

FAMILY LAW AT ELY SCHOLARSHIP AND SOCIALIZING

**BY ROBERT CERCEO, ESQ.,
CHAIR OF THE FAMILY LAW SECTION**

The annual Family Law Conference in Ely each March is like nothing else offered by the state bar. Supreme Court justices, District Court judges, hearing masters from all of the counties and a throng of attorneys and paralegals all gather under one roof.



Attendees ask questions of a panel of Nevada judges.

Conceptualized 22 years ago by Gary Silverman, the gathering has been a chance to “break bread” with our opponents and judges. We spend most of our working lives working with or against our peers, but rarely taking time to know each other personally, discussing ideas and furthering our practice area. Growing from a modest 70 or so in the conference’s first year in Tonopah, we reached record numbers in 2011, with 320 advance enrollees plus walk-ins.

Every year, the conference features a general session plus an advanced track for seasoned practitioners and a paralegal training track. Offerings specific to this year included the judge’s panel, intensives on national and state domestic violence issues, ethics and malpractice and extensive course time devoted to the impact of bankruptcy, foreclosures and short sales on family law cases. We are indebted to outgoing chair Ray Oster for designing the course on the hottest topics now facing family law practitioners, and for his endless efforts to promote attendance – it has been a banner year.

The Pillar Award went to Gary Silverman for his past and current efforts to promote scholarship and comradery. The award, now in its third year, singles out those with a long-term commitment to our professional betterment. Gary continues to teach the annual Nuts and Bolts course with Ed Kainen of Las Vegas and, after so many successful years, it is becoming a generational rite of passage.



Specialization has grown. This is a certification program offered by the state bar that permits the Family Law Section to self-determine who should be designated as an expert in the area of family law. It is an objective recognition of the individuals who have dedicated themselves to scholarship and heightened practice standards. In the five years since the inception of the program, we have reached a 70 percent passage rate and that number is expected to increase with the recent March 2011 examination.

It is a worthy endeavor to attend and participate in the Ely conference. We appreciate the one time each year when we can all mingle, argue, laugh and grow; as Gary would say, "... to break bread with our brothers and sisters under one roof." Thanks for thinking of the next generation of lawyers.

The 23rd Ely Conference will take place next March. Hope to see you there. ■



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