
Saturday, November 16, 1996

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Judicial ratings aren't based on the facts

A Nov. 5 story, "Group questions bar rankings," compels this reply. The methods used by the Westchester County and Westchester Women's Bar Associations to rate judicial nominees are as indefensible as the statement of their presidents that the Center for Judicial Accountability Inc. "declined to participate in the (ratings) process." The statement is absolutely untrue. Not only did they never extend us any invitation to do so, but they showed no interest in the negative information we proffered well before the elections.

Our experience with these and other bar associations has shown that their judicial rating process does not rest on adequate investigation, even where adverse information is brought to their attention. It is because these bar associations know that they have given their stamp of approval to unqualified and unfit candidates that they hide behind an unwarranted "confidentiality" to deprive the public of its right to know.

That these two bar presidents could freely admit to having withheld the requested biographic and other substantiating information to support their "well-qualified" and "qualified" judicial ratings — relied upon by the media and the voters — demonstrates that the associations do not respect basic democratic principles. It should be obvious that information provided to the bar associations by already-nominated judicial candidates should be available to the electorate before it can be expected to vote intelligently in choosing one candidate over another.

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