



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

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The civil litigation landscape has changed dramatically in recent years, resulting in a significant decrease in the number of civil cases that go to a jury. The decrease has been so significant that many believe the art of trial advocacy may soon become ancient history. The high cost of litigation is most certainly a major contributing factor.

In addition to court-ordered ADR, there has been a significant increase in private arbitration/mediation. ADR alternatives provide means by which litigants can resolve differences quickly and in a cost-effective manner. So, one might ask, what is wrong with ADR if it provides a quicker and less costly resolution of legal disputes? The answer is actually rather obvious: nothing. However, an unintended consequence of such efficiency is that it has gotten much harder for our young lawyers to obtain litigation experience as civil trial attorneys.

The purpose of the Short Trial Volunteer Program (STVP) is to afford young lawyers an opportunity to gain litigation experience by representing pro se litigants in the Short Trial Program defined in the Nevada Court Rules. Currently, the Second, Eighth and Ninth Judicial Districts have Short Trial Programs.

STATE BAR ROLLS OUT SHORT TRIAL VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

In 1991 the Nevada Legislature enacted the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) program, effective July 1, 1992. The legislation required the Second and Eighth Judicial Districts (Washoe and Clark counties) to implement ADR programs. The First and Ninth Judicial districts (Carson City, Storey County and Douglas County), subsequently adopted the program voluntarily. A major goal of the ADR program is to avoid the high cost of litigation, while affording litigants the opportunity to resolve their differences.

While the STVP is primarily intended to provide young lawyers litigation experience, the program is open to all members in good standing of the State Bar of Nevada who desire the opportunity to gain civil litigation experience.

How it Works

The state bar will develop a list of attorneys who agree to represent pro se litigants with cases assigned to the Short Trial Program. Attorneys interested in participating in the STVP will submit applications to the bar. The list of applicants will go to the program administrator who will make the assignments. When cases involving pro se litigants move into the Short Trial Program. Each litigant will be offered an opportunity to be represented by an attorney during the short trial; if the litigant accepts, an assignment will be made, matching the case with an accepted applicant.

The Program is a Winner and There are No Losers

The STVP provides young lawyers with an opportunity to obtain real trial experience, while simultaneously gaining the skills and confidence essential for a trial advocate; this in turn will serve them well as they work to master all the aspects of a strong and confident advocate.

Providing a pro se litigant with an attorney not only benefits the litigant, but is an asset to the court as well. The fact that all parties are represented by counsel most assuredly assists the short trial judge in conducting a more efficient jury trial within the Short Trial Program's time limitations. I am sure the jurors called upon to serve will be grateful as well. **NL**