

## FEDERAL BENCH/BAR COMMITTEE MEETING

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 30, 2007 AT 4:00 p.m.

### JURY ASSEMBLY ROOM MINUTES

#### I. Spring '08 CLE (Lieberman)

George Lieberman reported that the committee is working on three CLE seminars for 2008. The first seminar on March 19<sup>th</sup> will cover certification of legal issues to the Rhode Island Supreme Court by the District of Rhode Island. The second seminar on removal and remand is scheduled for April 9<sup>th</sup>. The final seminar on April 23<sup>rd</sup> will address the major differences between federal and state court practices.

#### II. Annual Meeting Programs (Magratten)

Brooks Magratten needs volunteers to plan programs for the 2008 Rhode Island Bar Association Annual Meeting. A proposal to the RI Bar Association must be submitted in next few weeks. Please contact Judge Lisi, Beverly Ledbetter or Brooks Magratten if you would like to help.

#### III. High School Outreach (J. Lisi, Ridlan, Oliverio)

This subcommittee met on September 17, 2007. It also gave a presentation to school based coordinators at the Department of Education. The coordinators are responsible for bringing in professional groups to the schools. As a result, six schools have already contacted the subcommittee to schedule the program. The subcommittee, however, needs more judges and lawyers to participate. Judge Lisi suggested getting the Superior Court Bench/Bar Committee involved.

#### IV. Local Rules Project (Sullivan)

Brooks Magratten noted that there is some question about whether to conduct a review of the Local Rules on an annual basis. The court is still digesting the work of the Local Rules committee from this past year. Judge Lisi noted that it takes a while for the judges to meet and review the committee's recommendations and that the First Circuit has to review the changes as well. The judges will look at the Local Rules to see if the Court is locked into an annual review. If not, it will consider reviewing the rules every other year.

V. District Court Conference (Rocha, Pelczarski)

Karen Pelczarski discussed plans for the District Court Conference on September 26, 2008. The conference will celebrate the courthouse centennial. The theme will be the positive impact of lawyers and the law. Michael Greco, former president of the ABA, will be the keynote speaker. A luncheon will be held at the Renaissance Hotel.

VI. Membership Development (McSweeney)

This subcommittee has been reviewing statistics on the last five years of admissions to federal bar. It is also looking at the members of committee in the last five years to see if there have been any dropouts. Becky McSweeney welcomes any help. You can contact her if you would like to join the membership subcommittee.

VII. Court Centennial (J. Lisi)

The courthouse will be celebrating the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its opening in November, 2008. The following events have been planned to celebrate the centennial:

- University Symposium on “Civil Gideon” (January)
- University Symposium on Victims Rights (February)
- Presentation on courthouse architecture (March)
- Presentation on important cases over last 100 years
- Naturalization ceremony
- Meeting of the First Circuit Court of Appeals (October)
- District Court Conference (September)
- Grand finale (November)

The court is also trying to arrange a visit from Chief Justice Roberts somewhere in between these events. It will work to contact community leaders and to publicize the events, which are all free and open to the public.

The March/April Rhode Island Bar Journal will be dedicated to the centennial. Thomas Connolly will write an article discussing the history of court with the help of David DiMarzio.

VIII. University Symposia (Ledbetter, Magratten)

Beverly Ledbetter reported that three symposia have been planned for 2008:

- Civil Gideon (January 23, 2008): the constitutional right to counsel and related issues
  - Professor Russel Engler, New England School of Law
  - The Honorable Charles Kocoras, U.S. District Court for the District of Illinois
  - Legal Services Corporation

- Victims' Rights (February)
  - Judge Darigan
  - National Center for Victims of Crime
  - David Kennedy, John Jay School of Law
  - Peter DiBiase
  
- Celebration of courthouse architecture (March/April)
  - panelists TBA

All of the symposia will be held at the courthouse.

IX. Fact-finding commission re: declining federal filings (Muri)

This subcommittee is looking at trends in the number of federal filings nationally and in Rhode Island. While the District of Rhode Island had a 5% decline in filings from 5 years ago, national federal filings are up. Rhode Island state courts had a 2% decline in filings. The commission seeks input from attorneys on why they decide to file a lawsuit in state or federal court. The commission will do its best to protect confidentiality. You can contact the commission—Terry White, Lynette Labinger, Becky McSweeney, Tony Muri or Scott Kilpatrick—with input on this issue.

X. Attorney Best Practices Project (Magratten)

The Rhode Island Bar Association is putting together an outline of best practices/practical tips from each of Association's committees. A draft is due in January as the entire volume will be produced by the Annual Meeting. Michael Levin, Scott Kilpatrick and Paul Goodale agreed to help compose a "best practices" outline on behalf of the committee. Please let Brooks Magratten know if any one else would like to help.

XI. Other Business

None.