

Idaho Attorneys Who Care -

Attorneys for Civic Education: A Challenge for Idaho's Lawyers

In 2013 three Idaho attorneys took on a task as part of their participation in the Idaho Academy of Leadership for Lawyers, (IALL). As part of the program, all participants engage in a Legacy Project, meant to provide a service or benefit to Idaho communities. Three Idaho attorneys, Jodi Nafzger, Edith Pacillo and Danielle Quade met that challenge by creating the *Attorneys for Civic Education*, whose slogan is, "Connecting the Legal Community with Opportunities to Increase Civic Education."

The group has its own website, (<http://www.attorneysforciviceducation.org/>), which explains its rationale:

The key to a healthy, functioning democracy is a citizenry that is educated and knowledgeable about the Constitution and the United States' form of government. Unfortunately, due to a variety of factors, civic education is sometimes not given as high a priority as other education subjects. In addition, budgetary constraints have meant that programs such as those described in the "Idaho Programs" button have suffered lost or greatly reduced funding.

Recognizing those challenges, Attorneys for Civics Education ("ACE") was founded in 2013 by a group of Idaho attorneys who recognized the critical importance of civics education in Idaho's schools. ACE has grown to include several additional attorneys from various backgrounds and areas of practice. Uniting ACE is a common vision: to increase and sustain the opportunities for civics education in Idaho's schools in order to ensure that Idaho's citizens will have a solid understanding of the Constitution, the rule of law, and our form of government. Without that knowledge, democracy cannot succeed.

Currently, ACE is promoting the Idaho Law Foundation's Mock Trial, a program that manages completion between high school teams from across the state. ACE has generated volunteers and cash donations to also help the National Mock Trial Competition scheduled to be held in Boise, May 12-14, especially through its "An Hour for Civics" program.

Other notable activities by ACE include support for the *We the People* program, which promotes teaching and learning about the Constitution and Bill of Rights. *We the People* also conducts local teacher professional development, holds conferences and organizes local and state simulated congressional hearings for elementary and secondary students.

Other projects include supporting the *Treasure Valley YMCA Youth in Government Program*, fundraising, public awareness and outreach to the Idaho media. From its infancy, these three lawyers have launched a long-lasting program that will benefit Idahoans for the long term.

The visionary leadership of Ms. Nafzger, Ms. Pacillo and Ms. Quade have led ACE to become the official community service project of the Idaho State Bar Government & Public Lawyers Sector.