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ATTORNEY CHRISTA WITTENBERG WINS 2019 JUDGE TERENCE T. EVANS HUMOR AND CREATIVITY IN LAW COMPETITION

Christa Wittenberg was recently announced the winner of the 2019 Judge Terence T. Evans Humor and Creativity in Law Competition, sponsored by the Eastern District of Wisconsin Bar Association. The award is given to one attorney each year whose original creative law-related writing piece is selected by the review committee. The competition honors the memory of the Honorable Terence T. Evans, former judge of the U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Wisconsin, and U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit, who was known for his wit and creativity throughout his life and his work. At the EDWBA Annual Meeting in April, Attorney Wittenberg happily accepted the award of a traveling trophy. Her winning article is below:

Boot Camp for Litigators: An Unconventional, Immersive CLE

By: Christa D. Wittenberg

Are you a litigator looking to improve your skills? Stuck in a career rut? Wishing you could practice the essential soft skills that make lawyers effective in and out of the courtroom? Try our 12-week intensive crash course: Parental Leave, also known as Boot Camp for Litigators. A brand new baby is required for this course; you will need to supply your own.

This innovative CLE emphasizes the skills that separate good lawyers from great lawyers, which are the same skills new babies force upon their parents: tenacity, flexibility, heightened awareness, creativity, and the ability to sift through crap. Our boot camp will give you the skills necessary to make you the litigator you've always dreamed of becoming. It's guaranteed to give you the confidence to tell your opponents you can beat them while using just one arm. Literally.

The course focuses on the following areas:

Sleep deprivation resistance training: You will simulate the long days and sleepless nights of trial. Boasting 3-4 hours of interrupted sleep nightly, our boot camp will teach you to be impervious to the side effects of exhaustion in the highest stakes environment: your child's life depends on it.

Thinking quickly on your feet: Improvising and adapting to challenging circumstances are crucial skills for litigators. Test your mental and emotional dexterity with countless tear-your-hair-out moments, like diaper blowouts, incessant screaming for no apparent reason, fending off well-meaning strangers trying to touch your child, politely nodding at your relatives' terrible baby advice, and wrestling clothing onto your flailing infant. Like with any good improvisation class, instead of saying "no, please, no," you'll learn to say "yes, and . . . ." You'll roll with the punches and make it work, because there's really no alternative. After completing this boot camp, the next time you combat a challenging witness or argue your point to a frowning judge, your experienced brain will be hardwired to assess the situation and react deftly.

Reading a jury: Knowing whether a juror's grimace is disbelief, sympathy, or merely the burrito he had for lunch is an important skill that allows you to adjust your trial strategy on the fly and win the case. After spending 12 weeks trying to guess the reasons for your baby's many, many cries, you will find reading a fully-formed adult as easy as reading a book.

Public speaking: There's simultaneously no tougher and no easier audience than a crying baby who could not care less what you are saying. If you can soothe an infant with a spontaneous, animated speech about the jungle animals swinging from his mobile, handling an opening statement will be a breeze.

Perseverance through tedium: We all know the exciting and glamorous parts of litigation—trials, depositions, oral arguments—don't come along every day, and that it's the preparation and background work that make up the bulk of our work as litigators. Sifting through thousands of documents for the needle in the haystack, poring over mountains of raw data to build a case, researching all variants of every possible legal theory to support your claims—such work cannot be done without the ability to persist in the face of extreme boredom. At our boot camp, you will face colossal tedium. For 12 weeks, around the clock, your life will follow a dismally predictable cycle: Feed. Change diaper. Soothe. Sleep. Repeat. After you complete this mind-numbing routine for that long, reading every Seventh Circuit decision on diversity jurisdiction since 1950 will sound like some welcome fun.

Dealing with demanding clients: You'll rarely meet a client more irrational than an infant, and you don't often have a client who screams at you more than your unsmiling newborn incapable of any other form of communication. Let your little one reinforce your talent for service with a smile.

Prioritizing: Parenting, like lawyering, is all about prioritizing. Imagine you have a brief due at midnight, a deposition tomorrow, and a demanding client calling every ten minutes. Now imagine you're in the nursery, there's spit-up on your shirt, poop everywhere else, and a hungry screaming infant lying on the changing table. In both scenarios, the key to success is efficiently tackling the problems in order of priority. Our boot camp will allow you to practice

your triage skills in the relative comfort of your own home. For example, you might currently think showering every day or eating your meals while they're hot are important, but you'll soon learn otherwise. The same goes when you're up against competing deadlines and demands—except you'll probably still want to shower when handling your workplace challenges if you don't want to offend your colleagues.

Gaining perspective: A healthy dose of perspective can help lawyers keep a clear head, even under great stress. Yes, we all want to do good work, win our cases, and strive for justice. But no single project or case will define you unless you let it. Caring for your child—for 12 weeks and beyond—will force you to slow down and see the forest instead of the trees.

Participants are admitted to Boot Camp for Litigators on a rolling basis. Sign up early, as there is typically a 9-month wait list for this life-changing course. This 12-week intensive course is pre-approved for 2,016 hours of CLE credits. Boot Camp for Litigators can be repeated as many times as you wish; the difficulty level increases each time.

Are you ready to see if our Boot Camp for Litigators can make you a better lawyer? Make the commitment today—if you dare!