MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Engaging the NBTA Community – A Culture of Belonging

For nearly 50 years, the NBTA has elevated the practice of law by issuing nearly 10,000 board certifications, no doubt a proud history. For decades, the organization achieved its mission by recognizing attorneys who met our standards of tested excellence and promoting them to the general public. These efforts will continue. Yet, much has changed in our first half century, and it is time the NBTA meets another challenge – create a culture of belonging and provide our members with benefits beyond certification. In our last survey, NBTA members made clear their desire for educational offerings from the organization.

*Accordingly, I am proud to announce NBTA's new educational offering **NBTA Certified Litigation Excellence.***

Our new educational program will provide a series of webinars designed to provide members with an opportunity to hear from leading experts from around the country on a variety of legal topics.

To get this effort off the ground, we have scheduled April, May, and June webinars - please see details in this newsletter. If you would like to request a topic or offer to present a webinar, please reach out to Roger Daily, Director of Engagement (rdaily@nbtalawyers.org). Roger will work with the committee overseeing this program on which topics and presenters will be scheduled for future programming. The next generation of board-certified attorneys will discover the enhanced value of their expertise when paired with the exhibited professionalism of board certification. As the legal profession evolves, including the introduction and acceptance of the uniform bar exam, we believe board certification will become even more important to legal consumers who will judge and choose attorneys to best represent their interests.

The **Certified Litigation Excellence** program is just the first step in providing greater NBTA membership benefits. The Board is working on new ways for members to actively engage in achieving the organization's mission. I look forward to bringing you new opportunities as the year goes on.

Lastly, as we build our community, it is important that all of us engage in growing our organization and inviting peers to become NBTA members. This is a team effort, and we need your help. If every NBTA member brought in ONE new member, we would double the size of our organization. Board certification matters to the general public and we should proudly advocate for highly skilled attorneys to join our ranks.

NBTA's next half century demands that we work together in growing our membership. **There are a few specific ways to make this happen:**

1. Send your colleague to the NBTA application page. They are able to check if they meet the necessary standards as well.

2. As a member, you can log in to use NBTA PowerPoint resources as part of any educational session/webinar/speech given before larger audiences.

3. Invite NBTA leadership or staff to be part of national, state or local meetings. We are happy to present before your meetings (as speakers or members of panels) or have a presence at your meetings with a table or booth. Please fill out this form.

NBTA members believe in the power of the organization and its board certification program. Let's guarantee our next 50 years together and get new members to join our efforts. *It is imperative!*

New Membership Benefit

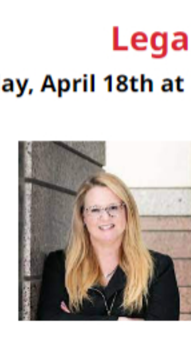
NBTA Certified Litigation Excellence
OUR LIFELONG LEARNING PROGRAM

To better serve our members, we are launching **NBTA Certified Litigation Excellence** this Spring. This new initiative was driven by our attorneys seeking education opportunities that would be relevant and valuable to add to their certifications. These FREE webinars for NBTA members are designed to empower, enhance, and elevate by presenting leading attorneys, judges, and experts from the legal field to discuss important topics. Prospects and applicants interested in specialization will be given the opportunity to attend for a fee.

UPCOMING SPRING WEBINARS AND REGISTRATIONS

Legal AI is Here – Are You Ready?

Thursday, April 18th at 10:00 am PDT/ 11:00 am MDT/ 12:00 pm CDT/ 1:00 pm EDT



Presenter
BETSY GREYTOK
Vice President and Associate Counsel for Foundation Models – IBM

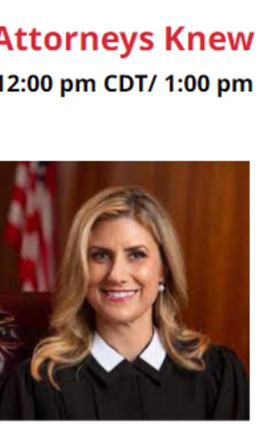
Moderator
TRACY WALTERS MCCORMACK
NBTA President & Retired Director of Advocacy – U of Texas

Register for This Webinar Here

The Top Things that Judges Wish Attorneys Knew

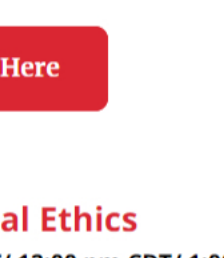
Monday, May 13th at 10:00 am PDT/ 11:00 am MDT/ 12:00 pm CDT/ 1:00 pm EDT

PRESENTER
JUDGE JAMES COLAW
Eighth Circuit Court of Florida, Criminal



PRESENTER
JUDGE CHARI KELLY
Texas Third District Court of Appeals Place 3

PRESENTER
JUDGE MELISSA S. MAY
Indiana Court of Appeals



MODERATOR
TRACY WALTERS MCCORMACK
NBTA President & Retired Director of Advocacy – U of Texas

Register for This Webinar Here

Five Timely Topics in Legal Ethics

Thursday, June 13th at 10:00 am PDT/ 11:00 am MDT/ 12:00 pm CDT/ 1:00 pm EDT

PRESENTER
JAMES MCCORMACK
Attorney for Legal Ethics, Legal Malpractice, and Attorney Licensure

Register for This Webinar Here

Advocating on Behalf of Attorneys

The mission of NBTA is to inform and educate the public concerning legal representation by board certified specialists. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in Peel v. Illinois 496 US 91 (1990), that rules against attorneys advertising themselves as "certified" violated their freedom of speech under the First Amendment. Yet the importance of board certification by all courts and all states has not been fully realized, creating obstacles. However, NBTA Board of Directors, staff, and members have been committed to ensuring that attorneys get the credit they earned and deserve. Through their effort and works, they have affected change. Here are their recent successes.

Ohio

Board Certification for Truck Accident Law (TAL) comes to Ohio. Michael Leizerman (NBTA certified in Civil Practice Advocacy, Civil Trial Law, and Truck Accident Law) prevailed in a lawsuit to have Ohio recognize TAL as a legal specialization area. The ruling prompted the Commission on the Certification of Attorneys as Specialists (CCAS) to make changes that will go into effect on April 15, 2024. NBTA is one of five that has been approved as an accrediting organization. The Supreme Court of Ohio will no longer require NBTA to seek approval for each specialty areas and NBTA will be permitted to determine what certification programs it would like to offer.

Michael Leizerman said, "Our lawsuit and the resulting decision of the Ohio Supreme Court to change the rules on lawyer specialization allows the Ohio lawyers at The Law Firm for Truck Safety to communicate our specialized skills and dedication to victims of truck crashes. This helps the consumer of legal services by making it easier for victims and their families to make informed decisions about who should represent them."

Pennsylvania

Through the collaborative work of NBTA members: Marion Munley, Edward Ciarimboli, Dan Munley and NBTA Staffer, Gwen Arcangelo – NBTA successfully received approval for Truck Accident Law Certification from The Pennsylvania Bar Association Review and Certifying Board after four-month review. Those Pennsylvania attorneys interested in Truck Accident Law may apply now.

Arizona and Connecticut

NBTA is noticing a trend that more states recognize the American Bar Association accreditation of NBTA specialization programs, and they no longer require NBTA to submit a separate application for each of our specialization areas to their states. Both Arizona and Connecticut, recently changed their policy. Gwen Arcangelo, Director of Exams and State Accreditations has navigated the required processes and attorneys in Arizona and Connecticut may now apply in all eight legal specialization areas.

Member Spotlight

NBTA Certified Attorneys, Michael and Rena Leizerman share many things: a marriage, a vision for possibilities, co-authorship, and a passion for providing the best outcome for victims after a truck accident. Rena and Michael along with NBTA members Joe Fried and Joe Camerlengo spearheaded the effort to professionalize those truck accident attorneys through national board certification.

Rena Leizerman says, "Board certification ensures that attorneys have undergone rigorous evaluation and have met high standards of proficiency and ethics."

Recognizing that Truck Accident Law is a unique legal specialty, they sought out the National Board of Trial Advocacy as a collaborator to successfully realize their vision.

Knowing they can litigate only a small portion of the over 5,000 fatal truck accident cases per year, the Leizermans need and want to share their legal knowledge with their fellow attorneys. They share their experience because they want to make the world a better place. They have helped other attorneys be successful through a variety of educational avenues.

Michael is a founder of The Law Firm for Truck Safety. He is also co-founder of the Academy of Truck Accident Attorneys (ATAA). He concentrates is practice in select catastrophic injury truck collision cases across the country. He has received record-breaking truck accident settlements and verdicts. Michael attended truck driving school and obtained his Class "A" Commercial Driver's License. Michael is also the author of the Trial Guides book The Zen Lawyer: Winning with Mindfulness, published in 2018.

Rena concentrates her practice in trial and appellate litigation involving serious personal injury and wrongful death related to commercial vehicle collisions. She has successfully opposed Petitions for Certiorari to the United States Supreme Court and obtained the first punitive damage verdict against a freight broker for negligent selection. She lectures at the University of Toledo where she taught the only course in the country on Truck Accident Law. Rena is on the Board of Directors for NBTA and leads the NBTA Specialty Program Commission on truck accident law.

Rena and Michael coauthored the 4000 page, three-volume series, Litigating Truck Accident Cases. It provides a detailed road map to success in cases involving personal injury, death and/or damages caused by trucks or commercial trailers. The series include the complete Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) applicable to truck accidents and claims, and an overview of truck accident laws and regulations from each state. Both Rena and Michael have received the NBTA President's Award.

New Members

Congratulations to the following attorneys for becoming Board Certified – Proven, Tested Excellence in the following specialization areas:

Civil Trial Law
James Clancy | Branscomb Law | Corpus Christi, TX
James M Harrington | Polito and Harrington | Waterford, CT
Jason M Welborn | Welborn & Hargett, LLC | Lafayette, LA

Civil Practice Advocacy
Elissa M Coombs | The Law Office of David E. Gordon | Memphis, TN

Criminal Trial Law
Kelly N Pyle | Baldwin Perry & Wiley, P.C. | Franklin, IN

Family Trial Law
Lisa M Elliott | Elliott Law Offices, P.A. | Minneapolis, MN

Patent Litigation
M. Scott Stevens | Alston & Bird LLP | Charlotte, NC

Truck Accident Law
Peter Michael Anderson | The Law Office of Peter M. Anderson | Longmont, CO
Fred Burkey | Fred Burkey Law | Atlanta, GA
David C Dunbar | Dunbar Monroe, PLLC | Ridgeland, MS
Joel M Grist Jr. | Grist Law Firm | Macon, GA
Vanessa Motta | Motta Law, LLC | New Orleans, LA
Florence A. Murray | Murray & Murray Co. | Sandusky, OH
Lauren Pilie | Morris Bart | New Orleans, LA

List accurate as of 4/1/2024

Important Dates

NBTA Board Meeting: April 27, 2024
Exam Deadline: October 2, 2024
Exam Date: November 2, 2024
NBTA Board Meeting: Nov 16, 2024

Presidents Awards Notification

The purpose of the President's Awards is to recognize members of NBTA for their unique accomplishments and efforts which deserve to be known to our entire membership, the legal profession, and the communities that they work in. Each year multiple awards will be given out in each category.

An NBTA member may be nominated in any of the three areas. A separate nomination form is required for each area.

For the Legal Field: An accomplishment or outcome that will affect the legal field. It may be a new strategy, a verdict with an impactful outcome, creating an awareness of an issue, set a standard, right a wrong. etc. It should have an impact that extends beyond a local area or specific case.

For the Community: A project or initiative that makes a positive change in the community where the attorney practices. It can be accomplished through the legal work of the attorney or through a social or legal cause that the lawyer champions. It can be a single event or something ongoing.

For NBTA: A single effort or a body of work that furthers NBTA's mission to protect those in legal need through specialization accreditation or raises the professional level and quality of attorneys through the promotion of NBTA goals or board certification.

All nominations must be received no later than August 1st, 2024. The winners will be presented via Zoom PowerPoint presentation on September 21st, 2024. (1 pm EST)

President's Award Nomination

State Updates

NBTA was reaccredited in Truck Accident Law with the ABA 8/7/23-8/7/28.

NBTA was reaccredited in Family with the Minnesota State Board of Legal Certification 12/1/22-12/1/25.

NBTA was reaccredited in Truck Accident Law with the Minnesota State Board of Legal Certification 10/1/22-10/1/25.

NBTA was reaccredited in Civil Trial and Criminal Trial with the Pennsylvania Bar Association 6/1/24-6/1/29.