



The Ted Dalton American Inn of Court

Layers are in.

The Ted Dalton Inn is going back to its roots with mentoring as one of the guiding principles, and with a look both internally and externally.

- **Dinners:** At every Inn dinner, table mates are a mixture of people with different experience levels – from Masters to Pupils. This purposeful jumbling of people, know-how and expertise is a way to offer everyone an opportunity to get to know each other in a more intimate and relaxed setting.
- **Education:** Pupillage teams are designed specifically to encourage mentoring. Each team – 16 people in 6 teams – is comprised of every level of membership, including Emeritus. Each team is responsible for one educational program with every member strongly encouraged to be involved both in preparing and presenting the program. The organization is designed to get younger/newer attorneys involved and feeling comfortable working with more experienced lawyers. Furthermore each pupillage team divides into sub-groups. This arrangement makes coordination and communication easier for the pupillage teams; it also allows for more intense and personal interaction between team members leading to a deeper mentoring experience.
- **Social:** In addition to educational programs, pupillage teams are also responsible for another component: social mentoring. Each month, pupillage teams organize an opportunity for Inn members to convene in a social environment with other Inn members, as well as other attorneys in the community. Past events have been 5:00 –7:00 pm standard happy hours, 4:30 – 6:00 pm “family friendly” happy hours (so parents can get back to their families for pick up and dinner), and early morning “coffee klatches” before work. Each event has different benefits – some have larger numbers of attendees so that there are more opportunities for small group discussions; some have smaller numbers which allows for more focused group conversations. Once they even had a local judge give a short presentation. At each one, Inn members are encouraged to bring non Inn guests who are newer members of the bar. There seems to be an increasing number of young attorneys who are hanging out their own shingle. The social mentoring efforts at Ted Dalton AIC seem to be bridging the gap between law school education and real-world experience.

What’s next?

One-on-one in-depth and personal mentoring relationships haven’t yet been observed – while it remains to be seen if that level of mentoring is still to come, connections are being made. In the face of change, the Inn is thriving on the old model and its new application.