

June 26, 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:

The purpose of this letter is to express my support for the Petitioners' petition proposing amendments to Rules 2-11.1 and 4-13.2 of the Rules of the Supreme Court Relating to Admissions to the Bar.

I have been a member of the Florida Bar since 1994, as an Authorized House Counsel and my license number is 37415. Although I read of the debacle in several publications, I began taking a deeper interest as the details unfolded regarding Barry University School of Law after adding a Barry Graduate, who was granted permission to sit for the Florida Bar examination, to our legal staff. What seemed at first to be a reasonable process designed to insure the quality of the academic environment at Barry, instead deteriorated into an absurd predicament where students, found themselves forced to graduate before the school received provisional accreditation and yet were allowed to sit for the Bar Exam.

My understanding of the situation is that while Barry was undergoing the accreditation process, the ABA changed the process so that the House of Delegates can only remand the accreditation decision back to the Council of the ABA Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar. In other words, the House of Delegates is no longer vested with the power to make the final accreditation decision. This change has resulted in the distinct possibility that a final decision could take as long as three years. As this Honorable Court is well aware, three years is 36 months, not 12 months as currently provided for under the rules. Surely the harm that the 12-month rule was designed to protect against was not protected by keeping Barry's first three graduating classes from practicing law.

I urge your Honors to change the rules in a manner that suits this Honorable Court and the honorable profession it regulates. Right the wrong that has been perpetrated against the 109

Barry students caught in this snafu. In the process, we will eliminate the possibility that this scenario will re-play itself as Florida's two newest law schools undergo ABA scrutiny.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas E. Pierpan, Esq.
Vice President & Coordinating Counsel