



Benjamin Franklin American Inn of Court

Member Handbook

Benjamin Franklin American Inn of Court

For Practitioners Specializing in Intellectual Property

Welcome to the Benjamin Franklin American Inn of Court, an award-winning chartered member of the American Inns of Court (AIC) - the oldest, largest, and fastest growing legal mentoring organization in the country.

Established in 1995, the Benjamin Franklin Inn promotes mentoring, professionalism, civility, ethics, and excellent legal skills among members of the bar and the bench as well as students with an interest in intellectual property. The Benjamin Franklin Inn employs a mentoring system to allow students and less-experienced attorneys to learn from more experienced attorneys and judges in a collegial atmosphere. The Benjamin Franklin Inn also facilitates networking, continuing legal education and skills development through discussion of legal concepts, exchange of ideas and vetting of legal strategies.

The Benjamin Franklin Inn encourages active participation by judges, attorneys, law professors, and law students in various programs in the field of Intellectual Property including, for example, patents, trademarks copyrights, trade secrets, unfair competition, patent office practice, trial and appellate practice, as well as ethical issues relating to intellectual property.

The Benjamin Franklin Inn meets in the evening once per month from September to November and January to April, and has a social meeting each year in May. Meetings are typically conducted in the Philadelphia area at law firms, law schools, local businesses, and the Federal District Court.

The Benjamin Franklin Inn has been awarded Platinum Status by the American Inns of Court national organization for each of the past ten years. The Platinum Status award is presented to Inn chapters excelling in the areas of programming, communications, mentoring, and more.

The Benjamin Franklin Inn also won the National First Place Program Award for the program “Alice In Hamilton” during the 2017-2018 year.

Members are encouraged to use the Benjamin Franklin Inn's website as a resource:

<http://inns.innsocourt.org/for-members/inns/the-benjamin-franklin-american-inn-of-court.aspx>

See the Benjamin Franklin Inn of Court on Facebook, Twitter and Linked In.

American Inns of Court

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 a group of judges, lawyers, and in some cases, law professors and law students. Each Inn meets approximately once a month to hold programs and discussions on matters of ethics, skills and professionalism.

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.

Origins of the Inns of Court

The Inns of Court began in the United Kingdom, at least as early as 1422. Several centuries ago the Inns were any of a sizable number of buildings or precincts where barristers traditionally lodged, trained and carried on their profession. There are now four active Inns of Court in the UK:

- Gray's Inn
- Lincoln's Inn
- The Inner Temple
- The Middle Temple

The Inns are near the western boundary of the City of London; nearby are the Royal Courts of Justice (opened in 1882; previously sat in Westminster Hall), which were placed in the legal quarter of London for convenience. Each inn is a substantial complex with a great hall, chapel, libraries, sets of chambers for many hundreds of barristers, and gardens, and covers several acres. The layout is similar to that of an "Oxbridge" college. The "chambers" were originally used as residences as well as business premises by many of the barristers, but today, with a small number of exceptions, they serve as offices only.

History of the Inns of Court in the United States

In the late 1970s, Chief Justice Warren Burger led a movement to create Inns of Court in the United States. American Inns of Court are groups of judges, practicing attorneys, law professors and students who meet regularly to discuss and debate issues relating to legal ethics and professionalism. American Inn of Court meetings typically consist of a shared meal and a program presented by one of the Inn's pupillage teams. Chief Justice Burger and others established the American Inns of Court Foundation in 1985 to promote and charter Inns of Court across the United States.

Professional Growth

By participation at regular Inn meetings, you will be an active part of the exchange of practical lessons, methods, and ideas focused on the highest standards of the legal profession. Inn meetings provide a relaxed, informal environment for informative discussions among all levels of the bench and bar.

Inn Membership Categories

American Inns of Court actively involve more than 29,000 state, federal and administrative law judges, attorneys, legal scholars and law students. Membership is composed of the following categories:

- Masters of the Bench (15 or more years of experience)
- Barristers (3 to 15 years of experience)
- Associates (0 to 3 years of experience)
- Affiliated Professionals (non-lawyers who serve in a legal role)
- Pupils (law students)

Benjamin Franklin Inn Programming

Monthly programs are the foundation of each Inn. Inn programs provide an opportunity for all levels of the profession to come together and learn from each other.

- Monthly programs generally focus on practical legal skills.
- Monthly programs emphasize ethics, civility and professionalism in the practice of law.
- Programs include presentations of principles, techniques, and relationships involved in daily practice.
- Programs allow significant time for discussion by all Inn members present.

American Inn of Court National Program Library

The monthly Inn programs are collected and stored in the national program library. The program library consists of programs created by the Inns that are submitted to the national office. The library is available as a resource for new program ideas or programs on specific topics and practice areas and many programs can be downloaded from the American Inns of Court online store.

American Inns of Court Website

The American Inns of Court website provides tools for management of local Inns, as well as resources and information designed to facilitate interaction, cooperation and exchanges of ideas among the local Inns and Inn members. Members are encouraged to visit the American Inns of Court Website at: <https://home.innsofcourt.org/>

The Bencher

The Bencher is the publication of the American Inns of Court that is circulated to members of the Inns. *The Bencher* is published six times a year to provide a way to distribute information and ideas between the national office of the American Inn of Court, the local Inns, and the local Inn members.

Each issue of *The Bencher* includes articles based on a particular theme, typically legal ethics, professionalism, civility or mentoring. Also included are reports on the activities of American Inns of Court from around the country, information about Inn programs, and profiles of prominent individuals in the legal profession. Current circulation is more than 28,000.

Contributions from local Inn members are solicited and always welcome. Feature articles or news items for publication in *The Bencher* are submitted to the editor to be reviewed for suitability. If a submission is chosen for publication, it may be edited for content or to fit in the space available.

English and Irish Inn Visits

The American Inns of Court has a reciprocal visitation agreement with the four Inns of Court in London, England, and the King's Inn in Dublin, Ireland. Members of Inns of Court, with a letter of introduction from the national office, can visit, tour and dine at any of the London or Dublin Inns. The reciprocal agreement also extends the offer to English or Irish barristers traveling in the United States to attend meetings of American Inns of Court.

The relationship between the American and English Inns of Court was established in 1988 with the Declaration of Friendship, signed by [Chief Justice Warren Burger](#) and the Right Honourable [Lord Bridge of Harwich](#). This Declaration opened the door to other programs such as the [Pegasus Scholarship Trust](#) and the [Temple Bar Scholarships](#). The relationship between the American Inns of Court and the King's Inns in Dublin is a recent addition to the international programs.



The Pegasus Scholarships is an exchange program, wherein young English barristers travel to the United States for six weeks to learn about our legal system and young American Inn of Court members travel to London for six weeks to learn about the English legal system. Scholars can observe proceedings of Barristers' trials and arguments, the Supreme Court of the UK, the Privy Council, the Old Bailey and the Royal Courts of Justice. Scholars may dine at the various London Inns.

All members who are in their first five years of practice are encouraged to apply. Applications are due by October 30 of each year. Electronic submissions are welcome and should be e-mailed to Cindy Dennis (cdennis@innsofcourt.org) at the American Inns of Court. Applications submitted by mail should be addressed to Cindy Dennis, Awards and Scholarships Coordinator, American Inns of Court, 1229 King Street, Second Floor, Alexandria, Virginia 22314.

The Benjamin Franklin Inn Scholarship for Law Student Members

No application process is necessary. Each of the Inn's Pupils who actively participated in at least one program as a member of a pupillage group will be considered for the award.

The following resolution, passed by the Board on October 17, 2011, governs the terms and conditions of the Benjamin Franklin American Inn of Court Scholarship.

Resolved:

The Board will annually award the Benjamin Franklin American Inn of Court Scholarship (the "Scholarship") to a Pupil who participated actively as a member and made a significant contribution to one or more of the Inn's programs. The amount of the Scholarship will be \$500.00 in 2011-2012, and thereafter, the Board will annually determine the amount of the Scholarship and announce the Scholarship at the Inn's organizational meeting. Following the final substantive meeting of each year, a committee consisting of the year's pupillage group leaders will propose a recipient, and the Board will award the scholarship based on the committee's recommendation.

Benjamin Franklin Inn of Court Meetings & Pupillage Groups

The Benjamin Franklin Inn of Court meets eight times per year from September through May (with no meeting in December), to socialize and learn from each other. Six of the meetings include programs presented by pupillage groups on matters of intellectual property, ethics and professionalism. Attorneys receive an hour of continuing legal education credit for each of these meetings that they attend, and presenting attorneys receive two hours of continuing legal education credit.

The membership forms six "pupillage groups," with each group typically consisting of members from each membership category. Each pupillage group conducts one program for the Inn each year. Pupillage group members get together informally outside of monthly Inn meetings in groups of two or more to prepare their respective programs, as well as learn about and converse with fellow group members. This allows less-experienced attorneys and students to get to know and learn from more-experienced attorneys.

Board of Officers

The job descriptions of Inn of Court officers are as follows:

President: The president presides at all Inn functions, ensures that the officers, administrator and Executive Committee perform their duties, provides general leadership and guidance to the officers and membership of the Inn, maintains contact with the national organization and ensures that the Inn adheres to its bylaws and to the policies of the American Inns of Court Foundation. The President is the official voting representative of the Inn at the business meeting of the American Inns of Court Foundation.

President Elect: The president elect assists the president and performs the functions of the president in his or her absence. The president elect serves as a liaison with the local federal and state courts where appropriate. Should the President be unable to attend the annual meeting, the president elect has responsibility for voting at the business meeting.

Program Chair: The program chair oversees the planning and coordinating of programs for each Inn meeting; selection of pupillage group leaders; supervises and serves as a resource for the pupillage group leaders; and submits reports of programs for the national programming manual.

Secretary: The Secretary maintains the records of the Inn, including the minutes of the Executive Committee meetings and membership rosters; corresponds with the national office and local Inn members, including the providing of the national organization with rosters and officer information; extends membership invitations to new members; disseminates announcements, schedules meetings and events; gathers names for future membership vacancies; and makes recommendations to the Executive Committee regarding membership.

Treasurer: The treasurer collects the dues from the members, communicates with members regarding those dues, and pays all bills properly submitted to the Treasurer. A report must be made at least annually to the President.

Social Media Officer: The Social Media Officer is responsible for publicity and the dissemination of information about the Inn via various social media outlets.

Board Members: The Board members are voting members of the Executive Committee that participate and vote in Executive Committee meetings of the Inn and assist the members of the Executive Committee with their duties.

2024-25 Benjamin Franklin Inn of Court Meeting Program

Theme: Inventions in the Final Frontier

Sep **19** - Organizational Meeting (NO CLE)

Oct **17** - Trademarks and Copyrights (1.0 CLE)

Nov **21** - Patent Prosecution (1.0 CLE)

Jan **23** - Patent Litigation and/or PTAB Proceedings (1.0 CLE)

Feb **20** - Licensing and/or Transactions (1.0 CLE)

Mar **20** - Moot Court and Judges' Meeting (1.0 CLE)

Apr **24** - Ethical Practice Considerations (1.0 CLE)

May **22** - Social Meeting and Inn Year Closeout (NO CLE)

All meetings begin at 6:00 PM ET. Location of the meetings will be provided with each meeting announcement.

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.