

IN THE COURT OF APPEALS OF MARYLAND
ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER CREATING PROFESSIONALISM TASK FORCE

WHEREAS, Throughout the 1990s, members of the Maryland Bench and Bar, being increasingly aware of issues, and the repercussions, of unprofessional behavior by lawyers, adopted a civility code for lawyers; and

WHEREAS, Since 1992, the Court of Appeals has mandated the Professionalism Course for New Admittees to the Bar; and

WHEREAS, The Conference of Chief Justices in 1996 adopted a resolution that called for a study of lawyer professionalism and encouraged each state supreme court to take a leadership role in evaluating the contemporary needs of the legal community with respect to lawyer professionalism and coordinating the activities of the bench and bar by establishing a Commission on Professionalism; and

WHEREAS, The need exists for a Professionalism Task Force to examine the perceptions of professionalism and legal ethics within the local communities of the State of Maryland; and

WHEREAS, The need for a self-study is prudent to maintain the highest level of professionalism in the legal community;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Robert M. Bell, Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals and administrative head of the Judicial Branch, pursuant to the authority conferred by Article IV, § 18 of the Maryland Constitution, do hereby order this 25th day of April, 2002, effective immediately:

1. Creation. There is a Professionalism Task Force.

2. Members and Advisors.
 - a. Task Force. The Task Force shall consist of the following 26 members:
 - (i) The Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals or a designee of the Chief Judge, as the Chair;
 - (ii) A lawyer representative from each county of the State of Maryland and Baltimore City, designated by the Chief Judge; and
 - (iii) A lawyer, who shall be the Reporter.

 - b. Advisors. The Task Force may invite others to provide advice to or otherwise to participate in the Task Force's work, through invitations to public fora, appointment to subcommittees or assignment of specific tasks such as statistical and academic research.

 - c. Compensation. Task Force members and advisors are not entitled to compensation but may be reimbursed for expenses in connection with travel related to the work of the Task Force.

3. Meetings.
 - a. Scheduling. The Task Force shall meet at the call of the Chair.

 - b. Quorum. A majority of the authorized membership of the Task Force shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

4. Functions.
 - a. Purposes. The primary function of the Task Force is to conduct a "self study" of the concept of professionalism through the convening of town hall meetings of lawyers in each of Maryland's twenty four jurisdictions. The goal is to identify the

qualities of professionalism and to develop a consensus about the meaning of professionalism. At the end of the study, the Task Force shall present the results of the self-study before a convocation of Judges and lawyers.

b. Duties. To carry out its purpose, the Task Force shall:

(i) Conduct Town Hall meetings to address “Attorney concerns about ethics and professionalism”, to permit attorneys throughout Maryland to participate in discussions and engage in breakout groups after completing questionnaires about the issue; and

(ii) Organize the findings of the Town Hall meetings for presentation at a convocation on professionalism.

5. Staff. The Task Force shall have the staff assistance assigned by the Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals.

6. Authority. The Task Force shall not consider complaints that are within the authority of the Attorney Grievance Commission or the Judicial Disabilities Commission and shall refer any such complaints received by the Task Force to the appropriate Commission.

/s/ Robert M. Bell

Robert M. Bell
Chief Judge
Court of Appeals of Maryland

Filed: April 26, 2002

/s/ Alexander L. Cummings

Clerk
Court of Appeals of Maryland