



Board of Bar Examiners

2019

Annual Report

Annual Report of the Board of Bar Examiners

2019

Calendar Year

INTRODUCTION

Pursuant to Supreme Court Rule (SCR) 30.01 (2), the Board of Bar Examiners (BBE) is filing this annual report on its activities during the calendar year 2019. The BBE has general supervisory authority over SCR Chapter 31, Continuing Legal Education, and Chapter 40, Admission to the Bar. The BBE's mandate is to protect the people of Wisconsin by assuring that only capable and competent applicants who meet the character and fitness requirements are admitted to the practice of law in the state, and that attorneys licensed in the state maintain their legal competence through continuing legal education.

MEMBERSHIP AND STAFFING OF THE BOARD

The Board of Bar Examiners has general supervisory authority over the administration of admission to the bar by examination and upon proof of practice. It conducts character and fitness investigations of all candidates for admission including those seeking admission by diploma privilege. The BBE also supervises and monitors attorneys' compliance with the Wisconsin mandatory continuing legal education requirement.

The membership of the Board in 2019 was as follows:

Prof. Judith G. McMullen	Brookfield	Chairperson
Hon. Marc A. Hammer	Green Bay	Vice-Chairperson
Patrick Delmore, Ph.D.	Madison	
Atty. Blake J. Duren	Madison	
Atty. Timothy D. Edwards	Madison	
Mr. Samuel Christensen	Racine	
Atty. Jesus GQ Garza	Madison	
Assoc. Dean Kevin Kelly	Sun Prairie	
Atty. Steven A. Levine	Madison	
Atty. Kyle J. Sargent	Appleton	
Ms. Sally M. Younger	Madison	

The Board held eight meetings in 2019, including one in December with members of the Court at which policy matters of common concern were discussed. In addition to attendance at its meetings, the majority of attorney Board members grade the Wisconsin bar exams.

STAFFING OF THE BOARD

In 2019 the full time staff of the Board included the following:

Atty. Jacquelynn B. Rothstein	Director
Ms. April Ashley	Bar Application Manager (Bar Exam)
Mr. John Baggot	Program Assistant
Ms. Dianne Dillman	Bar Application Manager (Diploma Privilege)
Ms. Julie Halverson	CLE Records Manager
Ms. Tammy McMillen	CLE Records Manager
Mr. Daniel Pionke	Character and Fitness Investigator/Proof of Practice Manager



FUNDING SOURCES AND EXPENDITURES

The mandatory continuing legal education requirement was self-funded in fiscal year 2019 by an annual assessment of lawyers on active and inactive status as of July 1, 2019, per State Bar of Wisconsin records, who paid \$11.00 and \$5.50, respectively. The bar admission portion of the Board's responsibilities are also entirely self-funded.

Other fees were as follows:

Wisconsin Bar Examination (WBE): \$450

Application via foreign schooled applicant: \$850

Application for admission on Proof of Practice Elsewhere (PPE) (reciprocity): \$850

Diploma Privilege (DP) character and fitness (C&F) certification: \$210

Late filing fee for the WBE and C&F: \$200

Late filing fee for CLE Reporting: \$100

Admission fee for all admittees (regardless of mode of admission): \$100

Reinstatement/Readmission fee: \$200

Name Change fee \$25

FUNDING SOURCES AND EXPENDITURES

In addition, the Board realized revenue from late filing fees and reinstatement fees authorized by the court, and from miscellaneous fees (copying, duplicate admission certificates, past examination sales, etc.). Revenues shown are anticipated.

Revenues

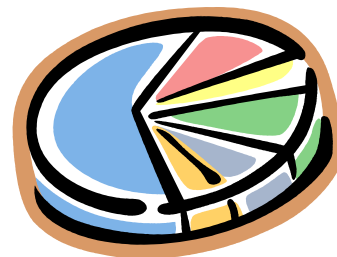
Licensing Activity	\$403,400.00
Education	<u>263,600.00</u>

Total CY 2019 Revenues **\$667,000.00**

Expenditures

Permanent Salaries	\$379,700.00
LTE Salaries	51,600.00
Fringe Benefits	148,800.00
Supplies, Services, and Capital	<u>203,300.00</u>

Total CY 2019 Expenditures **\$783,400.00**



MANDATORY CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION

Reporting Requirements

Chapter 31 of the Supreme Court Rules mandates that all active attorneys attend a minimum of thirty (30) hours of approved continuing legal education (CLE) every two years. The Supreme Court Rules also mandate that a minimum of three of the thirty hours must be Ethics and Professional Responsibility (EPR) credits. The rules further provide that attorneys who did not engage in the practice of law during the reporting period are exempt from the attendance requirement but must comply with the reporting requirement. Additionally, on January 11, 2008, the Supreme Court issued an Order adopting a “pure comity” rule which became effective for the CLE reporting period ending December 31, 2008. Under the “comity” rule (SCR 31.04 (3)), “A lawyer whose practice is principally in another jurisdiction that has mandatory continuing legal education requirements and who is current in meeting those requirements is exempt from the attendance requirement of SCR 31.02, but shall comply with the reporting requirement of SCR 31.03.”

The BBE and the Consolidated Courts Automation Program office (CCAP) collaborated on the development of an electronic CLE reporting program which was first offered in 2008.

Beginning with the 2016-17 reporting cycle, all attorneys are now required to electronically file their CLE report using the e-filing program. Additionally, effective July 1, 2017, two new categories of CLE may be used. Those include “Lawyer Awareness and Understanding” and “Law Practice Management.” Each category is limited to six (6) credits per reporting period. Also, as of July 1, 2017, attorneys may report an additional five (5) hours of “on demand” credits for a total of fifteen (15). Attorneys are also eligible to earn up to six (6) credits for providing legal services to qualified *pro bono* programs.

MANDATORY CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION (continued)

CLE Compliance

Pursuant to the Wisconsin Supreme Court Rules, attorneys who are not in compliance with the mandatory CLE attendance and reporting requirements are suspended from the practice of law following a notice of non-compliance. Since its inception in 1977, there have been 5,880 lawyers who have been suspended for non-compliance with the mandatory continuing legal education requirements. At the end of 2019 calendar year, there were 3,012 attorneys who remained suspended.

Reporting Cycles	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Lawyers required to report CLE compliance	9072	8805	9043	8694	8885

Issues	2015 (2013-2014 reporting cycle)	2016 (2014-2015 reporting cycle)	2017 (2015-2016 reporting cycle)	2018 (2016-2017 reporting cycle)	2019 (2017-2018 reporting cycle)
Attorneys suspended for non-compliance	199	209	222	230	229
Reinstated (Includes attorneys who were suspended in prior years and deceased)	76	96	85	111	110



CLE Course Information

In 2019, lawyers again had a wide range of educational activities from which to choose in order to meet their mandatory requirements. Besides live programs, other modes of course presentation included video replays, live webcasts, national teleconferences, and repeated “on-demand” online courses. General Program Approval (GPA), the annual institutional approval available to some CLE sponsors, was extended to 36 organizations.

Totals	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019*
Courses Approved	7993	8702	8857	10190	9604
CLE Activities provided in Wisconsin	2557	2136	2515	2368	2049
Repeated On-Demand courses	870	1137	1579	2118	1350
Live Webcasts offered	2724	3419	3841	4010	4134
National Teleconferences offered	1336	1529	1441	1334	1536
Approved for Ethics (EPR)	3624	4027	4124	4177	3938

(*as of the data collection date for the 2019 Annual Report)

MANDATORY CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION (continued)

GAL Course Approvals

The Board also approves Guardian Ad Litem (GAL) courses under Chapters 35 and 36 of the Supreme Court Rules.

Guardian Ad Litem Course Approvals	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019*
GAL - Minors	30	39	74	29	48
GAL - Adult	14	9	18	7	12
GAL - Family	33	39	74	36	48

(*as of the data collection date for the 2019 Annual Report)

CLE Course Denials

CLE course approval was denied in one hundred sixty-nine (169) cases. The main reason for CLE course denials was for courses pertaining to marketing, advertising, “rain-making,” profitability, and similar types of courses which were deemed not to be related specifically to improving attorneys’ professional competence as attorneys as required by the Supreme Court Rules, but could apply to any business entity. EPR approval was denied for approximately two hundred eight (208) courses. The principal reason for denial of approval was the failure to have a continuous hour of EPR as required by SCR 31.07 (5) or not meeting the objective of increasing an attendee’s professional competence as an attorney as required by SCR 31.07 (2) (a) or (b).



MISCELLANEOUS ACTIONS

The Board also carried out the following actions:	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Reinstatements (under SCR Chapter 40) (CLE and/or Dues Suspension exceeding 3+ Years)	21	13	24	23	25
Chapter 31 reinstatements (following a CLE suspension of less than three (3) years)	69	85	79	73	102
Readmission following voluntary resignation from the bar	7	12	11	10	7
Name changes	122	120	114	90	60

ADMISSION TO THE PRACTICE OF LAW



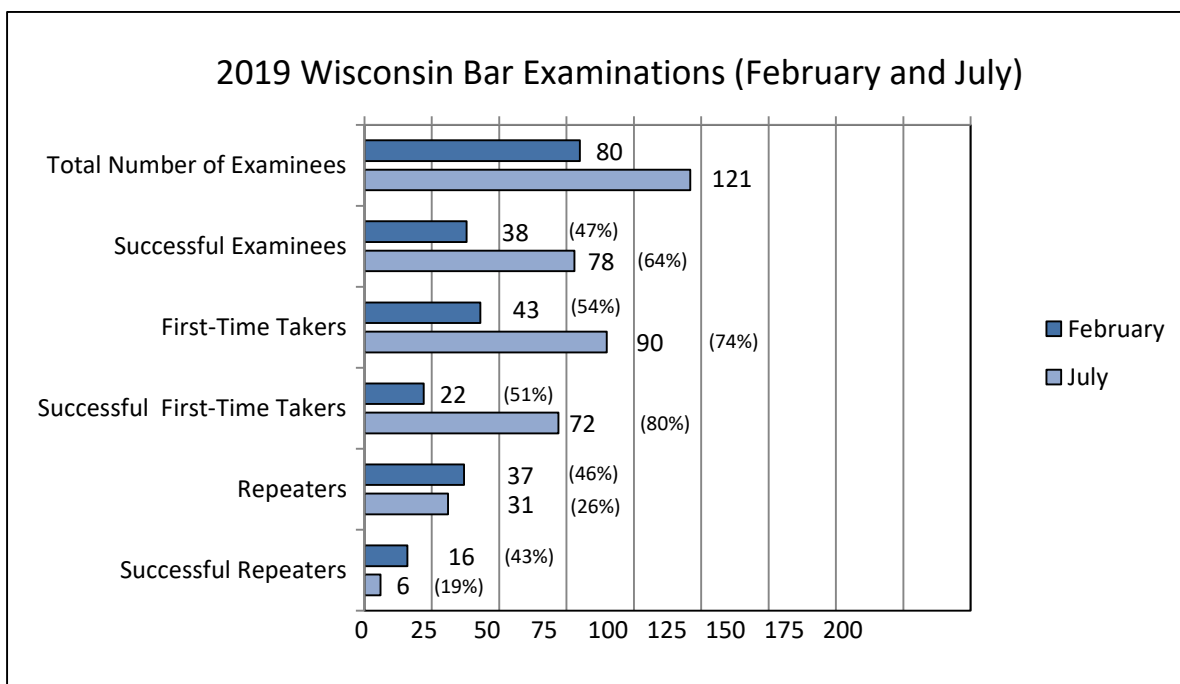
Diploma Privilege

The Board received three hundred twenty-six (326) applications for character and fitness certifications from prospective graduates of the University of Wisconsin and Marquette University law schools under SCR 40.03 and 40.06. This represents an increase of forty-six (46) applications from the previous year. Three hundred twenty-seven (327) were admitted to the Wisconsin Supreme Court in 2019, which may include those who graduated in prior years but who were not admitted until 2019.

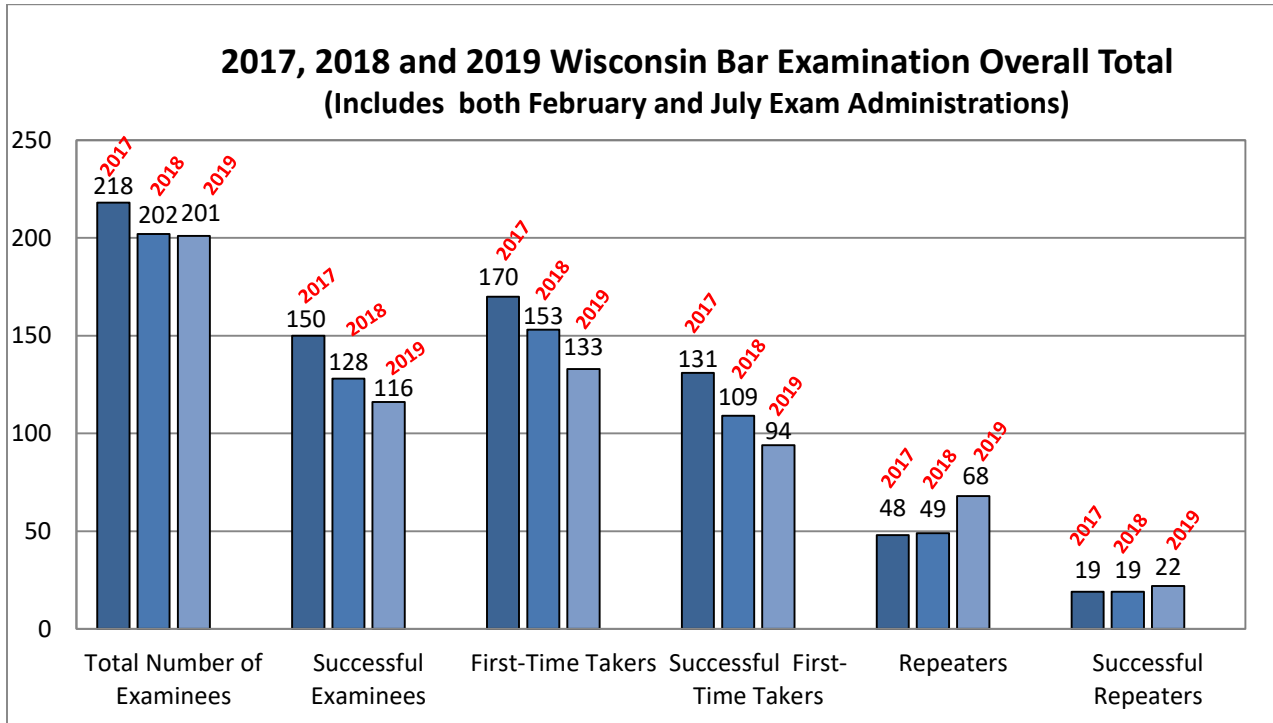
No diploma privilege applications were withdrawn in 2019. However, there were three (3) applicants who failed to complete their files within one year after filing as required under BA 6.06 (SCR Chapter 40 Appendix). Additionally, there were three (3) applicants whose files were closed for failing to be sworn in within a year of certification as required by SCR 40.09 (1). One (1) applicant file was closed due to a failure to respond to offer of conditional admission.

Wisconsin Bar Exam

The Board administered two bar examinations in 2019 to a total of two hundred one (201) applicants. This represents a decrease from the two hundred two (202) applicants in the previous year. Statistical information is as follows:

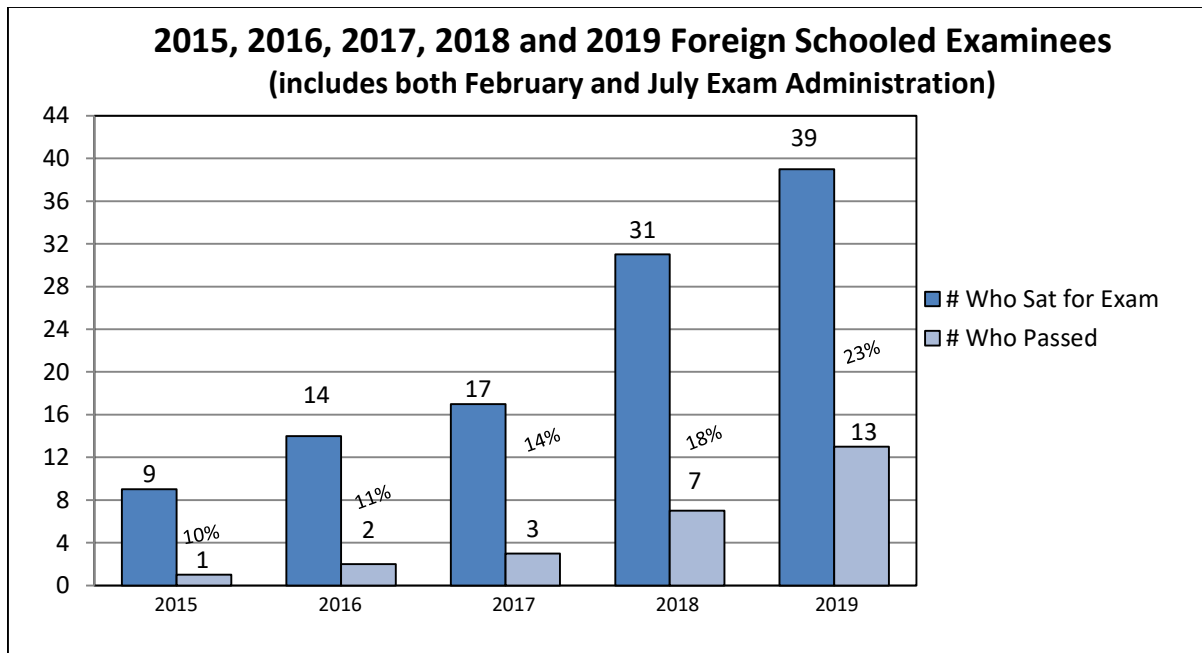


ADMISSION TO THE PRACTICE OF LAW (continued)



Foreign School Examinees (Law Schools outside of the U.S.)

In February 2019, twenty (20) foreign schooled graduates sat for the exam and seven (7) of them passed. In July 2019, nineteen (19) foreign schooled graduates sat for the exam and six (6) passed.



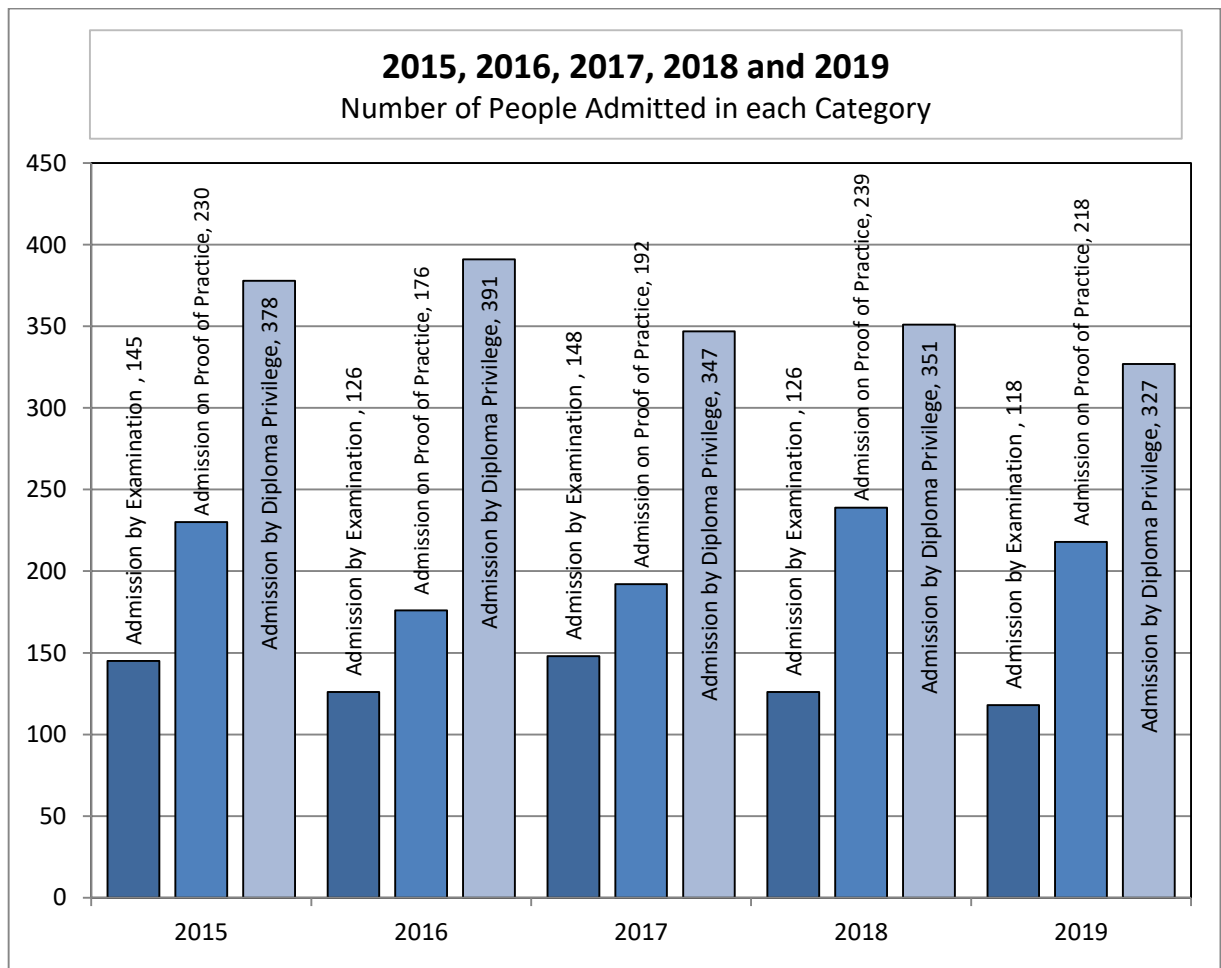
ADMISSION TO THE PRACTICE OF LAW (continued)

Proof of Practice Elsewhere

In addition, under SCR 40.05, the Board processed applications for proof of practice elsewhere (previously known as “reciprocity” or “application on foreign license”). In 2019 the Board received two hundred eighteen (218) applications, a 9% decrease from the previous year. Two hundred seventeen (217) applicants were certified for admission in 2019, although some were from applications received in prior years. Two hundred and ten (210) applicants were admitted in 2019. There was three (3) applications that were withdrawn. Two (2) applications were closed for being incomplete.

In House Counsel Registrations

Under SCR 10.03, the Board registered thirty-eight (38) attorneys as in-house counsel in 2019 (including some from the prior year). Thirty-seven (37) applications were filed.



ADMISSION TO THE PRACTICE OF LAW (continued)

DENIAL OF ADMISSION

The Board denies admission to the practice of law in Wisconsin by first notifying the applicant in writing that he or she is at risk of being denied. Applicants are given the basis for the denial and are also provided with the materials upon which the Board based its decision. Applicants are further advised about the timeframe in which to respond and, if desired, to request a hearing. An applicant who is denied admission may petition the Supreme Court for a review of the Board's adverse determination under to SCR 40.08.



CONDITIONAL ADMISSION

On June 8, 2011, SCR 40.075 went into effect, authorizing conditional admission. Certain exceptions notwithstanding, the fact that an individual is conditionally admitted and the terms of the conditional admission agreement are both confidential. In 2019, three (3) people were offered conditional admission. Of those three, one failed to respond to the offer and the file was ultimately closed; one was admitted conditionally; and another was offered and accepted conditional admission at the end of 2019, but was not admitted. In addition, four (4) people were successfully discharged. One conditional admission was revoked and that person was then suspended from the practice of law by the Wisconsin Supreme Court.

Reasons For Conditional Admission	Number of Attorneys
Financial	0
Alcohol or Other Drug	1
Mental Health	0
Mental Health/Alcohol or Other Drug	0
Conditional Admission in Another State	0
Sex Addiction	0
Non-Disclosure Issues	0
Total Admitted Conditionally	1

OTHER ACTIVITIES

As part of the Board of Bar Examiner's (BBE) ongoing wellness initiative, the Board held meetings at each of the respective Wisconsin law schools in the Fall of 2019. Those meetings stressed the importance of students obtaining treatment for mental health impairments or substance abuse disorders without fear of reprisal in connection with their applications for admission. Indeed, the UW Law School reported that it now has its own dedicated "in house" mental health professional. Ideally, the Board favors having additional outreach efforts to law students, especially those aimed at 1Ls so that they can gain a greater awareness and appreciation of the application process, including the importance of the character and fitness component.

Additionally, over the course of 2019, the BBE staff traveled to each of the Wisconsin law schools to review applicant files and to discuss the application process, including questions surrounding the character and fitness investigation, with the third year law students. The BBE staff also assisted with the swearing-in ceremonies before the Wisconsin Supreme Court. Various Board members and the BBE Director also attended conferences sponsored by the National Conference of Bar Examiners and the Council of Bar Admissions Administrators.

Respectfully submitted,

// Original Signed //



Jacquelynn B. Rothstein, Director
Board of Bar Examiners