

**PROFESSIONAL
RESPONSIBILITY
AND DISCIPLINE**

By

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A PLEDGE

The new Rules on Professional Responsibility governing members of the Minnesota Bar, including provisions for a full-time staff, are a great improvement over the prior procedures. Nevertheless, these Rules cannot be made fully effective without the cooperation of the lawyers and judges of the state.

The Code of Professional Responsibility specifically requires lawyers and judges to report known acts of professional misconduct to the proper authorities. We ask lawyers and judges to go further than this and report to us concerning professional misconduct even though they do not have personal knowledge of such conduct. In other words, we are asking lawyers and judges to pass on to us hearsay evidence of professional misconduct. We recognize that a great many lawyers and judges may be reluctant to relay such hearsay evidence if the source of the evidence is to be disclosed. The lawyers and judges of the state know we are responsible people with full knowledge of the limitations of hearsay evidence. We consider such evidence only as a lead to the discovery of admissible evidence of professional misconduct, where present.

More importantly, we are concerned that rumors, without foundation, do the profession as much harm as though true, unless they are investigated and the record set straight.

To encourage your reporting this type of information, we pledge that, upon your request, we will not disclose the source of the information. Of course, it must be understood that information furnished by lawyers and judges concerning professional misconduct known to them, to which they would be permitted to testify in a disciplinary proceeding, cannot be treated as confidential.

The new procedures, including the increased registration fee, came about because the profession recognized the inadequacies and inequities of the prior clumsy and underfinanced procedures. The profession further realized that it was becoming more and more difficult to clean up our house and keep it clean. We felt we owed the public the obligation to do the job ourselves. We now have the machinery and the financing. In addition to this, in order to do the job necessary to assure the integrity of our profession to the end that it be worthy of public confidence, we must have the cooperation of lawyers and judges. The choice is yours.

