

**Arve A. Wikstrom  
3407 Clear Stream Drive  
Orlando, Florida 32822**

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:

I graduated from Barry University School of Law when the law school was not yet accredited. I am one of the 109 graduates who are not permitted to sit for the Florida Bar. Last February of 2003 I sat for the New York Bar by petitioning the New York Court of Appeals under New York's hardship waiver (see attachment A). In addition I petitioned the Vermont Supreme Court. As a result of my petition the Vermont Supreme Court approved Barry University School of Law for accreditation in order for me to sit for the Vermont Bar Exam (see attachment B).

Florida does not have a hardship waiver unlike New York, nor does the Florida Supreme Court have the authority to accredit law schools on an individual basis as does the Vermont Supreme Court, I support either proposal to change the 12-month rule so I may sit for the Florida Bar Examination.

Had I known of the complexities in order for a law school to be accredited by the American Bar Association I would not have attended an unaccredited law school. I thought earning ABA accreditation was an objective standard requiring certain class sizes, faculty student ratio, a law library, adequate financial resources, etc. I assumed accreditation by the ABA would be similar to the state of Florida licensing a graduate program operating in the state of Florida. Adding to the complexities is the fact that the ABA's accreditation procedure has changed. Unfortunately Barry University was the first law school to fall victim to the new ABA accreditation procedures.

To date I have spoken to friends of law students at the new unaccredited state law school FAMU in Orlando. I have informed them based on my experience that ABA accreditation of a law school is complex, subjective, the proceedings not open to the public and ABA accreditation procedures have changed making accreditation even less likely within the current 12 month rule. The fact that the proceeding are not open to the public makes it impossible for the student attending an unaccredited law school to

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gauge whether or not their unaccredited law school may be accredited within the current 12 month standard. More troublesome, is that the ABA's accreditation procedure has changed thereby lessening the possibility of ABA accreditation within the current 12 month rule.

I support either proposed rules amending the 12 month rule. I am thankful that this honorable Court permitted me to sit for the Florida Bar in February of 2001 during the ABA accreditation debacle at Barry before the law school was accredited. Unfortunately Barry was accredited 2 weeks after the 12 month rule had expired and I did not receive my Florida Bar results. In the event this honorable Court decides to amend the 12 month rule I request that my Florida bar results from February 2001 be released and in the event I passed be admitted to the Florida Bar pending any approval by the Florida Bar.

Respectfully submitted,

Arve Wikstrom

AAW/aaw

**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.

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Arve Wikstrom