



MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS and CRITERIA

1. **By Invitation Only:** An invitation for membership may be extended only by the following: the Executive Director, Chair, Vice Chair, or Executive Committee of the Academy. Members may provide applications to prospective members with the approval of the Membership Committee. Applications are subject to approval by the Membership and Executive Committees. Membership is personal to the Academy member. That is, membership is not granted to anyone in the Member=s law firm by virtue of their membership in the Academy.
2. **Minimum Law Practice:** Bar membership in good standing and actual law practice for at least 10 years.
3. **Professional Trial Experience:** The prospective member shall have extensive and substantial experience as a plaintiff personal injury trial attorney. In furtherance of this requirement:
 - a. The prospective member must have tried a minimum of 20 jury trials to verdict, or in the alternative
 - b. Must satisfy the Membership Committee that he/she has comparable relevant trial experience
4. **Professional Reputation and Standing among the Plaintiff Bar:** The member must be regarded by peers in the personal injury bar as among the most ethical and accomplished trial attorneys in their respective states.

In furtherance of this requirement the prospective member must be sponsored by at least one current member of the Academy who must sign the membership application. In addition the following factors will be considered:

- a. Does the prospective member either have reference letters from 2 Academy members, or, in the alternative, reference letters from 2 Martindale-Hubble av rated trial attorneys, who certify the applicant to be in their opinion one of the most competent and well respected members of that state's trial bar
- b. Is the prospective member listed as one of The Best Lawyers in their state, SuperLawyers or the equivalent peer selected publication, or is the prospective member a member of one or more of the following organizations: the American College of Trial Lawyers, International Academy of Trial Lawyers, the Society of Barristers, the Inner Circle;



c. Is the prospective member Board Certified by an accredited board of the prospective member's state or the National Board of Trial Advocacy as a civil trial advocate.

5. Professional Expertise in Catastrophic Injury Cases: The prospective member must demonstrate competence and sensitivity for the human plight and the legal rights of those catastrophically injured or killed by wrongdoing. In furtherance of this requirement:

The prospective member must have represented and litigated for clients in at least 10 separate cases in which the client suffered a catastrophic injury. A catastrophic injury is defined as any of the following: personal injury including wrongful death/survivorship, traumatic brain injury, paraplegic, hemiplegic, quadriplegic, blindness, severe burn, significant scar, amputation, severe cancer or other life threatening disease or total disability case or substantial economic damages such as loss of a home, loss of a job or loss of a considerable portion of the income or assets of the plaintiff as the result of tortuous conduct of the defendant

6. Professional Scholarship & Continuing Legal Education: The prospective member must demonstrate ability and willingness to write and advocate for the rights of catastrophically injured clients. In furtherance of this the following factors will be considered:

- a. Briefed/argued at least one land mark or precedent setting case on behalf of injured plaintiffs that was published, or have submitted at least 3 briefs which have been substantial factors in seeking to help seriously injured plaintiffs;
- b. Published a minimum of one article, chapter or book in the field of personal injury law, trial advocacy other than in CLE publications;
- c. Published a minimum number of 2 articles or CLE papers over the past 3 year period to help develop and protect the plight and rights of plaintiffs;
- d. Lectured at least 2 times over the past 3 years for an accredited CLE professional organization, or taught at an accredited law school, NCA College or state TLA seminar on the subject of personal injury law.



Additionally, each prospective member shall demonstrate substantial CLE involvement and commitment. In furtherance of this requirement:

- a. Within the past 3 years, taking or participating in a minimum number of 15 CLE credit hours or the equivalence as approved by the Membership Committee, each year or,
 - b. Within the past 3 years lectured at least 3 times for some CLE professional organization, or taught at an accredited law school, NCA College or state TLA seminar on the subject of personal injury law and, in either case,
 - c. Must agree to continue to take or participate in educating the public and the bar by writing and publishing a minimum number of 2 articles for CLE programs or law journals or letters to news editors over a 3 year period to help develop and protect the plight and rights of seriously injured plaintiffs.
7. Professional Commitment to the Plaintiff Practice: The prospective member must demonstrate an ongoing commitment of time and money to the profession and colleagues who seek to help clients who are catastrophically injured. In furtherance of this requirement:
- a. Must be a member of AAJ; and
 - b. Must be a member in good standing of the state TLA or an acceptable alternative TLA.
8. Public, Community and Pro Bono Service: Must demonstrate a commitment to the public and community good and to pro bono public service of trial attorneys to charities and social improvement.

In furtherance of this requirement:

- a. Must be a member of Public Justice (formerly TLPJ), or
- b. Must be a member or sponsor of some charitable organization which provides free legal service to the public; and, in either case,
- c. Must show a past and continuing support by time and money of a community service organization.



9. **Sworn Duty of Non-Disclosure:** The prospective member must agree by certification to never disclose to anyone (this includes, *inter alia*, other personal injury attorneys who are not members of the Academy, any CLE program, any publication or news media, and especially to any attorney including but not limited to one's own partners who do any insurance defense work whatsoever) any of the information or documentation (any writings as defined by Fed Rule of Evidence 801 and 1001) which are distributed by or through the Academy without express written permission of the Executive Director or Academy Chair or Vice Chair.
10. **Ongoing Obligation to Report Disciplinary Action:** The prospective member must agree to an ongoing duty to report to the Membership Committee any malpractice actions brought against the member and any discipline imposed by any judicial or administrative body (including bar associations and courts) against the prospective member during and after any application for membership.
11. **Refrain from Supporting Those Who Espouse the Destruction of our Civil Justice System:** The prospective member shall, as much as possible, remain vigilant and refrain giving any financial or public support to any person or entity who promotes the destruction of our civil justice system and the constitutional right to a trial by jury, as well those who seek to undermine the public's respect for and confidence in the plaintiff's trial bar. The Membership Committee shall adopt and revise a list of guidelines for use by members to identify such blatant backers of the destruction of our civil justice system and disrespect for the plaintiff bar. The primary sponsor of the destruction of the civil justice system and disrespect for the plaintiff bar is the insurance industry. Therefore, members must:
 - a. Refrain wherever possible from purchasing or causing purchase of any products or services that enhance cash flow and profitability of the insurance industry (Examples: use of stock brokerage firms owned by or affiliated with insurance companies; use of banks or trust companies owned by or affiliated with insurance companies; use of any financial services firms, companies or organizations owned by or affiliated with insurance companies; recommending annuity based structured settlements except in circumstances where no other financial product or approach is equivalent to or better).
 - b. **Examples of Exceptions:** Necessary insurance such as life insurance, medical and health insurance, auto, flood, fire and homeowners insurance, liability insurance, professional negligence insurance, etc.



12. Professional Independence from any insurance carrier and the liability defense industry: It is the purpose of the Academy to permit and encourage members to freely communicate and strategize on behalf of injured clients. Therefore, membership is restricted to those trial lawyers who will not provide the benefits of membership to the defense bar or their clients. The prospective member must not have provided professional services (representation, consulting, research, etc.) for any insurance carrier or liability adjusting company for a period of at least five years prior to membership. The prospective member must not have been a regular member of any defense organization, including but not limited to the Defense Research Institute (DRI) for a period of at least five years prior to membership. If the nature of a member's practice changes, the member acknowledges that he or she is obligated to report that change in practice in writing to the Executive Director and the Chair of the Academy within 30 days. A change in practice may cause the member to be asked to resign from membership in the Academy.
13. Resignation or Expulsion from the Academy: Members of the Academy understand and agree that to promote the purposes of the Academy, the pursuit of the depth, strength and benefits of a virtual 1000 member law firm, that members must interact with complete trust in the Academy and other Academy members. Therefore, each member understands that membership is initially by invitation and continued membership is at the pleasure of the Executive Committee of the Academy. Members agree that it is exclusively within the discretion of the Executive Committee as to invitations, new member approval, and retention of members, including the removal of members if the Executive Committee should find that the member does not meet the criteria, ethics, morals and/or skills that the Academy seeks to promote. The member recognizes that this is a private organization and membership is by invitation only. Membership continues only so long as they comply with the requirements of the Academy. Failure to comply with membership requirements and guidelines for conduct may give rise to expulsion.
14. Requirements for the Academy Membership & Participation: Each Academy member applicant will substantially meet these requirements or the reasonable equivalent thereof, or an invitee may have all or some of these requirements waived by request of the Sponsor with approval of the Executive Committee in order to demonstrate their good moral character and high ethical practice, experience and commitment to serve catastrophically injured people.
15. Recommendation and Waiver by Executive Committee: Any Academy member invited with the express recommendation that requirements be waived shall, with approval of the Executive Committee, be deemed to satisfy all the requirements. All members shall be admitted subject to their commitment to confidentiality and support of the Academy.