



INFORMATION RELEASE THURSDAY MAY 1, 2014

ANNUAL ILLINOIS LAWYER REPORT RELEASED ON LAW DAY

The Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission (ARDC), the administrative agency that regulates licensed Illinois lawyers, has filed its year 2013 Annual Report with the Supreme Court of Illinois. The report was released to the public this morning when a copy was posted on the ARDC website: www.iardc.org.

A summary of the annual report entitled *Highlights from the 2013 Annual Report* is attached to this information release.

The ARDC annually evaluates the effectiveness of the disciplinary system. Complete and comprehensive statistics concerning the disciplinary caseload are submitted to the Illinois Supreme Court and are published in the Annual Report. Few professions account for their regulatory activity in such detail. In addition, the Annual Report also includes the findings of an independent auditor that the agency's financial statements were accurate and that the ARDC employs appropriate accounting procedures.

In its Annual Report, the ARDC accounts to the Supreme Court for money received and spent. No tax money is used to fund the agency. All operating funds are taken from an annual registration fee paid by Illinois attorneys. Most lawyers now pay an annual fee of \$342. Of that amount, \$200 is used by the ARDC to pay for lawyer regulation; \$95 is remitted to the Lawyers Trust Fund to fund legal services for the indigent; \$7 is sent to the Lawyers' Assistance Program, an organization that helps lawyers, judges, law students, and their families with alcohol abuse, drug dependency, or mental health problems; \$15 is submitted to the Supreme Court's Commission on Professionalism; and \$25 funds the Client Protection Program. The Supreme Court of

Illinois created the Client Protection Program in 1994 to reimburse clients who lose money because of the dishonest conduct of a lawyer.

Annual reports for the prior twelve reporting years are published at the ARDC website under the tab marked: **ARDC Organizational Information**. The website also includes the Master Roll of Attorneys in Illinois and permits a user to search for certain basic public registration information, including the business address and public disciplinary record, of Illinois lawyers. The site attracts an average of 111,000 visits each month and, in 2013, visitors totaled more than 1.3 million. It has a searchable database of disciplinary decisions.

The ARDC consists of four members of the Illinois Bar and three non-lawyers appointed by the Supreme Court. The ARDC Chairman is Joan Myers Eagle of Chicago. The Vice Chair is James R. Mendillo of Belleville. The Commissioners receive no compensation for their services. The Commissioners create ARDC policies, establish an operating budget, appoint members of the Inquiry and Hearing Boards, and manage the Client Protection Program. Subject to the approval of the Supreme Court, the Commissioners appoint the ARDC's chief executive officer, the Administrator. The Administrator is Jerome Larkin.

There are two ARDC offices: One Prudential Plaza in Chicago and 3161 White Oaks Drive in Springfield.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:
JAMES J. GROGAN. CHICAGO ARDC
(312) 565-2600 OR (800) 826-8625



THE ARDC WEBSITE: WWW.IARDC.ORG



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 2013 ANNUAL REPORT

■ LAWYER POPULATION

The names of 91,083 Illinois lawyers appeared on the Master Roll of Attorneys as of October 31, 2013. That number does not include 2,164 attorneys who took their oath of office in late 2013. The overall lawyer population in Illinois saw an increase of 2% from 2012. The percentage of attorneys reporting a principal business address in Illinois, however, decreased last year and the number of practitioners reporting an address outside Illinois increased by 9.5% over 2012.

■ GRIEVANCES AND FORMAL DISCIPLINARY CHARGES

During 2013 the ARDC docketed 6,073 investigations, a 5% decrease from the prior year. More than half of grievances lodged against lawyers involved issues of poor attorney-client relations, typically neglect of a client matter (40% of all grievances) or failure to communicate with a client (18% of all grievances). Consistent with prior years, the top practice areas likely to attract a grievance include criminal law, domestic relations, real estate, and tort.

■ DISCIPLINARY SANCTIONS

Last year, the Supreme Court entered 149 sanctions against 148 lawyers (one lawyer was disciplined twice in 2013). The Court suspended an additional 13 lawyers on an emergency basis. In addition, six lawyers were reprimanded by either the Hearing Board or the Review Board. Cook County practitioners accounted for 44% of all disciplined lawyers. Approximately 25% of those disciplined in 2013 had one or more identified substance abuse or mental impairment issues. More than 65% of sanctioned lawyers were sole practitioners.

■ PUBLIC OUTREACH EFFORTS

The ARDC continues to be a national leader in providing professional responsibility training and ethics seminars to the profession and public. Commission personnel made over 270 presentations to bar associations, government agencies, law firms, law schools, public interest groups and other organizations in 2013, a 23% increase from the year before. The ARDC also produced several Minimum Continuing Legal Education (MCLE) accredited webcasts posted on the agency's website. More than 11,000 Illinois

lawyers watched those webcasts and earned up to seven hours of ethics and professionalism MCLE credit at no cost.

■ CLIENT PROTECTION PROGRAM

The Supreme Court of Illinois established the Client Protection Program (CPP) in 1994 to reimburse clients who lose money due to the dishonest conduct of lawyers. In 2013, CPP approved 247 different claims against 38 lawyers and paid a record \$2,016,669. Beginning in 2014, the maximum available award available for claimants is \$100,000 per claim and \$1,000,000 per lawyer.

■ ASSISTANCE TO THE BAR AND TO THE PUBLIC

In 2013, ARDC staff paralegals provided assistance to nearly 15,000 people seeking help, including information about specific lawyers and ARDC procedures. In addition, the ARDC Ethics Inquiry Program, a telephone inquiry resource, continued to serve attorneys seeking help in resolving hypothetical, ethical dilemmas. In 2013, staff lawyers responded to 4,613 ethics inquiries. Questions about a lawyer's obligation to report the misconduct of another attorney continue to be the most frequent area of inquiry posed to the Program.

■ WEBSITE

The ARDC website continues to be a leading on-line resource for public information concerning all aspects of lawyer regulation. The site attracts an average of 111,000 visits each month and, during 2013, the total number of visits exceeded 1.3 million. Last year, approximately 81% of all Illinois lawyers utilized the on-line registration program, a significant increase over the 37% who used on-line registration in 2009, the first year that the program was available. The agency regularly posts important ethics and professionalism updates on the website and also sends e-mail alerts to members of the Illinois bar regarding events that impact on a lawyer's ethical duties.

■ PRO BONO LEGAL SERVICES AND CONTRIBUTIONS

A total of 30,751 Illinois lawyers reported that they had provided *pro bono* legal services during calendar year 2013. These attorneys provided more than 2,098,472 hours worth of free legal services. Last year, 16,266 Illinois lawyers made \$14,017,816 in monetary contributions to pro bono legal services organizations. In addition, beginning with the 2013 registration year, \$95 of every lawyer's annual registration fee was used to fund legal services.

THE ARDC WEBSITE IS: WWW.IARDC.ORG