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*3 March 2011
9:30 a.m.
Annapolis, Maryland*

SUMMARY OF COMMISSION MEETING

1. **Annual Report.** The Commission reviewed the draft Annual Report for 2010. The report was approved unanimously.
2. **Award Recipients.** The Commission reviewed the slate of award nominees and unanimously approved the proposed slate:
 - a. **Judge:** Hon. Ben C. Clyburn, Chief Judge, District Court of Maryland.
 - b. **Judicial Branch Employee:** Joan Bellistri, Director, Anne Arundel Co. Public Law Library, Circuit Court for Anne Arundel County.
 - c. **Program:** Tenants in Foreclosure Project, Public Justice Center.
 - d. **Legislator:** Joint Award – Hon. Kathleen Dumais, Delegate, Maryland House of Delegates and Vice-Chair of the House Judiciary Committee, and Sen. Brian Frosh, Maryland Senate and Chair of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee.
 - e. **Executive Branch:** Governor Martin O'Malley.

3. Legislative Update – Loan Assistance Repayment Bills (HB 523, HB 440, HB 623). Members of the Commission testified recently on three bills in response to the recommendations made by the Commission to enhance the existing loan assistance repayment program for lawyers serving in public service positions.

- a. HB 523 would impose a \$100 fee for attorneys seeking admission pro hac vice, \$75 of which would go to the Janet L. Hoffman LARP.
- b. HB 440 would make any awards from the Janet L. Hoffman program deductible from state taxes and would direct the Maryland Higher Education Commission to study making the program awards in the form of forgivable loans.
- c. HB 623 would make law school student loan payments deductible from the income of individuals entering a qualified public service practice, for the purposes of state taxes.

4. Committee Reports.

a. **Access & Delivery of Legal Services.**

- i. *Civil Right to Counsel.* Commission staff briefed a national conference call, hosted by the National Clearinghouse for a Civil Right to Counsel, on the Commission’s implementation document. There will be workshops on the topic at the Partners for Justice Conference, and at the Maryland State Bar Association’s planning retreat.
- ii. *Fee-Shifting.* The white paper published by the Commission has been forwarded to the Judiciary’s Legislative Committee to be considered for inclusion in the Judiciary’s 2012 legislative package. There will be a workshop on the topic at the Partners for Justice Conference.
- iii. *Funding - Abandoned Property Fund.* The Department of Legislative Services recommended that the \$500,000 statutory appropriation from the Abandoned Property Fund for MLSC be cut. MLSC and the Judiciary oppose that recommendation.

b. **Critical Barriers.** The committee recently heard from two speakers from Alternative Directions that serve the incarcerated and the recently released. The Committee will next hear from seniors and other institutionalized persons.

c. **Public Education.** The Commission has distributed approximately 300 posters to date. Steve Anderson reported that the State Law Library launched the new version of the People’s Law Library earlier this year. Several court librarians have been involved in providing training for public librarians on how to assist people in getting legal help and information.

d. **Safety, Accessibility & Convenience.** The Commission discussed the role of the committee and concurred that the committee be retired at this time.

e. **Self-Represented Litigants.** The Rules Committee received the draft limited scope rules favorably. The Attorney Subcommittee voted unanimously to support the rules, with some changes. The Self-Help Center at Glen Burnie is working nicely and Maryland Legal Aid was commended for its work there.