



FEDERAL TRIAL PRACTICE SEMINAR
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Federal Trial Practice Seminar
2011 Seminar Description

Purpose of the Seminar

The Federal Trial Practice Seminar (“Seminar”) is a program sponsored by the United States District Court for the District of Delaware and the Federal Bar Association’s District of Delaware Chapter. The Seminar is a multi-week instructional trial practice program, to be held in April and May 2011. It is designed for lawyers who have less than 10 years of experience as a practicing attorney but who have an interest in regularly litigating in the District Court.

The Seminar has two primary goals. First, it seeks to provide the participants with a venue in which they can practice federal trial skills and learn from experienced practitioners in order to hone those skills. Second, it offers an opportunity for the Court to educate the participants as to what is expected of those who practice in federal court in the District.

Application Process

In this second year of the annual Seminar, we anticipate accepting 8 attorneys to participate in the program. Six of these spots will be reserved for members of the Delaware Bar, while two spots will be open to both members of the Bar and to non-members of the Bar who regularly practice in Delaware’s District Court. Membership in the Federal Bar Association’s District of Delaware Chapter will be a positive consideration in the application process, but will not be a requirement for admission.

Applicants will be required to submit a letter of interest, a resume and a list of at least two references, by an application deadline in early February 2011. Applicants under consideration for admission will be expected to participate in an interview process prior to their acceptance into the Seminar. Applicants will be notified of their acceptance by the end of February 2011.

Content of the Seminar

The 8 Seminar participants will take part in instructional sessions once a week for six consecutive weeks, beginning in April 2011 and ending in May 2011. It is anticipated that these sessions will be held on Tuesday evenings. Each session will be held in a courtroom (or courtrooms) at the U.S. Courthouse at 844 King Street in Wilmington. Sessions will begin at 5:00 p.m. and will end no later than 8:00 p.m. These six Seminar sessions will cover topics including Opening Statements, Direct Examination, Cross Examination, Courtroom Presentation and Demeanor and Closing Statements.

Five of the six Seminar sessions will be “speaker-driven” sessions. These will consist, first, of a presentation on the topic of the evening from an outside speaker who has frequently litigated in the District Court, or from one or more of our federal judges. The session will also include a “how to” component, in which a speaker will demonstrate an example or examples of how to effectively advocate in the courtroom regarding the given topic of the evening. Lastly, each of these speaker-driven sessions will include a discussion on the topic of the evening by a panel, which will be composed of the featured speaker, the judges present and each of our program mentors who are in attendance. Each of these speaker-driven sessions will have at least two hours of legal instruction.

One of the six Seminar sessions will be a “practicum” session. In this session, the participants will engage in mock presentations relating to particular topics that have been the focus of a speaker-driven session. For example, after participating in speaker-driven sessions on opening and closing statements, a future session may be a practicum on opening and closing statements, in which the participants will give a mock opening or closing statement to a “jury” composed of the federal judges and the program mentors in attendance. The participants will thereafter receive constructive criticism and feedback from the judges and program mentors regarding their presentation. This practicum session will include at least two hours of legal instruction.

Lastly, after the six weekly Seminar sessions are completed, the participants will participate in a day-long mock trial. In this mock trial, the participants will give opening statements, engage in direct and cross examination of witnesses and give closing statements, all before a real jury. For each of these sessions, the participants will use a set of prepared facts that they have been given in advance. After the mock trial is completed, a panel made up of the judges and program mentors in attendance will provide feedback on how the participants performed. This mock trial session will include at least five hours of legal instruction.

Other Benefits of the Seminar

As noted above, a group “program mentors” will be an important part of the Seminar. These Delaware-based practitioners are lawyers with significant experience practicing in Delaware’s District Court. The program mentors will be expected to attend all or nearly all of the Seminar sessions, and will offer feedback and advice to the participants during each session.

The Seminar also provides the participants with other opportunities to interact with the federal judges and program mentors. These interactions will include an opening ceremony, held before the start of the Seminar, in which the judges and program mentors will discuss what they hope the participants will gain from the Seminar. In addition, there will be a closing ceremony, held after the completion of the Seminar, in which participants will receive a diploma commemorating their completion of the Seminar. Participants are asked to invite a senior lawyer to this event who has served as a mentor in their career.

The Seminar will also provide opportunities to interact with alumni of the Seminar. These alumni can provide the participants with their unique perspective on how to take the skills learned in the Seminar and develop them in practice.

Participants in the Seminar will also receive CLE credit for each of the seminar sessions. Last year, participants received up to 17.5 hours of CLE credit, including 1.0 hours of Ethics credit, from the Delaware Bar due to their participation in the Seminar. There is no cost to participate in the Seminar.