

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 17, 2010

**SUPREME COURT JUSTICES INTRODUCE NEW LAW STUDENTS TO
ISSUES OF PROFESSIONALISM**

Illinois Supreme Court justices and Appellate Court justices will join in helping incoming first-year students at six Illinois law schools gain early exposure to issues of professionalism as part of their law school orientations.

The professionalism programs are organized and sponsored by the Illinois Supreme Court Commission on Professionalism and are designed to both welcome law students to the profession and to introduce them to core concepts of professionalism inherent in the work of attorneys.

Chief Justice Thomas R. Fitzgerald, Justices Robert R. Thomas, Thomas L. Kilbride, Rita B. Garman and Lloyd A. Karmeier of the Supreme Court as well as appellate justices will address incoming students at Northern Illinois University College of Law, University of Illinois College of Law, DePaul University College of Law, Loyola University School of Law, Chicago-Kent College of Law, and The John Marshall Law School. Law students at Southern Illinois University receive a similar orientation to professionalism under a separate program. In addition, the students will take a "Pledge of Professionalism."

Later, students at most of the schools will break out into small groups to consider and discuss assigned scenarios involving situations that implicate a range of ethical issues. The small groups are facilitated by attorneys and judges from the community, who will spend time with the students examining the scenarios designed to raise questions about a lawyer's personal code of conduct and the choices students will face as they begin their legal education.

The idea behind the pledge and the workshops on professionalism grew out of a belief among justices of the Supreme Court that one of the most effective ways of improving professionalism among lawyers is to begin at the earliest stages with students and new lawyers.

"Our Commission was created to encourage greater professionalism in the bench and bar. As part of this effort, the Commission collaborates with law schools to get law students thinking about professional responsibility and ethical conduct from day one," said Jayne Reardon, Executive Director for the Commission on Professionalism. "By raising these issues early on and

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by asking students to take the Pledge of Professionalism, our goal is to promote the importance of professionalism both during their academic career, and later as members of our legal community.”

Steven Sibo, a new law student who attended the recently-completed orientation at Northern Illinois University College of Law, appreciated the thought-provoking nature of the session. “The scenarios challenged us to think about some very realistic situations we may be faced with in our legal careers. I found the session very insightful, and I really believe the information discussed will be useful to all of us,” said Sibo.

Here is a schedule of the events beginning this week:

August 18: Illinois Supreme Court Justice Rita B. Garman at the University of Illinois College of Law at 9:45 a.m.; Appellate Court Justice Michael J. Gallagher at Chicago-Kent College of Law 3:30 p.m., and Appellate Court Justice Rodolfo Garcia addressing a second session at Chicago-Kent College of Law 6 p.m.; Appellate Court Justice Bertina E. Lampkin at DePaul University College of Law at 6:30 p.m.; Appellate Court Justice Joy V. Cunningham at The John Marshall Law School at 5:50 p.m.

August 19: Appellate Court Justice Bertina E. Lampkin addressing a second session at DePaul University College of Law at noon; Illinois Supreme Court Justice Robert R. Thomas at Loyola University School of Law at 6 p.m.

August 20: Illinois Supreme Court Chief Justice Thomas R. Fitzgerald addressing a second session at The John Marshall School of Law at 11:30 a.m.

On August 11, Illinois Supreme Court Justice Thomas L. Kilbride addressed students at Northern Illinois University College of Law.

On October 10, Illinois Supreme Court Justice Lloyd A. Karmeier will address students at Southern Illinois University School of Law.

The Commission on Professionalism was established by the Illinois Supreme Court in September 2005 to help foster increased civility, professionalism and inclusiveness among the lawyers and judges in the state. Its duties are defined under Supreme Court Rule 799(c). The Commission consists of a Chair, law school faculty, judges, lawyers, and non-lawyers appointed by the Court. Commissioners serve terms of three years.

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