

Greetings, dear friends,

I hope you and your families are staying healthy. I miss you and long for the days when we could gather safely in one place. Our executive committee has been hard at work preparing to make this term a success despite the challenges we face individually, as a community, and as a nation.

Before I brief you on our plans for the upcoming term, we are pleased to announce that the William K. Thomas American Inn of Court has achieved Platinum status for the seventh consecutive year. Beginning with AX's leadership in the 2013–14 term, our Inn has met the exacting requirements for this recognition from the national Inns of Court organization through its Achieving Excellence program. Congratulations to DX for his leadership of the Inn to this honor, with special thanks to AX and JX who coordinated our chapter's efforts to achieve excellence.

Programming

Our programming this term will explore our power as lawyers and how to use our powers for good.

Judge William K. Thomas was the perfect combination of power and kindness. As members of the legal community, we wield enormous power to ensure justice is done and influence change where it is needed. We can fulfill our sacred duty to uphold the rule of law by doing our work with empathy, grace, and kindness toward our colleagues, our opponents, and ourselves. The programming committee is working to finalize the presentation topics and pupillage teams for the term. You should expect to receive your team assignment soon.

Meeting format

Given the pandemic, we are preparing to conduct our meetings virtually until it is safe to assemble 75+ people in a room. We are arranging for guest speakers to work with our pupillage teams to create engaging program content. We have also secured a technology vendor to provide our teams with the production support they need to successfully present on a virtual platform.

We expect that after some virtual meetings, there will be a transitional period when some members participate virtually while others gather in a socially distant fashion. And then we expect to return to in-person meetings again.

We understand that everyone will have different views about when they feel comfortable returning to large indoor social gatherings. That risk calculus will be different for each of us as we make decisions about our health and exposure. We understand that many of you are at high risk or have loved ones who are. We are committed to ensuring that everyone can participate in our programming and fellowship no matter where they fall on that comfort spectrum. I commit to you that we will continue to offer the opportunity for interpersonal connections that make us all look forward to the second Wednesday of each month with this amazing group

of individuals. Our Virtual Task Force is exploring options to facilitate that engagement, e.g., through pre- and post-meeting Zoom rooms. Please feel free to reach out to me or any member of the Task Force to share your thoughts on how best to achieve this.

Meeting schedule

As usual, our meetings will take place on the second Wednesday of each month: September 9, October 14, November 11, December 9, January 13, February 10, March 10, April 14, and May 12. We will continue to meet in the evenings, with our CLE presentation taking place in the 6:00–7:00 time slot while we are virtual.

We are exploring whether the Supreme Court will allow us to offer CLE credit for viewing a recorded version of the program outside that live time slot.

Small-group summer events

We all look forward to our annual summer social. It was a great disappointment not to be able to enjoy this annual tradition. Based on recent member feedback, we understand that many of you would welcome the opportunity to gather safely with fellow Inn members. To that end, we will be arranging for a series of small outdoor gatherings at members' homes during the week of August 17–21. We will also host a virtual event for those who are not comfortable meeting in person. If you are interested in participating in either of these options, please click on this link to **RSVP by Wednesday, August 5, 2020** and provide your availability to host or attend one of these events. <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r>

Dues

Our annual dues have been \$TIER1 since 2015. We were contemplating an increase for the upcoming term to keep pace with the expense of hosting our meetings. But we have jettisoned that discussion due to the pandemic.

The executive committee also discussed reducing dues for this term in light of anticipated cost savings from virtual meetings. But we do not know when in-person meetings will resume, and do not want to have a budget shortfall if conditions improve sooner than is presently expected. Our dues will thus remain at \$TIER1 for this term. This is a good value for the nine hours of CLE credit that meeting attendance earns. We will reassess whether a dues reduction for next year is appropriate once we know what our expenses have been for this year.

You will receive your dues invoice through the Inn's website and can send payment to Treasurer MX.

We are always willing to work with our members to arrange for installment payments or otherwise accommodate financial hardship. We do not want the annual dues obligation to be an impediment to anyone's participation. Please contact MX or any other member of the executive committee to discuss payment options.

Executive committee

Finally, I would like to thank the following Inn members who have agreed to serve on our executive committee for the coming term:

DX, Immediate Past President
Hon. MX, President-Elect and Virtual Task Force Chair
Hon. AX, Secretary
MX, Treasurer
AX, Counselor
JX, Achieving Excellence Coordinator
JX, Membership Experience Coordinator
MX, Programming Chair
RX, Programming Committee
AX, Programming Committee
PX, Recruiting & Membership Chair
Hon. DX, Recruiting Committee
Hon. PX, Recruiting Committee
SX, Membership Committee
SX, Membership Committee
AX, Mentorship Chair
RX, Community Outreach Chair
Hon. LX, Virtual Task Force
CX, Virtual Task Force
BX, Virtual Task Force
MX, Virtual Task Force

I offer my deepest gratitude to these volunteers for the time and effort they will invest over the coming year to make the Inn a success.

Be well,
Ashlie Case Sletvold