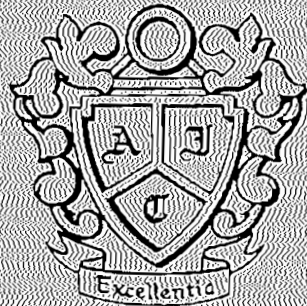


The
THOMAS S. FORKIN
FAMILY LAW



AMERICAN
INN OF COURT

2008-2010 Inn Manual

Thomas S. Forkin Family Law American Inn of Court

The Thomas S. Forkin Family Law American Inn of Court was founded in 1996 in Camden County, New Jersey. Originally known as the "South Jersey Family Law AIC" in its charter year, the Inn attracted membership from attorneys and Family Part Judges with offices located in the South Jersey counties of Burlington, Camden, Gloucester and Atlantic. The popularity of the Inn has grown over the years, with enrollment increasing each year. The Inn adopted the name "Thomas S. Forkin Family Law AIC" as a memorial tribute to the late Thomas S. Forkin, Esquire, who was instrumental in the founding and organization of the Inn.

As American Inns of Court are permitted to have a specialized focus, the emphasis of this Inn is on family law and matrimonial litigation. Program topics include not only the review of substantive areas of law, but practical tips and "how to" lessons through audience participation and round-table discussions.

American Inns of Court are designed to improve the skills, professionalism and legal ethics of the bench and bar. They provide lawyers with the opportunity to learn side-by-side with the most experienced judges and lawyers in their community. The objectives of each Inn are as follows:

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- A. To establish a society of judges, lawyers, legal educators, law students, and others to promote excellence in legal advocacy in accordance with the Professional Creed of the American Inns of Court;
 - B. To foster greater understanding of and appreciation for the adversary system of dispute resolution in American law, with particular emphasis on ethics, civility, professionalism and legal skills;
 - C. To provide significant educational experiences that will improve and enhance the abilities of lawyers as counselors and advocates, and of judges as adjudicators and judicial administrators;
 - D. To promote interaction and collegiality among all legal professionals in order to minimize misapprehensions, misconceptions, and failures of communication that obstruct the effective practice of law;
 - E. To facilitate the development of law students, recent law school graduates, and less experienced lawyers as skilled participants in the American court system;
 - F. To preserve and transmit ethical values from one generation of legal professionals to the next; and
 - G. To build upon the genius and strengths of the common

law and the English Inns of Court and to renew and inspire joy and zest in legal advocacy as a service worthy of constant effort and learning.

The American Inns of Court is one of the fastest growing legal organizations in the country. Currently, more than 26,000 state, federal, and administrative law judges, lawyers, legal scholars and law students are actively involved in over 350 local Inns. 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.

MEMBERSHIP

The Inn membership is divided into three classifications. The category of "**Masters**" includes New Jersey Superior Court Judges who currently (or previously) preside in the Family Part, as well as experienced attorneys who have been primarily practicing family law for more than ten years and have demonstrated superior character, ability and competence, as determined by the Masters Qualification Committee. The term of service of a Master is indefinite, though for continuity of the Inn, three to five years should be considered a minimum. "**Barristers**" include lawyers with more than five years of experience practicing family law. "**Associates**" include lawyers with five years or less of experience practicing family law, and may also include current law clerks of Family

Part Judges. Membership classification is established at the beginning of each program year. Membership is open to all interested and qualified attorneys, 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. In the event that membership reaches a maximum, the membership chairperson will establish a waiting list of prospective members which will be in the order of receipt of membership applications.

In addition to the above membership categories, the Inn offers several other limited membership opportunities.

“Emeritus” status is offered to those Masters who have been active members of the Inn for five consecutive years or more. Emeritus members are not full members of the Inn and are, therefore, not counted as members with the AIC. Accordingly, Emeritus members do not receive benefits from the AIC (i.e., access to the AIC website and receipt of The Bench) and are not voting members of the Inn. Emeritus members are not required to attend meetings or participate in the planning or presentation of a program, however, they are welcome to attend up to four meetings per year, as well as the final banquet, and may opt to participate in or help plan/present a program. Emeritus members are invited to the final banquet in June, in addition to attending four regular meetings each program year. Emeritus members are encouraged to join AIC Alumni.

Association

Sitting Family Court Judges, who are members in good standing, may bring their law clerks to all meetings (except the banquet) without incurring an additional charge. Law clerks are considered guests and are not members of the Inn. They may attend meetings whether their judge attends or not, as long as the particular judge is a member of the Inn in good standing. Other judge's law clerks may attend meetings as a guest, but will be required to pay the standard guest attendance fee. Law clerks are required to pay the guest fee charge to attend the June banquet.

The Inn also accepts two to four law students from Rutgers University School of Law as non-paying members each year. These law students are classified as pupils. Law students are not required to pay Membership dues or guest attendance fees for regular Inn meetings. Law students are invited to attend the June banquet, but are required to pay the guest attendance fee for same.

Currently, the calendar of the Inn spans over a one-year period of time, with at least nine monthly meetings scheduled during the months of September through June.

The current dues structure is as follows:

Masters - Lawyers	\$350.00
Emeritus	\$250.00
Masters- Judges	\$250.00
Barristers	\$300.00
Associates	\$250.00

All membership fees (except Emeritus) include a \$65.00 annual dues payment to the American Inn of Court Foundation. As a result, Inn members may deduct \$65.00 of their dues as a charitable contribution, as the American Inns of Court Foundation has received a 501(c)(3) designation from the Internal Revenue Service. Dues must be paid in full no later than September 1. Failure to pay dues by the second meeting of the Inn year (October) may be considered by the Executive Committee as grounds to terminate membership, after reasonable notice.

Once membership applications have been accepted for the coming year, the Programming Committee assigns all members to a Program Team. Each Program Team is chaired by a Master appointed by the Programming Committee. The Masters and Program Teams are reassigned each year.

SELECTION OF MEMBERS

All members are encouraged to apply annually for renewal membership. The Inn accepts new and renewal applications in the Spring of each year, for membership beginning in the Fall session. Applications are reviewed by members of the Executive Committee prior to acceptance. The Executive Committee reserves the right to designate the appropriate classification for that individual. Although members are not permitted to change their membership classification during the year in session, they may be placed in a different classification upon re-enrollment the following

year. Membership acceptance and classification are made annually prior to the September meeting. Applications will be considered and membership admitted on a "first come, first served" basis. In the event applications exceed the maximum number of members, as established by the Executive Committee, remaining applicants will be placed on a waiting list in the order in which the application was received.

INN GOVERNANCE

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

Officers

The Officers of the Inn include a President, President Elect, Vice President and Treasurer. Each Officer serves a two year term, and may succeed themselves only once, as voted upon by the general membership. All Officers must be Masters, active for two consecutive years prior to their selection. Each Officer, other than the President, also chairs a standing or ad hoc committee.

Standing Committees

There are currently seven standing committees. The **"Administration Committee"** is chaired by the President-Elect and is responsible for taking attendance at meetings, submitting programs for continuing legal education credits, publicity, distribution of information to members, and other administrative tasks.

The **"Membership Committee"** is responsible for recruiting new members, reviewing applications, and making recommendations to the Executive Committee on membership. This committee is also responsible for maintaining the attendance records and overseeing attendance as required by the Inn.

The **"Masters Qualifications"** committee consists of two Masters who have been members of the Inn for at least three years each. This committee reviews and approves or rejects applications for Master status. If an applicant is rejected for Master status, he/she is offered membership as a Barrister. The applicant may reapply to qualify for Master status the following Inn program year or any subsequent year.

The **"Programming and Social Committee"** oversees and approves program topics and formats and assigns members to program teams.

The **"Social Committee"** is responsible for arranging the meeting locations, confirming attendance responses for the meetings, food and beverages and planning the year end banquet in June.

Communication with the American Inns of Court Foundation, local bar associations and legal organizations, and local law schools is maintained by the "**Liaison Committee**". This committee is also responsible for submitting programs to the AIC Foundation for consideration of awards.

Last, but not least, the "**Nominating Committee**" prepares and suggests to the membership a slate of officers for each term, as well as suggests for nominations for various local and national awards. This committee is chaired by the immediate past President of the Inn, and consists of at least one member from each of the membership classifications who have been active members of the Inn for at least two years prior.

All active members of the Inn are encouraged to seek positions within the committees. Committee chairpersons serve two year terms, and may succeed themselves only once. The committee chairs report directly to the President and are required to attend Executive Committee meetings scheduled throughout the year.

ELECTIONS

The nomination and election of Officers are held in every even numbered year. The Nominating Committee will present a slate of officers to the active membership in April of each even numbered year, and elections shall occur in May. All active members in good standing are entitled to one vote on all matters submitted to the general membership.

CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION CREDITS

Members are entitled to receive continuing legal education credits for the State of Pennsylvania for their attendance at programs. Each member applying for such credits is charged a \$50 administrative fee, payable to the Inn, in addition to his or her regular dues. Further, each member electing to receive PA CLE credits will be required to pay, in advance, the per program PA CLE fee, which is currently \$3.00 per program. Therefore, such members will be required to pay \$27.00 for nine substantive programs. The Inn will process the required documentation when application is made for PA CLE credits by the respective members.

Upon the adoption of New Jersey mandatory continuing legal education, the Inn will apply for certification as a presenter of substantive programs, which will allow Inn members to apply for NJMCLE credits for Inn participation. An additional service fee may be applied at that time.

AWARDS

The Inn has established several local awards. The most prestigious is the Honorable Joseph F. Nardi Award. This award is presented to a member of the South Jersey Family Law community whose commitment to the practice of law encourages and exemplifies civility, humility, compassion and a moral/ethical obligation to the welfare of children and families, in general. This commitment should be further evidenced by

participation in continuing legal education, whether formally or informally, and a willingness to act as an advisor/mentor to less experienced attorneys.

The Inn had also established awards for Associate of the Year awarded to an Associate who has demonstrated excellent service and commitment to the Inn during the program year, and the Best Program Award.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

All active members are expected to attend and participate regularly in all Inn meetings. Three unexcused absences during a program year will be deemed to be a resignation, unless the Executive Committee waives this provision for good cause. Successful completion of the year's program is met by all members who have attended at least six of the substantive program meetings for the year (non-social programs) and have participated in at least one program presentation.

Upon resignation of an active member, an applicant who has previously been placed upon the membership waiting list will be invited to join, in the order of his or her placement on the waiting list.

GUEST POLICY

The Inn's programs are primarily for the members' benefit. However, members may, on occasion, invite guests. Members who wish to invite guests must inform the Chair of the Programming and Social Committee, who will determine whether there is sufficient space for the guest's attendance. The member must also agree to be responsible for the cost of the guest's meal, which cost is determined by the Social Committee Chair on a per meeting basis.

MEETINGS AND PROGRAMS

The program year begins in September. The Inn holds seven or eight educational meetings each program year, on the third Tuesday of each month, except July and August. Meetings begin at 5:30 p.m. with light cocktails and a chance to mingle with other members for approximately thirty minutes, followed by a program lasting one to one and a half hours. Dinner follows the program. Members are encouraged to stay for dinner in order to take advantage of informal mentoring as well as socializing and development of collegiality.

The programs are the heart of the monthly meetings. They involve practical legal skills with an emphasis on ethics, civility, and professionalism in lawyering. They generally include a demonstration or presentation of principles, skills, techniques, and relationships involved in

the practice of family law. The programs also incorporate opportunities for critique and discussion.

Program teams consist of all levels of membership classification, including at least one Master and one member of the Bench. All teams are provided with advance notice of the topic on which they shall be expected to make a presentation. The Master is designated as the Team Leader and is responsible for coordinating assignments among the team members and supervising the production of the presentation. All Associates and Barristers are expected to participate in the planning and presentation of one program. Masters are encouraged to provide the Associate and Barrister team members with opportunities to meet and discuss the materials, provide guidance and make recommendations regarding the proposed presentation.

To assist the program teams with developing creative and engaging programs, while maintaining our goal of mentoring and engendering professionalism in our less experienced members, the Inn has developed the following program guidelines to be followed by each of the program teams:

- Each member of the team must have a part in the program, whether in the performance, writing, research or any combination.
- Programs should not be in a "lecture" format. Guest speakers

in lecture format are discouraged, as this does not afford all members of the pupilage teams equal opportunity to participate in the process. However, guests will be permitted to participate in the program by playing a part or providing other assistance as the team deems necessary.

- Each team is required to hold a minimum of two meetings prior to their program. It is recommended that as schedules permit, teams meet a minimum of three times prior to their scheduled program. Team leaders shall be responsible for scheduling the required meetings, and shall be responsible for assuring attendance.
- Within one month of the program date (by the next meeting) each team shall submit their program outline in the form provided by the AIC for submission to the AIC for a program award and inclusion in the program catalogue. Forms may be obtained from the Programming Chairperson or on the AIC website. The Programming Committee has access to various props and equipment for use in your programs, such as microphones, computers, screens, and costumes. Inn members also have access to the AIC Program Catalogue Library, which contains ideas for creating or supplementing the team

programs. Please contact the Programming Chair in advance with your team's particular needs for your presentation.

- Programs will be evaluated and rated by fellow Inn members. The team whose program is voted best by the Inn members will receive the Best Program Award.

At the conclusion of the program year, the Inn holds an annual banquet. All paying members in good standing, including Emeritus members, are invited to attend the banquet. **Inn members may not invite guests to the final banquet.** Law clerks and law students will be charged a fee in order to attend the banquet. In the event that space is limited, regular Inn members will be given first priority over guests, law clerks and law students.

CONTACT INFORMATION

The American Inns of Court maintains a website for information located at www.innsforcourt.org. This website provides general information regarding the Inns, as well as a listing of local Inns with contact information throughout the United States.

The Thomas S. Forkin Family Law Inn of Court maintains a website at www.innsforcourt.org/inns/forkininn. Each member has access to this

website, which will provide updated membership and programming information, announcements and other valuable information. Contact information and a list of officers and committee chairpersons will be provided to the general membership at the start of each program year.

The Inn has established 2 listserves for the purpose of communication with and among members. In order to post an announcement to the general Inn membership, you must submit your proposed announcement to the President, Administrative Committee Chairperson or other designee, for approval and posting. If you wish to send a "discussion" type email to the Inn members, you may send it to forkinnattys@lists.innsofcourt.org. Members may opt out of this discussion listserv. Judges will not be included on this listserv.

OFFICERS

July 2008 - August 2010 Term

PRESIDENT

Hon. Marie E. Lihotz
216 Haddon Avenue
7th Floor
Westmont, NJ 08108-2815
(856) 854-8764
marie.lihotz@judiciary.state.nj.us

PRESIDENT ELECT

Deena L. Betze
1415 Route 70 East, Suite 305
Cherry Hill, NJ 08033
856-424-3444
dbetze@njfamilylaw.net

VICE PRESIDENT

Richard B. Rotz
750 Kings Highway North
Suite One
Cherry Hill, NJ 08034-1581
856-779-8500
rbrotz@fmmrfamllaw.com

TREASURER

Judith S. Charny
1300 Route 73
Suite 211
Mount Laurel, NJ 08054
(856)505-1700
jcharny@charnylaw.com

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

July 2008 - August 2010 Term

ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE

Deena L. Betze

LIAISON COMMITTEE

Bruce P. Matez

MASTERS QUALIFICATIONS COMMITTEE

Nancy D. Gold

Robert J. Adinolfi

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Berge Tumaian

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Donafaye Wilson Zoll, Past President

PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE

Hon. Octavia Melendez

Richard B. Rotz

SOCIAL COMMITTEE

Judith Charny

LIAISON TO NJSBA FAMILY LAW EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Maryann Rabkin

PROFESSIONAL CREED OF THE AMERICAN INNS OF COURT

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.