



The Specialist

FROM THE DESK OF **CHARLES T. HALL,**

A BOARD CERTIFIED SPECIALIST IN SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY LAW, SINCE 2006, PRACTICING IN RALEIGH

Board certified specialists in all practice areas can work with clients who are nearing retirement age and have questions about their financial futures. Many wonder how they will make ends meet. Charles answers a typical client question below:

Can I increase my Social Security?

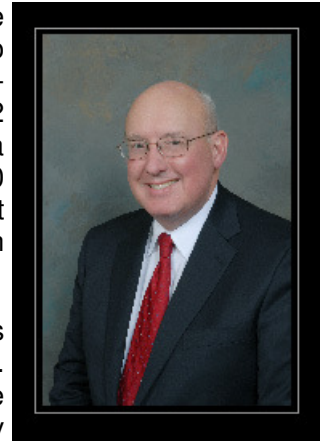
If you're talking about retirement benefits, the answer is yes but you'll have to be patient.

I think most people know that if you go on Social Security retirement benefits before full retirement age — which is age 66 for those retiring now — you receive less. The reduction is 25% if you go on Social Security retirement benefits at age 62 rather than at age 66. That's a big reduction! For example, if your benefit at age 66 would be \$2,000 a month, your benefits at age 62 would only be \$1,500 a month.

Most people don't know that they can get even more per month if they delay starting their Social Security retirement benefits to age 70. The difference between going on benefits at 66 and going on benefits at age 70 is 32%. The difference between going on retirement benefits at age 62

and going on benefits at age 70 is 76%! The person who goes on Social Security retirement benefits at age 62 and receives \$1,500 a month would receive \$2,640 a month if he or she can wait until age 70 before going on benefits.

There's an obvious problem for most people. They need or want to retire before age 70 but once they retire they don't have enough income without their Social Security retirement benefits. However, if you have assets such as an IRA or 401(k) to tide you over until you turn 70 and you're not too worried about your longevity, delaying the start of your benefits is a good idea. And, by the way, you don't have to go on Social Security to go on Medicare. You can apply for Medicare at age 65 regardless of whether you go on retirement benefits at the same time.



For additional resources, please visit: <http://www.ssa.gov/planners/retire/retirechart.html>

YOU ARE INVITED

Please join the Board of Legal Specialization

Friday, May 8, 2015 at the Mecklenburg County Bar, Charlotte

10:00—12:00 PM—Specialist CLE

CLE cost is only \$6 - Register online at www.MeckBarCLE.org

12:15 - 1:30 PM—Annual Specialists Luncheon

Space is limited: reserve your spot by emailing specialistrespond@ncbar.gov

Please nominate a colleague for the Annual Specialist Awards—forms attached.

Lawyer Legion Recognizes Specialty Certification

by Leslie Sammis, Co-Founder of Lawyer Legion

Lawyer Legion (www.LawyerLegion.com) is an online attorney directory that launched two years ago. The directory gives special recognition to certified specialists in the various state sponsored and national programs. All things being equal, a certified specialist will outrank a non-specialist for the applicable practice area.

If you are certified as a specialist, then your profile has already been added to the directory. When you visit your profile you will see a badge that highlights your designation as a specialist.

Educating the Public on the Benefits of Specialization

Lawyer Legion helps educate the public about the benefits of finding a certified specialist. The directory also includes a search feature that allows the viewer to narrow his search to only find a specialist. (www.lawyerlegion.com/certifications/)

The emphasis on specialty certification matters because the directory receives more than 34,000 unique visitors per month. The number of unique visitors has continued to increase steadily over the last two years.

The directory is easy for the public to use from either a personal computer or a mobile device such as a smart phone. The directory features an interactive map showing the location of all of the attorneys listed in a search. Each attorney's profile page also includes a Google map with a pin on the office location. Advance search features allow you to search for an attorney by name or by the name of a law firm. Thousands of attorneys have already claimed their profile, including more than 30 certified specialists in North Carolina.

How to Claim Your Lawyer Legion Profile

When you claim your profile, you can add the following information:

1. A profile picture;
2. Your contact information including the name of your law firm, your address and phone number;
3. A link to your website;
4. A complete biography;
5. Information on your bar licenses, work experience, education and membership in legal associations;
6. A RSS feed for your blog;
7. Links to any articles you have written;
8. A description of any awards you have received; and
9. Links to your social media profiles such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Google+.

To create the best experience for the viewer, the profile ranks higher if it is filled out completely. As you are filling out the profile, you will see a progress bar. If possible, add enough information so that you reach 100% completion.

What if I Don't Want My Profile to Show Up in Searches?

If you do not want to show up in search results when a viewer is looking for an attorney to hire, then simply delete your "practice area" information. For example, many specialists do not market their services to the public because they work for the government or a non-profit organization.

Those attorneys may have no interest in showing up in the directory for practice area searches. If you are included in this group and want Lawyer Legion to make the adjustment for you, send a request to support@lawyerlegion.com.

Can I Pay to Advertise on the Directory?

The online directory is unique because it does not allow attorneys or law firms to advertise. The ban on advertising includes any kind of enhanced listing. All listings are completely free and no paid listings are allowed.

Instead, when you are logged into the website to claim your profile, you will see an advertisement for the directory's parent company, Internet LAVA, LLC (<http://www.internetlava.com>). The parent company builds websites for attorneys and manages their internet marketing. Additionally, at the top of each page is a link for "Website Design for Attorneys" that provides more information about the services provided by the parent company.

Why Claim Your Profile?

Lawyer Legion recognizes objective criteria such as board certification and membership in specialty bar associations. While other directories focus on paid advertising, Lawyer Legion is taking a different approach that may prove to be popular with the consumer.

RECERTIFICATION REMINDER: Specialists who were recertified or certified for the first time in 2010 must renew their certifications in 2015. For administrative convenience, certifications granted in November of 2010 were considered effective on January 1, 2011. Applications are due August 30, but applicants have until December 31, 2015, to satisfy their CLE and substantial involvement requirements for recertification. Each specialty has different CLE requirements, so please be sure that you are meeting the CLE requirements specific to your specialty.

You will receive a detailed e-mail memorandum in June 2015 if you are eligible for recertification. **You will receive no other notification, so please be sure that your e-mail address with the specialization department is current.**

Recertification applications will be available on the specialization website, www.nclawspecialists.gov, starting July 1, 2015. Please contact Lanice Heidbrink at 919.719.9271 (lheidbrink@ncbar.gov) or Denise Mullen at 919.719-9255 (dmullen@ncbar.gov) if you have any questions about the application process.

NC LEAF Specialization Scholarship

NC LEAF (Legal Education Assistance Foundation) encourages the recruitment and retention of public interest attorneys by providing loan repayment assistance for law school debt. NC LEAF serves non-profit legal services providers, prosecutors and public defenders and, through them, citizens across the state. Equal access to justice is a cornerstone of our legal system and NC LEAF helps ensure that skilled lawyers continue to assist the underserved citizens of our state.



Christon Halkiotis, Assistant District Attorney in the Guilford County DA's Office, received one of the scholarship awards in 2014 and was certified as a specialist in state criminal law on November 24, 2014. Christon has been in the DA's office for 11 years and considers herself to be a "career" public servant. She prosecutes mostly violent felonies, concentrating heavily on domestic violence, sexual assault, and

Student loan debt continues to be the overwhelming reason why attorneys decline or leave public interest positions. The vast majority of law students borrow to finance their legal education and the rising costs have imposed staggering debt. Furthermore, public interest salaries have failed to keep pace with the escalating cost of education.

The NC LEAF specialization scholarship is one simple way that the Board of Legal Specialization, and board certified specialists across the state, can recognize public service attorneys for their commitment and encourage them to continue their service.

child abuse cases.

Christon was grateful for the support. "I found out about the opportunity from another board certified specialist in High Point. The support meant a lot to me and I think it's important to let other assistant district attorneys and public defenders know as well. It's a wonderful recognition and one that helps me to show the victims and families that I work with, that they are in good hands. I'm dedicated to this practice area and have achieved this higher standard of recognition."

Please consider making a tax-deductible donation to the Jeri L. Whitfield Legal Specialty Certification Scholarship Fund. 100% of your donation will support the application fees of lawyers who have dedicated their careers to public service, including prosecutors, public defenders and lawyers working for Legal Aid.

Please send donations to: NC LEAF Scholarship Fund, 217 E. Edenton Street, Raleigh, NC 27601-1015

DID YOU KNOW *that the rules provide for some alternative ways to earn CLE?*

.1905 Alternatives to Lecture-Type CLE Course Instruction

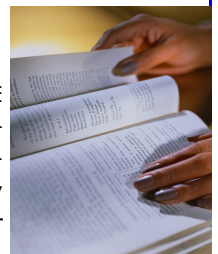
(a) Teaching - Preparation and presentation of written materials at an accredited CLE course will qualify for CLE credit at the rate of six hours of credit for each hour of presentation as computed under Rule .1904 of this subchapter. In the case of joint preparation and/or presentation, each preparer and presenter will receive a proportionate share of the total credit available. Repeat presentations of substantially the same materials will qualify for one-half the credit available for the initial presentation. Instruction at an academic institution will qualify for three hours of CLE credit per semester hour taught in the specialty field.

(b) Publication - Publication of a scholarly article in the applicant's specialty field will qualify for CLE credit in the discretion of the specialty committee, subject to board approval, based on a review of the article, its content, and its quality. No more than ten hours of credit will be given for a single article.

(c) Self-study - An individual may review video or audio tapes or manuscripts of lectures from qualified CLE courses, which lectures would meet the accreditation standards in Rule .1903 of this subchapter and receive credit according to the computation of hours in Rule .1904 of this subchapter provided that no more than two hours per year of self-study shall qualify to meet the CLE requirements for certification or recertification.

(d) Advanced degrees - Attendance at courses of instruction at a law school which can be credited toward the earning of an advanced degree in the specialty field of the applicant will qualify for one hour of CLE credit per semester hour taken if attained in the required period prior to application for certification or recertification.

Please contact the specialization program office if you need any additional information about these options—919-828-4620.



IN MEMORIAM

Ann Elizabeth Hanks, High Point; Estate Planning and Probate Law, January 23, 1954—March 11, 2015

Judge Randy Davis Doub, Greenville; Consumer Bankruptcy Law, September 1, 1955 – January 24, 2015

Judge Jennifer Green, Raleigh; Family Law, June 26, 1961 – December 12, 2014

Charles J. Alexander, II, Winston-Salem; State and Federal Criminal Law, November 20, 1946 - November 26, 2014

*Christy Eve Reid, Charlotte; Estate Planning and Probate Law, February 8, 1951 – May 8, 2014;
Former Chair of the Board of Legal Specialization,*

Robert Curtis Gunst, Waxhaw; Estate Planning and Probate Law, March 9, 1955 - April 23, 2014

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Alice N. Mine,
Executive Director

*ABA Standing Committee
on Specialization*

The Standing Committee on Specialization is housed in the Center for Professional Responsibility at the American Bar Association. The Center's website has many resources available regarding board certification for lawyers throughout the country.

http://www.americanbar.org/groups/professional_responsibility/committees_commissions/specialization.html

The North Carolina specialization program is one of the largest and most well-established programs in the country. The National Roundtable on Specialization will be held on May 29-30, 2015 in Denver, Colorado in conjunction with the 31st National Forum on Client Protection and the 41st National Conference on Professional Responsibility.

The North Carolina State Bar
Board of Legal Specialization
217 East Edenton Street
Raleigh, NC 27601
919-828-4620

Committee Chairs

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Workers' Compensation Law

The Specialist Newsletter is written and edited by Denise Mullen, Assistant Director of Legal Specialization and Lanice Heidbrink, Executive Assistant. Please submit comments and article ideas to dmullen@ncbar.gov