

MG+M The Law Firm Celebrates Inaugural Trial Academy Graduating Class, Dedicates National Trial Center in Honor of Susan J. Cole

September 28, 2026

MG+M The Law Firm (MG+M) celebrated the graduation of the inaugural class of its [Trial Academy](#) on September 27, while also dedicating its National Trial Center in honor of Partner [Susan J. Cole](#), who developed and helped lead the firm's intensive trial advocacy program.

Launched in January 2025, MG+M's Trial Academy is a rigorous training program designed to develop the next generation of trial attorneys through hands-on instruction, practical experience and mentorship from some of the firm's trial lawyers. More than 60 participants and 25 faculty made up the inaugural program, completing monthly sessions addressing the full lifecycle of a case and virtually every aspect of trial practice.

Participants came together Sept. 25–27 to put those skills on display with a final mock trial in the firm's [National Trial Center](#) in our New Orleans office. The weekend marked the culmination of their training, covering opening and closing statements, direct and cross examinations, impeachment, jury selection, evidence, trial preservation depositions, mediation, motions in limine, jury instructions, and other core trial skills.

"MG+M's Trial Academy reflects the firm's longstanding commitment to training elite trial lawyers" said MG+M Chairperson and Partner [John B. Manning](#). "Outstanding trial lawyers develop through experience, preparation, mentorship, and a willingness to keep learning. This inaugural class invested tremendous time and energy in developing those skills, and we are incredibly proud of what they have accomplished."

MG+M developed the Trial Academy in response to an increasingly challenging environment for young litigators, who often have fewer opportunities to gain meaningful courtroom experience early in their careers. The program gives attorneys the opportunity to practice in a realistic setting, receiving individualized feedback from senior trial attorneys while working through case materials modeled on actual litigation.

"Participating in MG+M's Trial Academy and mock trial was an invaluable experience that accelerated my growth in ways I will never forget," said Los Angeles–based Associate [Domineisha Lescaille](#). "Working alongside faculty and coaches with extensive records of trial success gave me practical insight into how to effectively present and leverage evidence in the courtroom, and the feedback I received will have a lasting impact on my practice."

The academy's faculty includes members of MG+M's National Trial Team and is led by Susan and Partner [Max Swetman](#). Throughout the program, faculty members demonstrated specific trial skills before participants practiced those same techniques themselves, working with witnesses, judges, jurors, experts and other participants.

"What distinguishes this program is the time we devote to each individual attorney and each individual skill," said Susan. "Participants have the opportunity not simply to hear how experienced trial lawyers approach a particular challenge, but to try it themselves, receive candid feedback and continue refining their approach over time. Watching this first class grow in confidence, judgment, and advocacy skills has been extraordinarily rewarding."

Added Max: "The goal of the Trial Academy is to give attorneys a realistic environment to practice the skills they need in the courtroom. The commitment and preparation demonstrated by the participants throughout the program have been outstanding, and the improvement we've seen from session to session speaks for itself. We're proud of what

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this inaugural group accomplished and confident they're better equipped to handle the challenges of trial practice moving forward."

During the weekend, MG+M also formally dedicated its National Trial Center in Susan's honor, recognizing her decades of trial experience and her leadership in developing the academy.

Susan has more than 40 years of trial experience and has been Florida Bar Board Certified in Civil Trial Law since 2002. She previously served two six-year terms on the Florida Bar Civil Trial Certification Committee and a six-year term on the Board of Legal Specialization and Education.

"Through Sue's commitment to developing great trial lawyers and the consistent engagement and effort she invested in the Trial Academy, she built a program that has strengthened our trial bench, raised morale among participants and faculty alike, and strengthened our culture of mentorship across the firm," John said. "Naming our National Trial Center in her honor is a fitting recognition of her distinguished career as a trial lawyer and the time, energy, and passion she has invested in preparing the lawyers who will follow her."

Trial Academy sessions are conducted from MG+M's state-of-the-art courtroom in New Orleans and broadcast across the firm. The facility is also used by MG+M attorneys and clients to develop and test trial strategies in preparation for actual litigation.