

Temple American Inn Of Court Celebrates Twenty Years: Garners National Awards and Travels the World as Ambassadors

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The Temple American Inn of Court (“Temple AIC”) celebrates its 20th Anniversary this year with a grand celebration at the Union League of Philadelphia where past and present lawyer and judge members were invited to share experiences and take part in a gala event.

The Temple AIC was named in part after the Middle Temple Inn of London (the first English Inn that was founded in 1292 from the Knights Templar who were in the possession of the Temple site for over 150 years and its creation “marked the replacement of the priestly lawyers by a lay profession”).

Dating back to 1990, the concept of the Temple AIC started with an idea by then Temple Law School Dean Robert Reinstein who approached the Honorable Lowell A. Reed, Jr., Ed Edelstein, Esquire, and others in the hopes of forming an Inn modeled after the English training grounds for young barristers. At that time, Pennsylvania had no Inns of Court. Once chartered, Temple AIC would become the 100th chartered Inn in the United States and the very first in Pennsylvania. Judge Reed became the Inn’s inaugural president for the first two years. In 2003, Judge Reed received the A. Sherman Christensen Award, the National Inn Foundation’s highest honor, at the annual Celebration of Excellence at the United States Supreme Court.

Since Judge Reed’s inaugural two year term the leadership of the Board rotates from Bench to Bar generally every other year. Currently, Paul D. Weiner, Esquire is the President of the Inn and Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas President Judge Pamela P. Dembe is the President-Elect. The Honorable Annette M. Rizzo is the immediate Past-President and led the Inn on a trip to Italy to meet the Italian Bench and Bar to honor the Inn’s 20th year anniversary coinciding with the 150th anniversary of the Republic of Italy. Past presidents include: Edward L. Edelstein, Esquire; Honorable Anita B. Brody; Leonard Dubin, Esquire; Honorable G. Craig Lord; Roberta D. Pichini, Esquire; Honorable James T. Giles; Thomas P. Wagner, Esquire; Honorable Stephen R. Levin; Alan B. Epstein, Esquire; Honorable Diane M. Welsh; Carl H. Delacato, Jr., Esquire; Honorable Anne E. Lazarus; Anthony B. Haller, Esquire; Donald M. Davis, Esquire; Honorable Sandra M. Moss; Honorable Cynthia M. Rufe; and Larry Bendesky, Esquire.

Today, the American Inns of Court have chapters in every state and the District of Columbia. Every year, Temple AIC hosts a joint Inn event where other Pennsylvania Inns, as well as Inns from other states, are invited to participate in a joint program held in Philadelphia.

The Inn movement seeks to improve and foster civility, professionalism, ethics and excellence. Since being chartered, the Temple AIC has become a national model of excellence

and set the example to Inns across the country. Many of these national accolades are displayed in grand cases in the Temple Law Library, and include:

- Honors for National Best Program Awards;
- Circle of Excellence Award;
- Outstanding Program Awards; and
- Model of Excellence Awards.

The Temple AIC has received some sixteen awards for individual programs throughout the years.

Many of these national awards commend the outstanding educational and entertaining monthly CLE Programs, created by a team of judges, lawyers, and law students with varying levels of experience in a wide range of practice areas that have been the hallmark of Temple AIC's style, often with a flair for the dramatic. The CLE topics are timely, and often provocative, highlighting current and sometimes controversial issues facing the profession. Some of the topics include: religious freedom and the courts, discrimination and diversity, gay marriage, rights of detainees at Guantanamo Bay, the use of the Military Commissions Act, the Second Amendment

Instead of normal CLE venues, such as conference rooms and courtrooms, Temple Inn has held many of its programs in unique venues, such as Eastern State Penitentiary, the Friends Meeting House, the National Constitution Center, Independence Hall, the Spirit of Philadelphia on the Delaware River, the Free Library of Philadelphia, the Historic Christ Church, the National Liberty Museum, the ceremonial chamber of the Italian Supreme Court (in Rome, Italy), just to name a few. In addition to dramatically acted skits, the Inn has hosted many prominent guests, including: former Pennsylvania First Lady and 3rd Circuit Judge, the Hon. Marjorie O. Rendell; former United States Senator from Pennsylvania, the Hon. Arlen Specter; Member of the Italian Parliament, the Honorable Cavaliere Amato Berardi (who serves as the elected representative of Italian citizens living in North America); and prominent London Barrister Nigel Pascoe (who performed a one man play on the trial of William Penn). The Inn has also hosted some high profile guests, including: former Pennsylvania Attorney General and former federal prison inmate, Ernie Preate, Esquire, and convicted killer and former Pennsylvania death row inmate, Jay C. Smith (who was later exonerated and freed from death row by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court due to prosecutorial misconduct and passed away shortly after a provocative discussion with the Inn).

The Temple AIC also has served as Ambassadors of the American Inns of Court and the United States legal profession to lawyers and judges abroad. As Inn ambassadors to London and Rome, Temple AIC brought the mission of the Inn movement to prominent members of the European legal community including law professors, Supreme Court Justices, Law Lords, Barristers, Solicitors, and high ranking members of the British and Italian Bars.

In addition to the great CLE programs, mentoring, and ambassadorship, the Temple AIC is also engaged in pro-bono and charitable activities. During the Inn's yearly holiday celebration held at a restaurant in December, Inn members provide in kind gifts such as books or cash

donations to worthy causes such as the George Fund, Philadelphia Reads, Breastcancer.org, and relief to victims of Hurricane Katrina. Other programs include, the “Wills for Heroes” project, which provides pro bono estate planning for first responders, firefighters, police, and paramedics. Temple AIC became the first Inn in the nation to support the “Wills for Heroes” project which is now in twenty six states. The Inn also started a scholarship in memory of Steve Saltz, Esquire, a long-time Inn member, which is awarded each year to a Temple Law student who enters an essay contest on themes of ethics and civility in the legal profession.

The Temple AIC looks forward to its next twenty years and to continuing its tradition of promoting legal excellence, civility, professionalism, and ethics.

The Inn maintains a comprehensive website which holds program materials, resources, history, our calendar and other information. Please visit us at:
www.innsforcourt.org/lms/templeinn.

Temple American Inn of Court Past Presidents are listed below:

- Honorable Lowell A. Reed, Jr. (1991-1993);
- Edward L. Edelstein, Esquire
- Honorable Anita B. Brody
- Leonard Dubin, Esquire
- Honorable G. Craig Lord
- Roberta D. Pichini, Esquire
- Honorable James T. Giles
- Thomas P. Wagner, Esquire
- Honorable Stephen R. Levin
- Alan B. Epstein, Esquire
- Honorable Diane M. Welsh
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- Larry Bendesky, Esquire
- Honorable Annette M. Rizzo