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Hawkins appoints commission to review attorney regulation

Bar President Scott Hawkins has named the chairs and members for a special commission to review the board's disciplinary system.

The panel will have three chairs and three co-chairs who will lead three subcommittees studying specific grievance-related issues.

In his latest video message to Bar members, Hawkins explained his vision for the Commission on Review of the Discipline System: "The grievance commission will study the Bar's regulation of lawyer conduct, with an eye on the rapidly growing number of Bar members and in view of some recent high-profile matters involving broad-scale misconduct. The goal is to make sure the Bar is fully responsive and vigilant in regulating our nearly 100,000 members. The Bar has faced some large-scale problems in recent years, such as mass frauds and improper filings in foreclosures, and we must be prepared to handle such large problems in the future."



One subcommittee will focus on the Standards for Imposing Lawyer Sanctions, alternatives to discipline, and problems related to aging attorneys. That panel will be chaired by Board of Governors member Eugene Pettis, and Reneé Thompson, immediate past chair of the Young Lawyers Division, is the vice chair. Members of the subcommittee are West Palm Beach attorneys Grasford Smith, Rob Vargas, D. Culver Smith III, Odette Bendix, and Board of Governors member Brian Burgoon, Atlanta attorney Christopher Marquardt, Bar Citizens Forum member Marni Stahlman, Oakland Park attorney Charles L. Curtis, and Clearwater attorney Joseph Corsemeier, a former Bar prosecutor.

The second subcommittee will look at the Bar's Attorney Consumer Assistance Program, which handles intake and mediation for the grievance program. It will also look at how complaints against lawyers made by judges are handled and frivolous or retaliatory complaints. Naples attorney Edward Cheffy will chair the subcommittee, and former Bar Board of Governors member Jake Schickel will be the vice chair. Other members are Jacksonville attorney Corney Grimm, Tallahassee attorney and former circuit Judge Tom Bateman, Tampa attorney Julie Simone Sneed, Board of Governors member Michael Higer, Board of Governors public member Alvin Alsobrook, Orlando attorney Linda Burdick, Gainesville attorney Stacy Scott, Miami attorney Michael Lax, and former YLD President Jewel White Cole.

The third subcommittee will be chaired by former Bar President Miles McGrane, with Board of Governors member Greg Coleman as vice chair. It will look at complex discipline cases and cases involving widespread impacts, such as with mortgage foreclosure irregularities or when one lawyer's bad actions affect numerous clients. The subcommittee will also look at communication with the public and Bar members about the grievance program. Other members of that subcommittee are Miami attorney George F. Knox, Board of Governors member Dennis Kainen, Bay Harbor Islands attorney Alan Sakowitz, former Supreme Court Justice Kenneth Bell, Tampa attorney Mark Crixer, Citizens Forum member Carlos Halley, Tampa attorney Joanna Garcia, West Palm Beach attorney David Atkinson, Jr., and Board of Governors member Grier Wells.