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Montana Bar Association Activities

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MONTANA BAR ASSOCIATION ACTIVITIES

A modern practicing lawyer faces two major problems of public opinion which he must overcome if he is to achieve a solid success in the eyes of the public and the profession.

The first problem is the opinion of the public, thoroughly erroneous and fortunately not universally held, that lawyers generally are untrustworthy, high-fee charlatans; and the second problem is the opinion of the public, again erroneous and fortunately not universally held, that courts are so slow in operation and so staffed by incompetents that a litigant will eventually lose regardless of outcome.

The Montana Bar Association has faced up to these problems and has determined to do something about them.

With respect to the first problem it is sadly true that the good things that lawyers do, for their clients and for the public, receive scant attention, and far, far overbalance the discredits. The Association feels that it has a duty to undertake public relations to bring forth to the public view the good things that people should know and realize about our profession. At the convention of the Association held in Helena in July of 1955, the Association expanded its public relations committee and made provisions to get the funds to employ advertising media for the achievement of the results desired. This money is now being made available to the committee and in future years we hope, through intelligent emphasis upon the service and worthwhile activities of lawyers, to meet and overcome any distaste the public might have for lawyers as a class.

The problem respecting public opinion about our courts is also being studied. The Montana Bar Association has two committees working at this time on two facets of the problem and these committees will make reports at the annual convention of the Association in Missoula in June, 1956. One of these committees will report on the subject of rules of civil procedure and make recommendations for such further action, judicial or legislative, as may be necessary to expedite litigation and obtain decision of cases on merits.

A second committee is making an exhaustive study of the method and process of judicial selection and will report on the present system used, and systems used in other states, so that the members of the Association might study various methods of judicial selection. Elective and appointive judicial systems will be studied and reported upon to the end that our lawyers will have the fullest opportunity to examine the systems and to decide in convention whether to recommend changes in our present system.

In other fields, the happiest accomplishment of the Montana Bar Association this year was the erection of a Judge Pray Memorial Shelter in Glacier National Park. Judge Charles M. Pray has sat on the Federal Bench in Montana for many years and has become ensconced in the admiration and affection of lawyers throughout the state. This gentle and learned man is responsible, in the days when he was a member of Congress, for the designation of Glacier as a National Park. The Association thought it proper to provide memorial for him in the park and accordingly a committee headed by John C. Harrison of Helena solicited voluntary contribu-

tions, which were cheerfully given in sufficient amount to provide a fine shelter. Judge Pray was formally honored at the annual meeting of the Cascade County Bar in Great Falls this spring, with officers of the Montana Bar Association attending.

This year for the first time, pursuant to a resolution adopted at the convention in Helena last year, the Montana Bar Association sponsored the voluntary Moot Court Competition at the Montana State University Law School. The Association provided the prizes for the Moot Court Competition to encourage and aid the students attending Law School at the State University.

The President of the Association, Russell E. Smith of Missoula ("Rusty" to the law students) has done splendid work this year in organizing the activities of the Bar, supervising the committees, and representing the Association at various legal meetings throughout the country. The Bar Association continues to be the best medium for lawyers practicing in the State of Montana to express themselves on matters involving the profession and the courts and to strive for the good of the profession. Membership in the Association continues to offer the best source of up-to-the-minute professional action, and a wide acquaintance with the Bar in the State.

The annual convention will be held this year in Missoula on June 28, 29 and 30, with headquarters at the Hotel Florence. Graduate students are welcome to membership and attendance at the convention, and law students would be most welcome to attend the sessions.

Respectfully submitted.

JOHN C. SHEEHY
Secretary-Treasurer,
Montana Bar Association

THE JUSTIN MILLER PRIZE

The Justin Miller prize, a \$100 United States Saving Bond is awarded annually to the student author of the note adjudged best of these appearing in the Review. The 1955 award went to William R. McNamer for his note entitled "Venue of Contract Actions in Montana," which appeared in the 1955 issue of The Montana Law Review.