

The History of the American Inns of Court

The American Inns of Court concept was the product of a discussion in the late 1970's among the United States' members of the Anglo-American Exchange of Lawyers and Judges, including Chief Justice of the United States Warren E. Burger and Judge J. Clifford Wallace of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. Burger subsequently invited Rex E. Lee, then Dean of the J. Reuben Clark School of Law at Brigham Young University and later U.S. Solicitor General, and Dallin Oaks, then president of Brigham Young University and later justice of the Utah Supreme Court, to test the idea.

At the suggestion of Lee, a pilot program was entrusted to Senior U.S. District Court Judge A. Sherman Christensen, who shaped the idea into a workable concept. The first American Inn of Court was founded February 2, 1980 in the Provo/Salt Lake City area of Utah, and included law students from Brigham Young University.

Within the next three years, additional American Inns formed in Utah, Mississippi, Hawaii, New York, and Washington, D.C.

In 1983, Chief Justice Burger created a committee of the Judicial Conference of the United States to explore whether the American Inn concept was of value to the administration of justice and, if so, whether there should be a national organization to promote, establish and assist American Inns, and promote the goals of legal excellence, civility, professionalism and ethics on a national level.

The committee reported to the Judicial Conference affirmatively on the two questions and proposed the creation of the American Inns of Court Foundation. The Judicial Conference approved the reports and, thus, endorsed the American Inn concept and the formation of a national structure.

In 1985 the American Inns of Court Foundation with 12 Inns nationally, was organized to support the Inns and to promote the goals of legal excellence, civility, professionalism and ethics on a national level. The establishment of the American Inns of Court Foundation was celebrated at a dinner in Salt Lake City in June 1985. Speakers at the dinner program included Judge Christensen, Judge Aldon J. Anderson, and Dallin Oaks.

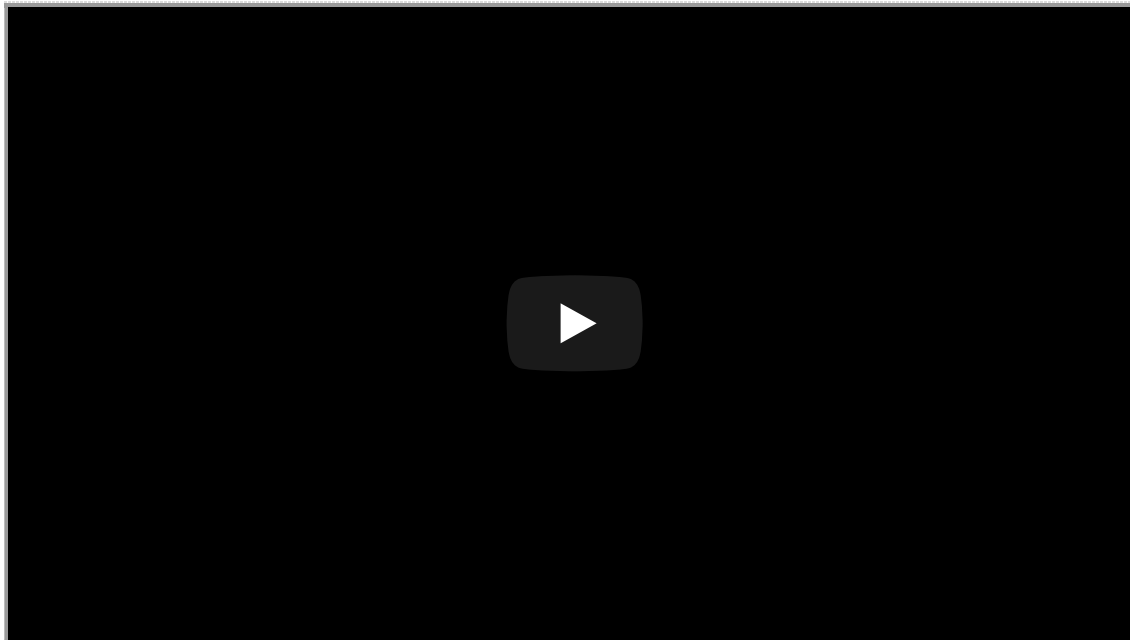
The American Inns of Court movement has grown faster than any other organization of legal professionals. Today there are nearly 400 chartered American Inns of Court in 48 states, the District of Columbia, Guam, and Tokyo. There are more than 30,000 active members nationwide encompassing a wide cross-section of the legal community, including federal and state judges, lawyers, law professors, and law students.

Past Chairman and Presidents of the American Inns of Court Foundation

- Judge Aldon J. Anderson, U.S. District Court for the District of Utah (1985–1986)
- Judge Howard T. Markey, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit (1986–1994)
- Professor Sherman L. Cohn, Georgetown University Law Center (1994–1996)

- Judge Patrick E. Higginbotham, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit (1996–2000)
- Justice Randy J. Holland, Delaware Supreme Court (2000–2004)
- Judge Deanell R. Tacha, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit (2004–2008)
- Dean Robert K. Walsh, Wake Forest University School of Law (2008–2010)
- Justice Donald W. Lemons, Supreme Court of Virginia (2010–2014)

AIC History Timeline



About Us

[Our Vision and Mission](#)

[What Is an American Inn of Court](#)

[Member Experience](#)

[History](#)

[Professional Creed](#)

[Commitment to Diversity](#)

[Our Board of Trustees](#)

[Our Staff](#)

[Directors of Chapter Relations](#)

[Find us on Social Media](#)



© 2018 American Inns of Court All rights reserved.

225 Reinekers Lane, Suite 770, Alexandria, VA 22314 | Phone: (703) 684-3590 | info@innsofcourt.org

[Disclaimer](#) [Privacy Policy](#) [Request Information](#)

© 2018 American Inns of Court Foundation. All rights reserved.