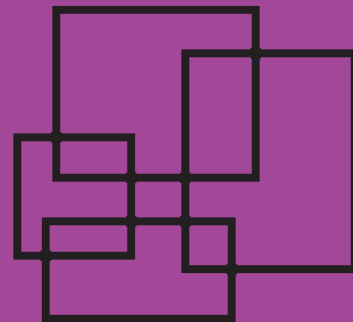


# CERTIFICATION LINK

Your Quarterly ABA Specialization Connection



SPRING 2006

**NEW SECTIONS:  
AWARDS AND  
RECOGNITION  
PAGE . . . . . 2  
AND  
NEW FACES IN  
NEW PLACES  
PAGE . . . . . 3**

## Proposed Rules Changes

One of the topics for discussion at the meeting of the Standing Committee on Specialization at this year's Roundtable, will be proposed changes to the Governing Rules. The Committee follows these rules as part of the accreditation procedure. The Rules (available on the website at [www.LegalSpecialists.org](http://www.LegalSpecialists.org)) cover everything from the make-up of the Accreditation Review Panels to time lines and from initial applications to appeals.

The last revision was in 2003. Since that time, all the programs have been through a re-accreditation cycle and 3 new programs have been accredited. Most of the proposed changes result from consolidating existing policies from other documents to provide consistency within the process.

Copies of the proposed rules were distributed for comment via the Specialization ListServ and will be available at the meeting at 2:00 pm on March 23rd. We welcome all comments.

## 2006 National Roundtable on Lawyer Specialty Certification

The 2006 Roundtable will feature speakers from across the United States and a special guest from Edinburgh, Scotland.

The event begins with a view into the Standing Committee on Specialization, the regular committee meeting will begin at 2:00 pm on Thursday, March 23rd. All are welcome to attend the meeting. Among the items on the agenda will be modifications to the ABA Governing Rules and a review of the first draft of a new committee publication, tentatively titled, "A Concise Guide to Specialty Certification".

The real kick off will be the Annual Welcome Reception. This year our host is the Texas Board of Legal Specialization. Join us as we renew friendships, network and catch up on the past year in the Specialty Certification Community.

The program begins bright and early with a Welcome by Standing Committee Chair, Myron "Mickey" Sheinfeld. The first

session is the Administrator's Workshop, run concurrently with the ever-popular "Certification 101".

One highlight of this year's Roundtable is sure to

be the session on Professionalism and the Accredited Specialist. Those of you who attended the 2004 Roundtable in New Orleans, will remember Professor Clark Cunningham's discussion of Professionalism and Certification. This year he will be speaking with Mr. Robert Pirrie, WS. Mr. Pirrie is the Chief Executive of The Society of Writers to Her Majesty's Signet ("The WS Society"), based in Edinburgh, Scotland. Come find out what the WS Society is proposing in terms of specialty accreditation in Scotland.



Robert Pirrie

In order to involve the many board members who attend the Roundtable, we are having a panel discussion on conducting effective hearings and appeals. Standing Committee member, Judge Melissa May, will moderate a panel comprised of current and former specialty certification board members.

The Annual Luncheon will find Certification Statistician, Alec Schwartz wielding his remote control and powerpoint slides to bring us the latest numbers and trends.

Continued on page 4



Clark Cunningham



## AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

### Tom Elligett receives Inaugural Harry Lee Anstead Award for Board Certified Lawyer of the Year

Raymond T. "Tom" Elligett Jr. is the first recipient of the Justice Harry Lee Anstead Award for the Florida Bar's Board Certified Lawyer of the Year. The Board of Legal Specialization and Education created the award to recognize exemplary professionalism, excellence, character and commitment to The Florida Bar's certification program and to the practice of law.

Incoming Florida Bar President, Alan Bookman, and BLSE Chairman Judge Ralph Artigliere presented the

award on June 23, during the BLSE's reception at the Florida Bar Annual Meeting.

The award will be presented annually by the BLSE chair to a Florida board certified lawyer or judge.

Mr. Elligett is a board certified appellate practice lawyer with Schropp, Buell & Elligett in Tampa.

Other board certified lawyers nominated for the Anstead Award were Tracy S. Carlin, Jacksonville; Judge Ralph Artigliere, Bartow; and Michael G. Tanner, Jacksonville.

#### Online Resource Kit for Certified Lawyers

Slogans, talk points, media relations tips, backgrounders, logos, etc. to help board-certified lawyers market and raise awareness about the benefits of certification. [www.flabar.org/certification](http://www.flabar.org/certification)

## The Texas Board of Legal Specialization celebrates 30 years of attorney certification

In July 1974, the Supreme Court established TBLS, and in 1975, the first Criminal, Family and Labor Law attorneys received Certificates of Special Competence. TBLS celebrates and honors the dedication of the pioneer attorneys who forged the way for the

program's current success. Today, there are over 6,700 Board Certified attorneys in 20 specialty areas of law, and have over 300 certified legal assistants in 6 specialty areas. The TBLS and the Board Certification program will continue to insure that citizens of

Texas receive the highest quality legal services through expanding online access and enhancing member services.



Texas Board of  
Legal Specialization  
Celebrates  
30th Anniversary of  
Board Certification

## North Carolina Board of Legal Specialization announces three new awards

The North Carolina Board of Legal Specialization announces three new awards. Nominations are open until March 1. The Howard L. Gum Service Award will be given to a specialty committee member who consistently excels in completing committee tasks. The Sara M. Davis Excellence award is presented to the certified specialist who exemplifies excellence in his or her daily work as an attorney and serves as a model for other lawyers. The James

E. Cross, Jr. Leadership Award is presented to a certified specialist who has taken an active leadership role in his or her practice area, through presentations at CLE seminars, scholarly writings, participation in groundbreaking cases or service of an established professional organization. Nomination forms are available on line at <http://www.nclawspecialists.org> or by calling Denise Mullen at 919/828-4620 x255.

### ABC Hires New Executive Director

**Alexandria, Virginia**—The American Board of Certification (ABC) announced the hiring of Michelle Sparacino as Executive Director. Michelle will oversee the operation of the organization including board governance, committee liaison functions, and marketing to ensure a smooth transition from her predecessor, who served as Executive Director for eight of the nine years the organization has been a separate entity. In addition, she is charged with developing a marketing and communication plans to promote certification, efficient application processing and member relations. She will also redesign the ABC website in order to maintain a consistent, yet continuously evolving presence.

Prior to joining ABC, Michelle enjoyed a successful, 17-year career in higher education, primarily in academic health as the director of admissions for several prominent

graduate schools. She also served, most recently, as the assistant director of The American Medical College Application Service, a program of the Association of American Medical Colleges. Michelle earned her B.A. in Middle Eastern History from the University of Maryland at College Park, and studied Education Policy in The George Washington University's master's program. She will use her application processing, marketing, and education experience to advance the vision and goals of the American Board of Certification. "With my familiarity with the medical field, I am aware of the vital role credentialing and specialization play in the health of an industry and in the public's trust. My goal is to use that understanding and experience to advance ABC's mission to promote certification in the legal profession," said Michelle, who became the new Executive Director on January 3, 2006.

### Bob Bernstein Named President of American Board of Certification

**Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania**—Robert S. Bernstein has a very full plate for 2006. In addition to his duties as managing partner of Bernstein Law Firm, P.C., the lauded attorney has just become president of the American Board of Certification (ABC). Recent changes in bankruptcy law make his new position more "high profile" than ever.

Mr. Bernstein has served as president-elect of this organization for the past year. He previously spent two years as treasurer, and before that served as the chair of the Standards Committee, which reviews attorneys' applications to become certified.

"One provision of the new Bankruptcy Law states that board certification is a factor the court can take into account when awarding fees to counsel," explains Mr. Bernstein. "The law change also requires that we start testing under the new law in 2006. These two developments resulted in a significant spike in the number of applications for certification."

"Assuming many of these applicants complete the requirements, the ABC will have over 1,000 certified attorneys," he adds. "That is an accomplishment that shows the acceptance and importance of certification."

### New Jersey Applications Available

Applications for Civil and Criminal Trial Attorney Certification, Matrimonial Law Attorney Certification, and Workers' Compensation Law Attorney Certification are now available to determine eligibility for examinations given in 2006.

The deadline for submitting a completed civil and criminal application is February 28, 2006 by postmark or hand delivery. The deadline for filing a completed matrimonial or workers' compensation application is March 31, 2006 by postmark or hand delivery.

For your convenience, applications for civil, criminal, matrimonial, and workers' compensation certification may be obtained from the Board's website at [www.njbac.org](http://www.njbac.org) or

requested from:

Certified Attorneys whose certifications are expiring in the year 2006 must file an application for recertification by January 31, 2006. For your convenience, applications for Civil, Criminal, Matrimonial, and Workers' Compensation recertification may be obtained from the Board's website at [www.njbac.org](http://www.njbac.org) or requested from:

Supreme Court of New Jersey Board on Attorney Certification  
PO Box 970  
Trenton, NJ 08625-0970  
(609) 984-3077

Log on to [www.LegalSpecialists.org](http://www.LegalSpecialists.org)  
for the latest certification news

## 2006 Roundtable

Continued from page 1

To finish off our first day, we welcome Pat Nester, Executive Director of the College of the State Bar of Texas. Mr. Nester led a two day strategic planning retreat for the Texas Board of Legal Specialization and he joins us to share insights into the issues affecting the future of specialty certification.

Our Annual Social Event promises to be an enjoyable evening. We will go by motorcoach to the San Antonio Botanical Gardens, where we will have a social hour, followed by dinner in the Gardens. Our advance scout, Gary McNeil, assures us that despite the lengthy drought, the Botanical Gardens are lush and green.

Our final sessions on Saturday are not to be missed. The Certification Players will be back to blur the lines between ethics and outrage and teach us all about the perils and pitfalls of operating a specialty certification program.

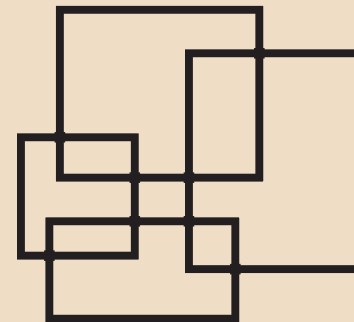
The information sharing session has become an annual event as well. In the past, members of the certification community have shared marketing plans, forms, and

tips for dealing with volunteers. This year's program is, as they say, "Ripped from the Headlines." We will have forms, checklists, as well as what to do and what not to do in the face of disaster. State Bar of Louisiana Board of Legal Specialization Executive Director, Catherine Zulli will share her story of Katrina and the Levees. Joining her will be Deborah Barnett of the Elder Law Foundation, Meaghan Harper, the Certification Manager of the Minnesota State Bar Association, and a representative of the San Antonio Red Cross. Disasters come in all sizes, from lost exams and fried hard drives to wiped-out exam sites and natural disasters.

The Roundtable will wrap up around noon, leaving you plenty of time to explore the River Walk, Women's NCAA Basketball, and don't forget, the Alamo!

To register for the Roundtable, go to <http://www.LegalSpecialists.org/> and click on the Roundtable. You can register for the Roundtable and take care of your hotel reservations, all directly on-line. Or, if you prefer, download the registration form and fax or mail it to the Standing Committee.

Hope to see you all in San Antonio.



### Editor:

Tori Jo Wible  
[wiblelet@staff.abanet.org](mailto:wiblelet@staff.abanet.org)

### Contributors:

Denise Mullen  
North Carolina Board  
of Legal Specialization

Lisa McKnight Garcia  
Florida Board of Legal  
Specialization and  
Education

## ABA Standing Committee on Specialization

321 North Clark Street  
Chicago, IL 60610  
Tel: 312-988-5753  
Fax: 312-988-5483  
[abaspecialization@abanet.org](mailto:abaspecialization@abanet.org)

The views expressed in *Certification Link* are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the policies of the American Bar Association. The contents of this publication have not been approved by the ABA House of Delegates and do not constitute ABA policy.

Have an idea for a future CertLink article? Does your program have news you want to share?

Send any submissions to [specialization@abanet.org](mailto:specialization@abanet.org) or contribute to the Specialization ListServ. Not on the ListServ? It's free and open to anyone interested in specialization. Email Tori Wible at [wiblelet@staff.abanet.org](mailto:wiblelet@staff.abanet.org) to join.