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Montana Bar Association Activities

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MONTANA BAR ASSOCIATION ACTIVITIES

An increasing tempo of activity is making the Montana Bar Association a powerful instrument for the good of the legal profession in this State.

For the past several years the officers of the Association, reflecting the mood and desire of its members, have carried on a program designed to keep the graduate lawyer abreast of the evergrowing field of law through a plan of continuing legal education. The effort is wholly voluntary; a majority of the practicing lawyers of the State take an active interest in it.

An outstanding example of the efforts of the Montana Bar Association in the direction of continuing legal education was presented at the Sixty-sixth Annual Convention in Billings in July, 1954. There, four outstanding lawyers from the Minnesota Bar, two of them judges or past judges and the others aggressive and successful trial lawyers, in a group popularly known as the "Minnesota Civil Jury Trial Panel," presented a program illustrating the technique of jury trial in civil cases. The panel lasted through two afternoons of the convention, and the halls were jam-packed by interested lawyers throughout. With humor, intelligence and real know-how in their field, the panel members developed every nuance of technique and legal interplay as they progressed through the various stages of trial. All in attendance were enthusiastic about the educational value of the panel.

Another feature of the Convention Program was the address of Earl Brown, Sr., of the Bar of Texas, on the nature and effect of various oil and gas instruments. The paper which he prepared for presentation to the Montana Bar was such a thorough treatise that it is now used in several law firms for reference purposes.

Wesley W. Wertz, of Helena, President of the Association this year, has continued the pace. Under his leadership, the Continuing Legal Education Committee, headed by William Coldiron of Butte, with the cooperation of the Cascade County Bar, conducted a Legal-Medical Institute in Great Falls on April 22 and 23, 1955. The Institute was sponsored by the Montana Bar Association in cooperation with the Montana Medical Association and had the benefit not only of the outstanding practicing trial lawyers in the State but also many eminent medical practitioners. The program was invaluable to lawyers who are practicing, or who intend to practice in the field of personal injury litigation, whether from the viewpoint of a plaintiff's or defend-

ant's lawyer. For example, panels discussing the human anatomy and the effect of trauma thereon, the technique of physical examinations, the medical-legal aspects of injuries, the preparation of medical testimony, and the presentation of expert medical testimony were developed in interesting expositions and discussions. The whole of the program was invaluable in demonstrating to the doctors and the lawyers in attendance the problems each of the professions face in personal injury litigation. The harmony created between the two professional groups makes it probable that such panels shall be continued in the future.

The Association is not confining its activity alone to continuing legal education. The executive committee of the Association is working constantly with the public relations committee, headed by George J. Hutton of Billings, to improve the standing of the lawyer with the public. The Association is ever concerned with the possible encroachment of other groups in unauthorized practice of law; with the necessity for self-discipline for the protection of the public and the improvement of the Bar; with the relations of the Bar to Federal and State administrative agencies; with the emoluments of judicial office to make a judicial career attractive to the best qualified lawyers; and always with the continued defense of the liberty and freedom of the individual.

All of these matters will attract the young graduate lawyer to membership, but in addition the Montana Bar Association offers the best medium for acquaintance throughout the Bar in our State. All are cordially invited to attend our Annual Convention in Helena, Montana on July 14-16, 1955.

One activity of the Montana Bar Association with which the law school students may not be familiar is the support of the Montana Law Review. The Association incorporates in its dues a sum sufficient to pay a subscription to each annual publication of the Montana Law Review. Thus the Bar Association activity supports this very worthy legal publication of the law school, and the members of the Association have the benefit of the work and study of the students which goes into the Law Review topics.

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