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Montana Bar Association Activities

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MONTANA BAR ASSOCIATION ACTIVITIES

The annual convention of the Montana Bar Association was held at Missoula, Montana, during the latter part of June, 1956. At the convention Weymouth D. Symmes, then of Lewistown and now of Billings, was elected president of the Association, and Kendrick Smith of the law firm of Corette, Smith & Dean, Butte, Montana, was elected president-nominee.

In recent years Montana, like other states in the Union, has been plagued with crowded court calendars. In the fall of 1955 Russell Smith, then president of the Association, appointed a special committee to study the problem of the various methods of selecting Justices. This committee made its report to the Montana Bar Association at its convention in Missoula in June, 1956, recommending that the so-called American Bar Association Plan for the selection of Judges be endorsed by the Association. The recommendations of this committee were adopted by the Association and legislation prepared and submitted to the Legislative Assembly. The legislation received a favorable report from the Judiciary Committee of the House, although it did not obtain the necessary two-thirds majority which is required to obtain a constitutional amendment. However, the State Legislature did authorize the Supreme Court to employ five law clerks to assist the Justices in their duties. This should do much to help clean up the current backlog of cases in the Supreme Court of this state.

For the past three years the Montana Bar Association and the Montana Medical Association have joined in putting on a Medical-Legal Institute. The year the Institute was held in Butte, and it has proved to be invaluable to the two professions which, with the great growth of personal injury litigation, have mutual problems.

The Montana Bar Association has also been successful in working out a plan for group insurance which contains many benefits for the individual members of the Association.

The 1957 Convention, which will be the 69th Annual Convention of the Association, will be held at Old Faithful Inn in Yellowstone National Park on June 13, 14 and 15. Mr. Charles Rhyne, president-elect of the American Bar Association, will speak to the Convention at 2 p.m., Saturday, June 15. We were also successful in obtaining a trial panel to discuss personal injury cases consisting of Wilfred R. Lorry and John R. McConnell, both of the Philadelphia Bar. This trial panel is sponsored by the American Law Institute and is nationally known. The law students and graduates are welcome to the convention and we hope that all will attend.

Respectfully submitted,

WEYMOUTH D. SYMMES
President
Montana Bar Association