

North Carolina

Supreme Court Order (Sept. 22, 1998)

Commission Description

**NORTH CAROLINA**

**THE CHIEF JUSTICE'S COMMISSION ON PROFESSIONALISM  
IN THE SUPREME COURT OF NORTH CAROLINA  
BY ORDER OF THE COURT**

In recognition of the need for the emphasis upon and encouragement of professionalism in the practice of law, the Court hereby creates THE CHIEF JUSTICE'S COMMISSION ON PROFESSIONALISM.

The membership of the Commission shall be as follows:

The Commission's chair will be the Chief Justice or his designee. The chair will appoint the Commission's other members. The Commission's members will reflect the profession's four main constituents: practicing lawyers, judges, law school faculty, and the public. The chair will appoint from the constituents as follows:

1. Judges:

(a) two judges chosen from those who serve actively on the trial benches of the courts of North Carolina or the United States, and

(b) an appellate court judge chosen from the North Carolina Supreme Court, the North Carolina Court of Appeals, or the United States Court of Appeals.

2. Law School Faculty: two law school faculty members who are full-time faculty members from accredited North Carolina law schools, chosen on recommendations of the deans thereof.

3. Practicing Lawyers: seven practicing lawyers giving due and appropriate regard for diversity of representation and taking into account such factors as the chair shall deem just.

4. Public Members: Three non-lawyer citizens active in public affairs.

With the exception of the chairman, the members of the Commission shall serve for a term of three years provided, however, in the discretion of the chair, the initial appointments may be for a term of less than three years so as to accomplish staggered terms for the membership of the Commission.

BY THIS ORDER, the Court issues to the Commission the following charge: The Commission's primary charge shall be to enhance professionalism among North Carolina's lawyers. In carrying out its charge, the Commission shall provide ongoing

attention and assistance to the task of ensuring that the practice of law remains a high calling, enlisted in the service of clients and in the public good.

The Commission's major responsibilities should include:

1. to consider and encourage efforts by lawyers and judges to improve the administration of justice;
2. to examine ways of making the system of justice more accessible to the public;
3. to monitor and coordinate North Carolina's professionalism efforts in such institutional settings as the bar, the courts, the law schools, and law firms;
4. to monitor professionalism efforts in jurisdictions outside North Carolina;
5. to conduct a study and issue a report on the present state of lawyer professionalism within North Carolina;
6. to plan and conduct Convocations on Professionalism;
7. to provide guidance and support to the Board of Continuing Legal Education and to the various CLE providers accredited by the Board, in the implementation and execution of a CLE professionalism requirement of not less than one hour per year;
8. to implement a professionalism component in bridge-the-gap programs for new lawyers;
9. to make recommendations to the Supreme Court, the State Bar, the voluntary bars, and the Board of Continuing Legal Education concerning additional means by which professionalism can be enhanced among North Carolina lawyers;
10. to receive and administer grants and to make such expenditures therefrom as the Commission shall deem prudent in the discharge of its responsibilities.

Provided, however, the Commission shall have no authority to impose discipline upon any members of the North Carolina State Bar or to amend, suspend, or modify the rules and regulations of the North Carolina State Bar including the Revised Rules of Professional Conduct.

By order of the Court in conference, this the 22nd day of September, 1998.

Orr, J.  
For the Court

**The Chief Justice's Commission on Professionalism  
North Carolina**

The North Carolina Chief Justice's Commission on Professionalism (CJCP) was established on September 22, 1998, by order of the North Carolina State Supreme Court. The order established the Commission's membership and major responsibilities.

The North Carolina CJCP consists of a Chair, the Chief Justice of the North Carolina Supreme Court or his designee; two judges serving on trial benches of the courts of the state or the United States; and one appellate court judge either from the state or United States; two law school faculty members from accredited North Carolina law schools; seven practicing lawyers; and three non-lawyer citizens who are active in public affairs. All members, with the exception of the Chairman, serve for a term of three years.

The CJCP has no disciplinary authority. The CJCP meets quarterly. Nine members present constitute a quorum for the transaction of business, and the latest edition of Roberts Rules of Order govern the proceedings. Voting may be in person, by proxy, by letter or by telephone.

In November 1999, the CJCP hired an Executive Director to control and administer the day-to-day operations, Melvin F. Wright, Jr.

### **Major Responsibilities**

The major responsibilities of the Commission include its primary charge: to enhance professionalism among North Carolina's lawyers. In carrying out this charge, the CJCP is required to provide ongoing attention and assistance to ensure the practice of law remains a high calling, dedicated to the service of clients and the public good.

Other major responsibilities include:

1. Considering and encouraging efforts by lawyers and judges to improve the administration of justice;
2. Examining ways of making the system of justice more accessible to the public;
3. Monitoring and coordinating North Carolina's professionalism efforts in such institutional settings as the bar, the courts, the law schools and law firms;
4. Monitoring professionalism efforts in jurisdictions outside North Carolina;
5. Conducting a study and issue a report on the present state of lawyers professionalism within North Carolina;
6. Providing guidance and support to the Board of Continuing Legal Education and to the various CLE providers accredited by the Board, in the implementation and execution of a CLE professionalism requirement of not less than one hour per year;
7. Implementing a professionalism component in bridge-the-gap programs for new lawyers;
8. Making recommendations to the Supreme Court, the State Bar, the voluntary bars, and the Board of Continuing Legal Education concerning additional means by which professionalism can be enhanced among North Carolina lawyers;
9. Receiving and administering grants and making such expenditures therefrom as the Commission deems prudent in the discharge of its responsibilities.

### **Routine Activities**

- o Law School programs on professionalism and assisting law schools with their own professionalism programs.

- Professionalism presentations provided throughout the state to voluntary bar associations, judicial district bar associations, civic organizations, and law firms.
- Participation and membership on professional boards and committees in order to help implement ideas that affect professionalism.
- Write and provide articles on professionalism for professional publications (legal, business and educational).
- Provide suggestions and lobby for changes to the State Bar CLE requirements in order to ensure lawyers have adequate professionalism related programs.
- Seek involvement in established programs or in establishing programs to further enhance professionalism in our state.