

**REPORT . . .**  
**Lawyers Professional**  
**Responsibility Board**

By

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Having now completed one year of operation under the Board's new procedural rules, some words of reflection are in order as to the continuing vital role played by Bar Association District Ethics Committees in the system for professional discipline of lawyers in Minnesota.

Before 1977, the District Committees functioned more or less autonomously. The greatest difficulty under the previous Board rules, which was a logical concomitant of having twenty different autonomous districts, was the lack of uniformity of disposition of complaints.

In altering the relationship between the Lawyers Professional Responsibility Board and the District Committees, the revised Supreme Court rules sought to maintain the strengths of the previous disciplinary system while avoiding non-uniform handling of complaints. The present rules, therefore, provide for investigation of most complaints by the District Committees, which then submit reports and recommendations to the Administrative Director for review before disposition. Experience has shown that approximately 95% of the recommendations of the District Committees have been adopted.

With the nationwide trend towards centralization and professionalization of lawyers' discipline, some states have totally abandoned the use of volunteer committees. I strongly believe that the twenty District Committees in Minnesota and the approximately 175 lawyer and non-lawyer members of those Committees immeasurably strengthen Minnesota's system of professional discipline. The existence of these Committees assures the continued involvement of lawyers throughout the state in investigating and pondering the questions raised by allegations of unprofessional conduct. In addition, the Committee Chairmen and Committee members are looked to by their colleagues for informal advice on legal ethics issues.

While many could be cited, one prime example of the selfless dedication at the District Committee level which comes to mind is Roger Catherwood, an Austin attorney. Mr. Catherwood has served as Chairman of the Tenth District Bar Association Ethics Committee since before the creation of the Lawyers Professional Responsibility Board seven years ago. Judging from the Board's files, Mr. Catherwood has spent hundreds of hours courteously responding to client complaints, inquiring into those complaints, and otherwise conducting the affairs of the local Committee. Mr. Catherwood resigned his position as District

Chairman this year, but he deserves the deepest recognition of the profession for his many years of outstanding work.

The present Chairmen of the twenty Bar Association District Ethics Committees are:

|                       |                            |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| Lloyd J. Moosbrugger  | First District             |
| Edward C. Stringer    | Second District            |
| Richard H. Bins       | Third District             |
| Rollin J. Whitcomb    | Fourth District            |
| William L. Hoversten  | Fifth District             |
| A. R. Pfau            | Sixth District             |
| Richard L. Pemberton  | Seventh District           |
| Loren Gross           | Eighth District            |
| Lawrence Frank        | Ninth District             |
| Hugh V. Plunkett, Jr. | Tenth District             |
| Loren W. Sanford      | Eleventh District          |
| Wendell Nelson        | Twelfth District           |
| Thomas W. Lewis       | Thirteenth District        |
| Robert R. Remark      | Fourteenth District        |
| Neal A. Lano          | Fifteenth District         |
| Robert R. Pflueger    | Sixteenth District         |
| Newton Johnson        | Seventeenth District       |
| Robert B. Danforth    | Eighteenth District        |
| Donald T. Raleigh     | Nineteenth District        |
| Roland T. Wivoda      | Twentieth (Range) District |

Each of these Chairmen has been appointed directly by the Minnesota Supreme Court. These Chairmen and the many members of their Committees all deserve recognition and gratitude from all Minnesota lawyers for the voluntary work they perform for the betterment of the profession.