The District of Columbia Bar

1426 H STREET, N.W., EIGHTH FLOOR WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005
(202) 638-1500
Lawyer Referral and Information Service 638-1509

October 7, 1983

To the Members of the D.C. Bar Board of Governors:

The Steering Committee of Division IV (Courts, Lawyers, and the Administration of Justice) wishes to express its support for the program of judicial evaluation which has been designed by the Judicial Evaluation Committee of the Bar for judges of the D.C. Court of Appeals and Superior Court. We understand that several judges of the D.C. Court of Appeals have recently written a letter to the Board of Governors strongly urging that the current evaluation form either be modified substantially or not be published at all. We disagree with that position and urge the Board to allow the publication of the judicial evaluation questionnaire in the form developed by the Committee.

The members of the Steering Committee of Division IV believe that the questionnaire -- developed after extensive consultation with members of the judiciary -- appropriately includes space for both a check-off evaluation and for individual comments in each carefully defined category of judicial competence. The check-off portion, to which the members of the Court who signed the recent letter object, will provide a measure of uniformity among the responses by setting out a framework for evaluation and defining by juxtaposition the terms used in making evaluations. It will also motivate members of the Bar to complete the questionnaire by providing an expeditious mechanism to participate in the evaluation process. Furthermore, the check-off evaluations -- which will allow the Judicial Evaluation Committee to tabulate the overall responses for the use of the judges -- will make the entire evaluation process more useful to individual judges. They will be able to ascertain their standing in the various

competency areas without the need to decipher hundreds of narrative comments, many of which may well be ambiguous or inconsistent in their use of key terms.

The proposed judicial evaluation program would provide a heretofore unavailable forum for constructive criticisms of individual members of the judiciary. At the same time, it would provide each judge with valuable feed-back on his or her performance. The Steering Committee of Division IV believes that this can be expected to benefit the Bar, the judiciary and the entire administration of justice.

Sincerely yours,

STEERING COMMITTEE, DIVISION IV
(Courts, Lawyers, and the Administration of Justice) */
Noel Anketell Kramer, Chairperson
John P. Hume
Claudia Ribet
John T. Rich
Arthur B. Spitzer

cc: John Vanderstar, Esquire
Chairman, Judicial Evaluation Committee

*/ Larry Polansky, a member of the Steering Committee, wishes to specifically dissent from the views expressed in this letter.

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