

VOL. 41 NO. 9

SEPTEMBER 1996



THE BRIEFS

Connie Becerra, Julia L. Frey, James H. Monroe Co-Editors

Announcements

NEAL J. BLAHER, a sole practitioner in Orlando representing retail customers in stockbroker arbitration cases, has been appointed by the President of the Florida Bar to the Florida Bar's Committee on Relations Between the Bar and the Institute Of CPAs.

April 29, 1992

Neal J. Blaher, Esquire
Post Office Box 3791
Orlando, FL 32802-3791

RE: Law Library Committee

Dear Neal:

Thank you for your annual report of the Law Library Committee for 1991/1992. I am forwarding that report over to _____ and to our incoming President _____

In the past, this Committee has functioned, but no where near the level that you have achieved during this year. The investigations into computer research systems, instructional material for the public, training for the Orange County Law Librarians, and the dissemination of information to members about what is available in the courthouse, have all been of great assistance. Sometimes, we as practicing lawyers, forget how important it is to have a law library. This becomes especially true when the library is not "on sight".

On behalf of both myself, and the Executive Council, let me thank you for your excellent work on this Committee. I would ask that you express our thanks to other members of your Committee as well.

Sincerely,

cc: _____ Executive Director, OCBA
_____, President-Elect, OCBA

May 5, 1992

Neal Blaher
P.O. Box 3791
Orlando, FL 32802-3791

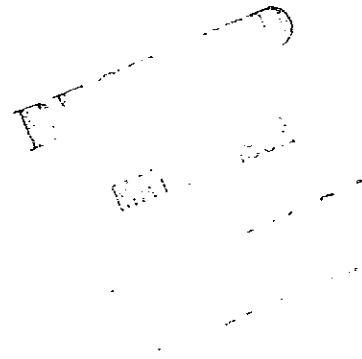
Dear Neal:

I have recently received a "glowing" report on the activities that you undertook on behalf of the Law Library Committee last year. I certainly would encourage you to consider my offer to continue as Chairman of that Committee. I did not realize how many projects had been undertaken and were underway under your direction.

The Orange County Bar Association ~~certainly~~ needs motivated individuals such as yourself to keep the Bar Association functioning and productive for its members. As past Chair of the Law Library Committee, if you cannot serve an additional year, would you please recommend to me someone whom might carry on the projects which you have started. I thank you for your help in this regard.

Sincerely,





7

ORANGE COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Neal *Neal* Blaher, Esq.

RE: Chairman, Law Library Committee

On behalf of the Executive Council of the Orange County Bar Association, let me extend our sincere thanks for your committee work during the 1991-92 year. Your commitment and dedication to this committee has helped to make this committee's work a success.

This has been both a challenging, and yet productive year for our Orange County Bar Association. Reevaluation of many of our past programs, as well as involvement with the public and the political machinery in Orange County has required that our Orange County Bar Association remain active in all avenues. Without your assistance, these efforts would not have been possible.

We are please to enclose, as a token of our thanks, a Certificate for you participation.

Once again, on behalf of the Orange County Bar Association, thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

RECEIVED

JUN 04 1992

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MAY 07 1993

May 5, 1993

ELOISE O. FOX
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Neal J. Blaher, Esquire
Allen, Dyer, Doppelt, Franjola
& Milbrath, P.A.
P. O. Box 3791
Orlando, FL 32802-3791

Dear Neal:

I am pleased to appoint you as Chairman of the Orange County Bar Arbitration Service. As you know, the Chairman of the committee serves a one year term, while the other six members of the committee serve two year terms. In addition to yourself, I have appointed the following new members to the Orange County Bar Arbitration Service Committee:

The existing members of the committee who served with you last year are _____ y. Their terms expire in one year.

I am encouraged by your desire to have frequent meetings. There is much for your committee to do, in my judgment. As we discussed by phone and as a reminder, some of the things I'd like to see your committee address during the coming year are the following:

Neal J. Blaher, Esquire
May 5, 1993
Page 2

the availability of arbitration, the standard arbitration clause, etc.

4. Another thing I would like your committee to consider is the examination of the current Rules of the Arbitration Service and the interviewing or polling of members of our Bar Association who have served as arbitrators for OCBAS to determine what improvements could be made in the Rules, facilities, procedures, etc. If we stay close to the arbitrators who are operating under the Rules, we should be able to get some good information on how well these Rules are working in practice and what kinds of changes might be made.

Neal, please mark your calendar for 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, May 20, 1993. The leadership of the Bar Association will have an initial organizational meeting at that time at the Omni Hotel. The room at the hotel will be announced later. I'd really like you to be there to discuss briefly your committee and what your tentative plans are for the coming year. It is important that you share with the other committee chairs your aims and goals for the year as well as that you listen to what other committees are doing. Sometimes some ideas can come of this that will be useful in your committee.

Lastly, one thing I'd like all committee chairs to do during the course of the next year is to be cheerleaders for the Bar Association. Please talk up the Bar Association activities and committees among your committee members, peers, members of your firm to try to get them involved in Bar activities. Neal, it is important to encourage as many lawyers as you can to attend the many fun social functions and work functions that the Bar sponsors and to participate in assisting the Bar accomplish its good works in the various community outreach programs. We need the help of the attorneys on your committee and in your firm.

Thanks again for your help.

Yours very truly,

cc:

ALLEN, DYER, DOPPELT, FRANJOLA & MILBRATH
PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION
ATTORNEYS AT LAW

HERBERT L. ALLEN
ROBERT DYER
AVA K. DOPPELT
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STEPHEN D. MILBRATH
NEAL J. BLAHER
LISA N. KAUFMAN
BRIAN R. GILCHRIST

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June 7, 1993

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The Honorable
Circuit Court Judge
Ninth Judicial Circuit
Room
37 North Orange Avenue
Orlando, FL 32802

JUN 1 1993

Dear Judge

I have been asked to chair the arbitration committee this year. It is my hope that you will continue to lend us your support. In that regard, I am enclosing a copy of my initial memorandum to our members indicating that our initial meeting will be on June 24 at the lunch hour. I realize that Judge's schedules are not necessarily the same as lawyer's schedules, so let me know if regular lunchtime meetings will pose a problem for you.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Neal J. Blaher

NJB/jmb
Enclosure

6.10.93
Neal - I'll be pleased to stay
on. Thursday noon brown bag
meetings are usually OK for me.
See you 6/24 at noon.
Judge

ORANGE COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION

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January 25, 1994

The Honorable
Chief Judge
Ninth Judicial Circuit
37 N. Orange Avenue

Orlando, FL 32801

Dear Judge :

I attended a Florida Bar seminar about mediation last week and was able to persuade the course monitor to give me an extra copy of the course materials, which I am enclosing with this letter. I thought perhaps you'd have an interest in reviewing these materials inasmuch as it might further the dialogue just begun on greater mediation and arbitration opportunities in the Civil Ninth Judicial Circuit.

The Orange County Bar Association has two distinct committees dealing with alternative dispute resolution. The Orange County Bar Arbitration Service Committee was established a few years ago to administer the OCBA sponsored arbitration service. That committee was intended to deal with rules oversight and program administration for OCBA's own program. Members of that committee are selected by the President of OCBA to serve staggered three year terms. Under rules changes recently proposed, there will be nine persons on that select committee. Neal Blaher is the current Chairman of the committee and has just completed, with the help of his committee members, an exhaustive review and revision of the original rules and forms of OCBAS. Neal Blaher will be calling you soon to discuss in more detail the bar's program and the prospect of having the judges of the Ninth Judicial Circuit follow Judge 's lead in referring cases to OCBA's arbitration service for non-binding arbitration, as well as to encourage our judges to "encourage" parties to agree voluntarily to binding arbitration by the Orange County Bar Arbitration Service. has recently provided you a copy of the proposed rules which have been adopted, with three minor exceptions that will be reviewed on

The Honorable
January 25, 1994
Page 2

February 8th. I don't know if she also provided to you a list of our arbitrators, but if not, that is certainly available if you would like to review it. It is an impressive list of very qualified practitioners.

Also, about four months ago I established a new and already well-organized committee of the Orange County Bar Association called the "Alternative Dispute Resolution" Committee. This new committee, which heavily emphasizes mediation as the prime method of resolving disputes extra-judicially, is also supposed to take into account other dispute resolution options such as negotiation, arbitration, summary jury trials, mini-trials, rent-a-judge, early neutral evaluation, special masters, and the ombudsman. As it is such a new committee, it has not yet had time to explore these other options.

You have already met with a subcommittee of the ADR Committee to deal with the subjects of early mediation and standard form referral orders. I'm confident that this committee will work closely with the judges to achieve efficient, frequent, and to my way of thinking, early (in the appropriate case) mediation, and non-binding arbitration using OCBAS.

Yours very truly,

Enclosures

cc: Neal J. Blaher, Esquire (w/o enc)

P.S. Also, I've enclosed some materials from recent ABA summaries that might interest you.

Law Office of
NEAL J. BLAHER

Hillcrest Plaza, Suite 200
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Orlando, Florida 32803

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Orlando, Florida 32802-0804

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*Admitted to Practice in
Florida, Pennsylvania and
New Jersey*

*Stockbroker Arbitration
Trademark & Copyright
Litigation*

January 26, 1994

The Honorable
Chief Judge
Ninth Judicial Circuit
37 North Orange Avenue
Orlando, Florida 32801

Re: Orange County Bar Arbitration Service

Dear Judge ...

I am writing to follow up on your discussions with ... concerning the Orange County Bar Arbitration Service (OCBAS). As I believe you are now aware, I currently chair the Committee of the OCBA which oversees the Service. The Service was conceived approximately 3 1/2 years ago as an alternative to other arbitration programs, with a "blue ribbon" panel of respected local attorneys and selected non-lawyer experts in such fields as construction. Two years ago, then Chief Judge ... signed an order setting into motion referral of appropriate civil cases to the OCBAS for non-binding arbitration pursuant to Chapter 44 Florida Statutes.

We have now completed a comprehensive revision of the rules based on three years of operating experience and feedback from prior participants in the process. The new rules include for the first time a separate section devoted to court-ordered non-binding arbitration. Judge ..., in particular, has been very supportive and instrumental in relieving congested court dockets through referral of cases to arbitration administered by OCBAS.

Court-ordered non-binding arbitration is not the only available alternative. Judges certainly are free to encourage parties to voluntarily agree to binding arbitration. Use of alternative dispute resolution forums has continued to rise, and certain cases, particularly in the commercial context where cases may take up weeks of trial time, often are better suited for arbitration before a panel of arbitrators who are familiar with the issue and subject matter.

My Committee would like the opportunity to introduce OCBAS to those judges for whom it may be useful as a way of facilitating settlement or as an alternative to protracted litigation. I would propose allowing a couple of Committee members to appear for a few minutes at a regular

meeting of the judges to explain the Service. Alternatively, I would be happy to prepare an introductory letter for distribution to the interested judges, followed up by in-person visits by one or two of our Committee members to answer any questions and suggest ways that the Service can facilitate ADR and settlement.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Neal J. Blaher

cc: J. [redacted]

[redacted]

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March 18, 1994

Neal J. Blaher, Esquire
P. O. Box 804
Orlando, FL 320804

Dear Neal:

More work for your fine, very active committee: ?

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April 22, 1994

Neal J. Blaher, Esquire
P. O. Box 804
Orlando, FL 32802-0804

Re; OCBAS

Dear Neal:

Thanks for your letter of April 21, 1994 and thanks for sending me your final Quarterly Report Form for OCBAS.

About the June bar meeting, you'll need to coordinate that with my successor, . May is the last meeting at which I preside. You could call to deal with the survey as well as the seminar announcement. Thanks for your kind comments about this year. You've done a tremendous job and made me look good!

Yours very truly,

a:blaher.ltr

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(407) 677-8463

Have a safe
4th of July
from
the Orange County
Bar Association



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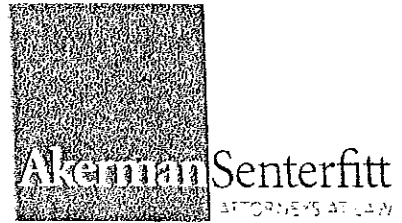
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akerman.com

June 6, 2007

Neal J. Blahar
1516 East Hillcrest Street
Orlando, Florida

Dear Neal:

Congratulations on receiving a Pro Bono Service Pin from the Legal Aid Society. Thank you for your contribution to upholding this tradition of our profession.

Best regards.

Very truly yours,

AKERMAN SENTERFITT