

July 14, 2003

Supreme Court of Florida
500 South Duval Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1927

Re: Petition to Amend Rules 2-11.1 and 4-13.2 of the Rules of the Supreme Court Relating to Admissions to the Bar
Petitioners: The Orange County Bar Association & Thomas B. Drage, Jr., Esq.
Case No: SC02-2354

Your Honors:

This is a letter in full support of the above-referenced petition. I have been a member of the Florida Bar since 1973, and my license number is 165478.

This law firm currently employs two Barry University School of Law alumni/returning students as law clerks. I have worked with both of these employees, and both do an excellent job, which is a reflection on the high-quality legal education they received from Barry. Additionally, as they are my co-workers, I have been privy to the mental and financial turmoil the Barry accreditation saga and resulting ineligibility for admission to the bar has taken on these two fine individuals. I believe that both of our law clerks will make excellent attorneys. As a result, it is frustrating to me and my partners that our two clerks, along with the 109 Barry alumni caught-up in this nightmare, have to date been denied relief from this Court and the Florida Board of Bar Examiners.

My understanding of the ABA accreditation process is somewhat limited, but I do understand that their remand procedures began to evolve over a period of time between 1999 and 2001. Presently, the House of Delegates of the ABA does not have the authority to make the final decision as to whether a law school gains provisional ABA accreditation – they can only remand back to the Council of the ABA Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar for reconsideration. This change has resulted in a discrepancy between this Court's 12-month rule and the ABA appellate process.

I urge this Honorable Court to act swiftly and surely to conform its rules to comply with the reality of the ABA's accreditation process. Further, I urge this Honorable Court to make certain that any law students/alumni from Barry University caught up in this conflict in the rules should be afforded full relief in the form of the release of the bar scores and, where appropriate, admission to the Florida Bar.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

CHARLES R. STEPTER, JR.

Certificate of Service

I hereby certify that a true and correct copy of the foregoing has been furnished by U.S. Mail to attorney for petitioners, Mathew D. Staver, Esquire, 210 Palmetto Avenue, Longwood, Florida 32750 on this 14th day of July, 2003.

CHARLES R. STEPTER, JR., ESQUIRE