

# HANDBOOK



MARCH 2020

# **The American Inn of Court**

Doris Jonas Freed Inn of Court is part of The American Inn of Court, which is a national organization loosely modeled after the traditional English Inns of Court. The purpose of The American Inn of Court, as originally conceived by then Chief Justice of the Supreme Court Warren Burger, and later approved by the Judicial Conference of the United States is to promote the goals of legal excellence, civility, professionalism, and ethics.

The first Inn was formed in 1980 in Provo Utah. Today, there are over 350 chartered American Inns of Court, which actively involve more than 25,000 attorneys, legal scholars, judges (state, federal, and administrative), and law students.

The American Inns 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 program. While an American Inn of Court partakes of some of each of these concepts, it is quite different in aim, scope, and effect. The American Inns of Court strive to help members become more effective advocates and counselors with a keener ethical awareness, learning side-by-side with the most experienced judges and attorneys in their community. Each local Inn is devoted to promoting professionalism, civility, ethics, and legal skills among the American bench and bar, in a collegial setting, through continuing education and mentoring. At the same time the Inn provides a rich opportunity for participants to meet new colleagues and network around shared interests and talents.

## **Ideals of the Inn Movement**

- Upholding the standards of the legal profession
  - Practicing law with dignity and respect
- Encouraging respect for our system of justice
- Achieving a higher level of legal excellence
- Developing a deeper sense of professionalism

# **The Doris Jonas Freed Inn of Court**

The Doris Jonas Freed Inn of Court is a specialty Inn of Court focusing solely in matters of family law. Our Inn consists of a collegial group of judges, and practicing attorneys, from Bucks, Chester, Delaware and Montgomery Counties who meet regularly to discuss and debate issues relating to substantive issues in family law, ethics, and professionalism.

Our meetings typically begin with conversation over a catered shared meal followed by a teaching program presented by one of the Inn's pupillage teams. At the start of each fall, our members are 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 to prepare our programs. This allows the less-experienced attorneys to become more effective advocates and counselors by learning from the more-experienced attorneys and judges.

In addition to our active members, the Doris Jonas Freed Inn strives to include Alumni, Emeritus and Honorary members to promote its ideals of achieving the highest level of professionalism through example, education and mentoring. The Inn also has a mentoring program which allows for new lawyers to learn from more senior members of the legal community outside of the pupillage process and includes informal as well as structured gatherings throughout the year. The Inn also conducts community outreach programs to give Inn members the opportunity to represent the ideals of the Inn through education and public service.

## **Who was Doris Jonas Freed?**

Doris Jonas Freed (1903 – 1993), the namesake of our Inn, was a nationally renowned expert in the field of family and matrimonial law. She was a prolific writer and a national leader in her field. Dr. Freed was former Chair of the American Bar Association Family Law Section and received numerous awards throughout her illustrious career. Dr. Freed

was co-author of the six-volume revision of “Law and the Family, New York” (Lawyers Cooperative Publishing Corporation, Rochester, 1986-90) with the late Henry H. Foster and Joel R. Brandes, and a co-author of the original treatise with Mr. Foster in 1966. She also was influential in drafting reform of the New York State divorce law, which according to her New York Times obituary “was based on the premise that marriage is an economic partnership of co-equals. “

## **Mission of the Doris Jonas Freed Inn of Court**

The Mission of our Inn of Court is to follow in the great tradition set by our namesake to be active practitioners of family law, while also pursuing scholarly interests, providing mentoring to less experienced attorneys and performing service in the community.

We use our time in the Inn to learn how better to represent the interests of our clients in their family matters; how better to understand the nuances of matrimonial law; how to become better advocates; to keep up with new law and trends in our area; and to hone our skills in communication and negotiation. Our mission also is to mentor younger attorneys and create a support network for all members of our Inn.

## **Programming**

An integral part of our Inn is its teaching mission. Each monthly meeting has a learning component for which members earn one hour of Continuing Legal Education (CLE) credit. Pupilage groups made up of attorneys and Judges, which are assigned at the start of each new Inn year in the Fall are assigned a topic and tasked with coming up with an interesting and informative way to present their topic to the full Inn.

### **Topic Selection**

Topics are selected by a Committee. Anything relevant to family law is open for assignment. Topics may range from Preparing for a Custody Trial; Prenuptial and Postnuptial Agreements; to a Primer on Paternity and Child Support. Topics typically address a trending case or

new rule of procedure to raise awareness of cutting-edge issues and allow Inn members an opportunity to discuss and better understand how the court may address these issues.

## **Teams/Pupilage Groups**

Pupilage groups are composed of an:

**Advisor** - who usually is an Executive Committee member, , and whose job it is to be a guide for the team.

**Team Leader**- whose job it is to organize the team and focus the members, arrange the planning meetings for the team presentation, and organize the materials for the presentation.

**Court Leader** - usually a Judge or a Master, who will provide Input and a view from the bench and participate in the presentation.

**Team Members**- attorney members of the Inn.

Each member of the team must have a part in the presentation, whether in the performance, writing, research or any combination.

## **Process**

The way in which programs are developed, assigned to Pupilage Teams, Evaluated and Documented, is as follows:

### **1. How Program Topics are Developed**

Programs are chosen by the Programming Chairs, with input from the Executive Committee, at a meeting that usually takes place in July before the term begins.

Executive Committee members suggest new or hot topics based on the development of recent rules and case law, recent programming from other organizations (e.g. local bar associations and the PBA), as well as suggestions made by Inn members during the prior term. The Programming Committee attempts to expand the Inn members' knowledge and range of experience by presenting programs on other areas of law that may impact family law practice. The Programming

Committee also seeks to promote ethics and professionalism by offering at least one ethics program per term.

After each program, Inn members are encouraged to evaluate the program, speakers and materials, and to propose new topics for consideration in future programs. Inn members are always welcome to suggest additional topics to the Programming Chairs.

## 2. **How Program Topics are Assigned to Pupilage Teams**

Assign Executive Committee Member, Judge, and Master  
Assign equal number of young/newer members with more experienced members (balance of youth and experience)  
Assign equal number of women and men  
Assign mixture of introverted and extroverted people (comfortable with public speaking)  
Assign two alternates in anticipation of potential calendar conflicts  
Pupilage teams develop style of presentation (lecture/skit/combination)

## 3. **How Program Topics are Evaluated and Documented**

Presentations are evaluated by members at the end of each meeting. In addition, members are asked to provide feedback on programming and the selected topics at the end of each program year via a survey.

Presentation materials are generally emailed to members prior to any scheduled meeting in an effort to avoid unnecessary environmental paper waste. To the extent that some materials are critical to participation during the program, they may be provided via handouts at the meeting.

## 4. **Awards**

The Pupilage Teams compete for the best program as voted on by Inn members. The awards for the best program, along with other awards (often of a comedic nature) voted on by the Executive Committee, are presented at the annual banquet, which usually takes place in May.

## **Meeting Format**

Each meeting follows a similar format. Dinner is served at a designated time, followed by introductory remarks by the President. The CLE program follows for one hour. It is recommended that members arrive at least one-half hour before the dinner starts to give them an opportunity to visit and network with colleagues. Mentoring meetings may take place before or after the regular monthly meeting, by arrangement between the mentor and mentee.

At the conclusion of the program year, the Inn holds an annual banquet. All members in good standing are invited to attend the banquet. Guests may not be invited to the annual banquet. There is no CLE presentation at the banquet, and awards are given out for various categories including best presentation.

## **Mentoring Program**

### **Mentoring Opportunities**

The Doris Jonas Freed Inn of Court strives to fulfill one of the fundamental goals of the American Inns of Court by providing opportunities for its seasoned members to share experiences and insights with its less experienced practitioners and law student members. Most of these mentoring opportunities derive from the close associations formed among the members of the pupillage groups or “teams.” At our membership meetings, the teams sit together and participate as a group in the programs. Since many of the programs involve competition between the teams, the members of each team quickly establish a camaraderie. The members learn from each other and from the audience during the programs, which are often interactive. A great deal of bonding and mentoring within each team also occurs during the process of planning and presenting the team’s program for the membership. Each team member is expected to be an active participant in development and execution of the team program and to honor their commitment to the team.

In addition to the pupillage team experience, the Mentoring Committee, which has two Co-Chairs, assigns mentors to less experienced members as they may request typically after the new member orientation at the beginning of the term. The new member orientation describes the Mentoring Program and the availability of the mentors. In addition, the Co-Chairs plan quarterly programs, which are located in the counties where the Inn members practice, in order to teach them the “tools of the trade” at a more advanced level with the help of guest lecturers who are experts in specialized areas such as business valuation, forensic accounting, or direction from the Masters on practice and procedure in the county, for example, guidance on the utilization of expert witnesses. Inn members of all levels of experience are invited to these meetings and the interaction and exchange of information among the less experienced members, the more experienced members and the Masters or experts helps the mentees to gain knowledge and contacts that will benefit them personally and professionally.

The Inn also welcomes area law students each term. These students are charged a discounted rate to attend the monthly meetings. They are encouraged to interact with the members during the dinner hour and to participate in the discussions during the program. The interaction between the law students and lawyers at the Inn often lays the groundwork for these students to pursue a family law practice.

### **Mentoring Evaluation**

At the end of the Inn year, the Doris Jonas Freed Inn asks its members to complete a membership survey so that we can identify our strengths and weaknesses as an organization. Part of this survey solicits feedback on the quantity and quality of the mentoring component of our Inn. These evaluations are used by the Executive Council to plan the year ahead.

## **Community Outreach Committee**

The Doris Jonas Freed Inn of Court strives to fulfill the mission of the American Inns of Court by providing exposure to the broader



community and offering opportunities for Inn members to represent the ideals of the American Inns of Court. These ideals include to be widely recognized as a leader in promoting professionalism, including ethics, civility and excellence, in the legal community and the wider world. The Community Outreach Committee, which is Co-Chaired by two Inn members, leads the effort in promoting public awareness of the Inn and facilitating opportunities for the Inn members to assist community members in need.

The Community Outreach Committee typically organizes two community events. The committee begins to plan the programs in August prior to the start of the term and members are encouraged to submit their suggestions then or at any time during the term. Members are also encouraged to participate in the programs during the year, as full participation by the members will make the most positive and lasting impact on the community.

## **Continuing Legal Education**

Members of the Inn are entitled to receive continuing legal education credits for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for their attendance at meetings. Each meeting incorporates a one-hour CLE that is planned, prepared and presented by one of the pupillage groups, and covers one of the pre-selected topics.

## **Membership**

<b>Inn Title</b>	<b>Years in Practice</b>	<b>Total Annual Dues</b>
Master	More than 10 years	\$330
Barrister	Between 5 and 10 years	\$280
Associate	Less than 5 years	\$230
Law Clerk/Court Employee	Not applicable.	\$155
Law Students	Not applicable.	\$55

**Selection:** Membership to the Doris Jonas Freed Inn of Court is restricted to those who primarily practice family law. Membership is not geographically restricted, and any attorney, judge or master in

Pennsylvania may be a member. Membership is open to all interested and qualified attorneys, Judges and Masters, regardless of race, color, sex, age, religion, national origin or handicap, although the actual number of members for any given program year may be limited as determined by the Executive Committee. Applications will be considered and membership granted on a “first come, first served” basis. In the event applications exceed the maximum number of members in a program year, as established by the Executive Committee, remaining applicants will be placed on a waiting list in the order in which the application was received.

**Costs:** Members pay according to the cost designated for their membership status. Any dues paid by the Members are tax deductible, since the Inn has received a 501(c)(3) designation.

**Guest Policy:** Guests may be sponsored by a hosting Inn member. The hosting Inn member must contact the Inn Secretary prior to the RSVP deadline to ensure that space is available. Guests may attend on a “first come, first served” basis, except at the annual banquet. The hosting Inn member is responsible for covering the guest’s dinner costs, which are approximately \$25.00 per plate.

## **Alumni, Emeritus and Honorary Members**

In addition to our active members, the Doris Jonas Freed Inn may have Alumni, Emeritus and Honorary members. Inn Alumni are individuals who were in the past active members of the Inn, who have retired in good standing from active membership (but not necessarily from the practice of law); Emeritus Members are those currently active Masters of the Bench who are becoming an Alumnus and on whom the Inn Executive Committee has bestowed special recognition on account of long and distinguished service to the American Inn of Court; and Honorary Members are active members, alumni members, or other active or retired attorneys or judges, on whom the Executive Committee has bestowed the designation on account of the person’s distinguished service to the bench or bar, furtherance of the Inn’s objectives, or other noteworthy achievements. These Alumni, Emeritus and Honorary members shall not be required to pay dues, attend meetings, or

participate in other programs of the Inn, but shall enjoy the privileges of active membership except the right to vote. The Executive Committee shall assess appropriate charges to the Alumni, Emeritus or Honorary Members for attendance at social events or meetings.

The Inn is committed to maintain engagement with its Alumni, Emeritus, and Honorary Members in the following ways:

1. The Alumni members are usually invited to special events/anniversaries and the closing banquet; the Emeritus and Honorary Members are given a blanket invitation to attend whatever programs or special events they choose at a discounted “meal charge” rate.
2. All active members are encouraged to maintain regular contact with these Alumni, Emeritus, and Honorary Members and to share with them relevant events and information regarding the Inn.
3. Active members are also encouraged to report back to the Inn regarding any significant circumstances and events involving the Alumni, Emeritus, and Honorary Members.
4. The Inn Secretary maintains a list of Alumni, Emeritus, and Honorary Members and such individuals are included on notifications and information regarding significant events regarding the Inn.
5. The Inn endeavors to invite Alumni to Inn social events and to the extent feasible, to monthly meetings and programs. Emeritus and Honorary Members are always welcome to attend social events and regular meetings and programs.
6. Alumni may at any time reapply for or be invited to membership in the Inn, or on such terms as may be determined by the Executive Committee.
7. It is the policy of the Inn to encourage active participation of the Alumni, Emeritus, and Honorary Members in Inn programs and activities.

## **Attendance Requirements**

All active members are expected to attend and participate in each meeting in the Inn. The Executive Committee recognizes that judges and attorneys must occasionally be absent. The Committee, however, looks with disfavor on frequent absences. Frequent absences will have a significant bearing on whether an existing member is re-invited for membership in a succeeding year. If a member misses three or more

meetings, the Executive Committee will consider whether that member's participation justifies continued involvement in the Inn.

## **American Inns of Court Diversity Policy**

### **Ideals of Diversity**

- The American Inns of Court firmly believes that personal diversity in all its aspects is essential to our ability to accomplish our mission.
- Diversity embodies all those differences that make us unique individuals.
- We value the differences in views and perspectives and the varied experiences that are part of a diverse membership.
- Diversity enriches and broadens our membership, which in turn leads to more creative and meaningful programs.

### **Professional Diversity**

- Legal professionals and law school faculty, administrators, and students
- All practice types, from both the public and private sectors
- From the least experienced to the most seasoned are vital to maximizing the Inn experience

Only by drawing and retaining a diverse membership will we guarantee the success of our unique organization as well as our respective professional pursuits. Therefore, the American Inns of Court are committed to creating and maintaining a culture that promotes and supports diversity not only throughout our organization, but in our profession as well.

# **Governance**

## **OUR OFFICERS AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Governance in the Inn is entrusted to the Officers and Executive Committee. All members are encouraged to seek a position on the Executive Committee and to be involved with the administration of the Inn.

The Officers include a President, a Treasurer, a Secretary, a Membership Chair, two Co-Program Chairs, President Emeritus, a CLE Coordinator, and an Achieving Excellence Coordinator. The officers serve a one-year term unless a two-year term is recommended by the Executive Committee and approved by the members.

The Executive Committee is composed of the officers and such other active members as determined by a majority vote of the members. The Executive Committee serves mainly to screen new members, plan the meetings and select topics for the pupillage groups.

## **OUR NOMINATING COMMITTEE AND ELECTIONS**

The Executive Committee also serves as the Officer Nominating Committee to propose a slate of officers and Executive Committee members for consideration by the membership at our May Meeting, the final meeting of the term, which is called in large part for the purpose of election of officers and the Executive Committee and to celebrate the success of the term.

Our Officer Nominating Committee presents the slate of officers and Executive Committee members to the membership and further nominations may be made from the floor. All officers are elected by a majority vote of the members present. The Treasurer succeeds to the office of President the following term. Officers and Executive Committee members may succeed themselves. For continuity, several of our Officers have served for two, three, four, or more consecutive terms.

There are currently four standing Committees that report to the Board: The "Program Committee," led by the Program Chairs, oversees and approves program topics and formats and assigns members to

pupilage teams; the “Mentoring Committee”, under the direction of the Membership Chair, develops and maintains the Inn’s mentoring programs, including mentoring teams and educational workshops for mentees; the “Community Outreach Committee,” under the direction of the Achieving Excellence Coordinator, which reports to the is responsible for coordinating public service activities for the Inn members; and the “Communications Committee,” under the direction of the Secretary, is responsible for maintaining and updating the Inn’s website and handbook. The Officers may designate one or more chairs for each of these committees, to serve for a one-year term, or longer, at the discretion of the Officers.

## **VACANCIES**

If the President or the President-Elect is unable to serve, a replacement is selected and elected in the same manner as the President-Elect at the next meeting. Vacancies in any other office arising from any cause are filled for the unexpired portion of the term by the Executive Committee at the next Executive Committee meeting.

## **The American Inns of Court** **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

## **Contact Information and Website**

The Doris Jonas Freed American Inn of Court maintains a website for information located at:

<http://inns.innsofcourt.org/for-members/inns/the-doris-jonas-freed-american-inn-of-court.aspx>.

## **Forms**

Form “A”: Membership Application

## FORM "A" Membership Application:

**APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP IN THE DORIS JONAS FREED AMERICAN INN OF COURT** The Doris Jonas Freed American Inn of Court is a multi-county family law Inn of the American Inns of Court. Among the objective of the Inn are the promotion of excellence, civility, professionalism, and ethics in the legal profession, and the fostering of greater appreciation of the adversary system of dispute resolution in American law.

Our experience in the Inn will improve and enhance the skills of law students, lawyers, and judges, promote interaction and collegiality among all members, and help to transmit ethnical values from one professional generation to another.

The Doris Jonas Freed American Inn of Court meets seven times each year, generally on the second Tuesday of the month. Every member of the Inn is assigned to a pupillage team. Each team presents one educational program each year. Members are expected to help their team prepare the program and to attend every meeting.

Dues range from \$55 per year for law students to \$330 per year for the most experienced lawyers, subject to occasional increase. Dues include meals at the meetings.

If you would like to apply for membership, please provide the information requested below and return this application to \_\_\_\_\_, Esquire at \_\_\_\_\_ [\[insert name and email address of current Membership Chair\]](#).

NAME:

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FIRM NAME:

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BUSINESS ADDRESS:

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EMAIL ADDRESS:

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TELEPHONE NUMBER:

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FAX NUMBER:

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DATE ADMITTED TO THE BAR:

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PERCENTAGE OF PRACTICE DEVOTED TO FAMILY LAW:

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PLEASE ATTACH A BRIEF RESUME OF YOUR LEGAL EXPERIENCE,  
EMPHASIZING YOUR FAMILY LAW BACKGROUND