MINUTES OF MEETING

CHIEF JUSTICE'S COMMISSION ON PROFESSIONALISM

May 31, 1996

Main Conference Room, State Bar Headquarters, The Hurt Building

WELCOME

The Chief Justice called the meeting to order at 12:25 p.m. Present were:

Commissioners

Judge Girardeau	Nolie Motes
Ron Ellington	Dave Oedel
Jim Elliott	Roy Sobelson
Judge Fitzpatrick	Comer Yates
Woody Hunter	

Advisors

Justice Clarke	Judge Etheridge
Gus Cleveland	Justice Marshall

Liaisons

Joseph Carter	Allan Tanenbaum

Staff members

Bucky Askew	Sally Lockwood	Terie Latala

Guests

Angela Couch	Bob Beynart	Michelle Whitelaw

This page has been redacted and edited to add the *Mission Statement Committee Report*, which is found later in the minutes, for brevity and educational purposes.

INTRODUCTIONS

Sally Lockwood introduced Angela Couch, Summer Law Clerk to Chief Judge Dorothy Beasely of the Court of Appeals. Angela represented the Court of Appeals at the meeting in the absence of Judge Birdsong. Bob Beynart, partner at Smith, Gambrell & Russell, was a leader at the Professionalism Program for Third Year Students conducted at the Walter F. George School of Law at Mercer in May. Michelle Whitelaw, Summer Law Intern for the Commission, just completed her first year of law school at Georgia State College of Law.

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MISSION STATEMENT COMMITTEE REPORT

Comer Yates, chair of the Mission Statement Committee, presented the most recent version of the Mission Statement drafted by the Committee composed of Comer, John Cromartie, Judge Girardeau, and Nolie Motes. The committee also proposed a Development Summary and Calling to Tasks in the words of former Chief Justice Harold Clarke. The Mission Statement and proposed related materials were approved unanimously by the Commission and are attached to these minutes. The Chief Justice announced that this Mission Statement could serve to encourage state courts to adopt mission statements so that court employees could be reminded of the purposes served by the courts.

DEVELOPMENT OF MISSION STATEMENT

From your suggestions we have developed a Mission Statement. We have tried to keep in mind that a mission defines an organization's "reason for being" now and into the future. We have been guided by the desire to keep the Mission Statement clear and understandable, brief enough for most people to keep in mind, having a primary focus on a single strategic thrust (that is attainable), but broad enough to allow for flexibility in implementation.

Comer Yates
John Cromartie
Nolie Motes
John Girardeau

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Chief Justice's Commission on Professionalism is to support and encourage lawyers to exercise the highest levels of professional integrity in their relationships with their clients, other lawyers, the courts, and the public and to fulfill their obligations to improve the law and the legal system and to ensure access to that system.

CALLING TO TASKS

The Commission seeks to foster among lawyers an active awareness of its mission by calling lawyers to the following tasks, in the words of former Chief Justice Harold Clarke:

1. To recognize that the reason for the existence of lawyers is to act as problem solvers performing their service on behalf of the client while adhering at all times to the public interest;

2. To utilize their special training and natural talents in positions of leadership for societal betterment;

3. To adhere to the proposition that a social conscience and devotion to the public interest stand as essential elements of lawyer professionalism.

A LAWYER'S CREED

To my clients, I offer faithfulness, competence, diligence, and good judgment. I will strive to represent you as I would want to be represented and to be worthy of your trust.

To the opposing parties and their counsel, I offer fairness, integrity, and civility. I will seek reconciliation and, if we fail, I will strive to make our dispute a dignified one.

To the courts, and other tribunals, and to those who assist them, I offer respect, candor, and courtesy. I will strive to do honor to the search for justice.

To my colleagues in the practice of law, I offer concern for your welfare. I will strive to make our association a professional friendship.

To the profession, I offer assistance. I will strive to keep our business a profession and our profession a calling in the spirit of public service.

To the public and our systems of justice, I offer service. I will strive to improve the law and our legal system, to make the law and our legal system available to all, and to seek the common good through the representation of my clients.