

**The University of Florida Chapter of the Order of the Coif
(Approved on September 19, 2007)**

The Order of the Coif is an honorary scholastic society the purpose of which is to encourage excellence in legal education by fostering a spirit of careful study, recognizing those who as law students attained a high grade of scholarship, and honoring those who as lawyers, judges and teachers attained high distinction for their scholarly or professional accomplishments.

An invitation to become a member of the University of Florida Chapter of the Order of the Coif marks the completion of a distinguished career as a student at the Levin College of Law.

History and Applicable Rules

The Order of the Coif traces its roots to the centuries-old English practice of designating serjeants-at-law who were also known as serjeants-of-the-coif because of the headdress they wore. “What gave significance to the Order was the fact that for centuries only its members were appointed judges of the Court of Common Pleas or, later, of King’s Bench.” This practice effectively ended in 1877.

The modern Order of the Coif in the United States traces its roots to the creation of an honorary society at the University of Illinois College of Law in 1902.

The University of Florida Fredric G. Levin College of Law has been a member of the national society since 1955. The professors at the College of Law who are allowed to vote at faculty meetings and are members of the Order of the Coif constitute the voting membership of the chapter and are thus responsible for selecting new members from our graduating classes.

Each chapter is bound by the Order of the Coif Constitution of February 25, 1976, as amended. Selection of members is governed by section 5.1 of the Constitution, which reads as follows:

SECTION 5.1. Eligibility of Law Students.

- a) For each academic year, measured from July 1 to June 30, or any other twelve-month period designated by a member school, a Chapter may elect to membership in The Order any graduating senior (1) who has completed at least 75 percent of his or her law studies in graded courses and (2) whose grade record ranks in the top 10 percent of all**

the graduating seniors of the school. "Graded courses" are those for which academic accomplishment is recorded on the basis of educational measurement involving four or more discriminators.

- b) A Chapter need not elect the maximum eligible under subsection (a). The criterion should be the election of those eligible who, in the opinion of the voting members of the Chapter, are deemed truly worthy of the honor. Accordingly, in addition to scholastic standing, a Chapter may take into consideration law school activities contributing measurably to the total legal education of the candidate. The Chapter may set forth rules listing additional factors, or may make selections on an individualized basis. A Chapter may decline to elect an eligible student whose character is unfitting for membership in The Order.**

Please note that the top ten-percent limitation must be strictly enforced. Additionally, treatment of a course as a "graded course" must be done at the time of selection, in accordance with the grading rules of the University of Florida Levin College of Law. Therefore, any course that is treated as a pass/fail or s/u course for purposes of computing your graduation GPA, including all transfer credits, must be treated as a non-graded course.

For more information on the history of the Order, please refer to Frank R. Strong, *Order of the Coif, English Antecedents and American Adaptation*, 63 Amer. Bar Assoc. J. 1725 (December 1977), or visit the society's website at <http://www.orderofthecoif.org>.