here](#) for more information.

**Can the AIC help me locate a good lawyer in another part of the country?**

Many Inn members will refer business to other Inn members across the country. The American Inns of Court, however, does not offer a referral service.

**Can I talk to someone in my area about the AIC?**

Find an Inn near you. Members of Inns are usually quite happy to talk about their experiences.

**Do the courts see any benefit to the AIC?**

The American Inns of Court have been endorsed by the Conference of Chief Justices, the Judicial Administration

Division of the ABA, and the Seventh Circuit Committee on Professionalism.

**Do judges give preference to other AIC members in their courts?**

No. The American Inns of Court give judges and lawyers an opportunity to discuss the ethical and professional issues that they share. However, since the primary focus of Inn membership is ethics, there is a strong assumption that neither judges nor lawyers will use their Inn membership in a way that would violate their ethical duties.

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### Mentoring Programs

Sharing experiences and insights between seasoned members and less experienced practitioners is a fundamental principle of American Inns of Court.

Mentoring may take place during the regular, monthly meeting, as well as within the pupillage team as it meets to plan and prepare a program for presentation at a meeting. Mentoring may also take place in a relationship designed for this purpose with scheduled meetings between the "wise and trusted counselor" and the less experienced member. Mentoring may also occur in small groups that meet in addition to monthly Inn meetings.

The national office has materials in our program library to help your Inn set up a mentoring program.

#### RELATED LINKS

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[Sample Mentoring Materials](#)