



Northwestern
PRITZKER SCHOOL OF LAW

American Board
of Trial Advocates™



ABOTA National Trial College - Advanced Trial Skills Program

The ABOTA National Trial College, already the preeminent trial advocacy training program in the country, is taking it to the next level and offering its inaugural Advanced Trial Skills Program. This advanced program, held on the campus of Northwestern Law School, is specifically designed for trial attorneys who already have several trials under their belts and are looking to up their games. They will receive intensive and advanced training from the best and most experienced trial lawyers in the country, all of whom are ABOTA members and veteran trial advocacy teachers.

Faculty demonstrations and student exercises will encompass all aspects of civil jury trials. Rather than teach the simple basics, such as the skill of asking open-ended questions on direct and leading questions on cross, this program will focus on the next level of trial practice.

- Building rapport during voir dire
- Perfecting cause challenges
- Effective storytelling during opening statements
- Dealing with difficult witnesses
- Advanced control techniques on cross-examination
- Closing arguments that strike just the right balance of rhetoric, facts and law
- And more



**Northwestern University
Pritzker School of Law
Chicago, Illinois**



August 5-9, 2025

Application deadline is March 31, 2025



Tuition is \$5,995

Includes: 6 nights at a downtown Chicago hotel, all meals, 5 days of instruction and program materials.

Students nationwide are invited to apply. Registration is limited. Scan QR code to start the application or apply now at <https://qrco.de/bfVBbq>.

ABOTA will apply for CLE credit for this program.





Put Your Trial Skills to the Test!

This is a career-changing opportunity for lawyers seeking to take their advocacy techniques and tactics to the next level. It is a week-long, intensive program that blends small group faculty instruction and demonstration with individual student participation. And participants will hit the ground running, having been provided the trial materials in advance.

The inaugural ABOTA National Trial College in 2010 was conducted at Princeton University. The 2012, 2014 and 2016 Colleges were held at Harvard Law School in Cambridge, Massachusetts. For 2018, 2020 and 2022, the program moved to Yale Law School, another of the country's leading law schools. Now, the Advanced Trial College will be held on the shores of Lake Michigan in the hallowed halls of the beautiful Northwestern Pritzker School of Law in downtown Chicago.

With an impressive 2:1 student to faculty ratio, the classes are taught by highly experienced trial lawyers from all

parts of the country who share their techniques of trial preparation and the art of effective advocacy. The students also have the opportunity to work with very experienced and accomplished expert witnesses. Throughout, the participants are recorded while conducting mock opening statements, direct and cross examinations of lay and expert witnesses, and closing arguments. This provides the invaluable opportunity for students to see themselves as others see them, allowing them to identify their own strengths and weaknesses and objectively look at their performance without relying on memory.

After four days of "learning by doing" and observing outstanding faculty demonstrations, students are divided into trial teams and compete in mock jury trials before real judges and jurors after which the students observe jury deliberations and then receive final critiques from the faculty. A graduation ceremony is held on the final evening.



Preliminary Program Schedule

Subject to Change

Tuesday, August 5, 2025

8:00 – 9:00	Registration
9:00 – 9:15	Welcome to the Program & Introductions
9:15 – 10:30	Direct and Cross of a Witness
10:30 – 10:45	Break
10:45 – 12:00	Direct and Cross of a Witness
12:00 – 1:15	Working Lunch: Dealing with Difficult Witnesses
1:15 – 2:15	Plaintiffs conduct an examination; Defendants cross-examine
2:15 – 3:15	Defendants conduct an examination; Plaintiffs cross-examine
3:15 – 3:30	Break
3:30 – 4:30	Impeachment with a Prior Inconsistent Statement
4:30 – 5:00	Demonstration: Opening Statement Using Electronic Evidence

Wednesday, August 6, 2025

9:00 – 10:15	Opening Statements
10:15 – 10:30	Break
10:30 – 11:15	Objections Drills with Exhibits
11:15 – 12:15	Admitting Social Media
12:15 – 1:15	Working lunch: Discussion of jury selection, creating a juror profile and questioning technique
1:15 – 4:15	Jury Selection
1:15 – 2:15	Plaintiffs and Defendants meet to review juror questionnaires
2:15 – 3:15	Jury Selection
3:15 – 3:30	Break
3:30 – 4:15	Jury Selection (continued)
4:15 – 5:15	The ethics of jury selection in the age of social media, ethical issues in social media for attorneys

Thursday, August 7, 2025

8:30 – 9:00	Demonstration: Expert Witness Examinations, Direct and Cross
9:00 – 9:30	Preparation with Experts
9:30 – 10:30	Direct and Cross of Experts
10:30 – 10:45	Break
10:45 – 11:45	Defendants conduct direct; Plaintiffs cross-examine
11:45- 12:45	Lunch
12:45 – 1:15	Demonstration: Discussion of Closing Argument
1:15 – 2:00	Planning Sessions for Closing Arguments
2:00 – 3:15	Closing Arguments
3:15 – 3:30	Break
3:30 – 4:30	Closing Arguments
4:30 -5:00	Demonstration: Witness Preparation

Friday, August 8, 2025

9:00 – 10:00	The Ethics of Witness Preparation
10:00 – 12:00	Witness Preparation
12:00 – 1:00	Lunch
1:00 – 1:30	Prepare any Pretrial Motions
1:30 – 3:00	Pretrial conferences, pretrial motions, review ground rules with trial judge
3:00 – 4:00	Discussion of Professional Responsibility Issues in Trials
4:00 – 6:00	Free for Trial Preparation

Saturday, August 9, 2025

8:15 – 11:30	Jury Trials
11:30 – 12:30	Lunch
12:30 – 2:00	Jury Trials (continued)
2:00 – 2:30	Closing Ceremony



About the Faculty

All faculty mentors are ABOTA members, including several past National Presidents of ABOTA. ABOTA, representing equally the plaintiff and defense bars, as well as judges, spread among nearly 100 chapters in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, is an invitation-only organization. All members must have at least five years of active experience as trial lawyers, have tried at least seven civil jury trials to jury verdict or hung jury as lead counsel, and possess additional litigation experience. Members must also exhibit the virtues of civility, integrity and professionalism.

Why ABOTA is Needed

ABOTA is an organization where plaintiff and defense lawyers, along with members of the bench, can unite on a non-adversarial basis. Trial by jury in civil litigation is the most effective and just means of resolving disputes and dispensing justice. The Seventh Amendment is the necessary safeguard to the right to a civil trial by jury. Those who oppose the Seventh Amendment fail to recognize that jury trials are as essential to security and liberty as the right to vote.

Thomas Jefferson knew that protecting the citizenry was a key element in forging a new constitution. He wrote, "I consider trial by jury as the only anchor ever yet imagined by man, by which a government can be held to the principles of its constitution."

What National Trial College Past Fellows are Saying

"Don't take any of this for granted. It's an incredible program that you will remember for years to come."

"You are going to have one-on-one access to lawyers from around the country who are experts in trying cases."

"You will get many trials worth of experience in one short week."

"I will never forget my closing argument and rebuttal at the 2024 National Trial College. It was the culmination of a week that stretched me intellectually, emotionally, and performatively. I not only felt ready to take on more trials, but I was overcome with a sense of professional purpose I had never before experienced in my life."

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