

A Message from the President (continued)

Even though NOVA often testifies at congressional hearings at the same table and alongside Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs), it's important to know that NOVA is different from any other organization in the veteran community. Among our over 400 members are advocates who have been representing veterans since the early days of the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims (circa 1988). Our members' foundation of knowledge and experience has made NOVA uniquely qualified to provide competent training and mentoring to licensed attorneys and VA-accredited representatives who seek to assist veterans to the best of their abilities. Those members who are relatively new to veterans' law are trained and mentored by our experienced members through NOVA's face-to-face multi-day seminars, through forums on our secure bulletin board, and through our encyclopedia of veterans' law ("The Wiki") which can be accessed on line.

Because NOVA's members represent veterans at every step of the VA appeals process, they understand and utilize VA statutes, regulations, and policy provisions, as well as case law from all relevant courts (e.g., the CAVC, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit, and the U.S. Supreme Court). This hands-on, in-depth legal experience provides NOVA a unique perspective in the ever-changing and fluid area of veterans' law. This, in turn, affords NOVA the opportunity to enlighten and inform Congress and the VA's leadership about the impact (whether beneficial or adverse) of proposed legislation on our nation's veterans.

As NOVA's President, I am proud of the many ways our members assist the veteran community. I hope you'll consider becoming an active member. By doing so, you will have access to up-to-date information regarding veterans' benefits law AND access to experienced practitioners with whom to collaborate (and commiserate!). If you are a veteran or VA claimant, I hope you'll consider contacting one of NOVA's members to assist you with your appeal. Since our members are required to attend veterans' law conferences regularly (a minimum of once every 18 months), NOVA sets the standard for competency, capability, and knowledge in advocating for the rights of our veteran clients.

Happy Browsing and Warmest Regards,

Katrina J. Eagle, Attorney at Law