

## **Special Needs Alliance Members Win ABA Writing Award Article Stresses Growing Importance of Disability Law**

Special Needs Alliance members Katherine N. Barr, Esq., and Richard E. Davis, Esq., have won a 2010 Excellence in Writing Award from the American Bar Association (ABA). They collaborated with a third attorney, Kristen M. Lewis, on [“Top 15 Tips for Estate Planners When Planning for Special Needs.”](#) published in the March/April 2010 issue of *Probate & Property*, a publication of the Real Property, Probate & Trust Section of the ABA.

The article points to the increasingly important role of special needs planning in the work of traditional estate planners and outlines some of the top issues likely to be encountered when working with families whose loved ones have special needs. The article won “Best Overall” in the trusts and estates category.

“According to the U.S. Census Bureau, nearly 50 million Americans have a disability of some kind,” notes Barr. “Understanding how to protect both their assets and their eligibility for government benefits—often key to maintaining their quality of life—is important for all estate planning professionals.”

“Attorneys in the Special Needs Alliance are frequently called upon by other estate attorneys for advice on complex issues related to public benefits,” continues Davis. “The interaction of trust law, tax regulation and government programs is incredibly nuanced. This article was an effort to lay out some of the biggest issues.”

Special Needs Alliance members Katherine N. Barr, who practices with the firm of [Sirote & Permutt, P.C.](#), Birmingham, Alabama, and Richard E. Davis, with the firm of [Krugliak, Wilkins, Griffith & Dougherty Co., L.P.A.](#), Canton and Akron, Ohio, are both Fellows of ACTEC (American College of Trust and Estate Counsel), listed in “Best Lawyers in America,” and designated “Super Lawyers” for Alabama and Ohio, respectively.

Kristen M. Lewis, of [Smith, Gambrell & Russell, LLP](#), Atlanta, Georgia, frequently lectures on estate planning.