Minutes from Survey Subcommittee Meeting of July 17, 2007

Present: Mr. Scott Brede and Judge Barbara Bailey Jongbloed, co-chairs; Attorney Joseph D'Alesio; Ms. Karen Florin, Mr. Paul Giguere; and Judge Carol Wolven.

Absent: Mr. Patrick Sanders

<u>Agenda Item No. I. Welcome by co-chairs</u> – Judge Jongbloed and Mr. Brede started the meeting at 2:30 p.m. and welcomed members of the subcommittee.

<u>Agenda Item No. II. Report from Joe D'Alesio regarding surveys done in other states</u> – Attorney D'Alesio reported that he had received surveys from other states, but that the information was not very helpful for this subcommittee's purposes.

Agenda Item No. III—Report from subcommittees

Subcommittee members turned their discussion to the draft surveys prepared by journalists for journalists and by judges for judges. They also discussed whether responses should be anonymous. Mr. D'Alesio was going to check with Legal Services to determine whether judges' individual responses were required to be public, or whether the Judicial-Media Committee has the option of making them anonymous. Judge Jongbloed added that all participants should be informed that the tabulated results of the survey will be public.

Regarding the drafts, Mr. Giguere asked whether the subcommittee wanted to incorporate qualitative questions into the survey to gauge the level of problems in the field. Such questions also would help if trends start emerging through the responses, he said. In addition, Mr. Giguere suggested these two goals of the survey: to determine 1) What problems are we trying to solve; and 2) What do we need to solve? Judge Jongbloed responded that a cover letter attached to the survey would lay out the goals to participants.

Subcommittee members next discussed the draft survey for judges and redrafted it to read as follows:

Judge's Media Survey (revised)

- 1) How long have you served on the bench?
- 2) a) How many times have you been contacted by the media about a case?

Never

1-5 times

6-10 times

10 or more

b) What was the nature of the contact?

- 3) Do you have a practice about responding to media inquiries? If yes, what is the practice?
- 4) Have you ever contacted the media? If yes, what was the purpose and outcome of the contact?
- 5) a) Have you ever been contacted by the media to request a camera in your courtroom? b) If yes, how many times?

1-5

6-10

10 or more

- 6) Do you see potential issues regarding cameras in a courtroom? If yes, what are they?
- 7) a) Do you advise jurors about speaking to the media following a trial?

Never

Sometimes

Always

- b) If sometimes or always, what advisement do you give?
- 8) Do you read stories about your cases or watch them on television?

Never

Sometimes

Often

- 9) What do you do if you see or read inaccurate information about judicial matters in the media?
- 10) What do you do if you see or read unfair criticism of yourself or another judge in the media?
- 11) a) Do you think it's important for the Branch to formulate guidelines for responding to unfair criticism?
 - b) If this would be helpful, what suggestions do you have?
- 12) a) Do you explain your decisions from the bench?
 - b) If you explain, under what circumstances?
- 13) a) Do you think reporters who cover the courts, in general, have sufficient knowledge about the court system?
 - b) If no, what should reporters do to learn more about the system?

14) a) Do you thin courts?	ak the media could	benefit from ed	ducational prog	grams about the
1 Agree	2	3	4	5 Disagree
b) Would you c) If yes, what	participate? topics would you	like to have co	vered?	
15) a) Do you thin interacting with	ink judges could be the media?	enefit from edu	cational progra	ums about
1 Agree	2	3	4	5 Disagree
b) Would you c) What topics	participate? would you like co	overed?		
questions freq	Branch have stand uently asked by the ors is public inform	e media to judg		
1 Always	2	3	4	5 Never
b) If yes, what	questions/answers	s do you sugges	st?	
17) Should the Bramembers of the	anch formulate gui e media?	delines for cou	rt staff who ma	ay be contacted by
1 Always	2	3	4	5 Never
18) Do you wish	to make any comm	nents regarding	your dealings	with the media?
19) Do you have a Branch and the mo	any suggestions for edia?	improving into	eractions betwe	een the Judicial
	*****	******	****	
Subcommittee me		to the draft sur	vey for journal	ists and redrafted it

Media Survey (revised)

1) a) How long h	ave you been	covering th	e court system?		
0-1 year 2-5 years 6-10 years More than 10) years				
b) If not your	primary beat,	then what	percentage of yo	our job is it?	
Less than 25 25-50 percen 50-75 percen More than 75	t t				
2) a) Are you ably you cover?	e to get access	s to court fi	les on a timely b	pasis in the co	urthouse(s)
1 Always	2	3	4	5 Never	
b) Describe p	problems that y	ou've expe	erienced.		
3) For files that a portion of the file		aled, are yo	ou able to get acc	cess to the nor	n-sealed
1 Always	2	3	4	5 Never	
4) a) Are court clinformation?	lerks helpful ii	n answering	g questions you	have about ac	cess to court
1 Always	2	3	4	5 Never	
b) Explain pr c) Do you ha		s on how the	ey can be more	helpful?	
5) a) Do you use how helpful is it		ranch webs	ite for help in co	overing court	cases? If so,
1 Extremely helpfu	2 ul		3	4	5 Not helpful

b) Explain.					
6) What informa	ation not currer	ntly on the websi	ite would be m	nost helpful to you?	
7) a) Do you hav	ve problems ob	otaining copies o	f court docum	ents, including exhi	bits?
1 Always	2	3	4	5 Never	
b) If yes, wh	hat kind of pro	blems have you	encountered?		
8) a) Have you opublic?	ever experience	ed any difficultie	es in covering	trials that are open t	o the
1 Always	2	3	4	5 Never	
b) Please ex	plain.				
9) a) Are court of	calendars adequ	aate in providing	notice to upc	oming trials/hearing	s?
1 Always	2	3	4	5 Never	
b) If no, hov	v can they be in	mproved?			
10) a) Are judge	es cooperative i	in allowing medi	ia access to op	en court proceeding	s?
1 Always	2	3	4	5 Never	
	perative, pleas ave suggestion	e explain. s to enhance coo	peration?		
11) a) Have you records?	had any other	problems regard	ling access to	court proceedings an	nd/or
b) If yes, ple	ease explain.				
12) a) Do you th			urts, in genera	al, have sufficient	

1	2	3	4	5
Yes				No

b) If no, what should reporters do to learn more about the system?

14) a) Do you think judges could benefit from educational programs about interacting with the media?

1	2	3	4	5
Yes				No

- b) Would you participate?
- c) What topics would you like covered?
- 15) Do you wish to make any comments regarding your dealings with the Judicial Branch?
- 16) Do you have any suggestions for improving interactions between the Judicial Branch and the media?

Agenda Item No. IV—Time Frame for Conducting Surveys

Subcommittee members discussed having the final draft of the surveys available for the full Judicial-Media Committee meeting on Sept. 10, 2007. Members also discussed ways to distribute the survey.

<u>Agenda Item No. V – New Business</u>

Whether or not another meeting would be needed was left to further discussion, and the subcommittee set no specific date.

Agenda Item No. VI – Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 4 p.m.