

September 28, 2004

To: The Distinguished Members of the Judiciary of North Carolina

From: The Judicial Response Committee

The Chief Justice's Commission on Professionalism created the Judicial Response Committee just over one year ago in order to be available to respond to unwarranted attacks in the media on judges and the judicial system. During the course of the year, there have been several occasions where attacks have been made in either the newspaper or on the TV news. The Judicial Response Committee investigated the situations and contacted the judges involved to determine whether or not a response was warranted. On each occasion, the judges indicated they did not want the Committee to respond publicly, but they appreciated its support and willingness to respond on their behalf, if needed.

The Committee is still willing to respond on your behalf, should an unwarranted attack occur. However, please do not assume that the Committee is aware of every article that appears in every paper or on each news program. If a situation arises, please feel free to alert the Committee or request the Committee's service. Please understand that the Committee has been designed for you and the judiciary at large, but the Committee must depend on you to alert it of any articles or stories that you believe warrants a response. We need to protect and defend the integrity of our legal system, and the Committee's existence and appropriate involvement is one way we can.

Enclosed is an article entitled "In defense of judges," which appeared in the *Charlotte Observer* on May 6th, 2004 and explains the Committee's role and mission. Please feel free to call on this Committee whenever you have been the subject or target of unwarranted attacks. The Committee may be contacted through the Chief Justice's Commission on Professionalism at 919-571-4762.

Respectfully submitted,

Hon. Burley B. Mitchell, Jr., Chairperson
Hon. James E. Holshouser, Jr.
Hon. S. Gerald Arnold
Professor F. Leary Davis, Jr.
Cressie H. Thigpen, Esquire
E. Fitzgerald Parnell, III, Esquire
Deborrah L. Newton, Esquire

Enclosure