

# PROFESSIONALISM AND THE STATE BAR OF NEVADA: THE FIFTH ANNUAL PROFESSIONALISM SUMMIT

BY ANNE WELLBORN, ESQ. & PATTY CAFFERATA, ESQ.



**Attorney Ed Bernstein and Justice Nancy Saitta demonstrate what not to do in a court of law.**



**Christopher Byrd (center) accepts the 2009 Professionalism Award on behalf of his long-time law partner John Mowbray. Presenting the award are Nevada Supreme Court Justices James Hardesty and Nancy Saitta.**

The Fifth Annual Professionalism Summit took place in Las Vegas on October 13, 2009, and in Carson City on October 14, 2009. Both events drew a record number of attendees. The theme of this year's summit was a call to the members of the State Bar of Nevada to change the perception embodied in the quote from Shakespeare's *Henry VI*, "The first thing we do, let's kill all the lawyers." Justice Nancy Saitta, the originator of the summit, challenged those attending to aspire to a level of professionalism that not only includes civility to the judiciary, fellow practitioners and their staff members and clients, but also upholds and supports the entire legal system. She announced that several of the judiciary across the state had agreed to sign and uphold a pledge of professionalism and to display a plaque promoting professionalism on their respective judicial benches.

The introduction to this year's summit was provided by former U.S. Senator Richard Bryan. Bryan reminded attendees that it is the responsibility of those practicing law to support the legal system, even where the result is not favorable to the client. He requested the help of the judiciary to appropriately respond to pleadings and arguments containing unprofessional statements.

Las Vegas attorney John H. Mowbray received the Lloyd D. George Professionalism Award in recognition of his outstanding legal career and his exemplary display of professionalism and commitment to improve the

practice of law in Nevada. The Howard D. McKibben Professionalism Award went to respected Reno attorney John Desmond.

Those in attendance found the program both entertaining and informative. Two skits were performed by Nevada attorneys; one of them was a television commercial parody, starring Bar Counsel Rob Bare. Bare portrayed Mr. Ten-Percent Lawyer, wearing a crooked toupee and spouting off examples of just about every violation of the advertising rules. His rapid-fire speech about his legal fees was comical and totally incomprehensible (another violation). The video is highly recommended for any attorney who currently advertises, or is considering advertising, his or her services.

The well-written skits covered basic ethics rules such as competency, duties to prospective clients and confidentiality. One of the skits demonstrated the ethical challenges of representing a client when the attorney and client do not speak the same language – a timely comment on Nevada's diverse demographics. [NL](#)

**ANNE WELLBORN** is a solo practitioner who handles business transactional work for start-up businesses and entrepreneurs, including formation issues, infrastructure development, and funding options. Wellborn also handles wills and trusts for small business owners and individuals.

**For Patty Cafferata's bio, see p. 19.**