



# THE CHRONICLE

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## The State Bar of Georgia Conference Center

By Cliff Brashier, Executive Director, State Bar of Georgia

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In 1995, the State Bar of Georgia began an ambitious project of finding a Bar Center that would serve as a facility to educate the public on the justice system and provide a professional gathering place for members of the Bar. In January, 2005, during the Bar Center dedication, keynote speaker U.S. Supreme Court Justice Anthony M. Kennedy commended State Bar members for their commitment to freedom and the rule of law.



“Love the seating – not crammed in! Easy to hear; visual aids easy to see.”

Justice Kennedy told attendees, “One of the greatest duties of any generation, and particularly of its bar, is to transmit the idea of freedom and the rule of law to the next generation. You know, the idea of freedom, the commitment to democracy, a belief in the rule of law is not transmitted by some automatic genetic inheritance. You don’t take a DNA

test to see if you believe in democracy. It’s taught, and teaching is a conscious act. Law must live in the consciousness of the people. We must give more frequent, more serious dedication, more devotion to transmitting our whole extant legal culture, our whole idea of freedom, to the next generation.”

In addition to being used to educate the public, the Bar Center also serves as the professional gathering place to the more than 37,000 attorneys licensed to practice law in Georgia. **The Bar Center is dedicated to serve all members and the public through the administration of justice in the highest traditions of the legal profession.**

As their professional home, all Georgia lawyers are strongly encouraged to visit and use the Bar Center for client meetings, depositions, mediations and other professional uses. Offices, meeting areas, and conference rooms are available daily on a first-reservation basis. In addition, all members, along with their families, are invited to visit and tour the Bar Center whenever possible.



“Gourmet box lunch better than most hotel meals”

Special appreciation is extended to ICLE for its long-standing support of the Bar Center. As the primary CLE provider for Georgia attorneys, ICLE hosts many thousands of our members at the Bar Center each year. **The combination of ICLE’s high quality educational seminar and the Bar Center’s high-quality facilities is a wonderful benefit for Georgia lawyers.** The State Bar of Georgia thanks ICLE for this special partnership.



“The facility is outstanding. This was my first time here and I was more than impressed. Let’s have all seminars here.”

# The State Bar of Georgia Conference Center: It's a Great Fit

By: Steve Harper, Director of Programs, I.C.L.E.

I'll be honest - when the idea of holding seminars at the State Bar Conference Center first surfaced, I had my doubts. As you probably know, ICLE has traditionally held most of its Atlanta seminars at area hotels. I was concerned that we would not get the same level of service and support we experience at hotels. Would attorneys want to come to downtown Atlanta for a seminar? Would our technology needs be met, and would there be a knowledgeable technician on site to deal with the inevitable problems. Finally, I was concerned that the level of food / refreshment service would not be the same as that of a hotel, in terms of quality and speed of service.



Helpful staff.

Our first seminar at the Bar Conference Center was a simple video replay in January of 2005. It went off pretty well, but I thought that it wasn't a real test of the facility. Since then the Bar Conference Center has hosted more than a few of our seminars. In Fiscal Year 2006 (July 2005 through June 2006) we had one hundred one (101) events at the Bar and in Fiscal Year 2007 (July 2006 through June 2007) we've planned one hundred thirty (130) events at this venue. I am now a total convert and a Bar Conference Center cheerleader. Since I schedule the seminars and assign the I.C.L.E. staff attorneys to their respective slice of the whole CLE pie, **I have made sure that I assign myself to as many of the Bar Conference Center seminars as I dare. My colleagues now complain that they don't get their fair share of events at that venue.**

What happened to all of my concerns? Let me share a few things with you. Cliff Brashier and his staff, especially Faye First, the Conference Center Manager, and Kyle Gause, the AV Manager, have never heard of the word "can't" when it comes to helping make our seminars at the Conference Center successful. **The State Bar of Georgia Headquarters is elegant.** If you have the chance, let Cliff Brashier tell you about the process our Bar leadership went through getting it to look like it does today. It has to be the nicest, best equipped and most member-friendly bar location in the nation. From the Lawyers' Lounge to the Museum to the President's Board Room (which is furnished from donations made by past

Bar Presidents) to the Mock Trial Courtroom to the meeting rooms, it is fantastic. I dare say that most of our offices don't compare. It doesn't end with merely beautiful surroundings. **The available technology is state-of-the-art, and it has been designed to maximize the experience.** For example, four drop-down screens in the auditorium provide an unobstructed view to every seminar attendee. In addition, the entire Bar is a wireless environment; you can go online anywhere in the building.

**There are several great caterers who serve the Conference Center.** We have decided that for most of our seminars, a gourmet box lunch is the way to go. I thought gourmet box lunch was an oxymoron, but they are very nicely done and are at least as tasty as most plated lunches we enjoy at hotels. An additional benefit of this method is that our lunch lasts only thirty minutes, and, when you couple that with an 8:30 a.m. seminar start time at the Bar, that means the seminar ends at 3:30 p.m. This is an hour earlier than a hotel-based event. Traffic is a bit lighter at 3:30 p.m. too. Of course, parking is free, again I say free, at the Bar and there is direct access from the parking garage to the Conference Center.

Another major benefit of having our seminars at the bar is the impact on our registration fees. **This year a seminar at the Bar is thirty dollars less than the same seminar would be at a hotel.** That difference most likely will only grow greater, as hotel prices continue to climb. We have the leadership of the State Bar of Georgia to thank for this result.

When brother or sister attorneys make a first visit to the Bar, I am struck by two frequent observations. First, they say what a great facility it is, and second, they comment on how pleased they are that our Bar dues have gone to enable such a great facility. Also, I'll bet we are the only Bar headquarters in the United States with an indoor firing range...just a value-added fact.

I hope I've given you enough information to encourage you to attend a seminar at the Bar Conference Center. I think you'll be impressed and want to come back again and again for your CLEs. It's a great fit for I.C.L.E. We look forward to seeing you at an I.C.L.E. seminar soon.



"Superb in all respects."