



ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE of PENNSYLVANIA COURTS

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Campaign Spending a Focus: State Supreme Court Announces Special Commission on Judicial Campaigns**

**HARRISBURG, September 3, 1997** – Putting a cap on the skyrocketing cost of running for judge in Pennsylvania is among areas which will be explored by members of a special commission appointed by the state Supreme Court, it was announced today by Chief Justice John P. Flaherty.

The commission will be headed by James F. Mundy of Philadelphia, immediate past president of the Pennsylvania Bar Association (PBA). Others serving with Mundy are current PBA President Vincent J. Grogan of Pittsburgh; PBA President-Elect Leslie Anne Miller of Philadelphia; and PBA Past Presidents Thomas L. Cooper of Pittsburgh; H. Robert Fiebach of Philadelphia; Arthur L. Piccone of Wilkes-Barre; and Paul L. Stevens of Doylestown.

In making the announcement, Chief Justice Flaherty said, "This commission reflects the Court's concern for the integrity of the system and the perceptual danger to that integrity due to the increasingly large amount of money involved in judicial elections. The commission, composed of present, past and future presidents of the Pennsylvania Bar Association, is charged with making an in-depth study and providing recommendations."

Chief Justice Flaherty said the commission was given a charge broad enough to allow members to study all facets of the state's judicial campaigns, but that the major focus would be on determining how to limit expenditures for positions that currently pay at most \$122,864 per year (the salary of a state Supreme Court Justice). He said the commission's study would have no impact on the 1997 judicial elections.

Reports from a number of counties reflect increasing costs of judicial campaigns in Pennsylvania. In 1995 two candidates for judge in Luzerne County spent \$477,289 and \$167,777 each, for a total of \$645,066. That same year in Lackawanna County, two candidates spent a total of \$777,974 (\$350,472 and \$427,502). In this year's primary race in Lackawanna County, the top three candidates reportedly spent a combined total of \$600,000 in their quest to become judges. Costs of statewide appellate races also have escalated significantly in recent years.

Noting the tentative deadline of January 1, 1998, for the commission to submit a report to the Supreme Court, Pennsylvania Court Administrator Nancy M. Sobolevitch said that the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts will cooperate in every way possible to facilitate the study.

"Judicial candidates are among the last to adopt many of the sophisticated techniques long used by those seeking other elective offices," said Mundy. "With the advent of those techniques, including paid media advisers, slick electronic advertising, and the like, the pressure to raise ever greater campaign 'war chests' also increases. The fear is that without at least a look at campaign reforms now, a time could come in Pennsylvania when the entire reputation of the judiciary would suffer through a 'knock-down, drag-out fight.'

"Involving the citizenry in our work is very important," Mundy continued, stressing the commission will be seeking non-lawyer input. "We want to see what ideas other people have, including getting input from legislators, jurists and other members of the bar through a series of public forums in October and November.

Obviously, one of our mandates will be to consider experiences from other states to determine not only *whether* campaign caps are appropriate in Pennsylvania, but also *how* they might be implemented," said Mundy, a recognized proponent of reforming judgeship races.

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Attachment to AOPC News Release: State Supreme Court Names Special Commission

## Short Biographies of Commission Members

**JAMES F. MUNDY**, a partner in the Philadelphia firm of Raynes, McCarty, Binder, Ross & Mundy, is immediate past president of the Pennsylvania Bar Association. A past president of the Pennsylvania and Philadelphia trial lawyers associations, he is a former chair of the Disciplinary Board of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania. Mundy chaired then Governor Robert P. Casey's Appellate Court Nominating Commission and is a former member of the Pennsylvania Continuing Legal Education Board. He is a graduate of King's College and the Catholic University Law School.

**THOMAS L. COOPER**, a partner in the Pittsburgh firm of Gilardi & Cooper, is a past president of the Pennsylvania Bar Association, the Allegheny County Bar Association and the Academy of Trial Lawyers of Allegheny County. A member of the Pennsylvania Continuing Legal Education Board and the Pennsylvania Supreme Court Historical Society, he is a former member of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court Civil Procedural Rules Committee and Automation Implementation Team. Cooper is a former member of the American Bar Association House of Delegates and the Pennsylvania Trial Lawyers Association Board of Governors. He is a member of the Pennsylvania Bar Association House of Delegates and a fellow of the American and Pennsylvania Bar foundations. An adjunct professor at the University of Pittsburgh School of Law, he is a graduate of Dartmouth College and the University of Pittsburgh School of Law, where he served as article editor of the *University of Pittsburgh Law Review*.

A member of the American Bar Association Board of Governors, **H. ROBERT FIEBACH** is a partner in the Philadelphia firm of Cozen & O'Connor. He is a past president and zone governor of the Pennsylvania Bar Association and a former member of the Pennsylvania Bar Institute Board of Directors. A former chair of the American Bar Association Standing Committee on Lawyers' Liability, he is a member of the association's House of Delegates and the Civil Litigation and Antitrust sections. Fiebach is a past president of the Philadelphia Bar Education Foundation, and a former board member of the Philadelphia Bar Association, the Philadelphia Trial Lawyers Association, the Defender Association of Philadelphia and the Anti-Defamation League. He is a member of the Pennsylvania Bar Association House of Delegates and a life fellow of the Pennsylvania Bar Foundation and a fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers and the American Bar Foundation. Fiebach is a graduate of the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania and the University of Pennsylvania Law School.

A senior shareholder in the Pittsburgh firm of Grogan, Graffam, McGinley & Lucchino P.C., **VINCENT J. GROGAN** is the president of the Pennsylvania Bar Association and a former chair of the Pennsylvania Continuing Legal Education Board. A former Pennsylvania Bar Association Zone 12 governor, House of Delegates member and Professional Liability Committee chair, he is a member of the American Bar Association House of Delegates. Grogan is a former member of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court Advisory Committee on Appellate Court Rules and a past president of the Allegheny County Bar Association and past chair of that association's real property and young lawyers sections. A graduate of Duquesne University and the University of Pittsburgh School of Law, he is a member of the American Judicature Society, the Pennsylvania Defense Institute, the Defense Research Institute, the Professional Liability Underwriting Society, the Academy of Trial Lawyers of Allegheny County and the Association of Trial Lawyers of America.

Philadelphia lawyer **LESLIE ANNE MILLER** is a partner in the firm of McKissock & Hoffman, P.C. and is the president-elect of the Pennsylvania Bar Association. She is a former chair of the Pennsylvania Bar Association Commission on Women in the Profession, House of Delegates and Young Lawyers Division and is a past secretary of the association. A member of the Disciplinary Board of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, Miller served as a chair of

the former Judicial Inquiry and Review Board. Miller is a life fellow of the American and Pennsylvania bar foundations and co-chair of the Philadelphia Bar Association Century Three Commission. She is a graduate of Mount Holyoke College, the Eagleton Institute of Politics of Rutgers University, the Dickinson School of Law and the Temple University School of Law.

A partner in the Wilkes-Barre firm of Hourigan, Kluger, Spohrer & Quinn P.C., **ARTHUR L. PICCONE** is a past president of the Pennsylvania Bar Association and the Wilkes-Barre Law and Library Association. Piccone is a former Pennsylvania Bar Association Zone 5 governor and a past president of the Conference of County Bar Leaders. He is a member of the Pennsylvania Trial Lawyers Association and the Pennsylvania Defense Institute. He is a graduate of Dickinson College and the Dickinson School of Law.

Doylestown lawyer **PAUL L. STEVENS**, managing partner in the firm of Sweet, Stevens, Tucker & Katz LLP, is a past president of the Pennsylvania Bar Association. He is a past chair of the Pennsylvania Bar Association House of Delegates and Young Lawyers Division and has served as a delegate to the American Bar Association House of Delegates. A life fellow of the Pennsylvania Bar Foundation and a past president of the Pennsylvania School Board Solicitors Association, he is a member of the National Council of School Attorneys. A graduate of the University of New Hampshire and the Dickinson School of Law, Stevens serves as chair of the annual fund of the law school.