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## THE NORTH DAKOTA BAR ASSOCIATION RECEIVES THE ABA'S AWARD OF MERIT

**T**HE NORTH DAKOTA State Bar Association received a distinguished honor recently when the American Bar Association, at its annual convention in New York, presented to it one of the four Awards of Merit given annually by the ABA.

The award is given to the bar association which, within its own division, has carried on the most outstanding and constructive program of public service for the preceding year. There are four divisions — two divisions of state bar associations and two of city and county bar associations.

Competing against the North Dakota Bar Association were the state bar associations of Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Delaware, Idaho, Kansas, Louisiana, Maine, Mississippi, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, New Hampshire, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Utah, Vermont, West Virginia and Wyoming. In view of the number and comparative size of the associations entered in the competition, the selection of the North Dakota organized bar as the winner of the Award represents marked recognition on a national scale.

The program of public service carried on by the North Dakota State Bar Association which served to win the award consisted of the following activities:

(1) Each week the State Bar Association furnishes every newspaper in the state with a column, written entirely by North Dakota attorneys, designed to inform and assist the citizens of North Dakota, called "Know Your Law." A poll of North Dakota editors of daily, weekly, and semi-weekly papers indicated that, with but one solitary exception, every editor considered it a public service of the first rank and urged its continuance.

(2) The Association has developed a Constitution Award, given yearly to one student in each North Dakota high school. The award is given to the student who, in the opinion of the school's principal, has the best understanding of the function of the Constitution of the United States in the American form of government.

(3) The Association allocated \$1500 to its Legislative Committee for the preparation of bills for introduction in the 1951 legislature. This legislation was not designed for the benefit of lawyers but for the general welfare, and included clarification of existing statutes to prevent litigation, and laws clarifying market-

able record title to real estate, raising the salaries of judges, and streamlining probate procedures.

(4) The Association completed a "Handbook for Jurors" which is being distributed through the several district judges to citizens called for jury service. The book is intended to assist jurors in performing their functions.

(5) The Association, in June, 1951, awarded and paid \$750 as scholarships to students in the School of Law, University of North Dakota. The members of the faculty and the dean of the School of Law were the sole judges of the scholarship recipients. Scholastic ability, qualities of leadership, legal research on the *North Dakota Law Review* and all around character were the determining factors.

(6) In conjunction with the American Bar Association's Committee on Continuing Legal Education, the Association conducted a two-day institute at Bismarck, N. D., devoted to income, estate and gift tax laws and current problems, trial technique and allied matters. (For a report on this institute, see Bench and Bar at page 69).

(7) During the past year the Association spent in excess of \$1000 on Commissioners to the National Council of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws. The North Dakota Legislative Assembly has not provided funds for this purpose in the past, and the Association is therefore required to carry this expenditure. It includes the state's contribution for the Council's permanent operations.

(8) The Association allocated approximately \$800 to assist the North Dakota Legislative Research Committee in meeting expenses incident to the proper drafting of bills for members of the Legislative Assembly.

(9) The Association continued its campaign to inform the public on legal matters and their importance by distributing pamphlets on basic legal subjects, such as "Do You Need a Will?" and "Title Examinations."

The Award of Merit, of course, represents recognition only for what has been accomplished in the past. While the members of North Dakota's legal profession may well take pride in what has been done, there is much remaining for the future. Given the same wholehearted cooperation from the members of the bar which has been forthcoming in the past, the Association can look forward to a future program meriting the same praise which has now been bestowed upon it.