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SUPER LAWYERS SELECTION PROCESS

Super Lawyers Selection Process Blessed by Courts and Bar Associations Across the Country

Bar associations and courts across the country have recognized the legitimacy of the Super Lawyers selection process. Most recently, the New Jersey Supreme Court upheld the findings of a Special Master assigned by the court to, among other things, examine the details of our process. In his July 2008 report, the Special Master lauded our process, stating:

"[The Super Lawyers selection process] is a comprehensive, good-faith and detailed attempt to produce a list of lawyers that have attained high peer recognition, meet ethical standards, and have demonstrated some degree of achievement in their field."

"Suffice to say, the selection procedures employed by [Super Lawyers] are very sophisticated, comprehensive and complex."

"It is absolutely clear from this record that [Super Lawyers does] not permit a lawyer to buy one's way onto the list, nor is there any requirement for the purchase of any product for inclusion in the lists or any quid pro quo of any kind or nature associated with the evaluation and listing of an attorney or in the subsequent advertising of one's inclusion in the lists."

OVERVIEW

Super Lawyers selects attorneys using a rigorous, multiphase process. Peer nominations and evaluations are combined with third party research. Each candidate is evaluated on 12 indicators of peer recognition and professional achievement. Selections are made on an annual, state-by-state basis.

The objective is to create a credible, comprehensive and diverse listing of outstanding attorneys that can be used as a resource for attorneys and consumers searching for legal counsel. Since Super Lawyers is intended to be used as an aid in the selection of a lawyer, we limit the list to attorneys who can be hired and retained by the public, i.e., lawyers in private practice and Legal Aid attorneys.

The Super Lawyers selection process involves three basic steps: creation of the candidate pool; evaluation of candidates by the research department; and peer evaluation by practice area.

STEP ONE: CREATION OF THE CANDIDATE POOL

Lawyers enter the candidate pool by being formally nominated by a peer; identified by the research department in the "Star Search" process; or informally nominated.

Formal nominations

Once a year, we invite lawyers in each state to nominate the top attorneys they've personally observed in action. Lawyers may nominate attorneys in their own firm, but these nominations count only if each in-firm nomination is matched by at least one out-firm nomination.

Each nomination carries a point value. An out-firm nomination has substantially greater point value than an in-firm nomination. Lawyers cannot nominate themselves, and must limit their nominations to others who practice in the same state.

Our procedures and database have several safeguards that prevent lawyers from "gaming" the system. For example, we track who nominates whom. This helps us detect any excessive "back-scratch" nominations (lawyers nominating each other) and "block nominations" (where members of the same law firm all cast identical nominations). We also prohibit lawyers from engaging in "campaigning" or solicitation of nominations from other lawyers.

While important, the nomination phase is simply the first step in our process. It puts lawyers on our radar for further research and evaluation, and awards points in our

WHAT IS SUPER LAWYERS



Super Lawyers magazine names attorneys in each state who received the highest point totals, as chosen by their peers and through the independent research. Rising Stars names the state's top up-and-coming attorneys.

Super Lawyers magazine is published in all 50 states and reaches more than 13 million readers.

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BROWSE SUPER LAWYERS

PRACTICE AREA

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LOCATIONS

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WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING

"We have used our ad to promote not only our New York practice, but the programs managed by our charitable foundation. *New York Super Lawyers* has been an effective forum for introducing the legal community to our many partnerships with organizations such as New York University. The *Super Lawyers* vehicle is a direct pipeline into New York's legal community—and that benefits our foundation and the causes it supports."

*William A. Brewer III, Partner
 Bickel & Brewer
 New York, NY*

"There are no better recommendations than those from your peers. Combining peer evaluations with independent research, *Super Lawyers* has created a highly credible list of top legal professionals. I want to congratulate both *Super Lawyers* and *New Jersey Monthly* for the making this valuable resource available to the consumers of New Jersey."

*William Laufer
 Laufer Knapp Torzewski Dalena & Sposaro, LLC
 Morristown, New Jersey*

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system. But we limit the value of those points so that no matter how many nominations one receives, it will not guarantee selection.

"Star Search" process

Our attorney-led research staff searches for lawyers who have attained certain honors, results or credentials, which indicate a high degree of peer recognition or professional competence—what we term "Star Search Credentials." For example, certification as a specialist in a particular area of practice, or admission to prestigious colleges or academies, e.g., The American College of Trial Lawyers. The staff identifies these Star Search Credentials by reviewing a proprietary listing of more than 150 database and online sources, as well as national and local legal trade publications.

Most of the lawyers we identify in the Star Search process have also been nominated by their peers. Occasionally, however, we find outstanding lawyers who have been overlooked in the nomination process. These "overlooked" attorneys fall into predictable categories.

These include: lawyers with national litigation practices who rarely appear in the courts of their home jurisdiction; lawyers in smaller firms or from smaller communities; and lawyers practicing in less visible or highly specialized practice areas.

Informal nominations

Throughout the year, readers, clients and attorneys who are not eligible to formally nominate (that is, actively licensed to practice in the same state as the nominee) send us names of lawyers we should consider for inclusion. Though no points are awarded, we add these lawyers to the candidate pool for further research and evaluation.

STEP TWO: EVALUATION OF LAWYERS IN CANDIDATE POOL

Our research department evaluates each candidate based on these 12 indicators of peer recognition and professional achievement: verdicts and settlements; transactions; representative clients; experience; honors and awards; special licenses and certifications; position within law firm; bar and or other professional activity; pro bono and community service as a lawyer; scholarly lectures and writings; education and employment background; and other outstanding achievements.

These indicators are not treated equally; some have a higher maximum point value than others.

STEP THREE: PEER EVALUATION BY PRACTICE AREA

In this step, also known as the "blue ribbon review," candidates are grouped according to their primary areas of practice. The candidates in each practice area with the highest point totals from steps one and two above are asked to serve on a blue ribbon panel. The panelists are then provided a list of candidates from their practice areas to review and rate on a scale of one to ten.

FINAL SELECTION

Candidates are grouped into four firm-size categories. Those with the highest point totals from each category are selected. This means solo and small firm lawyers are compared with other solo and small firm attorneys, and large firm lawyers compete with other large firm lawyers. Five percent of the total lawyers in the state are selected for inclusion in Super Lawyers.

BEFORE PUBLISHING

The research staff checks each candidate's standing with the local licensing authority. Each candidate is asked to aver that they have never been subject to disciplinary or criminal proceedings.

Final Internet searches are performed on each candidate to ensure there are no outstanding matters that would reflect adversely on the lawyer. We also contact each lawyer to ensure accuracy of all published information.

PUBLICATION

The final published list represents no more than 5 percent of the lawyers in the state. The lists are published annually in state and regional editions of Super Lawyers magazines and in inserts and special advertising sections in leading city and regional magazines and newspapers. All attorneys selected for inclusion in Super Lawyers, regardless of year, can be found on superlawyers.com.

The Rising Stars selection process

The selection process for Rising Stars is the same as the Super Lawyers selection process except that: 1) to be eligible for inclusion in Rising Stars, a candidate must be either 40 years

old or younger or in practice for ten years or less; 2) Candidates for Rising Stars do not go through step three above—peer evaluation by practice area. While up to five percent of the lawyers in the state are named to Super Lawyers, no more than 2.5 percent are named to the Rising Stars list.

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