

BELMONT UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF LAW

American Inn of Court

2015-2016

CHAPTER MANUAL

AMERICAN INNS OF COURT

The American Inns of Court is the fastest growing legal organization in the country. Today, there are over 350 chartered American Inns of Court in forty-eight states and the District of Columbia. More than 24,000 state, federal, and administrative law judges, attorneys, legal scholars, and law students are currently active members of an American Inn of Court, and there are 51,000 alumni members.

American Inns of Court are patterned after the English Inns of Court that began in 1292 when King Edward I directed his Chief Justice to satisfy a growing need for skilled advocates at the Royal Court at Westminster. The English Inns of Court grew in number and importance during the Middle Ages. They emphasized the value of learning the craft of lawyering from those already established in the profession. Their collegial environment fostered common goals and nurtured professional ideals and ethics.

In 1977 Chief Justice Warren E. Burger and other American lawyers and judges spent two weeks in England as part of the Anglo-American Exchange. They were particularly impressed with the collegial approach of the English Inns of Court and with the way in which the Inns passed on to new lawyers the decorum, civility, and professional standards necessary for a properly functioning bar. Following his return, Chief Justice Burger authorized a pilot program that could be adapted to the realities of law practice in the United States.

Chief Justice Burger, former Solicitor General Rex Lee, and Senior United States District Judge A. Sherman Christensen founded the first American Inn of Court in 1980. The Inn was affiliated with the J. Reuben Clark School of Law at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah. The number of Inns increased slowly at first, but the growth of the movement began to accelerate in 1985 with the creation of the American Inns of Court Foundation.

The Hamilton Burnett AIC, Tennessee's first American Inn of Court, was founded in 1988 in Knoxville. The Harry Phillips AIC, Tennessee's second Inn, was formed in 1990. Since then, six other Inns have been formed in Tennessee — The Leo Bearman, Sr. AIC in Memphis in 1995; The Tennessee John Marshall AIC in Franklin in 1997; The Andrew Jackson AIC in Murfreesboro in 1998; The Justices Ray L. Brock, Jr.-Robert E. Cooper AIC in Chattanooga in 2001; The Howell Edmunds Jackson AIC in Jackson in 2010; and the Belmont University College of Law AIC in Nashville in 2011.

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 for judges, lawyers, academicians, and students of the law in order to perfect the quality, availability and efficiency of justice in the United States.

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 respect 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.

BELMONT UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF LAW AMERICAN INN OF COURT

The Belmont University College of Law AIC was founded in 2011 in Nashville. The focus of the Belmont University College of Law AIC is on practical skills, ethics, and professionalism.

Each attorney member will be expected to serve as a mentor for two or three Belmont University College of Law first-year students. Mentors will:

- Help mentees make the transition into law school
- Assist with the future success of mentees by helping them make connections within the local legal community
- Serve as a role-model for mentees
- Meet mentees during a kick-off reception which will be held during first-year orientation
- Communicate with mentees by e-mail, phone, or one-on-one meetings
- Share any tips or general advice with mentees about what to do during law school to be successful after graduation
- Assist mentees with practice-related questions
- Advise mentees on practice options
- Introduce mentees to the practice of law by asking them to accompany you to trials, client interviews, depositions, closings, mediations, etc.

MEMBERSHIP

Members are divided into four classifications. Masters of the Bench (“Benchers” or “Masters”) are lawyers and law professors with fifteen or more years of experience and federal, state, and local judges. Barristers are lawyers and law professors with from five to fifteen years of experience. Associates are lawyers with less than five years of experience. Finally, Pupils are law students at Belmont University College of Law.

The Inn’s members are drawn from Davidson County and the surrounding counties. Membership is open to all qualified persons, regardless of race, color, sex, age, religion, national origin, or handicap. Thus, the Belmont University College of Law AIC reflects the rich diversity of the bench and bar in Middle Tennessee and includes representatives of the plaintiffs’ bar, defense counsel, solo practitioners, government lawyers, corporate counsel, law professors, persons working in large and small firms, and federal, state, and local trial and appellate judges. Efforts are made to ensure that no law firm or type of practice is disproportionately represented.

Masters and Barristers serve 4 year terms. Associates serve 2 year terms. Students are members of the Inn during their second and final year of law school. At the conclusion of their terms, Masters may be invited to serve an additional term or terms. Other members

are only eligible for re-election to the Inn after at least a one-year hiatus. Members are not permitted to change their membership classification during their term but may be placed in a different classification if they are re-elected to the Inn.

In addition to the active members, the Inn may extend emeritus status to Masters who have served continuously for 5 years and are in good standing. Emeritus members may participate in the Inn's educational and social programs at their own expense. Honorary membership may be conferred upon individuals on the basis of distinguished service to the bench or bar, furtherance of the objectives of the American Inns of Court or other noteworthy achievements. Honorary membership may be extended to non-lawyers.

SELECTION OF MEMBERS

In the spring of each year, a membership committee solicits nominations for new Masters, Barristers, and Associates from the Inn's active members and from state and federal judges. The membership committee then identifies persons who have a demonstrated interest in developing their own professional skills and in improving the quality of justice in Middle Tennessee and submits its recommendations to the Inn's executive committee. The executive committee extends the invitations to join the Inn.

Belmont University College of Law students participate in a mentoring program with the Inn during their first year of law school. Second and third year Belmont Law students are eligible for student memberships. The students are recommended based on their academic performance, participation in extracurricular activities, and whether they have demonstrated an active interest in the practice of law.

All lawyers, law professors, and judges living and working in Davidson County or in any county contiguous to Davidson County are eligible for membership in the Belmont University College of Law AIC either as Masters, Barristers, or Associates. Former members of the Inn may be nominated for membership as long as they have not been active members of the Inn for at least one year. The Inn favors making the experience available to as many lawyers practicing in Middle Tennessee as possible.

ANNUAL DUES

Annual dues are based on classification: Masters \$300, Barristers \$250, and Associates \$200. Pupils pay no dues. The funds provided by the dues defray the Inn's operating expenses, including the cost of the members' meals at the monthly Inn meetings, the dues to the American Inns of Court Foundation, and the CLE fees charged by the Tennessee Commission on Continuing Legal Education. Partial or full scholarships based on financial need may be available upon request.

The American Inns of Court Foundation has received a 501(c)(3) designation from the Internal Revenue Service, and the Belmont University College of Law AIC benefits from this designation as an affiliate of the Foundation. Members may deduct their dues either as a business expense or as a charitable contribution. Members electing to deduct their Inn dues as a charitable contribution must reduce the amount of their contribution by the value of the meals.

MEETINGS

The Belmont University College of Law AIC's regular meetings are typically held on the second Tuesday of the month from September through April at Belmont University College of Law. In addition to the regular meetings, the Inn may hold a new member orientation, a welcome reception before the start of the Inn year, and a holiday party during November or December.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

All active members are expected to attend and to participate actively in the Inn's meetings. Two unexcused absences during a program year will be deemed to be a resignation unless the executive committee waives the provision for good cause. Persons who are unable to attend a particular meeting must inform the president prior to the meeting of the reasons for their absence. Absences without advance notice are not excused.

GUEST POLICY

The Inn's programs are primarily for the members' benefit. However, members may invite guests. Members who wish to invite guests must inform the president in advance of the meeting of their guests' names. They must also agree to be responsible for the cost of the guests' meals and for the continuing legal education fees if their guests desire credit for attending the program. Members may pay for their guests prior to the meeting or may request to be billed. If you plan to bring a guest, please contact Concetta Smith at (615) 460-8254.

TEAMS

The Inn's active members are divided into seven teams composed of Masters, Barristers, Associates, and at least one Pupil. Team assignments may be changed for good cause. Members desiring to change teams must do so as early as possible. They must also

find a member of another team that has not yet presented a program and who is willing to take their place. If this happens, the member must inform the president of their reason for changing teams and the name of their replacement.

The teams are encouraged to meet monthly, or more often if necessary, to prepare their program and to promote comradery among the team members. The teams choose their own meeting places and times, but are expected to notify their team liaison when their meetings are scheduled.

Each team is led by a Captain. Captains are responsible for convening the team, assuring that the team members attend the Inn's meetings and activities, and facilitating contacts among team members between Inn meetings. The co-captains also supervise the preparation of the team's program and are responsible for all other team activities.

Each team must prepare and present one of the Inn's seven programs. Programs should be presented in such a manner that they will be eligible for 1.5 hours of continuing legal education credit. In this regard, each team member should familiarize themselves with Tenn. S. Ct. R. 21, § 4.

In addition to presenting a program, the teams provide Inn members an opportunity to become better acquainted with other lawyers practicing in Middle Tennessee. The teams are the principle component of the Inn's mentoring activities. Their diverse membership is intended to build an inter-generational relationship that encourages frank and personal discussion of matters of practice, ethics, civility, and all other aspects of the practice of law. The most experienced team members are encouraged to pass on the best of the practice to the less experienced members. Accordingly, Masters are encouraged to provide their Associate and Pupil teammates with opportunities to observe them in court, in deposition, or in the office.

CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION CREDIT

The Inn has been certified as a CLE provider by the Tennessee Commission on Continuing Legal Education. Members may earn as many as 10.5 hours of CLE credit by attending all seven of the Inn's programs. The number of credits available is subject to the approval of the Tennessee Commission on Continuing Legal Education.

Members and guests desiring to obtain CLE credit must sign an attendance form at the conclusion of each program. The members' CLE fees are included in their dues, but members are responsible for the payment of their guests' CLE fees. The current CLE fee is \$1.00 per credit hour.

PROGRAMS

The seven programs offered during the year are at the heart of the Inn's monthly meetings. They focus on practical legal skills with an emphasis on ethics, civility, and professionalism in lawyering. They generally involve a demonstration or presentation of principles, skills, techniques, and relationships involved in trial and appellate court proceedings or alternative dispute resolution proceedings and in activities preliminary to courtroom appearances. These programs also incorporate opportunities for critique and discussion.

Each team presenting a program must:

- Select a program format that will present the assigned topic in an interesting and informative manner.
- Prepare written materials that satisfy the requirements of Tenn. S. Ct. R. 21, §§ 4.03 & 5.01(e). These materials are either posted on the Inn's website or are handed out at the meeting.
- Prepare an American Inns of Court Program Report Form to be included in the Foundation's national *Programming Manual*. You can find the form online at www.innsofcourt.org under Forms and Links, Award Nominations.

The Inn will also underwrite the meal costs for persons who are not Inn members but who have been invited by a team to be part of a program.

With prior approval, the Inn will provide up to \$100 to each team to help defray the costs of its program.

AMERICAN INNS OF COURT WEBSITE

As a member of the Belmont University College of Law AIC, you can access great content to help you make the most of your membership experience on the American Inns of Court website. The website address is home.innsofcourt.org. The e-mail address you provided to the Belmont University College of Law AIC is your user name and your website login. When you first access the website, please click on "SIGN IN" at the top or bottom of the page. After entering your e-mail address, click on the "Reset Password" button. Your password will be e-mailed to the e-mail address you entered in the text box.

THE AMERICAN INNS OF COURT FOUNDATION

The American Inns of Court Foundation is a non-profit, tax exempt organization. It was created in May 1985 by and for the individual American Inns of Court. By becoming an active member of a local American Inn of Court, individuals automatically become members of the American Inns of Court Foundation. The objectives of the Foundation include: to charter Inns nationwide; to serve and foster communication among Inns; and to encourage membership in American Inns of Court. Our Inn pays annual dues to the Foundation.

The Foundation provides several benefits to Inn members, including (1) a subscription to *The Bench*, a bimonthly newsletter providing information on American Inns of Court events at a regional and national level, as well as local events involving other Inns, and columns and articles dealing with timely issues of legal ethics; (2) a listing in the *National Membership Directory* published each year with the assistance of the West Group; and (3) a reciprocal visitation agreement with the four English Inns of Court which enables individual Inn members to visit and dine in the English Inns. American Inns of Court members are required to obtain a letter of introduction from the Foundation before visiting one of the English Inns.

The Foundation also hosts a national conference that is traditionally held in May and is rotated among cities throughout the country. In addition to the annual conference, the Foundation holds annual regional workshops, usually on Saturdays, which focus on how to run an effective Inn. In October of each year, the Foundation hosts an annual leadership dinner at the United States Supreme Court for the purpose of honoring local, regional, and national leaders and to present the A. Sherman Christensen Award, the Lewis F. Powell Award for Professionalism and Ethics, and the Sandra Day O'Connor Award for Professional Service.

The Foundation may be contacted at:

American Inns of Court Foundation
1229 King Street
Second Floor
Alexandria, Virginia 22314
Telephone: (703) 684-3590
Fax: (703) 684-3607
Web site: www.innsforcourt.org

GOALS OF THE AMERICAN INNS OF COURT FOUNDATION

- I. To promote, establish and charter American Inns of Court throughout the United States.
- II. To help ensure the vitality and continuity of local Inns.
- III. To facilitate the exchange of ideas, experiences and ongoing education among members of the American Inns of Court, thereby maintaining an institutional forum where judges, lawyers, academicians and students of law, working together, pursue the highest goals of the legal profession.
- IV. To shape a culture of excellence in American jurisprudence by promoting a commitment to professionalism, ethics, civility and legal skills in the practice of law, and transmitting these values from one generation of lawyers to the next.
- V. To ensure the viability and long-term stability of the American Inns of Court Foundation.

2015-2016 Meeting Schedule

The Belmont Inn of Court's regular meetings are held on the second Tuesday of the month from September 8, 2015, through April 12, 2016, at Belmont University College of Law. In addition to the regular meetings, the Inn will have a new member orientation on a date to-be-determined and an opening reception on August 25, 2015, at the law school.

August 12, 2015	7:30-8:30 a.m.	New Member Orientation
August 25, 2015	6:00-8:00 p.m.	Reception
September 8, 2015	6:00-8:00 p.m.	Technology/Gadgets in Legal Practice
October 13, 2015	6:00-8:00 p.m.	Domestic Violence/Elder Abuse
November 10, 2015	6:00-8:00 p.m.	Sports Law
January 12, 2016	6:00-8:00 p.m.	Same-Sex Marriage
February 9, 2016	6:00-8:00 p.m.	Advertising in the Digital Age
March 15, 2016	6:00-8:00 p.m.	Cannabis
April 12, 2016	6:00-8:00 p.m.	Criminal Procedure- Nuts and Bolts

INN GOVERNANCE

Governance of the Belmont University College of Law AIC is entrusted to the officers and the executive committee. The officers include: president, counselor, secretary/treasurer, reporter, program chairs, and membership chairs, and the at-large executive chairs. The president and counselor must be Masters, and at least one of them must be a judge. The other officers and at-large executive committee members may be drawn from any membership category.

The membership committee also nominates the Inn's officers and at-large executive committee members. Elections are held in conjunction with the last meeting of the program year. The president and counselor are elected by a majority of the Masters, and the other officers are elected by a majority of the entire membership. Officers serve for a one-year term and are eligible to serve successive terms.

OFFICERS FOR 2015-2016

President:	Judge W. Neal McBrayer
Counselor:	Judge Kelvin Jones
Secretary/Treasurer:	Katherine Knight
Membership Chair:	Wendy Longmire
Programming Chair:	John Nefflen
Programming Vice Chair:	Robert (Jaz) Boon
At-Large Executive Committee:	Benjamin Glover & Joseph Hubbard