

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS FROM FIRST EDITION

In 1997 the American Bar Association Center for Professional Responsibility, working closely with the Conference of Chief Justices, designed a successful two-day conference for state supreme court chief justices and their invited guests. This conference, entitled "Regulatory Authority over the Legal Profession and the Judiciary: The Responsibility of State Supreme Courts", was held in Rancho Bernardo, California. Programming provided the chief justices and their representatives with a unique opportunity to discuss recommendations and initiatives relating to the exercise of the courts' regulatory authority over members of the bar and the justices' supervisory authority over the judiciary.

That unique forum and the conference materials distributed to the chief justices and other participants provided a substantive basis for the formulation of the Conference of Chief Justices' January 1999 report entitled *A National Action Plan on Lawyer Conduct and Professionalism*. The *Action Plan* and the report of the proceedings of the Rancho Bernardo conference were published and disseminated as a single volume in March 1999 to the chief justices, lawyer disciplinary agencies and state bar associations throughout the United States.

Since Rancho Bernardo, discussions have been ongoing about the importance of continuing the valuable dialogue started at that program, evaluating efforts to implement the *Action Plan*, and assisting the chief justices in maintaining their leadership role in the regulation of the legal profession. One of the recommendations of the Action Plan was for the courts to take a leadership role in establishing professionalism commissions. Now, as more and more states look to create these commissions, the experience of those states that have led the way is invaluable. The Open Society Institute, a part of the Soros Foundations Network, agreed to provide necessary financial support for the preparation of this guide to aid the efforts to create new commissions and for a follow-up conference to be held in March 2001. The ABA Standing Committee on Professionalism provided the lead in developing this guide, with assistance from representatives of the existing professionalism commissions.

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Associate Regulation Counsel, all were involved in conceptualizing the project and working with the Open Society Institute, as was Dean Burnele V. Powell, Chair of the Center's Coordinating Council. Professor Bruce Green, Fordham Law School, with the aid of student assistant Cathy Horta, served as reporter for the project.

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