

Leadership Forum Committee

The Leadership Forum Committee, chaired by Tim Gallagher, serves to select the members of Leadership Forum.

The Leadership Forum was created “to produce committed and involved lawyers willing to take significant leadership roles in local and state bars, and serve as role models in matters of ethics and professionalism.” The Forum’s mission has been revised through the years, and is set out as follows:

- To build a cadre of practicing lawyers that understand and appreciate the core values of ethics and professionalism and strive to raise the overall standards of our bar;
- To mold a critical mass of lawyers who will understand and appreciate the concept of servant leadership, and who will be ambassadors for the principles associated with it;
- To form a pool of lawyers who will be leaders both in the state and local bar associations as well as their communities; and
- To change the trajectory of the State of Alabama through active leadership. The Selection Committee evaluates the applicants received and selects up to 30 members and 4 alternates for admission to the Class.

The primary initiative of the Leadership Forum Selection Committee is to review the application materials submitted by each applicant, which primarily consist of the application form, narrative summary, and recommendation letter, and then select a Class to participate in the forum. Each Committee member is asked to review the application materials for every applicant, and then score and rank each applicant. The criteria to be considered are:

- 1) Demonstrated leadership ability based on past accomplishments and current engagements;
- 2) An understanding of the importance of servant leadership as demonstrated in the applicant's narrative;
- 3) Practice diversity (criminal, civil, governmental, corporate, etc);
- 4) Racial and other diversity such as county of residence;
- 5) Prior application to the Leadership Forum.

In addition to the application materials, each applicant has the option to request an interview as part of the process. A Committee member is assigned to interview each applicant that requests an interview and that Committee member submits a report to the full Committee about the interview. Once the applications are reviewed and scored by the Committee, the scores and ranks from each member of the Selection Committee are then averaged and a spreadsheet showing the average score and rank for each applicant is created. After the combined spreadsheet is created, the Committee meets to discuss the applicants and create a recommended Class to be submitted to the BBC for approval.

This year the Selection Committee reviewed applications from 37 applicants and selected a Class of 24 with 2 alternates. The Class breakdown is as follows: 14 males and 10 females; 16

Leadership Forum Committee

white and 8 non-white; 11 private practice, 11 public interest, and 2 in-house; 13 from Birmingham, 6 from Montgomery, 1 from Huntsville, 1 from Mobile and 3 from smaller cities. While the applicant pool was relatively small, the quality of the applicants was still outstanding and the overall class is particularly diverse.

The Leadership Forum Selection Committee is a specialized committee with essentially the sole goal of selecting the upcoming Leadership Forum class. As such, the Committee performs its role in a 2-3 month period each year. However, the time commitment in that short time frame is substantial, as each committee member can expect to spend between 20-40 hours reviewing and scoring applications in addition to attending several phone conferences, conducting applicant interviews, and attending the Selection Meeting that generally lasts between 4-6 hours.

The Leadership Forum Selection Committee is a specialized committee with essentially the sole goal of selecting the upcoming Leadership Forum class. As such, the Committee performs its role in a 2-3 month period each year. However, the time commitment in that short time frame is substantial, as each committee member can expect to spend between 20-40 hours reviewing and scoring applications in addition to attending several phone conferences, conducting applicant interviews, and attending the Selection Meeting that generally lasts between 4-6 hours.

I am proud of the work of the 2021-22 Leadership Forum Selection Committee and believe the Committee selected an outstanding 2022 Leadership Forum Class. I believe it would be beneficial to start the application process earlier this year and in future years to hopefully obtain a larger applicant pool. I also think the Committee could do a better job of encouraging eligible lawyers to apply to the Leadership Forum and perhaps that could be an additional responsibility of the Committee. Additionally, if this Committee will continue to be responsible for selection only, and not programming, the size of the Committee could be reduced if desired. I strongly believe the Leadership Forum is one of the best programs (out of many great programs) offered by the Alabama State Bar and I am honored to be part of the Leadership Forum Selection Committee.