



WILLS FOR FIDOS

I am writing to thank you for your article on the State Bar’s Animal Law Section (“Laws for Paws,” ARIZ. ATT’Y, Dec. 2005). I hope that most, if not all, members of the Bar will find something of interest in the article, and in the world of animal law.

I also would like to alert members to an excellent animal law resource not mentioned in the article. The Estate Planning for Pets Foundation is an online 501(c)(3) educational organization that provides information for persons planning for their companion animals and lawyers assisting those who wish to do so. The Foundation’s Web site is: www.estateplanningforpets.org. Steven Baker, an Arizona attorney and CPA, is the director of the Foundation and the author of this great Web site that I anticipate will be of interest to many of our members.

—Julie Singleton Hall, Esq.
Tucson

AN ILL WIND

I thought we had heard the last from Roxie Bacon with her prior article rationalizing the illegal immigration cancer that is destroying our nation. Her column titled “Stormy Weather” (“The Last Word,” ARIZ. ATT’Y, Nov. 2005) confirms that she is the Liberal/Socialist voice of our Association.

Please try to offer balance in commentaries in that the tired and trite observations from the Liberal template are wearisome.

—Walter L. Henderson
Tucson

RULE OF LAW? HA!

Where are Ms. Bacon’s ideas for “non-military options for dispute resolution” when it comes to radical Islamic terrorists who have vowed to destroy the United States? I didn’t see any in her column titled “Toys for Tots” (“The Last Word,” ARIZ. ATT’Y, Jan. 2006). Where, exactly, does the “rule of law” come into play when an Islamic terrorist is seconds away from detonating a bomb attached to his person?

Ms. Bacon’s swipe at the United States military is a sad commentary

on her view of the United States. How much “world peace” does she think there would be without the U.S. military providing it night and day for the last 60 years? Hmmmmm.

—Eric Speelmon
Mesa

BOILED HAMM

As a member of the State Bar, it was reassuring to read President Grimwood’s comments (“Murderers Need Not Apply,” ARIZ. ATT’Y, Dec. 2005) about James Hamm’s application for admission to the State Bar.

Mr. Hamm and I are the same age. In

1974, at the time he was putting a bullet into the head of his victim, Willard Morley, Jr., I was graduating from ASU after having served honorably in the United States Navy for three and a half years. My graduation from law school in 1991 and my subsequent admission to the State Bar the following year remain two of the most significant events in my life.

When I first became aware that Mr. Hamm had graduated from the ASU College of Law; had passed the Bar exam; and had sought admission to the



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State Bar, I wrote the Committee on Character and Fitness to voice my adamant opposition to his admission. I could not believe that after all the hard work I had put in to obtain entrance to what I consider to be an honorable profession, the Supreme Court would admit a first-degree murderer. My position remains unchanged.

It is admirable that Mr. Hamm embraced rehabilitation and now regrets his crime. However, it does not logically follow that, unless he is admitted to the State Bar, his rehabilitation will either be incomplete or a failure. To the contrary, Mr. Hamm has shown that rehabilitation worked for him.

What Mr. Hamm and his supporters choose to forget is that practicing law, like engaging in many other professions, is a privilege and not a right. I can only hope that the Arizona Supreme Court will make the only possible decision it can make under the circumstances, and deny Mr. Hamm's application to practice law.

—Richard A. Smith, Esq.
Phoenix

Editor's Note: On Dec. 7, 2005, the Supreme Court issued its opinion denying James Hamm's application for admission to the State Bar. The opinion is online: www.supreme.state.az.us/opin/pdf2005/SB040079M.pdf

Notwithstanding his prior conviction for murder, James Hamm does at least present an argument as to why he should be admitted to practice law in Arizona. After all, he has been a good citizen since his release from prison and apparently no longer poses a threat to society. He holds a degree from the ASU College of Law and has passed the bar examination—all of which he was permitted to do subsequent to his felony conviction.

While I was attending law school at the University of Arizona in the 1950s, my summer job involved the processing of applications for admission to future classes at the school. I would forward those meeting the minimum qualifications to the office of the Dean for further review and final action. With the exception of minor traffic violations, an applicant's prior conviction for *any* crime resulted in further inquiry. A felony conviction would have almost certainly disqualified a candidate.

I realize that standards have changed over these many years, but in this case I prefer those that previously existed. In my opinion, James Hamm should never have been admitted to law school, nor should he have been allowed to take the bar examination.

—J. Thomas Brooks
Judge (Ret.)
Phoenix

As a certified legal assistant, aspiring lawyer and incarcerated felon, I was quite disappointed in Helen Perry Grimwood's December President's Message.

Like James Hamm, I have earned a degree while imprisoned and through scholarships pursue an advanced degree. I get released within a year and am seriously considering applying to law school. Getting good grades and passing the bar exam will be the easy part. The difficulty will be changing attitudes like President Grimwood's.

Everyone knows that the lawyers appearing in *Arizona Attorney's Lawyer Regulation* section do not personify all of Arizona's lawyers' character. Conversely, nor do Arizona's imprisoned murderers mirror Hamm's character today.

How convenient that the Board of Governors and President Grimwood rely on the one intangible—character—to oppose Hamm's admission. I believe Hamm's surmounting all the other stringent admission requirements shows in itself some good character.

In light of Hamm's obviously changed life since he committed murder, wouldn't it make more sense to recognize those changes and admit him to the Bar with some restrictions: A long term of probation or a mandatory practice monitor would be viable safeguards to allow Hamm to practice law.

Sadly, we all know that the old saying "Do your time and your debt to society is paid" is a pathetic platitude nowadays. Instead of issuing the same tired shibboleth, the Bar should give Hamm a chance. Besides, we are a nation of second chances, and to abandon that American maxim is to forsake our heritage as Americans.

—Carl Ridgeway
Arizona State Prison, Winslow

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