

PODIUM

Lawyers Should Go for Olympic Gold, Too!

By Lawrence Savell SPECIAL TO THE NATIONAL LAW JOURNAL

ATLANTA IS BUSILY preparing for the 1996 Olympic Summer Games, and the community's spirit is being revitalized by all the anticipation. Visiting there recently, I realized that this is exactly what we need in our profession. Lawyers remain targets of unending criticism, and many practitioners reportedly wonder whether it is all worth the effort. So maybe we need our own Olympic Games to make us hold our heads high once again.

The very concept of the Olympics—representatives of often adverse (and sometimes hostile) interests assembling to compete in benign contest—could easily be extended to our profession.

Picture this: A runner in a three-piece pinstriped suit enters the arena, bearing aloft the "Eternal Hi-Liter," relayed across the country with stops at each branch office of Jacoby & Meyers. Above, the flags (embroidered letterheads) of hundreds of participating law firms wave in the hot air. A huge banner depicts the traditional Legal Olympic symbol—five interlocking BMW key chains—as trumpeters sound the "Perry Mason" theme. The contestants follow, their uniforms adorned with a small badge bearing their number and a far larger one with a detailed notice

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disclaiming responsibility for personal injuries. And in the center of the field is this Olympiad's beloved mascot, "Izzy," named in honor of Isadore Adequate, the legendary premises liability attorney.

Legal Olympians would compete in a variety of traditional events, modified to test the abilities of lawyers.

Logical Gymnastics: In this popular competition, the goal is to flip, spin and twist

facts to reach a predetermined position. Expectations are high for Russian Olga "Pretzel" Kornblum, if she can overcome an unfortunate propensity toward writer's cramp. Medalists in this event tend to succeed as well in two related competitions: the Long Jump in Reasoning and the Polemic Vault.

Sequestrian: Trial lawyers vie to see who can extend a criminal proceeding

the longest while keeping jurors isolated from family, friends and employers. It is unlikely, however, that any juror will eclipse the record held by Nelson "Room Service" Krupnik, a moonlighting postal worker who, for a 1932 trial, checked into a local Holiday Inn, where he remains to this day.

Recycling: Lawyers must demonstrate their commitment to ecology by pedaling their firms' conservation of limited resources. The pre-Games favorite is Spain's Miguel "El Grande Verde" Acidrain, a five-time "Tour de Trash" winner.

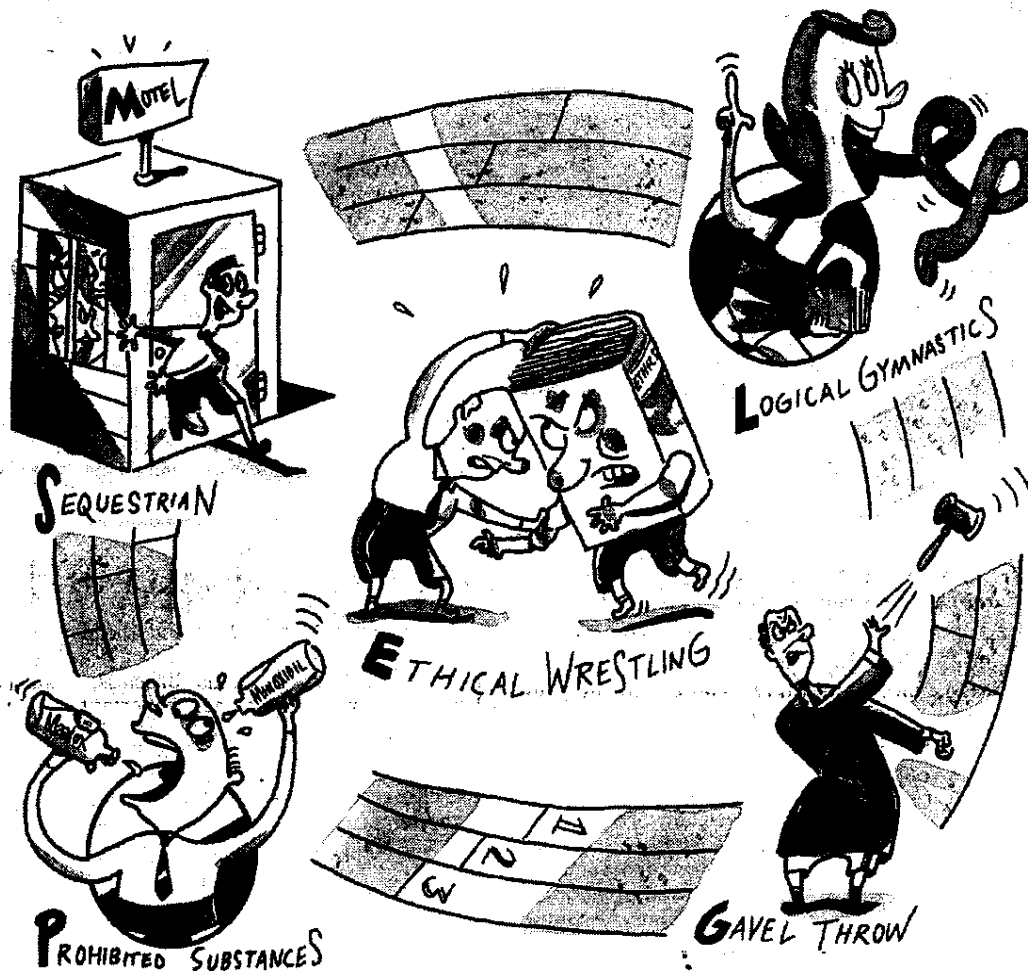
Uneven Bars: Forum shopping has finally achieved a level of legitimacy, as entrants scurry around the Olympic Village to find the court in which their efforts will be most favorably judged.

Laxathlon: In this, perhaps the most demanding of the events, competitors are called upon to work on (or at least bill to) 10 matters at once.

Ethical Wrestling: Competitors grapple with the Canons of Ethics as they attempt to do battle on behalf of their clients without straying out of bounds.

Gavel Throw: This event, designed to allow participation by members of the judiciary, has long been dominated by the prodigious tosses of legendary Hon. Al "Order!" Oerter. Judge Oerter will serve double duty in these Olympics, as he will also officiate at the Evidentiary Hurdles.

Other adapted events include **Synchronized Citing** (test-
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Marathon (Negotiations) at Games

['OLYMPICS' FROM PAGE A15]

ing the accuracy of parallel citations), **Marathon Negotiations**, **Shooting the Breeze** (held at the newly built Olympic water cooler facility), and **Marshal's Arts** (serving subpoenas on uncooperative recipients).

The Legal Olympics also would mark the introduction of several entirely new events, designed specifically to demonstrate the skills critical to effective lawyering.

These include fee collecting, business development (as distinguished from the relay, where referrals are involved), proofreading and, perhaps the greatest

challenge, non-legalese conversation.

Sadly, like its traditional counterpart, the Legal Olympics may have to resort to testing participants for prohibited substances.

Here, however, instead of amphetamines or anabolic steroids, the performance-enhancing medications likely to be detected are Maalox, Tylenol and, most commonly, Minoxidil.

In addition, Legal Olympic officials are authorized to administer on the spot abbreviated versions of the Multistate (or appropriate foreign) Bar Exam to make sure the medalists really are lawyers.

No doubt, the most successful (and at least minimally photogenic) Legal Olympians could win lucrative product endorsements. Who knows? Some day you might see a former torts class colleague smiling proudly from the front label of "Wite-Out, the Correction Fluid of Champions."

My vision may be somewhat unrealistic, but the motivation behind it is not. The image of our profession could stand an Olympic-size dose of revitalization and rehabilitation—perhaps even a touch of humor. I say: Let the Games begin! ☐