

RULE 139-A

INTEGRATED BAR OF THE PHILIPPINES (Effective January 16, 1973)

SECTION 1. **Organization.** – There is hereby organized an official national body to be known as the, Integrated Bar of the Philippines, composed of all persons whose names now appear or may hereafter be included in the Roll of Attorneys of the Supreme Court.

SEC. 2. **Purposes.** – The fundamental purposes of the Integrated Bar shall be to elevate the standards of the legal profession, improve the administration of justice, and enable the Bar to discharge its public responsibility more effectively.

SEC. 3. **Regions.** – The Philippines is hereby divided into nine Regions of the Integrated Bar, to wit:

- (a) *Northern Luzon*, consisting of the provinces of Abra, Batanes, Benguet, Cagayan, Ifugao, Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Sur, Isabela, Kalinga-Apayao, La Union, Mountain Province, Nueva Vizcaya, and Quirino;
- (b) *Central Luzon*, consisting of the provinces of Bataan, Bulacan, Nueva Ecija, Pampanga, Pangasinan, Tarlac, and Zambales;
- (c) *Greater Manila*, consisting of the City of Manila, and Quezon City;
- (d) *Southern Luzon*, consisting of the provinces of Batangas, Cavite, Laguna, Marinduque, Occidental Mindoro, Oriental Mindoro, Quezon and Rizal.
- (e) *Bicolandia*, consisting of the provinces of Albay, Camarines Norte, Camarines Sur, Catanduanes, Masbate, and Sorsogon;
- (f) *Eastern Visayas*, consisting of the provinces of Bohol, Cebu, Eastern Samar, Leyte, Northern Samar, Samar, and Southern Leyte;
- (g) *Western Visayas*, consisting of the provinces of Aklan, Antique, Capiz, Iloilo, Negros Occidental, Negros Oriental, Palawan, Romblon, and Siquijor;
- (h) *Eastern Mindanao*, consisting of the provinces of Agusan del Norte, Agusan del Sur, Bukidnon, Camiguin, Davao del Norte, Davao del Sur, Davao Oriental, Mindoro, Misamis Oriental, Surigao del Norte, and Surigao del Sur; and
- (i) *Western Mindanao*, consisting of the cities of Basilan and Zamboanga, and the provinces of Cotabato, Lanao del Norte, Lanao del Sur, Misamis Occidental, South Cotabato, Sulu, Zamboanga del Norte, and Zamboanga del Sur.

In the event of the creation of any new province, the Board of Governors shall, with the approval of the Supreme Court, determine the Region to which the said province shall belong.

SEC. 4. **Chapters.** – A Chapter of the Integrated Bar shall be organized in every province. Except as hereinbelow provided, every city shall be considered part of the province within which it is geographically situated.

A separate Chapter shall be organized in each of the following political subdivisions or areas;

- (a) The sub-province of Aurora;
- (b) Each congressional district of the City of Manila;
- (c) Quezon City;
- (d) Caloocan City, Malabon and Navotas;
- (e) Pasay City, Makati, Mandaluyong and San Juan del Monte;

- (f) Cebu City; and
- (g) Zamboanga City and Basilan City

Unless he otherwise registers his preference for a particular Chapter, a lawyer shall be considered a member of the Chapter of the province, city, political subdivision or area where his office or, in the absence thereof, his residence is located. In no case shall any lawyer be a member of more than one Chapter.

Each Chapter shall have its own local government as provided for by uniform rules to be prescribed by the Board of Governors and approved by the Supreme Court, the provisions of Section 19 of this rule notwithstanding.

Chapters belonging to the same Region may hold regional conventions on matters and problems of common concern.

SEC. 5. House of Delegates. – The Integrated Bar shall have a House of Delegates of not more than one hundred twenty members who shall be apportioned among all the Chapters as nearly as may be according to the number of their respective members, but each Chapter shall have at least one Delegate. On or before December 31, 1974, and every four years thereafter, the Board of Governors shall make an apportionment of Delegates.

The term of the office of Delegates shall begin on the date of the opening of the annual convention of the House and shall end on the day immediately preceding the date of the opening of the next succeeding annual convention. No person may be a Delegate for more than two terms.

The House shall hold an annual convention at the call of the Board of Governors at any time during the month of April of each year for the election of Governors, the reading and discussion of reports including the annual report of the Board of Governors, the transaction of such other business as may be referred to it by the Board and the consideration of such additional matters as may be requested in writing by at least twenty Delegates. Special conventions of the House may be called by the Board of Governors to consider only such matters as the Board shall indicate. A majority of the Delegates who have registered for a convention, whether annual or special, shall constitute a *quorum* to do business.

SEC. 6. Board of Governors. – The Integrated Bar shall be governed by a Board of Governors. Nine Governors shall be elected by the House of Delegates from the nine Regions on the representation basis of one Governor from each Region. Each Governor shall be chosen from a list of nominees submitted by the Delegates from the Region, provided that not more than one nominee shall come from any Chapter. The President and the Executive Vice President, chosen by the Governors from outside of themselves as provided in Section 7 of this Rule, shall *ipso facto* become members of the Board.

The members of the Board shall hold office for a term of one year from the date of their election and until their successors shall have been duly elected and qualified. No person may be a Governor for more than two terms.

The Board shall meet regularly once every three months, on such date at such time and place as it shall designate. A majority of all the members of the Board shall constitute a quorum to do business. Special meetings may be called by the President or by five members of the Board.

Subject to the approval of the Supreme Court, the Board shall adopt By-Laws and promulgate Canons of Professional Responsibility for all the members of the Integrated Bar. The By-Laws and the Canons may be amended by the Supreme Court *motu proprio* or upon the recommendation of the Board of Governors.

The Board shall prescribe such other rules and regulations as may be necessary and proper to carry out the purposes of the Integrated Bar as well as the provisions of this Rule.

SEC. 7. Officers. – The Integrated Bar shall have a President and an Executive Vice President who shall be chosen by the Governors immediately after the latter's election, either from among themselves or from other members of the Integrated Bar, by the vote of at least five Governors. Each of the regional members of the Board shall be *ex officio* Vice President for the Region which he represents.

The President and the Executive Vice President shall hold office for a term of one year from the date of their election and until their successors shall have duly qualified. The Executive Vice President shall automatically become the President for the next succeeding full term. The Presidency shall rotate from year to

year among all the nine Regions in such order of rotation as the Board of Governors shall prescribe. No person shall be President or Executive Vice President of the Integrated Bar for more than one term.

The Integrated Bar shall have a Secretary, a Treasurer, and such other officers and employees as may be required by the Board of Governors, to be appointed by the President with the consent of the Board, and to hold office at the pleasure of the Board or for such term as it may fix. Said officers and employees need not be members of the Integrated Bar.

SEC. 8. **Vacancies.** – In the event the President is absent or unable to act, his duties shall be performed by the Executive Vice President; and in the event of the death, resignation, or removal of the President, the Executive Vice President shall serve as Acting President during the remainder of the term of the office thus vacated. In the event of the death, resignation, removal or disability of both the President and the Executive Vice President, the Board of Governors shall elect an Acting President to hold office until the next succeeding election or during the period of disability.

The filling of vacancies in the House of Delegates, Board of Governors, and all other positions of Officers of the Integrated Bar shall be as provided in the By-Laws. Whenever the term of an office or position is for a fixed period, the person chosen to fill a vacancy therein shall serve only for the unexpired term.

SEC. 9. **Membership dues.** – Every member of the Integrated Bar shall pay such annual dues as the Board of Governors shall determine with the approval of the Supreme Court. A fixed sum equivalent to ten percent (10%) of the collection from each Chapter shall be set aside as a Welfare Fund for disabled members of the Chapter and the compulsory heirs of deceased members thereof.

SEC. 10. **Effect of non-payment of dues.** – Subject to the provisions of Section 12 of this Rule, default in the payment of annual dues for six months shall warrant suspension of membership in the Integrated Bar, and default in such payment for one year shall be a ground for the removal of the name of the delinquent member from the Roll of Attorneys.

SEC. 11. **Voluntary termination of membership; reinstatement.** – A member may terminate his membership by filing a written notice to that effect with the Secretary of the Integrated Bar, who shall immediately bring the matter to the attention of the Supreme Court. Forthwith he shall cease to be a member and his name shall be stricken by the Court from the Roll of Attorneys. Reinstatement may be made by the Court in accordance with rules and regulations prescribed by the Board of Governors and approved by the Court.

SEC. 12. **Grievance procedures.** – The Board of Governors shall provide in the By-Laws for grievance procedures for the enforcement and maintenance of discipline among all the members of the Integrated Bar, but no action involving the suspension or disbarment of a member or the removal of his name from the Roll of Attorneys shall be effective without the final approval of the Supreme Court.

SEC. 13. **Non-Political Bar.** – The Integrated Bar shall be strictly non-political, and every activity tending to impair this basic feature is strictly prohibited and shall be penalized accordingly. No lawyer holding an elective, judicial, quasi-judicial, or prosecutor office in the Government or any political subdivision or instrumentality thereof shall be eligible for election or appointment to any position in the Integrated Bar or any Chapter thereof. A Delegate, Governor, Officer or employee of the Integrated Bar, or an officer or employee of any Chapter thereof shall be considered *ipso facto* resigned from his position as of the moment he files his certificate of candidacy for any elective public office or accepts appointment to any judicial, quasi-judicial, or prosecutory office in the Government or any political subdivision or instrumentality thereof.

SEC. 14. **Positions honorary.** – Except as may be specifically authorized or allowed by the Supreme Court, no Delegate or Governor and no national or local Officer or committee member shall receive any compensation, allowance or emolument from the funds of the Integrated Bar for any service rendered therein or be entitled to reimbursement for any expense incurred in the discharge of his functions.

SEC. 15. **Fiscal matters.** – The Board of Governors shall administer the funds of the Integrated Bar and shall have the power to make appropriations and disbursements there from. It shall cause proper Books of Accounts to be kept and Financial Statements to be rendered and shall see to it that the proper audit is made of all accounts of the Integrated Bar and all the Chapters thereof.

SEC. 16. **Journal.** – The Board of Governors shall cause to be published a quarterly Journal of the Integrated Bar, free copies of which shall be distributed to every member of the Integrated Bar.

SEC. 17. **Voluntary bar associations.** – All voluntary Bar associations now existing or which may hereafter be formed may co-exist with the Integrated Bar but shall not operate at cross-purposes therewith.

SEC. 18. **Amendments.** – This Rule may be amended by the Supreme Court *motu proprio* or upon the recommendation of the Board of Governors or any Chapter of the Integrated Bar.

SEC. 19. **Organizational period.** – The Commission on Bar Integration shall organize the local Chapters and toward this end shall secure the assistance of the Department of Justice and of all Judges throughout the Philippines. All Chapter organizational meetings shall be held on Saturday, February 17, 1973. In every case, the Commission shall cause proper notice of the date, time and place of the meeting to be served upon all the lawyers concerned at their addresses appearing in the records of the Commission. The lawyers present at the meeting called to organize a Chapter shall constitute a *quorum* for the purpose, including the election of a President, a Vice President, a Secretary, a Treasurer, and five Directors.

The Commission shall initially fix the number of Delegates and apportion the same among all the Chapters as nearly as may be in proportion to the number of their respective members, but each Chapter shall have at least one Delegate. The President of each Chapter shall concurrently be its Delegate to the House of Delegates. The Vice President shall be his alternate, except where the Chapter is entitled to have more than one Delegate. The Board of Directors of the Chapter shall in proper cases elect additional as well as alternate Delegates.

The House of Delegates shall convene in the City of Manila on Saturday, March 17, 1973 for the purpose of electing a Board of Governors. The Governors shall immediately assume office and forthwith meet to elect the Officers of the Integrated Bar. The Officers so chosen shall immediately assume their respective positions.

SEC. 20. **Effectivity.** – This Rule shall take effect on January 16, 1973.

Rule 139-A which ordained the integration of the Philippine Bar and the By-Laws of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines did not withdraw from the courts the authority to investigate and decide complaints against erring members of the Bar.