

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

November 23, 2005

**SUPREME COURT NAMES MEMBERS TO CONTINUING LEGAL  
EDUCATION BOARD**

The Illinois Supreme Court announced Wednesday the appointment of the nine-member board to oversee a new continuing legal education program required for all attorneys licensed to practice within the state. ([Link to Announcement.](#))

Along with a permanent Supreme Court Commission on Professionalism, whose members were appointed earlier this month, the two new programs are aimed at ensuring the quality of legal services in Illinois as well as promoting civility among lawyers within the profession.

The Minimum Continuing Legal Education (MCLE) Board contains a balance, including attorneys of varied backgrounds from around the state; one non-attorney with experience in designing professional development opportunities for educators; and a Circuit Court judge.

Jack L. Brooks, an attorney in Rock Island with an emphasis in civil litigation, was appointed chairperson. He is one of the founding partners of Brooks & Trinrud in Rock Island, and has practiced law in western Illinois and eastern Iowa since 1975 after receiving his law degree from Drake Law School. Mr. Brooks has engaged in alternative dispute resolution matters both as an attorney for the parties as well as in the role of arbitrator or mediator.

Others named to the board are:

Diana L. Embil, an associate regional counsel for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in Chicago; a former law clerk to Supreme Court Justice Charles E. Freeman and to former Appellate Court Judge R. Eugene Pincham. Ms. Embil received her law degree from the University of Wisconsin Law School in Madison, Wis., in 1985.

Patrick M. Kinnally, an attorney with the Aurora firm of Kinnally, Krentz, Loran, Hodge & Herman P.C., with an emphasis in commercial and tort litigation; and immigration, administrative,

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environmental and local government law. He has served as an adjunct professor of law at Northern Illinois University, teaching courses in civil procedure, immigration and nationality law, and a trials skills course. He received his law degree from John Marshall Law School in 1980.

John G. O'Brien, who has law offices under his name in Arlington Heights and concentrates in real estate and estate planning. Mr. O'Brien is the founder and chairman of the board of directors of the Illinois Real Estate Lawyers Association; a member of the Illinois State Bar Association Board of Governors, and currently the treasurer of the ISA. He received his law degree from Loyola University in 1972.

Faye E. Terrell-Perkins, senior executive director of the Chicago Leadership Academies for Supporting Success which provides professional development opportunities for administrators of the Chicago Public Schools. Ms. Terrell-Perkins was formerly executive director of the Leadership Academy and Urban Network for Chicago, which administered and designed tools for the aspiring principals' program. She is a former middle school teacher of science, language arts and social studies. She holds a Masters of Arts in Education and was a doctoral candidate in curriculum and instruction at the University of Illinois. She is the only non-attorney among the board members.

James A. Rapp, a member of the law firm, Hutmacher & Rapp, P.C., in Quincy. As an attorney, he engages in a general practice with an emphasis in estates and trusts, real estate, business, employment, banking and governmental law. He also has served as a consultant to various agencies and individuals regarding school safety issues; and has served as an arbitrator in cases involving student testing claims, disability education and employee claims cases. He received his law degree in 1974 from Washington University School of Law in St. Louis.

George R. Ripplinger, who has law offices under his name in Belleville. Mr. Ripplinger was a member of the Illinois State Bar Association Special Committee on MCLE from 1984 to 1988. That committee promulgated one of the first proposals for continuing legal education, some of whose provisions were adopted by the Court in the new rules covering MCLE. A portion of his legal practice includes representing clients against their lawyers in legal malpractice cases. He received his law degree from the University of Illinois in 1970.

Philip J. Rock, former president and majority leader of the Illinois Senate, and senior partner and president of the firm, Rock, Fusco and Associates, LLC., in Chicago. Mr. Rock was elected to the Senate in 1970 and served as majority leader and President from 1979 to 1993. He received his law degree in 1964 from Loyola University School of Law.

Circuit Judge Michael J. Chmiel of the 19<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit in McHenry County, sitting in Woodstock. He has been a presenter at various continuing legal education programs sponsored by various groups and bar associations, including the Illinois State Bar Association. From 1992 to 2004,

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he was an associate or partner in several general practice law firms in north and northwest Illinois. He also served as a law clerk in U.S. Bankruptcy Court in Rockford, the Western Division of the Northern District of Illinois. He received his law degree from the University of Illinois College of Law.

The board members were chosen and its chairperson designated by the Supreme Court from about 150 persons who applied since the Supreme Court promulgated new rules covering continuing legal education on September 29. Board members will serve without compensation, and will be reimbursed for reasonable and necessary expenses incurred in performing their official duties. For an attorney to be eligible for consideration to the Board, a candidate must have actively practiced law in Illinois for a minimum of 10 years.

Chief Justice Robert R. Thomas thanked all those who applied, and said all the candidates' resumes and associated materials will be retained for future consideration should a vacancy on the MCLE Board occur.

“The Court was fortunate to receive a broad and diverse pool of highly qualified applicants from which to select the new nine-member Board,” Chief Justice Thomas said. “The Court’s most serious consideration was given to the review of each candidate’s materials.”

The complete statement of Chief Justice Thomas may be viewed on the Supreme Court website. ([Link to Chief Justice’s Statement.](#)) The Supreme Court rules establishing MCLE for Illinois attorneys may also be viewed from the website.

Among its myriad duties listed in new Supreme Court Rule 792(c), the nine-member administrative Board will recommend additional rules and regulations for MCLE, including fees sufficient to ensure that it will be financially self-supporting. It also is charged with accrediting commercial and non-commercial legal education courses and activities, and determining the number of hours to be awarded for attending such courses.

Messrs. Brooks and Rock and Ms. Terrell-Perkins were appointed to the Board for three-year terms; Judge Chmiel and Messrs. O'Brien and Rapp for two-year terms; and Ms. Embil and Messrs. Kinnally and Ripplinger for one-year terms.

The MCLE program will be funded from fees charged Continuing Legal Education (CLE) providers, and from late fees and reinstatement fees assessed to individual attorneys.

A key component of the program requires every new Illinois attorney admitted to practice after December 31, 2005 to complete a Basic Skills Course, totaling at least 15 hours of instruction. The course will cover local court practice and rules, filing requirements for various government agencies, the drafting of pleadings and other documents, practice techniques and procedures under the Illinois

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Rules of Professional Conduct, client communications, the use of trust accounts, required record keeping and other rudimentary elements of practice.

“Law school teaches us how to think like lawyers, but not always how to practice law,” said Chief Justice Thomas. “The basic skills course will ensure that every new attorney enters the profession with a firm understanding of the tools that are essential to the day-to-day practice of law.”

CLE requirements for Illinois attorneys will increase incrementally. Every Illinois attorney subject to the Rules will be required to complete 20 hours of CLE activity during their initial two-year reporting period, 24 hours of CLE activities during their second two-year reporting period and 30 hours of CLE activity during all subsequent two-year reporting periods.

The first two-year reporting period for lawyers whose last names begin with the letters A through M begins July 1, 2006 and runs through June 30, 2008; and subsequent two-year reporting periods for these lawyers begin on July 1 of all even-numbered years. The first two-year reporting requirement for lawyers whose last names begin with the letters N through Z begin on July 1, 2007 and runs through June 30, 2009; and subsequent two-year reporting periods for these lawyers begin on July 1 of all odd-numbered years.

To integrate the program with the goals of the Commission on Professionalism, a minimum of four of the total hours required for any two-year period must be in the area of professionalism; issues involving diversity; mental illness and addiction issues; civility or legal ethics. Courses and activities in these areas must be approved by the Commission on Professionalism and forwarded to the MCLE Board for accreditation. Without the Commission’s approval, courses in these areas will not be eligible for accreditation and will not satisfy the CLE requirement. David F. Rolewick, a Wheaton attorney, is chairperson of the Commission on Professionalism.

Attorneys must report their compliance with MCLE requirements on a certification form that will be mailed by the MCLE Director. It must be completed and submitted by the attorney within 31 days after the attorney’s reporting period (no later than July 31). An attorney may be given one, 60-day grace period. Failure to comply or failure to report compliance will result in the removal of the attorney’s name from the master roll of attorneys maintained by the Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission, rendering the attorney ineligible to practice law in Illinois. An attorney may be reinstated only upon recommendation of the Board after certified full compliance and payment of additional late fees.