The CCBL: It All Started with Cups of Coffee

In the mid-1960s, many changes were taking place at the PBA. Among them, the Pennsylvania Bar Institute (PBI) was formed to provide continuing legal education programs, an executive director was hired to replace an executive secretary and the current governance structure of the House of Delegates and Board of Governors took shape.

On March 18, 1967, to orient county bar association leaders to the “new” PBA, then-PBA President Gilbert Nurick and PBA Executive Directory Frederick Bolton organized a “coffee conclave” at the Penn Harris Hotel in Harrisburg.

Apparently, the bar leaders found that discussions over cups of coffee were worthy investments of their time and efforts.

The next year, a meeting was held at the brand-new Hershey Motor Lodge (now the Hershey Lodge) and the meeting was given a name, the Conference of County Bar Presidents.

In its third year, the focus of the annual get-together shifted to matters impacting county bar associations. County bar officers were invited to discuss the proposed Code of Professional Responsibility, judiciary committees, problems of judicial selection and tenure, and merit selection. As the years passed, the conference grew to its current format of multiple meetings, learning sessions and events spread out over three days.

Because the conference evolved to be directed at all county bar officers, not just presidents, the name was changed in 1971 to the Conference of County Bar Officers. The name changed again in 1983 to the Conference of County Bar Leaders (most often referred to as “the CCBL”).

The CCBL functions as an independent adjunct of the PBA. It has its own bylaws administered by an executive committee, which includes representatives from the PBA Young Lawyers Division, the Pennsylvania Association of Bar Executives and past county bar presidents.

Over the years, CCBL has dealt with lawyer discipline, ethics, specialization, professional responsibility, unauthorized practice of the law, delivery of legal services to the poor, bench-bar relations and the many important legal issues of the current day. It has fostered fresh and innovative county bar initiatives and helped spread those initiatives across the commonwealth. And, throughout its more than 50 year history, CCBL has developed mutually beneficial relationships among bar leaders with the ultimate goal of improving the status of the legal profession in Pennsylvania.

Sources: Much of this information was written by 1990-91 CCBL President Robert D. Beck of Washington County for The Pennsylvania Lawyer magazine’s special centennial issue, July/August 1995.

Join the conversation and get the latest updates about the PBA’s 125th anniversary on the association’s social media accounts (Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter) by using the hashtag: #PBA125strong.

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Our trivia contest celebrating #PBA125strong has begun. Two questions a month will be posted to PBA’s Facebook and Twitter. Members with correct answers will be entered into a monthly drawing for a Pennsylvania Bar Institute CLE ProPass (12 prizes total). More on the rules: www.pabar.org/site/125Strong/triviacontest.