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**Supreme Judicial Court's Judicial Performance Evaluation Committee
Seeks Lawyer Response in Evaluation of Suffolk County Judges**

As part of the ongoing program to evaluate and enhance judicial performance, the Supreme Judicial Court's Judicial Performance Evaluation Committee has sent questionnaires to attorneys and court employees in Suffolk County. Jurors who participate in trials will receive questionnaires upon completion of their jury duty for the next several months. Forty-nine judges will be evaluated in the Boston Municipal Court, District Court, Juvenile Court, Housing Court, and Probate and Family Court. (Superior Court Judges sitting in Suffolk County will be evaluated at a later date.)

Attorneys whose email addresses are known to the Supreme Judicial Court receive an invitation to use the evaluation website and are given a username and password. Out of the approximately 4,500 attorneys selected for the evaluation, close to 3,500 will be able to complete the evaluation on-line. Attorneys can register their email address with the Supreme Judicial Court for future evaluations at <http://judeval.sjc.state.ma.us/?go=reg>.

The Judicial Performance Evaluation Committee requests that attorneys who receive questionnaires complete and return them to the Supreme Judicial Court as soon as possible, as the success of the evaluation program depends upon timely responses. A high rate of participation enables the Committee to provide judges with fair and complete evaluations. Lawyers who have appeared in court multiple times in these counties during the last two years, according to computerized court records, have received questionnaires. The deadline for returning the paper questionnaire is April 3, 2009; the electronic questionnaire is due by April 10, 2009.

Among the categories covered in the evaluations are: a judge's knowledge of the law; temperament on the bench; courtroom control; treatment of litigants, witnesses, jurors, and attorneys; fairness and impartiality; and, timeliness in issuing written decisions.

All questionnaires, both paper and electronic, are anonymous; the resulting reports are also confidential and are given only to the judge being evaluated and to the appropriate Chief Justices.

Since the inception of the program in 2001, evaluation has been conducted in all the counties in the Commonwealth. Judges are now being evaluated for the third time.

Please direct any inquiries concerning questionnaires and evaluations to Mona Hochberg, Supreme Judicial Court Judicial Performance Evaluation Coordinator, at (617) 557-1156, or via email at mona.hochberg@sjc.state.ma.us. For other information, please contact Joan Kenney, Public Information Officer, Supreme Judicial Court, at (617) 557-1113, or via email at joan.kenney@sjc.state.ma.us.