

Case Flash and the Man Behind the Idea

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Case Flash is the CBA's new multimedia CLE offering, developed by the Family Law Section and rapidly expanding to serve the diverse CLE needs of all members. It is a series of short and impactful programs that address only the most significant Connecticut appellate court decisions, days after their official release. Attorney Samuel V. Schoonmaker IV—the man behind the idea—set aside some time to discuss this new program with the *Connecticut Lawyer* staff.

Samuel V. Schoonmaker IV is no stranger to developing educational seminars. As a past co-chair of the ABA Family Law Section's Continuing Legal Education Committee, Schoonmaker was responsible for planning, producing, and implementing legal education programs nationally. He is a frequent speaker at the CBA's premier events—its Appellate Advocacy Institute, Annual Meeting, and Family Law Section sponsored seminars. With his experience and ingenuity, he developed a tool for bringing information to members in a “flash.”

The format of *Case Flash* combines video, PowerPoint, and lecture, bringing short and intensive CLE to each member's computer—within one week of the official release of a decision. Member response to *Case Flash* has been immediate and overwhelmingly positive with the first program receiving 500 views in its debut week and the second program receiving 531 views within the first eight hours of its release. Program evaluations indicate that many of the viewers extended beyond the membership of the Family Law Section and there is interest in expanding the program to other practice areas.

The idea for *Cash Flash* originated in January 2012, while Schoonmaker was working on a CLE for the CBA's Family Law Section—

the first of the section's CLE to air as a webcast. “I started thinking about what else could be done by webcast,” Schoonmaker said.

The next step was to select an appellate court decision to introduce the program. On June 26, 2012, the Connecticut Supreme Court officially released *Tomlinson v. Tomlinson*, a case involving unallocated alimony and child support. The family bar was anticipating the decision, and the CBA had filed an amicus brief in the matter. Schoonmaker reached out to two of the section's most popular speakers, Judge Elaine Gordon (ret.) and incoming CLE Chair Attorney Allen Gary Palmer; the three speakers together came up with the name “*Case Flash*,” CBA staff sprang into action, and within one week members received the first installment by e-mail. With the team in place, they developed the second installment of *Case Flash*, which included additional panel discussion and a more polished visual presentation. The second installment also was available to members on their smartphones, allowing members to view *Case Flash* anywhere, anytime.

Cash Flash is expected to expand to other areas of practice, while maintaining its distinctive format. Schoonmaker hopes to see other sections use this new resource to deliver important and timely CLE to members. Since *Case Flash* only will appear in response to significant Connecticut appellate court decisions, it will not be published on a set schedule. The CBA is considering a subscription fee for this valuable resource.

Schoonmaker reiterated, “An attorney who sees that the CBA has released a *Case Flash* must both expect and receive short, high quality CLE that addresses a very important and recent appellate court decision.” **CL**

To access *Case Flash*, visit ctbar.org and choose it from the CLE menu.

