

Now let me go to the permanency aspect. Once this committee has done this great work, which I think is going to take them a couple of years, to develop these codes of ethics, and I hope you will put guidelines in, the mechanisms to enforce the code of ethics, and I would hope we would include in here the independent audit of the GAO.

Once it has done this, it still is going to have a function which will require not a large staff—in fact, it would require a pretty small staff—but it would be needed constantly. I think the best comparison that comes to my mind and the one that I am familiar with is the grievance committee of the bar association. I served on our St. Louis Bar Grievance Committee for many years. Incidentally, I was also a member of the Missouri Board of Law Examiners, where we got into this area of ethics constantly.

The need for every profession to have a grievance committee or the technique to handle grievances is just basic. There are only two professions that I know of that do not have permanent grievance committees. We in politics are in one of the professions. The other profession is the news media.

I have been urging for years that the news media start getting a grievance committee so that people who think that they have received unfair or unprofessional treatment have a place to record their grievance.

My experience of years in the St. Louis bar is this: it turns out that well over 90 percent of the complaints that are received by a grievance committee prove to be unfounded, or really are misunderstandings on the part of the complainant, and sometimes on the part of the professional person who is involved.

This function of a grievance committee is all plus. It helps the profession, it helps the public that thinks that it has a grievance. There are less than 10 percent of the cases, again drawing on my experience in the grievance committee, that turn out to have something that is a little more than a misunderstanding.

But even of those, I would say 9 percent of those turn out not to be serious matters; but just talking-them-over kind of thing sets whoever was in error back on the right track.

It is less than 1 percent that get into the area where I think that possibly other actions are required, either where we had to issue a warning, which we would do. That would be the penalty in this 1 percent I am talking about.

Only in the unusual cases would you resort to disbarment. They are most unusual. But the fact that you have a permanent committee whose sole purpose is to handle these matters actually cuts down on the number of complaints. Really the committee was run by a small staff under the direction of lawyers. This serves an amazing function of keeping the reputation of the profession high in the eyes of the people. I think this is why I basically argue the need to make this committee separate and permanent.

The first 2 years of its operation probably you would have to give them a rather larger staff because they are going to be in the business, the difficult business of trying to spell out the codes of ethics in these various areas, build up the mechanisms to enforce the codes and then when that is done I think that you probably would contemplate some-