



The Specialist

Award Recipients Announced

The Board of Legal Specialization held its annual luncheon on Friday, April 16, 2010. Newly-certified specialists were recognized and the following awards were presented.

The James E. Cross Jr. Leadership Award is presented to a certified specialist who has taken an active leadership role in his/her practice area through presentations at CLE seminars, scholarly writings, participation in groundbreaking cases, or service to an established professional organization. This year, the award was presented to **Charles T. Hall** of Raleigh. Charles became a board certified specialist in social security disability law in 2006 after serving as the chair of the committee that launched the specialty. Charles is a well-noted expert in his practice area, having written a much-respected one volume treatise on the practice of social security disability law. Charles maintains a social security news blog which is known nationwide as a daily "must-read" for developments in the world of social security administration in general, and the practice of social security disability law in particular. Charles undertakes these projects with one intention: to make his colleagues better at representing the disabled, and for that he is particularly deserving of this award.



The Howard L. Gum Service Award recognizes a specialty committee member who consistently excels in completing committee tasks. The eight specialty committees are the lifeblood of the specialization program. They are responsible for evaluating every application for certification, including peer references, and writing and grading the examinations. The recipient of the Howard Gum award is highly dedicated to legal specialization, donates substantial time to committee responsibilities, and responds to the needs of the State Bar staff and the board in exemplary fashion.

Kate Mewhinney of Winston-Salem is this year's recipient. Kate first became a board certified specialist in elder law in 1995 through the National Elder Law Foundation; since that time she has been a leader in elder law in North Carolina. She is known statewide as the director of the Elder Law Clinic at Wake Forest School of Law. Kate spearheaded the effort to create a North Carolina specialty in elder law. That goal was fully realized this past year when the first class of elder law specialists was certified in November. Kate is one of those rare people who has the gift of making hard work look easy. She led the way cleanly and efficiently through the morass of national and state specialization rules to a sensible, timely, and successful result. Her graceful persistence made board certification of elder law specialists in North Carolina a reality.

Continued on page 2

Board of Legal Specialization Now Accepting Applications

Please encourage qualified colleagues to consider becoming board certified. The application deadline is June 30, 2010 and certification is offered in the following specialty areas: Bankruptcy, Criminal, Elder Law, Estate Planning, Family, Immigration, Real Property, Social Security Disability and Workers' Compensation. Visit www.nclawsspecialists.gov for details!

Did you know?
National Certification Areas

In North Carolina, we offer specialty certification in 9 practice areas. Across the country, there are 49 specialty certifications available through state and private programs, including the following:

Administrative Law

Admiralty and Maritime

Adoption

Antitrust

Appellate Law

Aviation

Child Welfare

Civil Trial Advocacy

DUI Defense

Education Law

Environmental Law

Farm and Ranch Real Estate

Federal Indian Law

Franchise and Distribution

Health Law

Intellectual Property

International Law

Legal or Medical Professional Liability

Natural Resources

Oil, Gas and Mineral

Personal Injury Trial and

Tax

(AWARDS continued)

The Sara H. Davis Excellence Award is presented to a certified specialist who exemplifies excellence in his/her daily work as a lawyer and serves as a model for other lawyers. Special consideration is given for a long and consistent record of handling challenging matters successfully; for sharing knowledge and experience with other lawyers; for earning the respect and admiration of those with whom the lawyer comes into contact in his/her daily work; and for high ethical standards. At the April luncheon, the award was presented to **W. Timothy Haithcock** of Goldsboro.

Tim became a board certified specialist in workers' compensation law in 2000. He is well known by his partners, colleagues, and adversaries as a lawyer with tremendous skill and the highest of ethical standards. It is not unusual for Tim to take a case that others have turned down; he does so frequently when he sees an injured worker in need. He also regularly assists other lawyers handling complex cases both by providing advice and also by joining as associate counsel. Tim is exceptionally trustworthy both personally and professionally, and the consummate professional as well as husband and father. His partners share that he reminds them by words and deeds daily that honesty, hard work, generosity and ability—in that order—are hallmarks of a professional lawyer.

Congratulations award winners!

Growth in Board Certification

Despite the economic news, (or perhaps because of it) 2009 showed a measurable increase in applications to become board certified specialists. This jump occurred in North Carolina as well as throughout the nation. In NC, we had the highest number of applications since the program began in 1987. Across the county, the statistics were similar, giving us the largest cumulative growth in board certified specialists since 1995. (See chart below)

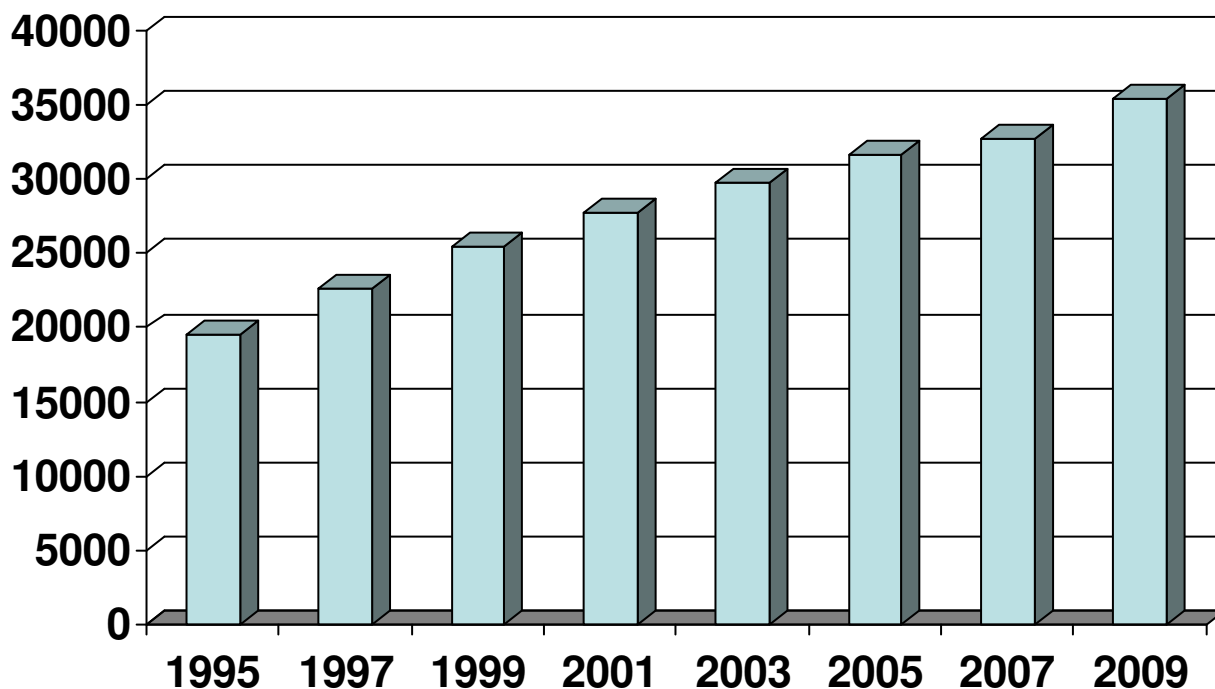
Above Average Growth Patterns

Nationally, the specialty areas with the highest growth over the past eight years are:

- City/County/Local Government
- Elder Law
- Health Law
- Labor Law
- Worker's Compensation

Statewide, the specialty areas with the highest numbers of applications last year were: Elder Law, Family Law, Real Property and Workers' Compensation.

Cumulative Growth in Board Certified Specialists—National Totals



*The total number of Board Certified Specialists was 35,453 at the end of 2009 based on data collected from the American Bar Association Standing Committee on Specialization.

In Memorium—Janie Long, Board Certified Specialist in Estate Planning and Probate Law

The main focus for an attorney is, and should always be, the client. Our firm was very fortunate to have an estate planning and probate specialist who epitomized this trait. Janie Long came to Craige Brawley Lipfert & Walker LLP in October 2007. She was a seasoned attorney and loved her clients. Her compassion and concern for all of them raised the bar for all of us at our firm.

We lost Janie in May, 2010 after a valiant battle with melanoma. When I look back I see a shining example of a great attorney – her clients meant everything to her and she to them. During her illness she continued to be the most positive person about her circumstances. She fought this battle with great courage and dignity, serving her clients as much as she was physically able to do right up to the end.

It is so difficult to lose anyone, and especially someone with so much enthusiasm for life. Our staff kept telling Janie to “make out your bucket list”. She would laugh and tell us she would get around to it. We realized after her death WE were her bucket list. It gives us comfort knowing that she left this world doing the work she loved most.

Having advised many clients facing grave illnesses, Janie planned for her illness by letting her family know her wishes and turning to Hospice for help in making her last days as pleasant and private as possible.

We are all better people because we knew Janie. We will miss her dearly.

Written by Bailey Lipfert, Friend and Colleague

Board of Legal Specialization

Michael E. Weddington, Chair
Raleigh

James B. Angell, Jr.
Raleigh

Carl W. Davis, Jr.,
Raleigh

D. Allen Hayes, MD,
Raleigh

Steven L. Jordan,
Raleigh

Edward P. Tewkesbury,
Greensboro

Lana S. Warlick,
Jacksonville

Jeri L. Whitfield
Greensboro

Alice N. Mine,
Executive Director

New Specialty Areas

The Board of Legal Specialization has received requests to pursue the creation of new specialty areas. Staff and board members are actively working with a new committee focused on creating standards for a specialty in appellate practice. If approved by the State Bar Council and Supreme Court, the new specialty would be offered for the first time in 2011.

The Board is also exploring the possibility of creating a sub-specialty of criminal law that would focus on juvenile defense. This idea was proposed by the Juvenile Defense Section of the North Carolina Advocates for Justice. If approved at all levels, this new sub-specialty exam would be offered for the first time in 2012.

New Exam Questions Wanted— If you've been involved in a recent case that was interesting or groundbreaking, please consider submitting an exam question (with model answer) for use on the exam in your specialty this fall. Please email to dmullen@ncbar.gov

Committee Chairs

Kevin Sink—Bankruptcy

Ames Chamberlin and Jan Pritchett—
Criminal Law

Kate Mewhinney—Elder Law

Sandy Clark—Estate Planning and
Probate Law

Charles Coltrane—Family Law

Laura Burton—Immigration

Jeff Dunham—Real Property

Mason Hogan—Social Security
Disability

Louise Root—Workers' s
Compensation