

NCLDB Member Spotlight

Marianne J. Lee, Esq.

Executive Secretary/Chief Counsel
Attorney Grievance Commission
- Maryland -



MARYLAND'S
ATTORNEY
GRIEVANCE
COMMISSION
AT A GLANCE:

- Oversees 39,000 active attorneys

- The Maryland Bar Association is a voluntary membership organization

- In 2014-2015, the Commission received 1,700 complaints (of which approx. 350 were "docketed" for further investigation and prosecution)

MARYLAND FUN
FACT:

- Maryland is the only state in the U.S. where judges wear red robes.

Getting to know Marianne Lee, the new Executive Secretary & Chief Counsel of Maryland's Attorney Grievance Commission:

- Q1: Please describe your work history and how you became interested in attorney discipline. You mentioned that you spent 14 years on the prosecution side before moving into your new position. Why did you make the switch?
- A: I received my B.A. from the University of Maryland, College Park, Magna Cum Laude, and my J.D. from the University of Maryland School of Law (now called The University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law). I clerked for the late Chief Judge Robert I.H. Hammerman of the Circuit Court for Baltimore County. I subsequently worked at a law firm in Chicago, Illinois, where I practiced mainly in the area of class action litigation and consumer law in both federal and state courts. In 2000, I started what has become a career in professional discipline; I accepted the position of litigation counsel at the Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission in Chicago, Illinois. After moving back to my home state of Maryland in 2002, I was hired as litigation counsel to the Attorney Grievance Commission of Maryland. I have worked at the Attorney Grievance Commission as Assistant Bar Counsel and subsequently Senior Assistant Bar Counsel for approximately 14 years. I enjoyed my years as litigation counsel, investigating and prosecuting disciplinary cases. One of the unique experiences our jurisdiction offers is trying cases before judges of all the different Circuit Courts in the state of Maryland and arguing before the highest court of our state, the Court of Appeals of Maryland. However, after 14 years, I was ready for a change to move on to different challenges, but still wanted to stay in the area of professional discipline, which was why I was excited to take on the position as Executive Secretary of the Attorney Grievance Commission.

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Q2: What do you find most rewarding about working in this area?

A: What I find most rewarding, thus far, having been in this position since July 1, 2016, is working with Commissioners, all of whom are dedicated and focused on maintaining the integrity of the legal profession in Maryland.

Q3: How many staff members do you supervise and how many are attorneys?

A: My office, that is, the Executive Secretary's office consists of only 2 people, myself and my assistant, Sharon Gross.

I am the only attorney in my office and act as in-house counsel to the Attorney Grievance Commission, which consists of 12 volunteer attorneys and non-attorneys appointed by the Court of Appeals of Maryland. The Commission has powers and duties as prescribed in Maryland Rule 19-702, some of which are: (1) recommend to the Court of Appeals the adoption of procedural and administrative guidelines and policies consistent with the Maryland Rules; (2) with the approval of the Court of Appeals, appoint Bar Counsel; (3) supervise the activities of Bar Counsel; (4) review for approval or disapproval dismissal of docketed complaints, termination of complaints with or without warnings, Conditional Diversion Agreements, reprimands, or filing of petitions for disciplinary or remedial actions.

Bar Counsel's office has 12 total attorneys, including Bar Counsel, litigation attorneys and screening attorney(s), along with approximately 16 staff members, who include investigators, paralegals, secretaries and an office manager.

Q4: What are some of your hobbies and interests?

A: In the fall, spring, and summer, you can often find me watching my boys play baseball, which I have grown to love. I enjoy traveling, skiing, and hiking. I also enjoy watching movies and reading a good book, when I get the chance.

Q5: Most memorable travel memory?

A: I have a couple. My first most memorable travel memory is my trip to Europe, particularly Venice and Florence. My second are the ski trips to Utah with my family.

NCLDB's monthly Member Spotlight highlights
select new NCLDB members and features information
about their jurisdiction's lawyer disciplinary board.