

## **ATTORNEY SPECIALISTS: WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?**

**BY: TERESA SCHARF, PARALEGAL  
NEWHOUSE, PROPHATER, LETCHER & MOOTS, LLC**

Rule I of the Rules for the Government of the Bar mandated by the Ohio Supreme Court defines stringent prerequisites that all attorneys must satisfy before being licensed to practice law in the state of Ohio. Rule XIV provides for certification and regulation of attorneys as specialists. So – what's the difference?

While each of our attorneys at NPL&M have vast experience in employment and labor relations law among other areas of practice, two of our attorneys, Barbara Letcher and Christopher Hogan, bear the exclusive distinction of OSBA Board Certified Specialists in Labor and Employment Law. This additional attribute denotes excellence above and beyond the already high level of service provided by our firm. It affords our clients the greater benefit of representation with proven leadership, skill, and expertise regarding labor and employment matters.

Fewer than 4% of licensed practicing attorneys in the United States are Certified Specialists in their area(s) of practice. In Ohio, that ratio decreases to less than 2%. Only 126 attorneys of 42,711 licensed to practice in Ohio are identified as OSBA Board Certified Specialists in Labor and Employment Law. Attorneys who have achieved this designation are among an exclusive group of professionals in the legal services community.

The standards for earning a specialty certification, like licensure as an attorney, are governed by the Supreme Court Commission on Certification of Attorneys as Specialists, via a certifying agency such as the Ohio State Bar Association. These standards include, among other requirements, successful completion of a written examination that is specific to the particular area of law in which the attorney aspires to be certified. At a minimum, the attorney must also have at least three (3) years of experience practicing in that specialty area to be eligible to apply for consideration and sit for the exam. After being awarded the designation, attorneys must be recertified periodically and they must complete continuing legal education courses in order to maintain their standing as an OSBA Board Certified Specialist.

Barbara has been an OSBA Board Certified Specialist in Labor and Employment Law since the inception of the certification program in Ohio, on January 1, 2002. She has successfully represented the interests of her clients time after time. Her years of experience and knowledge undergird the integrity of her well-defined practice.

Chris Hogan earned his designation as an OSBA Board Certified Specialist in Labor and Employment Law in 2005. Chris sought this designation as another way to enhance the quality of the services that he provides and to assure his clients that he is well-versed and trained in the subject matter. The certification also elicits recognition by his peers and opposing parties that he possesses a depth of experience and a breadth of knowledge in labor and employment law that he will bring to bear in protecting his clients' position.

When the need arises for legal counsel to help resolve labor and employment issues, your selection of an attorney is crucial. As OSBA Board Certified Specialists, Barbara Letcher and Christopher Hogan offer particular expertise that sets them apart from the rest.

### **The Martindale-Hubbell Peer Review Ratings**

In addition, five attorneys in our firm have received designations awarded by Martindale-Hubbell, ratings which indicate professional excellence in the practice of law. These are peer ratings, based upon anonymous opinions of members of the Bar and the Judiciary, evaluating each attorney's general ethical standards and legal abilities. The information is obtained via secure online surveys that are conducted by Martindale-Hubbell. The criterion includes legal knowledge, analytical capabilities, judgment, communication ability, and the legal experience of the attorney being evaluated.

D. Wesley Newhouse, Philip R. Moots, Wanda L. Carter, and Christopher E. Hogan each have been identified by Martindale-Hubbell with its highest designation of AV® Preeminent® rating. Michael S. Kolman possesses the credential of BV® Distinguished® rating.

An AV® Rating signifies that the lawyer has reached the heights of professional excellence. He or she has usually practiced law for a number of years and is recognized for doing so with the highest levels of skill and integrity. A BV® Rating is an indication of an attorney's exemplary reputation with a well-established practice.

These ratings are designed by Martindale-Hubbell to provide a comprehensive assessment of attorneys, supplying information to assist in the selection the most appropriate lawyer for a specific need. With that knowledge, you can be assured that the attorneys at NPL&M are qualified and ready to represent your interests with the highest caliber of integrity, knowledge, and skill.