

The COMMISSION QUARTERLY

News from the New Jersey Commission on Professionalism in the Law

Professionalism 2000 Conference Offers A Regional Flavor

The fifth annual professionalism conference — *Professionalism 2000* — featured wide-ranging panel discussions, the presentation of professionalism awards, and addresses by New Jersey Chief Justice Deborah T. Poritz and Sally Evans Winkler, of the Georgia Chief Justice's Commission on Professionalism. The conference, held Sept. 22 at Seton Hall University School of Law in Newark, drew almost 200 attendees. Panel discussions included lawyers and judges from neighboring states who discussed efforts under way in their jurisdictions to promote professionalism.

ADVICE FROM THE CHIEF JUSTICE

Chief Justice Deborah T. Poritz delivered the keynote speech and urged the legal community to redouble its efforts to encourage professionalism and help strengthen public respect for the bar and the court system. She called on law firms to examine the ways new lawyers are trained and supervised and institute training

and mentoring programs that include an emphasis on professionalism and ethics.

Poritz noted that "young lawyers need to realize that professional conduct breeds success."

Stressing a theme heard throughout the day, she also challenged judges to take a central role in promoting professionalism: "A goal of the judiciary that I expect all judges to pursue."

She urged judges to lead by example through their actions and personal conduct.

"Judges who conduct themselves in a professional manner," Poritz said, "will generate the respect necessary to require others to do likewise."

She challenged the organized bar to become a vehicle for teaching and promoting professional ideals through continuing legal education and praised the commission's Professionalism Counseling Program. Poritz urged all county bar associations to offer it as a means of addressing problems caused by serious breaches of professional stan-

dards. She advised law schools to continue to stress professional responsibility and teach a broad view of professionalism that includes *pro bono* and public service.

In closing, Poritz said, "Professionalism, in the end, is a higher standard that leads to public respect, satisfaction for a job well done, or a life and career well spent."

THE PANEL DISCUSSIONS

The conference featured discussion panelists from across the Mid-Atlantic region. A morning panel brought together Justice Priscilla Hall, of the New York Supreme Court and a member of the New York Institute on Professionalism; Dean Stuart Deutsch, of Rutgers Law School-Newark; Pamela White, president-elect of the Maryland State Bar Association; Cynthia Hill, of the District of Columbia Bar; and Robert Hollingshead, of the Morris County Bar Association. Thomas Curtin, former commission chair, moderated the discussion. Each panelist summarized the efforts of his or her association or law school. Topics covered included professionalism and civility codes, mentoring, the work of law schools and their interaction with the bar and courts, the important role of judges, and law firm training programs.

The afternoon panel focused on the need for the judiciary to stress professionalism and for judges to encourage positive professional behavior through their control of the courtroom and personal conduct. The panel featured Justice Randy Holland, of the Delaware Supreme Court and president of the American Inns of Court; Judge Stephen Orlofsky, of the U.S. District Court (Camden); assignment Judge Linda Feinberg; and two attorneys: Joel Leyner of Secaucus and Richard Silberberg of New York City. The panel was clear in its message — judges who

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Don Robinson Receives First O'Hern Award

Professionalism 2000 featured the presentation of a number of awards, including the Daniel J. O'Hern Award which was received by Donald A. Robinson. The award honors an outstanding legal career marked by professionalism, commitment to the highest ideals of the bar and service to the community. It is named in honor of retired Supreme Court Justice Daniel O'Hern, who has served as an adviser to the commission since its inception in 1995.

Robinson, of Newark's Robinson, Lapidus, and Livelli, is a well known litigator and expert on the First Amendment. He has participated in numerous bar and court related activities at the state and federal level. He is

a past president of the Association of the Federal Bar of New Jersey and is a member of the Judicial Conference of the Third Circuit. Robinson served for a number of years on the New Jersey Supreme Court's Media Relations Committee.

Many lawyers point to Robinson as a mentor who guided them through the early years of transition into law practice. However, his commitment to others reaches beyond the legal world. Robinson has been active in the Newark Fresh Air Fund in fund raising and leadership efforts, is a member of the St. Benedict's School Board of Trustees, and is on the Board of Directors of the New Jersey Performing Arts Center. ■

American Bar Association To Publish Professionalism Guide

The ABA's Committee on Professionalism is coordinating the preparation of a handbook for courts and bar associations that will set forth suggestions and plans for the creation of professionalism commissions. The work will draw upon the experiences of the states that currently have commissions, including New Jersey, Georgia, North Carolina, Florida, New York and South Carolina. The handbook will be designed to implement a recommendation of the Conference of Chief Justices that all states institute a commission, or related body, to coordinate professionalism efforts. The handbook is being prepared by Professor Bruce Green of Fordham University School of Law and is scheduled for completion in early 2001. ■

Monmouth AJ To Include Principles With Pre-Trial Orders

Monmouth County Assignment Judge Lawrence M. Lawson has announced that he will include a copy of the commission's Principles of Professionalism with pre-trial orders he issues. The judge, writing in the county bar association's *Monmouth Memoranda* characterized the Principles as "a document which accurately sets forth in detail standards of integrity and courtesy which should be integral to a truly effective justice system."

He urged all Monmouth County lawyers and judges to adhere to the Principles so as to continue Monmouth's "reputation for courtesy, civility, respect and integrity." ■

A View From The Bench

"The efforts of the law schools, law firms, and bar associations will not succeed unless we, as individuals, commit to professionalism in our daily lives. We must not tolerate unprofessional behavior, whether it comes from an adversary, a partner, a friend, or a judge. We must make it clear that we are not willing to take the lowest common denominator as our standard of conduct."

CHIEF JUSTICE DEBORAH T. PORITZ SPEAKING AT THE PROFESSIONALISM 2000 CONFERENCE, SEPTEMBER 2000 AT SETON HALL UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW

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establish clear boundaries of conduct and enforce rules firmly and fairly have little difficulty with uncivil or obstreperous lawyers. Ronald Riccio, chair of the commission, moderated the discussion.

EXPERIENCES OF A PIONEER

Sally Evans Winkler offered her experiences and insights as executive director of the Georgia Commission on Professionalism. The Georgia commission was the first of its kind in the country and has been a model for others, including New Jersey. Winkler noted that promoting professionalism has to be a joint effort of the bar, bench and law schools, and must be something that goes

beyond mere public relations. Because Supreme Court support is so critical, she said Georgia decided early on to designate the chief justice as commission chair. Georgia has two new programs of interest. The first is a mandatory mentor program for a select number of newly admitted lawyers. They are paired with a veteran lawyer who provides advice and guidance designed to facilitate the young lawyer's entry into the profession. The second is a judicial district professionalism program, which encourages local professionalism initiatives, including a peer review mechanism for resolving disputes between lawyers and between lawyers and judges. ■

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The New Jersey Commission on Professionalism in the Law is funded by the New Jersey State Bar Association. For more information about any of the commission's programs, contact Charles J. Hollenbeck, Esq., executive director, New Jersey Commission on Professionalism in the Law, New Jersey Law Center, One Constitution Square, New Brunswick, NJ 08901.

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Professionalism Award Winners

Chief Justice Poritz and Justice Daniel O'Hern presented Professional Lawyer of the Year awards to 26 outstanding attorneys from bar associations across the state. The annual awards are presented to lawyers who, by their conduct, competence, and character, represent the best the profession has to offer.

Commission Chair Ronald Riccio applauded the winners saying, "They are positive examples for others in the profession; lawyers we can point to with pride."

The winners of the 2000 Professional Lawyer of the Year awards are:

Marilyn Askin, New Jersey Women Lawyers Association. Founder and former chair of the NJSBA Elder Law Section, Askin established elder law programs for the Institute of Continuing Legal Education beginning in 1983 and served 15 years as senior attorney and director of Senior Citizen Legal Services of Essex County. She is past president of the New Jersey Women Lawyers Association and current president of NJ AARP.

Ann R. Bartlett, Hunterdon County Bar Association. Immediate past president of the New Jersey State Bar Association, Bartlett is a partner in the Clinton law firm of Alexander and Bartlett and past president of the Hunterdon County Bar Association. Bartlett is a member of the NJSBA Judicial and Prosecutorial Appointments Committee and a past chair of the Judicial Administration and Amicus committees.

Jeffrey S. Blitz, Atlantic County Bar Association. A past president of the New Jersey Prosecutors Association and the Atlantic County Bar Association, Blitz served on the Supreme Court's committees on Criminal Practice and Evidence Rules, the Governor's Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect, the Commission to Study the Law of Divorce, the State Juvenile Delinquency Commission, and the Judiciary Task Force on AIDS. He has been the Atlantic County prosecutor since 1985.

John Fiorello, Passaic County Bar Association. Fiorello is a partner in the Wayne law firm of Feldman and Fiorello, and township attorney for Wayne. An NJSBA trustee and member of the association's Family Law Section executive committee, Fiorello is a past president of the Passaic County Bar Association and Passaic County Legal Aid Society. He is chair of the Passaic County Bar Association's Matrimonial Law Committee.

Jerome J. Graham Jr., New Jersey

State Bar Association. Graham is a founding partner in the Morristown law firm of Graham, Curtin and Sheridan. An attorney for 40 years, Graham is a fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers and the American Bar Foundation. He also has served as the ACTL's regent for New Jersey, Delaware and Pennsylvania.

James D. Hamilton Jr., Camden County Bar Association. Hamilton is a partner in the Camden law firm of DuBois, Hamilton and Levin. A past president of the Camden County Bar Association and current president of the Camden County Bar Foundation, Hamilton served as chair of the county association's Professionalism Committee. He assisted in formulating a Code of Professionalism, the first such code promulgated by any legal organization in the state.

Robert L. Hollingshead, Morris County Bar Association. A partner in the Morristown law firm of Pitney, Hardin, Kipp and Szuch, Hollingshead is a past president and former trustee of the Morris County Bar Association. He is the founder and co-chair of the county bar's Legal Advocacy Program for Voluntary Attorneys for Battered Women and is currently a member of its Judicial Selection and Professionalism committees.

William R. Holzapfel, Union County Bar Association. Elizabeth city attorney, Holzapfel is a past president of the Union County Bar Association and former chair of the NJSBA Public Utility Law and Local Government Law sections. He is a recipient of the Distinguished Service Award of the New Jersey Utilities Association for his work on the New Jersey Digest of Public Utility Decisions.

Vivian Sanks King, Garden State Bar Association. Vice president of legal management and general counsel to the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, King is chair of the Community Health Law Project and a past president of the Seton Hall University School of Law Alumni Association. In 1995, she was appointed by Gov. Whitman to serve as vice chair of the Governor's Advisory Council on AIDS.

Paul F. Koch, Sussex County Bar Association. Koch is of counsel to the Franklin law firm of Koch and Nelson. A former trustee of the Sussex County Bar Association, he served as a municipal court judge for the localities of Franklin and Vernon, and the tri-municipal court of Franklin,

Hamburg and Hardyston.

Scott A. Krasny, Mercer County Bar Association. Krasny is a partner in the West Trenton law firm of Furlong and Krasny. A certified civil and criminal trial attorney, he was awarded the Professional Achievement Award by the NJSBA Young Lawyers Division in 1993. Krasny is president of the Mercer County Bar Foundation and a past president of the Mercer County Bar Association.

Linda Lashbrook, Middlesex County Bar Association. A senior litigator with the Woodbridge law firm of Wilentz, Goldman and Spitzer, Lashbrook is a past president of the Middlesex County Bar Association where she also serves on the Prosecutorial Appointments and Professionalism committees. Lashbrook is a NJSBA Women in the Profession Section trustee, and a member of the *New Jersey Lawyer — The Magazine* Editorial Board and the Real Property, Probate and Trust Law Section.

Joel A. Leyner, Hudson County Bar Association. A certified civil trial attorney, Leyner is managing partner for the Secaucus law firm of Chasan, Leyner, Tarrant and Lamparello. He is a member of the NJSBA Task Force on Diversity, the Judicial Administration Committee and the Ethics Diversionary Program Committee. Leyner is also a member of the New Jersey Commission on Professionalism in the Law.

Frank Lloyd, Bergen County Bar Association. Lloyd is managing partner for the Hackensack law firm of Harwood Lloyd. A certified civil trial attorney, Lloyd is a trustee and vice president of the Bergen County Bar Foundation. Lloyd has served on the New Jersey Supreme Court District Ethics and Fee Arbitration committees and is former chair of the Bergen County Bar Association's Judicial Selection Committee.

J. Edward Palmer, Warren County Bar Association. A partner in the Hackettstown law firm of Houston, Palmer and Ligos, Palmer is a municipal court judge for the borough of Washington and the townships of Independence and Mansfield. He is also planning board attorney for Hackettstown and Liberty Township.

Vincent J. Pancari, Cumberland County Bar Association. Pancari is a certified civil and criminal trial attorney and a senior partner with the Vineland law firm of Kavesh, Pancari, Tedesco and Pancari. He is a past president of the Cumberland County Bar Association and a trustee of the New Jersey State Bar Founda-

tion and presently serves as a member of the New Jersey Supreme Court's Committee on the Unauthorized Practice of Law.

David J. Puma, Salem County Bar Association. Puma is a partner in the Salem law firm of Waters, Telsey and Puma. His practice emphasizes real estate matters, banking, zoning, probate and inheritance taxes, municipal government and commercial matters.

Alberto Rivas, Hispanic Bar Association. Rivas is a partner in the Newark firm of Lite, DePalma, Greenberg & Rivas. He is a former assistant U.S. attorney and served as deputy chief of the Criminal Division of the U.S. Attorney's Office. He is past president of the Rutgers Law School Alumni Association and is active in the Willard Heckel Inn of Court.

Marshall D. Selikoff, Monmouth Bar Association. A retired New Jersey Superior Court judge, Selikoff is a member of the Supreme Court's Judicial Performance Evaluation Committee and is a past president of the Monmouth Bar Association.

Vimal K. Shah, Asian Pacific American Lawyers Association. A partner in the Newark law firm of Carpenter, Bennett and Morrissey, Shah is a member of the New Jersey Supreme Court's Civil Practice Rules and a member of the ADR and Labor and Employ-

ment sections of the New Jersey State and American bar associations. He serves as vice chair of the Labor and Employment Section of the Essex County Bar Association.

Floyd Shapiro, Essex County Bar Association. Shapiro is a partner in the Roseland law firm of Orloff, Lowenbach, Stifelman and Siegel. A member of the NJSBA Board of Trustees, Shapiro is past president of the Essex County Bar Association, past chair of the District 5-C Ethics Committee and a member of the American Bar Association. He is a member of the NJSBA's Professional Responsibility and Legal Education committees.

Amy Zylman Shimalla, Somerset County Bar Association. A partner in the Warren law firm of Copeland, Shimalla and Wechsler, Shimalla is a past president of the Somerset County Bar Association. A member of the NJSBA Board of Trustees, Shimalla chairs the association's Task Force on Diversity. She is past chair of the Women in the Profession Section and a member of the Family Law Section Executive Committee.

Janet L. Sozio, Burlington County Bar Association. A past president of the Burlington County Bar Association and a county bar trustee, she also received the Robert W. Criscuolo Award, given to young lawyers for

significant contributions to the community, county bar and charitable organizations. Sozio is chair of the county bar's Program Committee and a member of the Lawyers Advisory Committee for the New Jersey Bankruptcy Court.

Wayne C. Streitz, Gloucester County Bar Association. Streitz is a partner in the Pitman law firm of Ware, Streitz and Thompson and has served as counsel to numerous governmental, religious, environmental and public service boards. His past positions include public defender assignments, *pro bono* assignments and Gloucester County assistant prosecutor and municipal judgeships.

Peter R. Strohm, Ocean County Bar Association. A partner in the Lakewood law firm of Rothstein, Mandell, Strohm, Must and Gertner, Strohm is a past president of the Ocean County Bar Association. He chairs the District 3-A Fee Arbitration Committee and the Ocean County Chancery/Probate Committee.

Ronald L. Taht, Cape May County Bar Association. Of counsel to the Ocean City law firm of Taht, Stanton & McCrosson, Taht is a past president of the Cape May County Bar Association. A member of the New Jersey State and American Bar Associations, he is also a member of the American Judicature Society. ■

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