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Katherine N. Barr Elected President of Special Needs Alliance®

November 1, 2016 (Tucson, Arizona) — [Katherine N. Barr, Esq.](#), a shareholder in Sirote & Permutt, P.C.'s Birmingham, Alabama office, whose estate planning law practice is largely focused on special needs trusts and preserving government benefits for individuals with disabilities, has been elected president of the [Special Needs Alliance \(SNA®\)](#). SNA is a national nonprofit association of attorneys committed to helping individuals with disabilities, their families and the professionals who serve them.

“As SNA’s president, I plan to continue our regional and national advocacy for legislation and regulations that improve the lives of people with disabilities,” says Barr. “We’ve been encouraged by the enactment of the ABLE Act, the progress of the Special Needs Trust Fairness Act (SNTFA) and SNA’s ongoing policy discussions with Social Security regarding special needs trusts, but a great deal remains to be done.” SNTFA, which would enable individuals with disabilities to create their own trusts, instead of relying on parents, grandparents or the courts, has been passed in different forms by the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives but awaits final approval.

“We’ll also remain committed to educating both families and other attorneys about the importance of planning to preserve public benefits,” she continues. “Misinformation abounds about government programs. I know parents who have never approached federal or state agencies about eligibility for a 50-year-old son or daughter with disabilities. Even if they apply, the system’s complexity can be overwhelming, and they may simply give up.”

Barr is a commissioner of the American Bar Association's (ABA) Commission on Disability Rights and has held leadership positions with the ABA's Section of Real Property, Trust and Estate Law over 15 years, including serving as chair of the section's Special Needs Trust Committee. She has been named a Fellow of ACTEC (American College of Trust and Estate Counsel) and the American Bar Foundation and has been listed as an Alabama Super Lawyer and in Best Lawyers in America each year since 2008.

Also named to the SNA board of directors: [Brian Neal Rubin, Esq.](#), Buffalo Grove, Illinois, as president-elect; [Robert Fechtman](#), CELA, Indianapolis, Indiana, as vice president; [Jefferey M. Yussman, Esq.](#), Louisville, Kentucky, as treasurer; and [Jennifer L. Lile, CELA](#), Canton, Ohio, as secretary.

Newly elected as directors are [Mary Alice Jackson, Esq.](#), Austin, Texas, and [Julian E. Gray, CELA](#), Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Continuing as directors are [Robert Brogan, CELA](#), Point Pleasant, New Jersey; [Ann N. Butenhof](#), CELA, Manchester, New Hampshire; [Robert B. Fleming, CELA](#), Tucson, Arizona; [Laurie Hanson, Esq.](#), Minneapolis, Minnesota; [Morris Klein, CELA](#), Bethesda, Maryland; [Mary O'Byrne, Esq.](#), Lutherville, Maryland ;and [Kelly A. Thompson, Esq.](#), Arlington, Virginia.

[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.

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