

CENTER *for* JUDICIAL ACCOUNTABILITY, INC.

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Letters to the Editor

220 East 42nd Street

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To the Editor:

Your editorial "Time to Judge the Judge" (3/27/95) misses the mark in believing that filing a complaint against a judge or lawyer with the State Commission on Judicial Conduct or the Appellate Division's Grievance Committees will initiate an investigation of misconduct. The reality is that complaints filed with those bodies are dismissed, without investigation. In the case of the Commission on Judicial Conduct, its own annual reports show that such dismissals occur in the vast majority of cases. Thus, in 1993, the Commission on Judicial Conduct dismissed, without investigation, 1275 out of 1457 complaints or 87.5% of all complaints filed with it. Such dismissals violate the statute authorizing the Commission, which requires it to investigate every complaint, except those determined on their face to lack merit. Among the complaints which the Commission unlawfully dismisses, without investigation, are those which are detailed, fully documented, and where the misconduct is not only unethical but criminal.

Naturally, it is the high-ranking, politically-connected judges who have the least to worry about when such meritorious complaints are filed against them.

To our knowledge, there has never been an expose of the blatantly unlawful, politicized, and behind-closed-doors operations of the Commission on Judicial Conduct and the Appellate Division's Grievance Committees. We as taxpayers pay millions of dollars to finance these bodies to protect us. What we are getting, instead, is expensive window-dressing leaving the public at the mercy of demonstrably unfit judges and lawyers.

In short, before we can "judge the judge", we need to investigate the so-called investigators.



Elena Ruth Sassower, Coordinator
CENTER FOR JUDICIAL ACCOUNTABILITY, INC.

The Center for Judicial Accountability, Inc. is a national, non-partisan, not-for-profit citizens' organization raising consciousness about how judges break the law and get away with it.