



Special needs require special attorneys.

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BRIDGET O'BRIEN SWARTZ ELECTED PRESIDENT OF SPECIAL NEEDS ALLIANCE

(TUCSON, Ariz.) – Arizona attorney, **Bridget O'Brien Swartz**, CELA, has been elected president of the **Special Needs Alliance (SNA)**, the organization announced this week. She succeeds President **Bernard A. Krooks**, CELA, the New York attorney who served in the position since October of 2008. Swartz previously served as Chair of the SNA Public Policy Committee.

Building on the accomplishments of the past year, Swartz plans to continue building partnerships as well as SNA's voice as an advocate for those with special needs.

"SNA is a resource but we are also a stakeholder in the special needs community. As individual attorneys, we make a difference in people's lives everyday, but collectively we can also facilitate education and change on a national level," said Swartz.

This past year, the SNA joined a national coalition of organizations with the goal of ending the Medicare two-year wait for people with disabilities and advocated for legislation to allow Military Survivor Benefits to be assigned to a special needs trust.

"We will continue to build partnerships, educate the public, and advocate for the needs of our clients," Swartz said.

Swartz's administration has also committed to making the expertise of the SNA more accessible to younger attorneys learning about special needs law. The SNA has created two new levels of membership, Affiliated members and Trainee members.

"We've succeeded in establishing a membership of some of the best, most well respected special needs attorneys in the country. Now, we need to ensure that each and every one of those

members is engaged and active and that we are creating ways for others to tap into our experience for the benefit of their clients.”

Swartz’s law office in Phoenix, Arizona focuses on the financial and legal needs of minor disabled children and disabled adults under age 65, with an emphasis on public benefits eligibility issues. She is a Specialist in Estate & Trust Law, certified by the State Bar of Arizona and has been certified as an Elder Law Attorney by the National Elder Law Foundation (NELF).

Swartz plays an active role in special needs public policy, having served as Public Policy Committee Chair for the Special Needs Alliance as well as Co-Chair of the Public Policy Committee for the Arizona Chapter of the National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys (NAELA). With the Arizona Legislature, she was central in the development of SB 1184 pertaining to special treatment trusts and their treatment by Arizona Health Cost Containment System, which became effective in September, 2007, as well as an amendment to the Arizona Trust Code as it relates to special needs trusts, which became effective in January, 2009.

The **SNA Board of Directors** also saw changes during the fall meeting. Massachusetts attorney **Neal Winston**, CELA, was chosen President-Elect. Winston’s presidency will begin in October of 2010. **Janet Lowder**, CELA, of Ohio was elected Vice President, **Bradley Frigon**, CELA, of Colorado will take over as Treasurer, and Texas attorney **Pi Yi Mayo**, Esq., was elected Secretary. The new Board of Directors roster also includes **Rick Courtney**, CELA, of Mississippi, **Steven Dale**, Esq., of California, **Marielle Hazen**, CELA, of Pennsylvania, **Barbara Isenhour**, Esq., of Washington, **Brian Rubin**, Esq., of Illinois, **Nell Graham Sale**, CELA, of New Mexico and **Dennis Voorhees**, CELA, of Idaho.

About the Special Needs Alliance:

The Special Needs Alliance (SNA) is a national, not for profit organization of attorneys dedicated to the practice of disability and public benefits law. Individuals with disabilities, their families and their advisors rely on the SNA to connect them with nearby attorneys who focus their practices in the disability law arena. SNA membership is based on a combination of relevant legal experience in the disability and elder law fields, direct family experience with disability, active participation with national, state and local disability advocacy organizations, and professional reputation. The majority have been certified as Elder Law Attorneys (CELAs) by the National Elder Law Foundation, the certifying entity for the National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys (NAELA).

For more information about the Special Needs Alliance, or to locate a member attorney in your area, visit www.specialneedsalliance.org or call 1-877-572-8472.