



## **Selection Criteria**

Membership in Arizona's Finest Lawyers is peer-reviewed. Nominations come from current members and our Executive and Advisory Boards. Nominations are limited to members of the Arizona Bar, or law faculty, who have demonstrated leadership and professional standards consistent with AFL's criteria and guidelines for membership.

### **Governing Principles**

Peer-reviewed nomination and membership programs are meaningful only if each nominated lawyer meets clearly articulated standards. They must be highly skilled, have established reputations for integrity and professional conduct, and be committed to AFL's mission and goals. We maintain an internal database of all nominated lawyers who have been selected by the Executive Board. We encourage selectees to support AFL by becoming *Sustaining Members* and recognizing them on our website and other materials. The collective standing in the legal community of Sustaining Members, and those appointed to serve on our Executive and Advisory Boards, authenticate the nomination process.

Our membership reflects the diversity of Arizona's legal community -- by virtue of ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion, area of practice, interests, and participation in the activities of government, business, civic organizations, political entities, non-profits, and humanitarian groups.

### **Nomination Process**

Sustaining Members, selectees, and members of the Executive and Advisory Boards may nominate new members. The boards are expected to identify individuals who might not be otherwise found on the customary lists of excellent lawyers. For example, we have lists of board-certified specialists, state bar section and group leaders, fellows, trustees, directors, commissioners, and others elected or selected as members of governing, testing, qualifying, or honorary entities. These include but are not limited to state and national academies, centers, colleges, societies, and institutes. We also review lists of elected and appointed public officers, court systems, business organizations, and entrepreneurs. All nominations are transmitted to AFL's CEO, COO, or its Executive Board. Initial screening, assessment, vetting, and notification are done by Executive Board members. Final selections are made by AFL's Executive Board.

### **Membership Criteria**

Membership is limited to licensed members (both active and inactive) of the Arizona State Bar for at least ten years. Exceptions may be made for law faculty, and for in-house counsel who might not be members of the Arizona bar, but who have established substantial contacts in, and have contributed to, the Arizona legal community through scholarship and outreach. Each nominee will have demonstrated a level of competence and recognition within the top twenty percent of bar membership, registration, or law faculty,



and will have been widely accepted as honest, ethical, and professional. Nominees will have consistently complied with all CLE requirements that apply to them, and will not have a public record of formal discipline.

AFL seeks a wide membership of individuals who, by reason of noteworthy achievement, have attained positions of honor and trust. The following benchmarks are within AFL's criteria for selection.

### **Noteworthy Achievement**

Individuals who are, or have been, elected regents, fellows, trustees, or directors of any national, regional, or state academy, college, center, or institute, whose membership includes highly qualified lawyers who possess high levels of integrity and professional ethics;

Individuals who are, or have been, profiled by national, regional, or state boards, organizations, or groups based on peer-review membership protocols;

Individuals who are, or have been holders of AV ratings by Martindale-Hubbell, or similar rating or ranking organizations, including but not limited to America's Best Lawyers, Southwest Super Lawyers, Leading Lawyers of America, Who's Who in American Law, Chambers Guides, Lawdragon, LLC, etc;

Individuals who are or have been recognized by local, regional, state, or national professional organizations for high competency in a particular field or area of law;

Individuals who are or have been elected or appointed to leadership positions by the ABA, ALI, AJS, Arizona Supreme Court, Arizona State Bar, County, or Municipal bar associations, or are serving in lead positions on State, County, or City legal committees, sections, task forces, or other positions based on demonstrated commitment to excellence and professionalism; or

Individuals who have achieved distinction in allied fields, businesses, non-profits, or organizational structures in which legal training and experience is an important consideration.

### **Positions of Honor or Trust**

Individuals who are or have served in positions of honor or trust, as illustrated by the following examples: Justices of the U.S. Supreme Court; Judges of the U.S. Court of Appeals; Judges of the U.S. District Court; Attorney General of the United States and other high-ranking federal executive attorneys; Justices and judges of state, tribal, and territorial courts; Chief counsels and chiefs of staff of congressional committees; State and tribal attorneys general and their principal deputies and section chiefs; General counsels of major national or state corporations and labor unions as defined by quantitative criteria; Officials of the ABA or state bar associations, including specialized bar groups, or editors of important legal journals;



Individuals who have demonstrated significant professional achievement, based on objective criteria for measuring excellence within the legal profession;

Individuals who have been elected or appointed to board membership in professional organizations in which the rule of law, justice, or professionalism is an inherent part of the mission;

Individuals serving as deans, senior administrators, or faculty at ABA accredited law schools, faculty members of the Arizona Trial College, the National Institute for Trial Advocacy, and similarly recognized teaching faculties;

Individuals who are employed in leadership positions by corporations, non-profit entities, including universities and colleges, or other organizations whose mission includes legal and political issues relevant to law, social discourse, or legal policy;

Individual public lawyers who are or were elected, employed, or appointed to serve as prosecutors, public defenders, social service lawyers, pro-bono lawyers, labor union lawyers, legal aid lawyers, legislators, council members, commissioners, justices of the peace, including retired judges, and part-time practitioners who deserve recognition on a case-by-case basis;

Individuals who are or were political office-holders and who have demonstrated an on-going interest in, or leadership on, committees or issues dealing with the judiciary, the rule of law, legal ethics, or professionalism; or

Authors, writers, journalists, columnists, bloggers, and similarly situated lawyers whose body of published work contributes to and informs the public regarding legal issues and whose work has been critically acclaimed as measured by objective criteria.

Please direct any questions to Gary L. Stuart, [gstuart@azfinestlawyers.org](mailto:gstuart@azfinestlawyers.org) or 602.281.1111.