

CHIEF JUSTICE'S COMMISSION ON PROFESSIONALISM

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ANNUAL REPORT

2008

20th Anniversary Year in Review

The 2008 - 2009 bar year was a special one for the Chief Justice's Commission on Professionalism. In the fourth and last year under the leadership of Chief Justice Leah Ward Sears, we



commemorated and celebrated the Commission's 20th anniversary. Known for a cooperative spirit of engagement and commitment, the Georgia bench and bar

continued our tradition of focusing attention on professionalism through activities, signature programs and strategic liaisons with judicial, legal, community and national organizations.

We also celebrated the 10th anniversary of the Justice Robert Benham Awards for Community Service. As former Chief Justice Benham often reminds us, Georgia's brand of professionalism rests on four pillars: competence, civility, pro bono and community and public service. The Commission's 20th anniversary array of activities addressed these major areas. In addition, the Commission continues to address issues of access to justice, alternative dispute resolution, quality of life, diversity, the image of the profession, recognition of the role of lawyers in society, client relations and customer service, mentoring, law practice management, appropriate discovery use and the rule of law.

We thank all judges, lawyers and lay leaders of Georgia who supported our professionalism programs. All Georgia lawyers are connected to the Chief Justice's Commission on Professionalism through their annual continuing

legal education requirement. Others participate by presenting at a CLE or preparing a paper on an aspect of professionalism. This year many judges and lawyers went beyond minimum contact through attending and participating in 20th anniversary events.

Among those, we thank the members of the Chief Justice's Commission on Professionalism, members of the Selection Committee for the Justice Robert Benham Community Service Awards, State Bar President Jeff Bramlett, members of the Board of Governors, YLD President Josh Bell and members of the YLD, Mentors, Mentees and staff of the Transition Into Law Practice Program, the Committee on Professionalism, and State Bar staff. We extend special gratitude to Mrs. Vivian R. Ingersoll, a public Commission member, whose leadership and efforts made the commemorative dinner co-sponsored with the Lawyers Foundation of Georgia, such a huge success. Our other lay member, Dr. Sallie Brewer, retired superintendent of Bryan County Schools, never missed a meeting and lent her support to our educational efforts.

We must give special recognition to the Commission founders who had the insight to create this vehicle for promoting professionalism under the auspices of the Supreme Court of Georgia. The founders, Chief Justice Harold Clarke (retired), Dean A. James Elliott, Dr. James T. Laney (former Emory University President), and the late Chief Justices Thomas O. Marshall and Charles L. Weltner, would be proud of what we have done with their concept. Of special note, we point out that Dean A. James Elliott, the current and longest serving founder on the Commission, proved not

only an outstanding leader of the professionalism movement, but an able and entertaining emcee for the culminating commemorative celebration. Dean Elliott, a past State Bar President who found his way to academia after long years of practice with Atlanta's Alston & Bird, and who also co-founded the Georgia Legal Service Program and the Georgia Bar Foundation, simply cannot be praised enough for his profound commitment to professionalism ideals and causes. We look forward to honoring him in a more concrete way in the future.

We now enter a new era under the leadership of Chief Justice Carol W. Hunstein, an outstanding jurist and leader with whom we look forward to continuing our work. Moving forward, we do not intend to just merely rest on our laurels for 20 years of excellence! The Georgia Chief Justice's Commission on Professionalism takes seriously not only our position as the first such entity in the world, but our leadership in the professionalism movement that has spawned excellent programs and opportunities replicated around the world. Each and every year colleagues in other cities, states and countries turn to us for program ideas and assistance. Notably, our law school orientations on professionalism have been replicated in more than forty law schools and our mentoring program (Transition into Law Practice Program) is a model of how to gracefully transition newly-admitted into the practice of law.



We need your input and it is always welcome. Our staff is here to help, so please do call upon Ms. Terie Latala (Assistant Director), Nneka Harris-Daniel (Administrative Assistant) and me when you need assistance.

With gratitude,

Avarita L. Hanson
Executive Director



History of the Commission

In March of 1989, the Supreme Court of Georgia by its order created the Chief Justice's Commission on Professionalism, the first entity of this kind in the world. The brainchild of the late Supreme Court Justice Charles Weltner and former Emory University President James Laney, they were joined by Justices Thomas Marshall and Harold Clarke, and the State Bar President A. James Elliott in forming the Commission. The impetus for this entity was to address growing concerns with the increase in incivil approaches to the practice of law, as many believed the legal profession was changing from its traditional standpoint of a high calling – like medicine and the clergy – to a business.

The Commission carefully crafted a Lawyer's Creed, an Aspirational Statement on Professionalism and Aspirational Goals addressing attorneys' relationships with their colleagues, clients, judges, and the public. It retained its first executive director, Hulett "Bucky" Askew. Professionalism continuing education was mandated and programming requirements were developed by then assistant and second executive director Sally Evans Lockwood and the Institute for Continuing Legal Education. In the 1990s, after a series of convocations with the bench and bar to discern professionalism issues from the practitioners' views, the Commission sought views from the public in a series of town hall meetings held around Georgia. Two concerns were raised in these meetings – lack of civility and the economic pressures of law practice. As a result, the State Bar established the Law Practice Management Program and under then President Paul Kilpatrick the Law School Orientation Programs began, to inculcate students at the inception of their legal careers with professionalism ideals. Over the years, Commission leaders have worked with the State Bar to establish other programs that support professionalism ideals including the Consumer Assistance Program, Transition into Law Practice (Mentoring) Program, and the Diversity Program.

Today, the Commission supports and advises persons interested in providing professionalism programming around the world and maintains a resource library to support this initiative with its third executive director Avarita L. Hanson. It is a member of the American Bar Association's Center on Professional Responsibility and its Consortium on Professionalism Initiatives, and both send interested parties to the Commission for assistance. The Commission creates video products to support CLE programming and supports others, like the Atlanta Bar Association's "Lincoln on Professionalism" Program. It provides technical assistance and financial support to the National Institute for Teaching Ethics and Professionalism's (NIFTEP) biannual workshops coordinated by Georgia State Law Professor Clark Cunningham. Each year the Commission along with the State Bar presents the Justice Robert Benham Awards for Community Service, recognizing judges and attorneys from around the state who have combined a professional career with outstanding service and dedication to their communities through voluntary participation in community organizations, government-sponsored activities, or humanitarian work outside of their professional practice. Every summer, the Commission partners with the State Bar's Committee on Professionalism and all five Georgia law schools to present Law School Orientations on Professionalism to incoming students. To keep our colleagues abreast of professionalism issues and activities, there is a regular column in every *Georgia Bar Journal* on The Professionalism Page.

After twenty years, the measure of effectiveness of the Commission on Professionalism may ultimately rest in the actions, character and demeanor of every Georgia lawyer, and there remains work to be done. The Commission's leadership, along with Georgia's capable, committed and innovative bench and bar, continues to lead the charge, movement and dialogue on legal professionalism.

Celebrating the Commission Founders

The Honorable Harold G. Clarke
A. James Elliott
The Reverend Dr. James T. Laney
The Honorable Thomas O. Marshall
The Honorable Charles L. Weltner

The Honorable Harold G. Clarke

From 1990-1994, Chief Justice Clarke chaired the Chief Justice's Commission on Professionalism, the first body of its kind in the nation when created in 1989. Under Justice Clarke, the activities of the Commission grew and expanded into statewide convocations on professionalism, law school orientations on professionalism, mentoring programs, regional town hall meetings, and innovative Professionalism CLE programs. In 1994, Chief Justice Clarke hosted the Conference of Chief Justices meeting in Georgia where the Commission showcased its interactive video-based CLE program *The Case of the Silent Alarm*, now widely used around the country. Justice Clarke has served as the voice of conscience of the legal profession in Georgia, speaking and writing about professionalism. He called upon Georgia lawyers and judges to recognize that rules of legal ethics set minimum standards of conduct required of all lawyers, while professionalism is a higher standard that is expected of all lawyers, subject to no official sanctions and offering no official reward, but imperative if our profession is to survive. Hailing from Forsyth, Georgia, he graduated from the University of Georgia School of Law in 1950, practiced law in Forsyth, served in the Georgia General Assembly from 1961-71 and as president of the State Bar of Georgia 1977-77, and in 1979



was appointed to the Supreme Court of Georgia from which he retired in 1994.

Dean A. James Elliott



Prior to coming to Emory Law School as the Associate Dean and Professor of Law, A. James Elliott practiced law in Atlanta with the firm of Alston & Bird for twenty-eight years. He is a past president of the State Bar of Georgia. He is a co-founder of the Georgia Legal Services Program, the Georgia Bar Foundation and a Fellow of the American College of Real Estate Lawyers, as well as the American and Georgia Bar Foundations. Dean Elliott received his B.A. from Emory University in 1963 and his J.D. in 1966. He received an MBA from Kennesaw State University in 1997. The longest serving founder of the Chief Justice's Commission on Professionalism, Dean Elliott currently chairs its Finance and Personnel Committee and is a staunch supporter of professionalism programs.

The Reverend Dr. James T. Laney

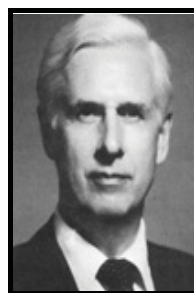


In 1986, Dr. James T. Laney, President of Emory University delivered a lecture on "Moral Authority in the Professions." In that lecture, Laney not only expressed concern about the decline in moral authority of all the professions, he focused on the legal profession because of the respect and confidence in which it has traditionally been held and because it is viewed by the public as serving the public in unique and important ways. Dr. Laney expressed his concern that the loss of moral authority seriously affects the larger society and the legal profession.

Given these challenges, the Supreme Court of Georgia and the State Bar of Georgia embarked on a long-range project to raise the professional aspirations of Georgia lawyers. This effort started with a meeting at Emory in 1988, hosted by Dr. Laney, and resulted in the Supreme Court of Georgia's formation of the Chief Justice's Commission on Professionalism in 1989. A true renaissance man and scholar, he served as Emory's president for 16 years, as Dean of the Emory's Candler School of Theology, and later as a U.S. Ambassador to Korea. An elder in the United Methodist Church, Dr. Laney has pastored churches in Connecticut, Ohio, and Tennessee and served as a missionary. Dr. Laney was educated at Yale University (B.A., M.Div, Ph.d) and co-founded the Faith and the City Program at Emory.

The Honorable Thomas O. Marshall

Chief Justice



Thomas O. Marshall served on the Supreme Court of Georgia from 1977 to 1989, during which time the Chief Justice's Commission on Professionalism was instituted. He began practicing law in Americus in 1948 with the firm Dykes, Dykes and Marshall, was elected to the Superior Courts of the Southwestern Judicial Circuit in 1960, and elected to the Court of Appeals where he served from 1974 to 1977. After attending Emory University for two years, he entered the U.S. Naval Academy in 1938 and received a B.S. degree in 1941. After World War II, he attended night law school at Emory for two quarters before earning a law degree at Georgia in 1948. In 2001, the State Bar of Georgia's Bench and Bar Committee instituted the Thomas O. Marshall Professionalism Awards to honor one lawyer and one judge who have demonstrated the highest professional conduct and paramount reputation for professionalism.

The Honorable Charles L. Weltner

Chief Justice



Weltner received a B.A. from Oglethorpe University in 1948 and in 1950 he received a law degree from Columbia Law School. After serving two years in the U.S. Army, Weltner practiced law in Atlanta and

was an advocate for racial equality. In 1962, Weltner was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives, but in 1966 he refused to run for reelection when the Georgia Democratic Party tried to make him sign a loyalty oath that would have required him to support Lester Maddox, an ardent segregationist who was a gubernatorial candidate. After leaving politics, Weltner first served as a judge on the Fulton County Superior Court from 1976 to 1981, then as an associate justice of the Supreme Court of Georgia from 1981 to 1992. In June 1992, he was elected Chief Justice and served as such until his death on August 31, 1992. Justice Weltner is credited with being the philosopher and moral authority behind the Commission's creation.

20th Anniversary Programs

Lincoln on Professionalism – Presented on October 29, 2008, this CLE was co-sponsored by the Atlanta Bar Association and the Chief Justice's Commission on Professionalism. Held at the Georgia Bar Center, it featured outstanding jurists and



attorneys who used teachings from the practice and life of President Abraham Lincoln in his bicentennial year to reflect on professionalism in contemporary law practice.

20 Years of Professionalism: Raising the Bar on Lawyer Conduct – The 20th Anniversary

Commemorative CLE was held on March 10, 2009. Co-sponsored by the Chief Justice's Commission on Professionalism and the Institute for Continuing Legal Education, it was



held at the Georgia Bar Center in Atlanta. A roundtable discussion moderated by John T. Marshall with The Honorable Leah Ward Sears, Chief Justice, Supreme Court of Georgia, The Honorable Harold G. Clarke, Former Chief Justice (Retired), Mr. H. Thomas Wells, Jr., President of the American Bar Association, Dean A. James Elliott, Associate Dean, Emory University School of Law, and Founder of the Commission, Ms. Sally

E. Lockwood, Director, Office of Bar Admissions and Former Executive Director of the Commission and Avarita L. Hanson, current Executive Director of the Commission. This event



featured a gourmet lunch and was a reflective retrospective of the Commission's twenty-year history and the impact of its activities and programs in Georgia, nationally and internationally.

10th Annual Justice Robert Benham Awards for Community Service.

The Presentation Program and reception for the Justice Robert Benham Community Service Awards, co-sponsored by the Chief Justice's Commission on

Professionalism and the State Bar of Georgia, was held on March 10, 2009 at the Georgia-Pacific Center Auditorium in Atlanta. Honorees included The Honorable Griffin Bell (posthumously) of Atlanta on



whose behalf his son, Griffin Bell, Jr, Esquire and grandson, Griffin Bell, III, Esq., received the Lifetime Achievement Award. Other outstanding Community Service Awardees included: Ms. Rebecca Crowley of Waycross, Ms. Laverne Lewis Gaskins of Valdosta, Judge James E. Hardy of Thomasville, Ms.



Tomieka Daniel of Byron, Judge Johnny Nick Panos of Decatur, Ms. Denise Cleveland-Leggett and Ms. Judith A. O'Brien of Atlanta, Mr. J. Kevin Moore of Marietta, Mr. David Cannon, Jr. of Canton, and Mr. David E. Hudson of Augusta. A special presentation was made by Mr. H. Thomas Wells, Jr., President of the American Bar Association. Mr. Bill Liss, WXIA TV Financial and Legal Editor, and Avarita Hanson, served as emcees, joined by Selection Committee Chair Patrise Perkins-Hooker and Tye Darland, General Counsel of Georgia-Pacific LLC. This event attracted the public and members of the bar.



Atlanta's John Marshall Law School Commemorative CLE: "Excellence Against the Odds: A Retrospective Dialogue on Professionalism and Diversity" – Presented on March 25, 2009 by the John Marshall Law School Black Law Students Association and Phi Alpha Delta Fraternity at Atlanta's John Marshall Law School, this program featured distinguished attorneys, professors and honorees of the school. Panelists included: The Honorable Thelma Wyatt Cummings Moore (Retired Fulton County Superior Court Judge), Professor Melinda Marbes (John Marshall Law School), Allegra Lawrence-Hardy (Partner, Sutherland LLP), Harold Franklin (Partner, King & Spalding LLP) and The Honorable Herbert Phipps (Judge, Georgia Court of Appeals). Honorees were: Louise Hornsby

(John Marshall alumna and oldest living female African-American attorney in Georgia) and Mrs. Louise Hollowell (Widow of noted civil rights attorney, Donald L. Hollowell).



Foundation of Georgia, at the



Chief Justice Leah Ward Sears. The 20th Anniversary Commemorative video was presented after dinner and the evening ended with dancing to the music of The Blake Group.

20th Anniversary Gala

– This charitable event was co-sponsored by the Chief Justice's Commission on Professionalism and the Lawyers

Conference Center, Amelia Island, Florida during the State Bar's Annual Meeting. It was an island style formal gathering honoring retiring



10th Annual Service Juris Day - Community Service Project

- On June 25, 2009, nearly 500 volunteer attorneys and friends gathered at the Atlanta Area School for the Deaf to engage in service coordinated by Hands on



Atlanta. This event was co-sponsored by the Lawyers Foundation of Georgia, Young Lawyers Division of the State Bar of Georgia and the Chief Justice's Commission on Professionalism. Special thanks to Lauren Larmer Barrett, Executive Director



Kasi Whitaker and Shiriki Cavitt

of the Lawyers Foundation of Georgia, and Shiriki Cavitt, Chair of the YLD's Community Service Committee, for making the event a huge success and beautifying the Atlanta Area School for the Deaf.

Signature Programs

The Commission provides and supports its signature programs:

- **Professionalism CLEs.** More than 600 CLEs on professionalism are reviewed and approved annually. Staff assists the bench and bar locally, nationally and internationally with professionalism CLE development.
- **Law Library.** Resources are collected, catalogued and maintained in the Commission's Law Library to support professionalism programming.
- **Professionalism Materials.** The Commission continues to produce, develop and market professionalism materials, including articles, Law Day guidelines, and videos. Its Educational Video Projects Committee provides oversight to the production of videos. The Commission co-sponsored and worked in partnership with the Atlanta Bar Association on an innovative CLE program that premiered in the fall of 2008, "Lincoln on Professionalism." Materials from this program are available to those who wish to explore and learn from President Lincoln's experiences.
- **Justice Robert Benham Awards for Community Service.** The 10th annual awards were presented to attorneys from the 10 judicial districts and to a lifetime achievement award recipient. The special 10th Anniversary program was hosted by Georgia-Pacific LLP, with its General Counsel Tye Darland participating along

with American Bar Association President Tommy Wells of Birmingham, Alabama. With an ever-increasing number of nominations of attorneys from throughout Georgia, the Selections Committee, chaired by Patrise Perkins-Hooker, seeks to focus the public's attention on attorneys' good deeds outside of their law practice or judicial duties. This is an Academy Awards-type event that is free and open to the public and provides a special setting to honor these outstanding attorneys. The 2009 honors were covered by WXIA newsmen, Bill Liss, on the station's evening. Coverage of the awards reached local media throughout Georgia and the recipients' alumni offices around the country, further spreading the news. This year's Lifetime Achievement Award went posthumously to Judge Griffin B. Bell, accepted by his son and grandson, Griffin Bell, Jr. and Griffin Bell, III, both Atlanta attorneys.

- **Transition Into Law Practice Program.** Nationally and internationally known as the first mandatory program for mentoring for newly-admitted attorneys, our own Transition Into Law Practice Program (TILPP) is a permanent bar program. Special thanks to John T. Marshall of Bryan Cave Powell Goldstein and Doug Ashworth, Executive Director, for their extraordinary efforts in making this the prototype mentoring program for new attorneys, worthy of replication in other states and nations.
- **Law School Orientations on Professionalism.** For the 16th year, the Commission on Professionalism partnered with the State Bar's



Committee on Professionalism and all Georgia law schools to provide this innovative

program to entering law students.

The Committee on Professionalism, ably chaired by the dedicated Dick Donovan, solicited almost 200 bench and bar members to support these programs at Emory, Georgia, Georgia State, Atlanta's John Marshall and Mercer Law Schools. This program continues to garner glowing reviews from all involved



– law students, school administrations, faculty members and alumni participants. Again, Georgia lawyers lead the pack, creating this program that has spread to more than forty law schools throughout the country to get students off to the right start in their thinking about ethics and professionalism and acting accordingly.

Cooperative and Collaborative Programs

The Commission continues to encourage the development of innovative and meaningful programs to enhance professionalism in Georgia's bench and bar.

Creative Connections – This Committee on Professionalism program made its second appearance during the 2009 Annual State Bar Meeting. Supreme Court Justice Robert Benham, a talented toy maker, developed this concept to foster positive associations among attorneys and to promote professionalism in attorney interactions. Attorneys throughout Georgia are invited to display their artistic talents to their peers and perhaps form new friendships through shared interests. This year's display featured a book signing of *Misjudged*, a



fictional work by Fulton County Superior Court Judge Gail Tusan (aka Susan Washington), quilts by Sharon Kaye Gipson, Roslind A. Rubens-Newell, and Overtis Hicks Brantley (retired Fulton County attorney), original paintings by Sonya Cromwell and Michael C. Daniel, books by Robert Steed (senior partner of King & Spalding LLP) and photographs by Gwendolyn Fortson Waring (Savannah attorney). Some participants donated items for the auction to benefit the Lawyers Foundation of Georgia and the bidding for them was highly spirited. Thanks to volunteer attorneys JaDawnya Butler and Hilary White Young for coordinating this event. Creative Connections is an innovative way for bar associations to bring members together for charitable events and business networking. A project manual is available. For more information contact Nneka Harris-Daniel at nneka@cjcpga.org.

High School Mock Trial – For the first time, the Chief Justice's Commission sponsored a newly-created Professionalism Awards for the State Bar's High School Mock Trial Program. This is the only award that the students select. Two awards were presented this year since Georgia hosted both national and state mock trial tournaments. The National Tournament was held in May and the State Finals were held in March. The State finalists, the team from Ware Magnet School of Manor, Georgia, won the 2009 Georgia State Professionalism Award. The team from Guam won the 2009 National Professionalism Award, presented to it by Commission member, Fulton County State Court Judge Brenda Cole and President of the Council of State Court Judges.



The NHSMT team from Guam and Judge Brenda Cole

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* Denotes 2008-2009 members

Italics denote deceased

Mission Statement

The mission of the Chief Justice's Commission on Professionalism is to support and encourage lawyers to exercise the highest levels of professional integrity in their relationships with their clients, other lawyers, the courts, and the public and to fulfill their obligations to improve the law and the legal system and to ensure access to that system.

20TH ANNIVERSARY SPONSORS

WE THANK THE FOLLOWING COMPANIES, LAW FIRMS AND INDIVIDUALS FOR THEIR
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