



THE MISSISSIPPI BAR

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**MEMORANDUM**

**TO: First Year Law Students  
The University of Mississippi School of Law**

**FR: Larry Houchins  
Executive Director**

**RE: James O. Dukes Professionalism Program**

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On behalf of The Mississippi Bar and its Professionalism Committee, I wish to congratulate and welcome you as you begin your law school career. You are embarking on a course of study leading to a field of endeavor which is much more than an occupation. You will become a part of the legal profession, a great and noble profession.

The legal profession is a high calling, enlisted in the service not only of clients, but of the public good as well. In the words of the Preamble to the Mississippi Rules of Professional Conduct, "A lawyer is a representative of clients, an officer of the legal system and a public citizen having special responsibility for the quality of justice." The Mississippi Bar Professionalism Committee is charged with developing programs to enhance the knowledge and awareness of legal professionalism among lawyers, judges and law students in Mississippi.

Annually, as a part of its ongoing efforts to promote "professionalism" in the practice of law, the Bar's Professionalism Committee conducts an Orientation on Professionalism at each of the Law Schools in Mississippi. The Program is named in memory of former Bar President James O. Dukes of Gulfport, who died of cancer in 2001. Professionalism was a theme during his year as President, and the Orientation Session for law students was implemented during his tenure. With the support of the law schools, the Bar once again is conducting a half-day session on Professionalism as part of your law school orientation.

This year's program will begin with a keynote address by Chief Justice James W. Smith, Jr., of the Mississippi Supreme Court. This will be followed by small group discussions of the professionalism and ethical issues raised in the enclosed hypotheticals. Each group will be composed of eight to ten students and two to three group leaders who will be assigned to your group from among the Mississippi lawyers and judges who have volunteered to participate in the program. The group leaders may also share with you their views of the profession, and you can feel free to ask them questions about their own professional journeys.

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As the enclosed instructions state, we ask that all you bring to these hypotheticals is your life experiences and your own set of ethics. Research is neither necessary nor appropriate. We hope that you will find the group discussions to be lively and instructive as you begin your career in the legal profession.

We look forward to seeing you in August.

LH:kmf  
Enclosures