

The staff of the circuit administrators in the First, Second, Fourth, and Fifth Judicial Circuits are also attached to the Administrative Office.

THE STATE REPORTER

James H. Norris, Jr., *State Reporter*

Courts of Appeal Building
Annapolis 21401 Telephone: 269-3539

The State Reporter, appointed by the Court of Appeals, is responsible for the publication of the *Maryland Reports* and the *Maryland Appellate Reports*, which respectively contain the official opinions of the Court of Appeals (Const. 1867, Art. IV, secs. 14-18A) and of the Court of Special Appeals (Code Courts Article, secs. 13-201 through 13-204).

COMMISSION ON JUDICIAL DISABILITIES

Chairperson: Richard P. Gilbert, *Chief Judge, Court of Special Appeals*, 1983

William Marbury, *Baltimore City*, 1983; James H. Taylor, *Prince George's County*, 1983; Edward D. Hardesty, *Baltimore County*, 1984; Marshall A. Levin, *Baltimore City*, 1984; Nathan Patz, *Baltimore City*, 1985; Dr. Morris E. Sumner, *Baltimore City*, 1985.

Howard E. Wallin, *Executive Secretary*

University of Baltimore
1420 North Charles Street
Baltimore 21201 Telephone: 727-6350

The Commission on Judicial Disabilities was established by constitutional amendment in 1966 and strengthened in 1970; its powers were further clarified in a 1974 constitutional amendment. The Commission is empowered to investigate complaints, conduct hearings, or take informal action as it deems necessary, provided that the judge involved has been properly notified. Its operating procedures are as follows: The Commission conducts a preliminary investigation to determine whether to initiate formal proceedings, after which a hearing may be held regarding the judge's alleged misconduct or disability. If, as a result of these hearings, the Commission, by a majority vote, decides that a judge should be retired, removed, censured, or publicly reprimanded, it recommends that course of action to the Court of Appeals. The Court of Appeals may also order a more severe discipline of the judge than the Commission recommends. In addition, the Commission has the power in limited situations to issue a private reprimand.

The Commission on Judicial Disabilities serves the public in a variety of ways. Its primary function is to receive, investigate, and hear complaints against members of the Maryland Judiciary. Formal complaints must be in writing and notarized, but no particular form is required. In addition, individuals may either write or call expressing dissatisfaction concerning the outcome of a case or some judicial ruling. While some of these complaints may not fall technically within the Commission's jurisdiction, the complainants are afforded an opportunity to express their feelings and frequently are informed, for the very first time, of their right of appeal. Thus the Commission in an informal fashion offers an ancillary, though vital, service to the public.

The Commission deals with formal complaints in a variety of ways. Tapes or transcripts of judicial hearings are obtained. When pertinent, attorneys and other disinterested parties who participated in the hearings are interviewed. Sometimes, as part of its preliminary investigation, the Commission will request a judge to appear before it.

Finally, pursuant to a revision in Rule 1227 of the Maryland Rules, the Commission serves yet another function. It now supplies judicial nominating commissions with confidential information concerning reprimands to or pending charges against those judges seeking nomination to judicial offices.

The Commission meets as a body irregularly, depending upon the press of business. Its seven members are appointed by the Governor and include four judges presently serving on the bench, two members of the bar for at least fifteen years, and one lay person representing the general public (Code 1957, Art. 40, sec. 45; Code Courts Article, secs. 13-401 through 13-403; Md. Rule 1227).

THE COURT OF APPEALS STANDING COMMITTEE ON RULES OF PRACTICE AND PROCEDURE

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