

tion of the State Court Administrator as ex officio secretary of all nine nominating commissions, with authority to activate any commission in the event of an existing or foreseeable judicial vacancy. This change was intended both to expedite the filling of judicial vacancies and to provide staff support for the nominating commissions. On October 4, 1977, Acting Governor Lee issued an Executive Order making some changes in Commission procedures, but generally confirming the 1974 Order.

The 1977 Executive Order directs that certain members of each Judicial Nominating Commission should be lawyers elected by fellow lawyers of the State in an election conducted by the Administrative Office of the Courts pursuant to rules governing such elections promulgated by the Court of Appeals. The other members of each Judicial Nominating Committee are lay members appointed by the Governor from the general public with a chairperson for each selection commission also appointed by the Governor who may be either a lawyer or a lay member.

On June 8, 1979, Governor Harry Hughes issued an Executive Order directing that judicial vacancies may be filled by selecting a person from a list previously submitted to fill a vacancy on the same court within one calendar year of the occurrence and as long as the information on the nominees is updated.

The Appellate Judicial Nominating Commission is composed of thirteen members from each of the six Appellate Judicial Circuits. The six elected members must be lawyers; the six lay members are appointed. The chairperson, who may be either a lawyer or lay member, is appointed from the State at large.

There are eight Trial Court Judicial Nominating Commissions, one for each of the eight Judicial Circuits in the State. Each of the Trial Court Commissions is composed of thirteen members, six of whom are lawyers and six of whom are lay members. Each of the six lawyer members is elected from the particular Judicial Circuit in which he maintains a principal office. The six appointed lay members from each Judicial Circuit must be residents and registered voters of that circuit and there must be at least one representative from each county if the Judicial Circuit is composed of more than one county. The chairperson of each commission, appointed from the Judicial Circuit in which he resides, must be a registered voter and may be either a lawyer or lay member.

The terms of the members of the Appellate Commission and the Trial Court Commissions are for four years. The terms of the present members expire in January 1983.

The function of the Appellate Nominating Commission and the Trial Court Nominating Commissions is to consider and pass upon the qualifications of proposed judicial appointees and to nominate to the governor those fully qualified for vacant judicial offices to be filled by him on the Court of Appeals, the Court of Special Appeals, the County Circuit Courts, the Supreme Bench of Baltimore City, and the District Court. The Executive Order binds the governor to appoint from the list of nominees.

THE MARYLAND JUDICIAL CONFERENCE

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The Maryland Judicial Conference was informally organized in 1945. It was formally established in 1969 when the Court of Appeals promulgated Maryland Rule 1226.

The Conference consists of all judges of the Court of Appeals, Court of Special Appeals, the Circuit Courts for the counties, the Supreme Bench of Baltimore City, and the District Court. The Administrative Office of the Courts serves as secretariat for the Conference and all committees appointed by it. The chief judge of the Court of Appeals is chairperson of the Conference and appoints all committees except the Executive Committee, which is elected by the Conference.

The Conference meets annually in plenary session. It conducts educational activities for the judges and considers the status of judicial business in various courts, devises means for relieving congestion of dockets where it may be necessary, considers improvements of practice and procedure in the courts, considers and recommends legislation and exchanges ideas with respect to the improvement of the administration of justice and the judicial system in Maryland.