

## STATE BOARD OF LAW EXAMINERS

*Chairperson:* Charles H. Dorsey, Jr., 1988

Appointed by Court of Appeals: John W. Sause, Jr., 1989; Robert H. Reinhart, 1990; Pamela J. White, 1990; William F. Abell, Jr., 1991; Jonathan A. Azrael, 1991; John F. Mudd, 1992.

Bedford T. Bentley, Jr., *Secretary*

Joanne G. Dowgwillo, *Clerk*

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Originally, the various local courts were authorized to examine persons seeking to be admitted to the practice of law in Maryland. Examination of attorneys remained a function of local courts until 1898, when the State Board of Law Examiners was created (Chapter 139, Laws of 1898).

The Board and its administrative staff administer bar examinations twice annually during the last weeks of February and July. Each is a two-day examination of between nine and twelve hours of writing time.

Since 1972, the Board has used the Multistate Bar Examination (MBE) as part of the overall examination. The MBE is the nationally recognized law examination consisting of multiple-choice questions, prepared and graded under the direction of the National Conference of Bar Examiners. The MBE test covers six subjects: contracts, criminal law, evidence, real property, torts, and constitutional law. The MBE test usually is given on the second day of the examination. The first day usually is devoted to the traditional essay examination, prepared and graded by the Board.

Pursuant to the Rules Governing Admission to the Bar, the subjects covered by the Board's essay examination encompass but need not include all of the following subject areas: agency, business associations, commercial transactions, constitutional law, contracts, criminal law and procedure, evidence, Maryland civil procedure, property, professional responsibility, and torts. Single questions may encompass more than one subject area and subjects are not specifically labeled on the examination paper.

The Board also processes applications for admission filed under Rule 14, which permits out-of-State attorneys who have practiced for at least five consecutive years to apply for admission to the Maryland bar. The lawyers' examination is an essay test limited in scope and subject matter to the rules in Maryland that govern practice and procedure in civil and criminal cases and the Code of Professional Responsibility. The test is three hours long and is administered on the first day of the regularly scheduled bar examination.

The requirement that all applicants to practice law in Maryland be domiciliaries of the State when admitted to the bar was abolished in 1982.

The Board is composed of seven lawyers appointed to five-year terms by the Court of Appeals. Authorization for the Board continues until July 1, 1994 (Code 1957, Art. 10, secs. 2-8).

## ATTORNEY GRIEVANCE COMMISSION

*Chairperson:* William Wells Beckett, 1991

Appointed by Court of Appeals: Ernest M. Thompson, 1988; Karen Egorin, 1989; Edwin A. Lechowicz, 1989; Robert S. Paye, 1989; Barry Bach, 1990; Barry P. Gossett, 1990; Marvin B. Miller, 1990; Judith C. H. Cline, 1991; Donna L. Jacobs, 1991.

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By Rule of the Court of Appeals, the Attorney Grievance Commission was created in 1975 to administer discipline and supervise the inactive status of lawyers. The Commission appoints, subject to approval of the Court of Appeals, a lawyer to serve as bar counsel and principal executive officer of the disciplinary system. The bar counsel and staff investigate all matters involving possible misconduct, prosecute disciplinary proceedings, and investigate petitions for reinstatement (Md. Rules, Chapter 1100, subtitle BV). By the same Rule of Court, the Court of Appeals also established a disciplinary fund to cover expenses of the Commission and provided for an Inquiry Committee and a Review Board to act upon disciplinary cases.

The Commission consists of eight lawyers and two lay persons appointed by the Court of Appeals for four-year terms. The chairperson is designated by the Court.

## REVIEW BOARD

The Review Board consists of eighteen persons appointed to three-year terms by the Commission. Fifteen are attorney members selected by the Board of Governors of the Maryland State Bar Association. Three are lay members from the State at large. Judges are not permitted as members of the Board.

## INQUIRY COMMITTEE

Appointed by the Commission, the Inquiry Committee consists of attorneys selected by the Bar Associations of the appropriate county or Baltimore City, and lay members.