

**IN RE: THE PETITIONS OF ATTORNEYS C. BENEDICT KENNEDY,  
VARNIE D. COOPER, SR., JOSEPH GADEH, FRANK C. S. OBERLY, H.  
VARNEY G. SHERMAN, MICHAEL WILKINS WRIGHT, R. LEROY UREY,  
CYRUS J. L. BANKS, ROGER K. MARTIN, CHARLES B. DUNBAR, SR., S.  
EDGAR SIE BADIO, MOSES GABRIEL VAH, FRANK P. SENKPENI, GLORIA  
GREENE, A. CADMUS MOORE, SHADRACK K. WALKER, ELIJAH J.  
GARNETTE, SR., J. COURSAY-THOMPSON AND MORRIS DABNEY.**

Decided: July 8, 1983.

MR. JUSTICE MORRIS, delivered the opinion of the Court.

The Supreme Court of Liberia sits twice a year. These sessions of the Supreme Court are known and referred to as the March Term and October Term. It is an established precedence that during each term, attorneys-at-law who have had at least three years of active practice of law as attorneys may petition the Supreme Court en banc, praying for admission as counselors to the Supreme Court Bar. If their petitions are accepted, the Court, through the Chief Justice, then appoints two committees to examine the moral fitness and legal competence of the petitioners. We quote hereunder Part I of Rule XVI of the Revised Rules of the Supreme Court for the benefit of this opinion:

"Part I ADMISSION OF - Except as hereinafter provided, no person shall be admitted as a counsellor of

this Court, unless he or she shall have been 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 to be evidenced by at least two members of this Court."

Part 2 of Rule XVI of the Revised Rules of the Supreme Court authorizes the Supreme Court to appoint a committee comprising members the faculty of the Louis Arthur Grimes School of Law, University of Liberia, and the Liberian National Bar Association to examine every person applying for admission to practice law in the Supreme Court, and the Court is to act upon the report of such examiners as may be just and reasonable.

The petitions filed by the attorneys-at-law, some of whom are judges of our subordinate courts of record, allege that they, the petitioners, were admitted as attorneys-at-law in our various subordinate courts of record at diverse times in the past and that they thereafter engaged in the practice of law in our lower courts. Each petition was accompanied by some documents such as diplomas and certificates issued by the clerk of court where the attorney was admitted as attorney-at-law, showing the year he or she was admitted, with recommendation from counsellors of the Supreme Court Bar, and affidavits to substantiate the allegations contained in the petition, etcetera. During the reading of the petitions, each petitioner was required to come forward with the counsellors who recommended him or her,

while his or her petition was read. After the reading of each petition, the counsellors of the Supreme Court Bar present were given the opportunity to express their views regarding the petitioner. No petition was read for a petitioner who was absent.

After the reading of all the petitions, the Chief Justice then appointed the following committees:

1. COMMITTEE ON MORAL FITNESS: Counsellor Victor D. Hne, Chairman " Casselia L. Stewart, Member " James G. Bull, Member

2. COMMITTEE ON LEGAL COMPETENCE: Counsellor Joseph Williamson, Chairman "Gladys Johnson, Member" David D. Kpomakpor, Member " Raymond A. Hoggard, Member " Jessie Clemens, Member

We quote the report of the Committee on Moral Fitness, word for word hereunder: "REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON MORAL FITNESS APPOINTED BY HIS HONOUR THE CHIEF JUSTICE TO EXAMINE THE MORAL AND ETHICAL CONDUCT OF CANDIDATES FOR ADMISSION TO THE HONORABLE PEOPLE'S SUPREME COURT BAR AS COUNSELLORS-AT-LAW"

His Honour Emmanuel N. Gbalazeh Chief Justice People's Supreme Court of Liberia Temple of Justice Monrovia, Liberia Your Honour:

The Committee on Moral Fitness appointed by Your Honour to examine the moral and ethical conduct of the candidates who have applied to the March 1983 Term of Court to be admitted to the Bar of the Honourable People's Supreme Court as counselors-at-law respectfully tenders its report herein.

The following candidates met with and were examined by the Committee: May 31, 1983:

Attorney Anthony Cadmus Moore Gloria E. Greene Charles B. Dunbar Roger K. Martin Elijah Garnett Moses Gabriel Vah June 1, 1983: Attorney S. Edgar Sie Badio " Micah Wilkins Wright R. LeRoy Urey H. Varney G. Sherman June 2, 1983: Attorney Shadrack K. Walker Cyrus J. L. Banks P. Morris M. Dabney Frank P. Senkpeni

The Committee inquired into the moral and ethical conduct of the candidates and their views of their duty to the Court, their clients and brother lawyers under our Moral and Ethical Code. The results were satisfactory.

None of the candidates, from our inquiry, have ever appeared before the Grievance and Ethics Committee for any charge of unprofessional conduct, except Attorney Cadmus Moore, who explained that he appeared before the Grievance and Ethics Committee sometime in 1980, upon the complaint of a client relating to the probate of a deed. That upon the recommendation of the Grievance and Ethics Committee, he was suspended, but

that the suspension was lifted by His Honour the Chief Justice in 1982. It is the Committee's view that the suspension having been served until lifted, the said incident can no longer stand against Attorney Moore in considering his application to be admitted as a counsellor-at-law.

The Committee also delved into the question of the citizenship of Attorney Roger K. Martin, since the issue was raised on this point when his application was read. Attorney Martin, who originally came from Cameroon, exhibited to the Committee a certificate dated the 10th October, 1979, admitting him to citizenship of Liberia. Attorney Martin was admitted as an attorney-at-law in 1980. His certificate of citizenship therefore shows that he was a citizen at the time of his admission to the bar in 1980.

Although no issue of citizenship was raised concerning Attorney Gloria E. Greene, the Committee thought it advisable, for good order's sake, to inquire into her citizenship, notwithstanding she is married to a Liberian. The Committee found that Mrs. Greene also has duly naturalized and is in possession of a certificate of citizenship. She was originally from Antilles.

It is the finding of the Committee, based upon the foregoing, that the candidates do not have any moral and ethical inhibitions to prevent them becoming members of the Bar of the Honourable Supreme Court of Liberia.

Respectfully submitted, Sgd. Victor D. Hne; Chairman Sgd. Casselia L. Stewart , Member Sgd. James G. Bull; Member According to the report of the Committee on Legal Competence, the first four of the attorneys on the report scored an average ranging from 80% to 88.996% while the average score of the remaining eleven range from 70.196% to 79.796%. The report was signed by all five members of the Committee on Legal Competence. The Committee also indicated in its report that 70% was the passing grade set by it. The candidates who successfully passed the examination are as follows:

1. H. Varney G. Sherman
2. M. Wilkins Wright
3. R. LeRoy Urey
4. Cyrus J. L. Banks
5. Roger K. Martin
6. Charles B. Dunbar
7. S. Edgar Sie Badio
8. Moses Gabriel Vah
9. Frank P. Senkpeni
10. Gloria Greene
- 11: A. Cadmus Moore
12. Shadrack K. Walker

13. Elijah J. Garnette, Sr.
14. J. Coursay Thompson
15. Morris M. Dabney

The precedence in this jurisdiction has been that all attorneys-at-law who are appointed as judges of our subordinate courts of record prior to their petition to the Supreme Court for admission as counselors-at-law are usually exempt from taking the examinations for legal competence by the prerogative of the Court. In keeping with this aged old precedence, the following judges who applied were exempt from sitting the examinations:

1. C. Benedict Kennedy, Resident Circuit Court Judge, Tenth Judicial Circuit, Lofa County.
2. Varnie D. Cooper, Sr., Resident Circuit Court Judge, Fifth Judicial Circuit Court, Grand Cape Mount County.
3. Joseph Gadeh, Debt Court Judge, Maryland County.
4. Frank C. S. Oberly, Territorial Judge, Gibi Territory.

We wish to welcome these new Counsellors to this Bar and to admonish them to abide by our Rules on the Moral and Ethical Conduct of Lawyers and to uphold the integrity, dignity and prestige of our judicial system, in the defense of their clients. The Court is the custodian of the people's liberty and the newly admitted counsellors-at-law as the strong arms of the Court, will be expected to do well their part in safeguarding the interest and liberty of our people and those within our borders. Be always bold in telling your clients the truth from a professional point of view.

In view of the foregoing circumstances and the fact that these attorneys-at-law have successfully passed both the moral fitness and legal competence examinations, and have been duly voted upon by the members of this Bar, it is our opinion that they be and they are hereby declared admitted as counsellors of the Honorable People's Supreme Court of Liberia, with all the rights and privileges appertaining thereto, and they are now qualified to receive the oath as counsellors-at-law, and they are:

1. C. Benedict Kennedy
2. Varnie D. Cooper, Sr.
3. Joseph Gadeh
4. Frank C. S. Oberly
5. H. Varney G. Sherman
6. Micah Wilkins Wright
7. R. LeRoy Urey
8. Cyrus J. L. Banks

9. Roger K. Martin
10. Charles B. Dunbar., Sr.
11. S. Edgar Sie Badio
12. Moses Gabriel Vah
13. Frank P. Senkpeni
14. Gloria Greene
15. A. Cadmus Moore
16. Shadrack K. Walker
17. Elijah J. Garnette, Sr.
18. J. Coursay Thompson
19. Morris Dabney

The Clerk of this Court is hereby commanded to send a mandate to all courts of this Republic informing them of this judgment. And it is hereby so ordered. Petition granted.