

**IN RE: THE PETITIONS OF CHAN-CHAN PAEGAR, CHARLES B.F. KARMO, II, JAMES N. VERDIER, BENEDICT K. SAGBEH, WILLIE DOMA BARCLAY, JR., ZAIYE B. DOHKEE, I., BOAKAI K. KANNEH, MORRIS G. SAYTUMAH, NANCY FINDA SAMMY, RICHARD S. KLAH, KATHLEEN PYNE-MAKOR, IDRIS S. SHERIFF, SAMUEL T.K. KORTIMAI, AMARA M. SHERIFF, JAMES M. KUMEH, DEWEH E. GRAY, AMOS M. FAGANS, CHRISTINE SONPON FREEMAN, ANSU B. KROMAH, DEXTER TIAH, SR., WINLETA HENRIES REEVES, SAYMA SYRENIUS CEPHUS, LAWRENCE YEAKULA, SERENE F. GARLAWOLU, ZEOR DAYLUE BERNARD, SAMUEL K. JACOBS, AND MECKENZIE H. ELLIOTT, ATTORNEYS-AT-LAW OF THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA, PRAYING TO THE HONOURABLE SUPREME COURT OF THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA FOR ADMISSION TO THE HONOURABLE SUPREME COURT BAR AS COUNSELLORS-AT-LAW.**

**LRSC 15**

HEARD: DECEMBER 3, 2009 DECIDED: JANUARY 22, 2010

MR. JUSTICE KORKPOR DELIVERED THE OPINION OF THE COURT

The petitioners, all attorneys-at-law, petitioned this Court praying for admission as counsellors-at-law to practice before the Supreme Court. They set forth in their respective petitions that they are graduates of the Louis Arthur Grimes School of Law, University of Liberia; that upon graduation they were admitted as attorneys-at-law into the local bars of various Circuit Courts within the Republic of Liberia; and that they have been actively engaged in the practice of law for at least three years, as evidenced by certificates issued and signed by reputable practicing lawyers of this bar. The petitioners further stated in their petitions that they are citizens of the Republic of Liberia and that since their admission as attorneys-at-law they have obeyed the moral and ethical code of the legal profession in Liberia.

Rule XIV, Revised Rules of Court, Admission of Counsellors, Parts 1 & 2 (1999) provide:

Part 1. "Except as herein after provided, no person shall be admitted as a Counsellor of this Court, unless, he/she shall have being a practicing attorney for a period of at least three years immediately previous to his or her application for admission, and shall be of good moral standing, the same evidenced by the certificate of at least two (2) members of the Bar of this Court".

Part 2. "The Court shall appoint an examination committee of at least five practicing counsellors of the National Bar Association. No Attorney-At-Law shall be permitted to practice law before the Supreme Court or to be a member of the Supreme Court without first sitting and passing the Supreme Court Bar Examination."

On December 3, 2009, the petitioners' petitions were heard. Each petitioner was presented and represented in Court by a practicing counsel of the Supreme Court Bar. After listening to the petitions, two committees were constituted by this Court, to pass upon the moral and ethical conduct, and to examine the legal qualifications of the petitioners. Members of the committees were:

*[Please see pdf file for list of names]*

The names of thirty-nine (39) candidates were forwarded to the committees to be examined. Of the thirty-nine (39) candidates, this Court granted dispensation to two because they are Judges.

In a joint report submitted by Counsellor George E. Henries on behalf of the two committees, we were informed that Counsellors Tweh and Scott could not participate in the work of the Examination Committee because they had travelled out of the country. The committees reported, also, that two candidates did not sit the examinations because they travelled outside of Liberia, thus thirty-five (35) candidates sat the examinations.

The candidates were tested in the following subjects: Property Law, Civil Procedure Law, Decedents Estates and Trusts, Torts, Labor Law, Evidence, Criminal Law & Procedure, Constitutional Law, Corporations, Contracts and Commercial Law and Domestic Relations Law. The average score of seventy percent (70%) was set as the passing grade.

The results show that of the thirty-five (35) candidates who sat the examinations, twenty-seven (27) passed, while eight (8) did not pass. The committees certified and recommended the twenty-seven (27) candidates who passed the examination to be admitted as members of the Supreme Court Bar during the close of the October, 2009 Term of Court.

The names of the successful candidates in order of performance are: Chan-chan Paegar, Charles B. F. Karmo, II, James N. Verdier, Benedict K. Sagbeh, Willie Doma Barclay, Jr., Zaiye B. Dehkee, I, Boakai N. Kanneh, Morris G. Saytumah, Nancy Finda

Sammy, Richard S. Klah, Kathleen Pyne-Makor, Idris S. Sheriff, Samuel T. K. Kortimai, Amara M. Sheriff, James M. Kumeh, Deweh E. Gray, Amos M. Fagans, Christine Sonpon Freeman, Ansu B. Kromah, Winleta Henries Reeves, Dexter C. Tiah, Sr., Sayma Syrenius Cephus, Lawrence Yeakula, Serene F. Garlawolu, Zeor Daylue Bernard, Samuel K. Jacobs, Meckenzie H. Elliot. The Committees made the following recommendations:

"1. That the Bar examination be administered annually, and the date of examinations be fixed to provide certainty and continuing notice to the Supreme Court, the Bar Examination Committee and the candidates";

"2. That the scope of the Supreme Court Bar examination be limited to a) legal practice and procedures, b) legal analysis and writing, and c) morals and ethics".

"3. That a comprehensive examination should be introduced for law school graduates seeking admission as attorneys-at-law in keeping with § 17.1 of the New Judiciary Law".

"4. That the Supreme Court [should] support the Liberia National Bar Association in the introduction and implementation of "continuing legal education" (CLE) policy/program in Liberia and making it mandatory for the continuous practice of law in Liberia.

We express sincere thanks and appreciation to members of the Moral and Ethics Committee and the Examination Committee for the excellent services rendered to the Judiciary, especially given the short notice they received from this Court. We take note of the useful recommendations made; we shall consider them in due course.

We congratulate the successful candidates. In accordance with the committees' recommendation, the successful attorneys will soon be "adorned in silk". They are about to join the ranks and files of other erudite members of this prestigious bar and advocate the rights of litigants before this Court. But first, this brief advice.

Under Rule 39, Code for the Moral and Ethical Conduct of Lawyers, it is expected of every member of the legal profession, under the professional oath you will soon take, to support the Constitution of the Republic of Liberia, the statute laws and the rules of all courts.

It is further expected of members of this bar to avoid all acts inimical to the cause of the legal profession, and to expose, without fear, all unethical and unprofessional

conducts either by a judge or by a fellow lawyer.

A lawyer must act with diligence and fidelity to his client. He must show prudence, knowledge and skills in all professional dealings. A lawyer should never deviate from the clear line of the law, and mislead the Court.

From where we sit, we know that some lawyers paint different pictures of controversial issues involved in cases and strive by forceful arguments to justify the correctness of their positions. In other words, some lawyers circumvent the law by filing unmeritorious suits. Beware of these few nonconformists. This is a noble profession of honest and reputable members. An honest and reputable lawyer must appropriately no matter what the situation; even where the law and facts preponderate against his/her client. The purpose of a lawyer in any given case is not to win, but to see that justice is done. And if justice is done by an outcome of a case unfavourable to your client, so let it be.

As stated, the Committee on Moral and Ethics and the Committee on Examination found the petitioners morally fit and professionally qualified. We find no reason to disturb the findings of these committees..

WHEREFORE, the petitions of the petitioners are granted. The Clerk of this Court is hereby ordered to issue to each petitioner named hereinabove a Counsellor Certificate with the signature of the Chief Justice and Associate Justices of the Supreme Court affixed thereon, certifying that they are authorized to practice law before the Honourable Supreme Court of Liberia. AND IT IS SO ORDERED.