

**THE MICHAEL R.N. McDONNELL  
AMERICAN INNS OF COURT  
ACTIVITY-FOCUSED MENTORING PROGRAM  
2018-2019**

*"The lamp that lights my way is experience."*  
- Patrick Henry

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>PAGE</u>
Section 1: The Mission, Vision, and Goals of the Program	3
Section 2: Program Description: Activity-Focused Mentoring Model	5
Section 3: Mentoring Operations and Job Description	6
Section 4: Activity Guidelines	8
Section 5: Participant and Mentor Recruitment	10
Section 6: Program Evaluation	11
Section 7: Mentee Registration Form	12
Program Materials	Appendix

**SECTION 1**  
**THE MISSION, VISION, AND GOALS OF THE PROGRAM**

**A. Mission Statement**

To benefit our community, the Bench, the Bar, and the public by elevating the efficiency and humanity of the judicial system through the promotion of awareness, understanding, appreciation and application of the principles of professionalism.

**B. Vision Statement**

The Michael R.N. McDonnell American Inns of Court Mentoring Program is designed to provide guidance to attorneys new to the Florida Bar that will instill the importance of professionalism and competence. By harnessing the experience of high principled, successful practitioners, attorneys new to the Florida Bar will be offered a resource that will spare them from experiencing many of the pitfalls that are a by-product of a lack of familiarity with the practice of law in Florida. Based on the understanding that successful mentoring relationships often develop organically and naturally when attorneys seeking mentors have multiple opportunities to socialize and have contact with attorneys who are open to mentoring others, this mentoring program seeks to maximize the opportunities for such relationships to develop through activities designed to promote mentoring relationships.

**C. Program Goals**

The mentor/mentee relationship seeks to facilitate the newly admitted lawyer's attainment of the qualities of an excellent lawyer, including evidencing good character and civility, exhibiting competence in the practice of law, and establishing a commitment to clients, the profession, and the judicial system. Appropriate attention to these qualities will help restore the legal profession to its former glory as one that commands respect in our society.

An important goal of the program is to facilitate the development of successful mentors and mentees, which will lead to successful mentoring relationships. The successful mentor is first a teacher, an informed and experienced professional. Second, a mentor is a connector, a person who helps the mentee in the professional world, assisting the mentee in making the contacts and network that will be of value throughout the mentee's career. Third, a mentor is responsible for managing the heart and spirit of the mentor/mentee relationship. A successful mentor is someone who is a good person first and a great lawyer second: someone who seeks knowledge yet

cherishes humanity; and someone who is guided by clear moral principles in both personal and professional levels.

Similarly, the successful mentee is someone who is motivated to be an exceptional lawyer. The mentee must have a love and a respect for the profession and recognize that there is a "people" component of a lawyer's training that should include the kind of contact that a true mentor can offer. The mentor/mentee relationship affords opportunities for all participants. Mentors are given the opportunity to influence the way new lawyers interact with their colleagues and practice law, thus influencing the future of the profession. Mentees are given the opportunity to be molded by some of the finest legal talent in the Bar in an atmosphere where candid, yet confidential, exchanges between the mentor and mentee can take place.

**SECTION 2**  
**PROGRAM DESCRIPTION: ACTIVITY-FOCUSED MENTORING MODEL**

The Michael R.N. McDonnell American Inns of Court Mentoring Program is designed to achieve its mission by organizing and hosting intentionally planned mentoring-focused activities throughout the year on a regular basis outside of the regular Inns of Court meetings and Pupillage groups. These mentoring-focused activities will be designed to encourage and create opportunities for mentoring relationships to be created naturally and informally between Inns of Court members who are new to the Florida Bar and seek mentoring relationships and Inns of Court members who are high principled, successful practitioners willing to serve as mentors. These mentoring relationships will be encouraged to develop at a pace and intensity that both the mentor and mentee find comfortable and beneficial.

Each Inns of Court season (September to May), The Michael R.N. McDonnell American Inns of Court will organize and host up to four mentoring-focused activities. Each activity will begin with an ice-breaker to ensure everyone gets a chance to meet each other. Each activity will encourage dialog on a particular topic related to mentoring. Within a week of each activity, the participants will be asked to complete an online survey to assess levels of satisfaction with the activities and the program. At the last activity, the participants will be asked to provide feedback on the program and suggestions for the following season.

## SECTION 3 MENTORING OPERATIONS

### A. Inn Mentoring Committee

Administration of the mentoring program will be executed by the Inn's Mentoring Committee of four members, at least one of whom is an Inn officer to serve as Mentoring Chair. In addition to general operational oversight of mentoring efforts, the committee's responsibilities includes the following tasks:

- Communicating the existence and organization of the mentoring program to American Inns of Court, Inn members, and the community;
- Establishing timelines for mentoring activities in each Inn program year;
- Generating and maintaining a non-inclusive, illustrative, list of discussion topics;
- Creating the applications, guiding the registration process, and recruiting mentors and participants;
- Promotion of each activity to the Inn members;
- Creating and communicating guidelines regarding expectations for participants;
- Establishing appropriate accountability mechanisms;
- Evaluating success and areas for improvement;
- Troubleshooting

### B. Mentoring Chair Job Description

The Mentoring Chair leads a board-appointed committee charged with conceiving and implementing the Inn's mentoring and professional-development activities. The Mentoring Chair's responsibilities include:

- Create a general plan for the year's mentoring and professional-development activities in advance (before the first meeting in the fall) with the approval of the executive committee.
- Encourage all levels of membership to participate, with an emphasis on fostering relationships between established practitioners and lawyers who are either new to the practice of law or new to practicing law in Collier County.
- Organize the mentoring / professional-development activities.
- Create and deploy satisfaction evaluations at the end of each activity or at the end of the program year; share results with the executive committee.
- Reports to the Executive Committee.
- Works with the other Mentoring Committee volunteers.

The person in this position must maintain an active membership status with the Inn throughout his or her term. The term of this position is one year, commencing on May 1, and may be appointed for additional terms.

Immediately after his or her appointment, the Mentoring Chair will meet with the outgoing Mentoring Chair, and both the President and President-Elect to review prior practices and survey results. The Mentoring Chair is expected to review the resources available in the Mentoring section of the national office website to ensure compliance with the requirements and recommendations for Inn mentoring programs. The Mentoring Chair is also strongly encouraged, but not required, to attend an Inns-of-Court Leadership Summit.

## SECTION 4 ACTIVITY GUIDELINES

The Mentoring Committee should apply the following guidelines when developing the mentoring activity events:

**Size:** While the activity itself may include the entire Inn, try to ensure that there are enough mentors on hand to work with no more than three mentees per mentor. This may vary depending upon the specific activity.

**Duration:** Each mentoring activity cycle lasts for the duration of one Inn program year—usually 9–12 months.

**Frequency:** Organize one to four activities during the cycle.

**Length:** A minimum of one hour per activity is recommended, but it can certainly last longer.

**Location:** Be creative with the location: at your Inn meeting place before or after a meeting, judges' chambers, local restaurants or coffee shops, the library, a law firm conference room, or even a city park.

**Topics:** The mentoring committee will agree before the start of the program year on the topic or topics to be covered in the mentoring activities. The topics should ensure that members have a strong understanding of what professionalism means. Important topics to include are:

- High competence in legal skills.
- Adherence to ethical obligations.
- Appreciation of the importance of civility and professional demeanor in all dealings.
- The importance of pro bono representation and access to justice issues.
- The importance of participation in bar organizations at the local, state and national levels.
- The transmission of professional values and standards to members of the legal profession.
- Balance of self-interest with the interests of clients, the justice system and the public interest.
- Accountability for one's actions.

**Encourage creation of a “Brave Space”:** Each activity should begin by declaring it a “brave space” or environment in which participants should all feel comfortable sharing with each without the fear of something getting back to an employer. The program organizer should be prepared to bring up relevant topics that are generally uncomfortable if they don’t come up organically—these kinds of topics are the things that need to be talked about the most!

**Introductions:** Each activity should have some kind of ice-breaker built in to ensure everyone gets a chance to meet each other. Activities held at the start of the year should be different from those at the year’s end, as most members will at least know everyone’s name and basic statistics by the end of the Inn year.

**Mentoring Topics:** Each activity should focus on a particular topic related to mentoring or several topics that fall under one umbrella category. You may also choose to focus on a particular aspect of a specialty area and then design the content to have a mentoring focus. Either way, the emphasis for each activity should be on facilitating mentoring.

**Engagement:** The activities should be designed for interaction between mentees and mentors. This may look different at each activity so be thoughtful about how to get members talking and not always to the same person!

**Q&A:** Each activity should have built in opportunities for asking questions—whether you do it along the way or at the end of the program, discussion is an important component to participant satisfaction and ensuring members come back for more.

## SECTION 5 RECRUITMENT OF PARTICIPANTS AND MENTORS

### A. Participants

The program description set forth in Section 2 of this handbook will be provided to Inn members as part of the invitation to register for the upcoming Inns of Court season. Upon registration, Inn members will be given an opportunity to register for the mentoring program as participants. At the first Inns of Court meeting of the season, a presentation about the program and an additional opportunity to register will be provided. A maximum of 15 participants will be accepted for each season. Participants will be provided resource materials on how to be successful mentees and how to establish mentoring relationships, and will be encouraged and expected to pursue mentoring relationships throughout the season. Participants are expected to provide candid feedback about the program in response to surveys after each activity and at the last mentoring activity.

### B. Mentors

Each season, a roster of a minimum of five mentors will be personally recruited by the Mentoring Committee with assistance from the board of directors to serve as mentors for the program. Mentors will be required to attend each mentoring-focused activity. Mentors will be provided resource materials on how to be successful mentors, and will be encouraged and expected to pursue mentoring relationships throughout the season. Mentors are expected to provide candid feedback about the program.

The identification and recruitment of mentors should focus on persons who have a history of practicing with dedication to the principles of professionalism, i.e. character, competence, civility, and commitment. It is recommended that mentors have at least ten (10) years of active practice before The Florida Bar, immediately preceding application as a mentor, and a record free of reprimands, suspensions, or expulsions from any Bar Association.

## **SECTION 6 PROGRAM EVALUATION**

The Mentoring Committee will develop a brief online survey to be circulated to participants after each activity. The Mentoring Committee will develop a program evaluation to be completed by participants and mentors at the last mentoring activity of the season. These materials are to be completed prior to May 1 of each season.

The Mentoring Committee will review results of all feedback, conduct a self-assessment, and develop recommendations for the following season's mentoring program.

**SECTION 7  
PARTICIPANT REGISTRATION FORM**

Name and Florida Bar Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of admission to The Florida Bar: \_\_\_\_\_

Firm: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of attorneys in firm: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please state your area of practice or special interest:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_