

AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION

ABA Commission on Ethics 20/20

321 N. Clark Street
Chicago, IL 60654-7598
Phone: (312) 988-5311
Fax: (312) 988-5280

Website: www.abanet.org/ethics2020

2010-2011

CO-CHAIR

Jamie S. Gorelick
WilmerHale
1875 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.
Washington, DC 20006

CO-CHAIR

Michael Traynor
3131 Eton Ave.
Berkeley, CA 94705

MEMBERS

Professor Stephen Gillers
New York, NY

Jeffrey B. Golden
London, United Kingdom

George W. Jones, Jr.
Washington, DC

Hon. Elizabeth B. Lacy
Richmond, VA

Judith A. Miller
San Francisco, CA

Hon. Kathryn A. Oberly
Washington, DC

Roberta Cooper Ramo
Albuquerque, NM

Herman Joseph Russomanno
Miami, FL

Professor Theodore Schneyer
Tucson, AZ

Professor Carole Silver
Bloomington, IN

Kenneth W. Starr
Waco, TX

Frederic S. Ury
Fairfield, CT

Hon. Gerald W. VandeWalle
Bismarck, ND

LIAISONS

ABA Board of Governors

Carolyn B. Lamm
Washington, DC

ABA Center for Professional

Responsibility
Donald B. Hilliker
Chicago, IL

ABA Task Force on International Trade

in Legal Services

Professor Robert E. Lutz, II
Los Angeles, CA

ABA Standing Committee on Ethics and

Professional Responsibility

Philip H. Schaeffer
New York, NY

ABA Young Lawyers Division

Youshea A. Berry

COMMISSION REPORTERS

Keith R. Fisher
Chicago, IL

Andrew M. Perlman
Boston, MA

CENTER FOR PROFESSIONAL

RESPONSIBILITY

Jeanne P. Gray, Director

Ellyn S. Rosen, Commission Counsel
(312) 988-5311

Marcia Kladder, Policy & Program Director
(312) 988-5326

Natalia Vera, Senior Paralegal
(312) 988-5328

Kimley Grant, Regulation Paralegal
(312) 988-5319

To: Bar Association Presidents and Executive Directors

cc: Bar Association Presidents Elect

From: Roberta Cooper Ramo and Don Hilliker

Re: Lawyer and Law Firm Rating and Ranking Providers

Date: June 25, 2010

At the 2010 ABA Midyear Meeting the House of Delegates adopted Recommendation 10A, which resolves that “the American Bar Association examine any efforts to publish national, state, territorial and local rankings of law firms and law schools.”

After the Midyear Meeting, ABA President Carolyn B. Lamm asked the ABA Commission on Ethics 20/20 to undertake a thorough examination of the ethical, regulatory, and public protection implications of lawyer and law firm rankings and ratings. In response, the Commission formed a Working Group that we have been asked to chair.

The Working Group is looking at the nature and structure of rating and ranking services, the participation of lawyers and law firms with those services, and how lawyers and law firms use the ultimate rating or ranking as credentials in their marketing and promotion.

The Working Group is also considering the manner in which the public utilizes ratings and rankings publicized by lawyers, law firms and providers. In this regard, we are collecting information about the public availability of the providers’ methodologies.

To assist the Working Group in its study and development of any recommendations for consideration by the full Commission, we ask that you provide us with the following information:

- 1) Any information your bar association has obtained on the impact rating or ranking services have had on your members or on members of the public, including any positive comments or complaints by your members or members of the public;
- 2) Any action taken or planned by your bar to examine the dynamics and/or propriety of lawyer and law firm participation in rating or ranking services;
- 3) Any reports, guidelines, policy statements or ethics opinions issued by your bar that pertain to the participation by lawyers or law firms in rating or ranking services.

Please email your responses to Senior Research Paralegal Natalia Vera at veran@staff.abanet.org by November 15, 2010.

Thank you for your time and consideration to assist us as we carry out the direction of the House of Delegates and address these important issues. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Working Group's staff counsel, Will Hornsby, at whornsby@staff.abanet.org, 312/988-5761.