

LAWYERS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES - MAY 10, 2007 MEETING

_____The Lawyers' Advisory Committee met at the East Brunswick Hilton in East Brunswick, New Jersey on May 10, 2007. The meeting was opened by Chair Philip R. Sellinger at 6:00 p.m. and thereafter the following occurred:

1. The minutes of February 1, 2007, meeting were approved.
2. Chief Judge Garret E. Brown, Jr. reported as follows:
 - The Court is currently at full strength except for the vacancy for the position previously held by Magistrate Judge Hedges. That vacancy should be filled by the Fall.
 - Chief Judge Brown also discussed an inquiry by the Patent Bar as to whether it would be helpful to have special local patent rules in place in the District of New Jersey, perhaps similar to local patent rules followed by other federal courts, in order to expedite Patent litigation. Chief Judge Brown indicated that he will appoint a special committee to research this subject and requested that anyone who is interested in participating in such a committee to contact him.
 - Chief Judge Brown reported on his discussion with Judge Rakoff, of the SDNY about the SDNY's Local Rule permitting NJ attorneys reciprocal admission to the SDNY Bar if SDNY attorneys are afforded the same privilege. The SDNY Local Rule 1.3(a) reads in part:

A member in good standing of the bar of the state of New York, or a member of good standing of the bar of the United States District Court in New Jersey . . . and of the bar of the State in which such district court is located, provided such district court by its rule extends a corresponding privilege to members of the bar of this court may be admitted to practice in this court on compliance with the following provisions.

_____Currently, because NJ does not have a reciprocal rule, the SDNY rule is without effect as to the District of New Jersey. Philip Sellinger recommended that a subcommittee be convened to report on whether the District of New Jersey should have a similar rule to allow reciprocity under the limited circumstances set forth in the SDNY rule. A subcommittee was appointed which included the following members: Bruce Goldstein, J Llewellyn Mathews, Robert Del Tufo, Thomas Curtin, Cynthia Jacobs, Douglas Arpert and Francis X Dee.

The subcommittee will invite comments from the Association of the Federal Bar and the Federal Practice Section of the New Jersey State Bar.

3. Thomas Curtin and James Murphy reported on behalf of the subcommittee on the LAC's link to the Court's web site and discussed the items to be added to the site. Recommendations for additions included: Names of members and their terms; Mission Statement and Bylaws. It was also recommended that an email box be established so that the public and bar can communicate with the LAC via the Court's web page.
4. Cynthia Jacobs discussed proposed amendments to Local Civil Rules 78.1 and 7.1. She discussed a recommendation to have a uniform return date for motion days for all three vicinages in order to simplify motion practice. Jacobs noted that a uniform motion day across the vicinages would not result in conflicts because oral argument is no longer scheduled on many motions, and because Judges hearing oral argument usually schedule it at the convenience of the Court and parties. Given these changes, it is now possible to devise and publish uniform return dates for all vicinages. The uniform motion dates could be published in the Lawyers' Diary as they are for the State Courts and posted on the court's web site.

Chief Judge Brown stated that he would place proposed amendments to the local rules concerning uniform motion days on the agenda for the next meeting of the Board of Judges in June.

5. William Maderer reported on Wireless Internet Access for attorneys in the three courthouses. Maderer reported that the Clerk's Office is currently working on this project and expects to provide all three courthouses with wireless connectivity capabilities by July 1, 2007.
6. Phillip Sellinger reported on a proposal to encourage law firms to provide full pay to employees serving jury service. A resolution was adopted by the members of the LAC to "encourage employers' to fully compensate employees serving jury duty in state and federal courts."
7. Judge Thompson reported on the Court's Jury Utilization statistics and how the Court and Clerk's Office make jury service a rewarding experience for jurors and prospective jurors. Judge Thompson distributed handouts to members showing a "juror certificate" that she prepares for each juror serving in her courtroom. LAC recommended that jurors' anonymous comments concerning their jury service be posted on the court's web site since they reflect that the jurors felt their service was valuable and personally rewarding.

8. Doug Alpert reported on behalf of the Historical Society of the United States District Court for the District of New Jersey. The Society will be sending 13 attorneys to Washington, D.C. to be sworn-in at the U.S. Supreme Court. Alpert also described the Hon. Clarkson S. Fisher scholarship award. The Society is planning a Historical event in September at the Trenton U.S. Courthouse to celebrate Charles Ward, a WPA Artist, who painted two murals hanging in the Clarkson S. Fisher, U.S. Courthouse.

The Society will be holding the First Annual Chairman's Ball on May 11, 2007.

9. The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 pm. The next LAC meeting will be scheduled for October 4, 2007 at the Newark U.S. Courthouse at 5:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

John T. O'Brien