

# The Chester Bedell American Inn of Court



## Bylaws

### Article One

#### General

**Section 1. Purpose.** The purposes of the Chester Bedell American Inn of Court are in its Organizational Charter issued by the American Inns of Court Foundation.

**Section 2. Nature of Association.** The Chester Bedell American Inn of Court shall be and remain chartered and affiliated with the American Inns of Court Foundation as a member Inn and shall be an unincorporated association composed of judges, practicing lawyers, law school educators, recent law school graduates, and law students who accept an invitation to membership.

**Section 3. Location.** The Chester Bedell American Inn of Court shall be in the City of Jacksonville, County of Duval, State of Florida.

### Article Two

#### Organization

**Section 1. The Executive Committee.** The Executive Committee shall be composed of the officers and other active members as determined by a majority vote of Masters present at a meeting called for that purpose. The duties of the Executive Committee and its members are in the Organizational Charter, as set forth below:

- a) Set the time, date, and location of at least six regular meetings during the operative year and ensure notice to all members entitled to attend each meeting by hand delivery, U.S. mail, or e-mail at least fifteen days before the meetings;
- b) Call any special meeting as it deems necessary and schedule an annual elections meeting open for attendance of all Masters;
- c) Determine the Order of Business at meetings;
- d) Nominate new Barristers for selection by Masters at the annual elections meeting;
- e) Nominate new Masters for selection by the Masters at the annual elections meeting;
- f) Grant Emeritus status to active Masters;
- g) Select and extend membership to Associates upon recommendation of active members of the Inn or based upon written applications;
- h) Select and extend membership to Pupils upon recommendation of law schools or based upon written applications;
- i) Nominate persons for election as Honorary members;
- j) Select either the President or Counselor to serve as a member of the American Inns of Court Foundation during his or her term in office;
- k) Establish committees that may be necessary to carry out the business, responsibilities and objectives of the Inn;
- l) Levy and assess dues in amounts it deems appropriate;
- m) Establish the beginning and end of the operative year and schedule the events to occur;
- n) Organize and place members in the Pupillage Groups;
- o) Perform other duties as assigned by the President or Counselor.

**Section 2. The Officers.** The officers of the Inn shall be a President, a President-elect, a Counselor, a Counselor-elect, a Secretary/Treasurer, and such other officers as determined by a majority vote of Masters present at a meeting called for that purpose. The officers, other than the Secretary/Treasurer, shall serve a one-year term, unless a two-year term is recommended by the Executive Committee and approved by the Masters, and may succeed themselves only once. The Secretary/Treasurer shall serve a one-year term and may serve additional terms if recommended by the Executive Committee and approved by the Masters.

a) Duties of the President and Counselor. Besides other duties that may be imposed by the Masters and by the Trustees of the American Inns of Court Foundation, the President and the Counselor shall have the following duties, which, absent agreement between them on division, shall be allocated by vote of the Executive Committee of the Inn:

- (1) Schedule and preside at all meetings of the Inn;
- (2) Ensure that an annual curriculum and agenda for Inn meetings and activities are developed and furnished to members;
- (3) Notify members of their appointment to serve on the Inn of Court Committees;
- (4) Call and conduct meetings of officers and committees as required to plan and conduct activities of the Inn;
- (5) Conduct all Inn activities under the Articles, Bylaws and Policies of the American Inns of Court Foundation and the Charter and Bylaws of the Inn;
- (6) Supervise and monitor Pupillage Group activities to encourage the proper functioning of this important aspect of Inn organization;
- (7) Encourage attendance at all Inn meetings;
- (8) Serve and liaison with other Inns of Court as they may be established;
- (9) Extend Invitations for membership in the Inn of Court as authorized by the Executive Committee and, when applicable, upon recommendation of the Membership Committee;

(10) Fulfill the duties of the other Officer if a brief absence occurs of either President or Counselor.

b) Duties of the President-elect and Counselor-elect.

(1) The President-elect and Counselor-elect shall take office as President and Counselor, respectively, at the conclusion of the President's and Counselor's terms of office following the meeting in which the new President-elect and Counselor-elect are elected.

(2) The duties of the President-elect and Counselor-elect shall be determined by the President and Counselor.

(3) If the President or Counselor has an extended absence or cannot act for an extended period, his or her duties shall be performed by the respective officer-elect. Brief absences by either officer will be filled by the other officer. If the President or Counselor should cease to hold office for any reason, the respective officer-elect shall serve as that officer for the remainder of the term of office vacated, and shall then serve as officer for the term for which he or she was elected. If both officer and respective officer-elect should cease to hold office for any reason, the Executive Committee shall elect an acting officer to hold office until the next meeting designated for elections.

c) Duties of the Secretary/Treasurer. The Secretary/Treasurer shall:

(1) Prepare, maintain, and forward to the American Inns of Court Foundation Secretary, at least annually, a complete roster of all present and past members of the Inn specifying name, last known address, telephone number, membership category, beginning date of membership and ending date of membership;

(2) Prepare and maintain such minutes or records of meetings of the Inn as directed by the Executive Committee or the American Inns of Court;

(3) Receive and disburse monies and other property paid to the Inn of Court under directives and policies of the American Inns of Court Foundation;

(4) Prepare and maintain accurate financial records of the Inn under the directives and policies of American Inns of Court Foundation;

(5) Furnish application forms to persons interested in becoming members of the Inn and see that the Executive Committee receive such completed applications;

(6) Issue appropriate certificates of membership to the members of this Inn;

(7) Deliver notice of meetings, by hand delivery, U.S. mail, or e-mail, to those active members entitled to attend, upon the direction of the Executive Committee;

(8) Perform other duties as assigned by the President or Executive Committee.

**Section 3. Election of the President-elect and Counselor-elect.** The President-elect and Counselor-elect shall be elected in the following manner:

a) The President-elect and Counselor-elect shall be elected every year at the meeting designated for that purpose. The date and location of this meeting shall be determined by the Executive Committee. Notice of this meeting shall be given to each active Master by hand delivery, U.S. mail, or e-mail no later than fifteen days before the meeting.

b) Nominations for these offices shall be made by the Executive Committee.

c) The President-elect and Counselor-elect must be elected from among the Masters, and unless otherwise authorized by the Board of Trustees of the Foundation, either the President-elect or the Counselor-elect must be a judge.

d) Only active Masters may vote in the election of the President-elect and Counselor-elect. The election will be conducted in a manner to be determined by the Executive Committee.

**Section 4. Election of the Secretary/Treasurer and Holders of Later Created Offices.** The Secretary/Treasurer and the holders of any later created offices shall be elected in the following manner:

a) The Secretary/Treasurer and the holders of any later created office shall be elected every year at the meeting designated for that purpose. The date and location of the meeting shall be determined by the Executive Committee. Notice of this meeting shall be given to each active member of the Inn by hand delivery, U.S. mail, or e-mail no later than fifteen days before the meeting.

b) Nominations for these offices shall be made by the Executive Committee.

c) A member of any class of active membership may be nominated for these offices.

d) Only active Masters may vote in the election of these officers. The election will be conducted in a manner determined by the Executive Committee.

**Section 5. Committees.** The Executive Committee may establish standing and ad hoc committees from among the active members of the Inn and may change or discontinue committees. The officers shall appoint committee members and chairs of the committees who shall serve as directed by the Executive Committee.

**Section 6. Pupillage Groups.** All active members will be assigned to a Pupillage Group by the President or the President's designee.

a) Each Pupillage Group shall be chaired by a Master appointed by the President or the President's designee and whose duties include general supervision over the Group, monitoring of attendance and participation by Group members, encouragement of meaningful participation in the Group's activities, encouragement of contact between Masters and other members of the Group between meetings, and general supervision of the presentation of the Group's topics.

b) Each Pupillage Group shall be composed of individuals from each category of Inn membership.

c) Each Pupillage Group shall conduct at least one program a year at an Inn meeting on an assigned topic. The program should present practical and provocative problems, techniques, and ethical considerations to stimulate in-depth discussions during and following the programs. The President or the President's designee will select a Program Chair for each Pupillage Group.

**Section 7. Quorum.** A quorum is established by a majority of Inn members entitled to vote in an election. Members may not vote by proxy. However, the Executive Committee may establish procedures to allow balloting by mail or e-mail.

## **Article Three** **Membership**

**Section 1. Active Members.** There are four classifications of active members in an American Inn of Court, as defined in the bylaws of the American Inns of Court Foundation, and as set forth below. There shall be a limit of one hundred twenty members in the Inn, with the goal of having the following approximate annual breakdown of membership within categories, as determined each year by the Executive Committee: Sixty-five Masters of the Bench, thirty-five Barristers and twenty Associates. However, the Executive Committee shall have the authority in a year to exceed the one

hundred twenty member cap for good cause shown.

a) Masters of the Bench:

(1) Masters of the Bench: Membership as Masters of the Bench (sometimes referred to as “Benchers”) may be held by judges, lawyers and law teachers with more than fifteen years of experience (as determined by the date of their first admission to the bar of any state) who have demonstrated superior character, ability, and competence as trial and appellate advocates.

(2) At least half of the active Masters must be practicing lawyers.

(3) Retention of status as a Master is contingent upon reasonable Inn activity to be periodically reviewed by the Executive Committee.

(4) There is no required tenure of membership in this category but Masters should serve continuously for at least five years before becoming eligible for election to Emeritus status. Such status is subject to the approval of the Executive Committee.

b) Barristers:

(1) Membership as Barristers may be conferred upon lawyers with more than five and up to fifteen years of experience and who have demonstrated good character and a desire to improve and refine their skills as trial and appellate advocates.

(2) Each Barrister will serve staggered three-year terms so that approximately one-third of the Barristers will be succeeded each year. If a Barrister cannot serve the entire three-year term or the Executive Committee determines that the Barrister has not demonstrated sufficient participation in Inn activities, an interim Barrister may be selected to replace the Barrister; and upon termination of the original Barrister’s term, the interim Barrister may be eligible to serve another three-year term, subject to the approval of the Executive Committee.

c) Associates:

(1) Membership as Associates may be conferred upon lawyers with zero to five years of experience.

(2) The term of membership for Associates is one year. An Associate’s membership may be terminated at the sole discretion of the Executive Committee.

d) Pupils:

- (1) Membership as Pupils may be held by students at an accredited law school.
- (2) The term of membership for Pupils is one year.
- (3) A Pupil's membership may be terminated at the sole discretion of the Executive Committee.
- (4) Pupils may participate in all activities of the Inn but will not be voting members.

**Section 2. Inactive Members.** The Executive Committee may confer Emeritus and Honorary memberships.

a) Masters of the Bench - Emeritus.

- (1) Emeritus Masters membership status may be granted on the basis of distinguished service to the Inn.
- (2) Emeritus Masters will be under no obligation to pay dues, attend meetings or participate in other Inn programs but will enjoy all privileges of active membership except the right to vote.
- (3) Emeritus Masters will retain such membership status for life if they desire.

b) Honorary Members.

- (1) Honorary membership status is based upon distinguished service to the bench or bar, in the education of law students, in furtherance of the objectives of the Inn of Court, or in the achievement of other noteworthy accomplishments.
- (2) Honorary Members may be elected from time to time upon nomination by the Executive Committee and upon a two-thirds affirmative vote of a quorum of Masters present at a meeting called for that purpose. Election shall be by secret ballot.
- (3) Honorary Members will be under no obligation to pay dues, attend meetings, or participate in other programs of the Inn but will have all privileges of membership except the right to vote.



**Section 3. Invitations to Membership.** Memberships shall be conferred upon those accepting invitations authorized by the Executive Committee and extended by the President. The Executive Committee's discretion in approving persons for membership is absolute and non-reviewable. Invitations to membership will be made upon the basis of the recommendations of the Executive Committee. Membership shall not be denied to any person based on race, creed, religion, sex, age, disability or national origin.

## **Article Four** **Fiscal Matters**

**Section 1. Fiscal Year.** The Inn's Fiscal Year for financial reporting shall be the same as the operative year set by the Executive Committee.

**Section 2. Management of Fiscal Matters.** Financial matters within the Inn shall be managed and controlled under the policies and directives established by the American Inns of Court Foundation, the Charter of this Inn, and these Bylaws.

a) The Inn shall remit annually to the American Inns of Court Foundation a reasonable amount to be levied by the Board of Trustees of the Foundation to pay its proportionate share of operating expenses of the Foundation.

b) The Executive Committee is empowered to levy and collect assessments in the form of dues in the amounts in which it may deem appropriate to meet its obligations to the American Inns of Court Foundation and to this Inn's operating needs. Failure to pay assessments and dues within a reasonable time and after reasonable notice may be considered by the Executive Committee as grounds to terminate membership of the person in default.

c) The Secretary/Treasurer will manage the financial matters of the Inn. The Secretary/Treasurer will provide notice of the dues assessments, keep the books to account for the expenses of the Inn, and effectuate the payment to the Foundation.

## **Article Five** **Meetings and Attendance**

**Section 1. Schedule for Meetings.** Meetings shall be held at least six times per year at such times as the Executive Committee may determine. The Inn shall endeavor to have at least one social event per year wherein members may invite guests.

a) The Secretary/Treasurer of the Inn shall monitor attendance at meetings

and shall submit the names of those who have three absences to the Executive Committee. Regular attendance at Inn functions by active members is not strictly mandatory; however, it is strongly encouraged for the benefit of both the individual Inn member and the other Inn members. After three absences, the member will be contacted by the chair of the Membership Committee to determine if he/she wishes to remain in the Inn. If the member does not desire to remain an active member of the Inn, he/she will be dropped from the rolls and all dues will be forfeited.

## **Article Six** **Relations**

**Section 1. Relations with Courts.** The Inn shall be and remain outside the jurisdiction of the courts but shall endeavor to work in close cooperation with the trial and appellate courts. Federal, state, and local trial and appellate judges will participate in the organization in the tradition of common law.

**Section 2. Relations with Other Inns of Court.** The Inn shall promote or cooperate in the establishment of similar Inns in the same or different localities of the state or elsewhere to meet existing or developing needs in order to more widely achieve the objectives of the American Inns of Court Foundation.

## **Article Seven** **Amendments**

These Bylaws may be amended upon a two-thirds vote of the active Masters in attendance at a meeting called for that purpose.

Dated: July 14, 2017