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Federal
Courts

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Vol. 36, Number 5—May 2004

Chief Justice Appoints Committee To Evaluate Judicial Discipline System

Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist has appointed Justice Stephen Breyer to chair a committee that will evaluate how the federal judicial system is dealing with judicial misbehavior and disability. "There has been some recent criticism from Congress about the way in which the Judicial Conduct and Disability Act of 1980 is being implemented, and I decided that the best way to see if there are any real problems is to have a committee look into it," the Chief Justice explained. In addition to Justice Breyer, Judge J. Harvie Wilkinson, former chief judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit, Judge Pasco M. Bowman, former chief judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit, Judge D. Brock Hornby, former chief judge of the U.S. District Court for the District of Maine, Judge Sarah Evans Barker, former chief judge of the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Indiana, and Sally M. Rider, the administrative assistant to the Chief Justice, will serve on the committee.

The committee will report directly to the Chief Justice and will be assisted by staff from the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts and the Federal Judicial Center. The committee's first meeting will be in June in Washington. The last comprehensive look into the judicial discipline system was performed by the National Commission on Judicial Discipline and Removal, which issued its report in 1993.

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Published monthly by the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts Office of Public Affairs
One Columbus Circle, N.E. Washington, DC 20544 — (202) 502-2600