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Criminal Instructions Advisory Panel

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Honorable J. Wesley Oler, Jr.

* Died 4-2-02

Staff:

Roger B. Meilton, *Assistant Reporter and Secretary*

Legal Authorization:

Pa. Constitution Article V, § 10(c)

**Committee
for
Proposed
Standard
Jury
Instructions**

c/o Pa. Bar Institute
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History/Background

The Pennsylvania Supreme Court Committee for Proposed Standard Jury Instructions was first appointed in 1968 by Chief Justice John C. Bell for the express purpose of developing pattern jury charges for the assistance of both the bench and the bar. The committee's mission from the outset has been to assist the administration of justice in both civil and criminal court proceedings through the availability of model jury instructions.

As a result, the committee has published comprehensive volumes of suggested civil and criminal jury instructions. The suggested instructions guide judges and lawyers in the preparation and consideration of instructions during the trial process. The ongoing purpose of the committee is to monitor developments in civil and criminal law, recommending and publishing revised and new instructions as required.

Since 1979 the Pennsylvania Bar Institute (PBI) has provided both administrative and publishing support for the committee as well as funding for this important work. Project costs are underwritten through the sale and distribution of the published suggested standard instructions to the legal community.

Committee Activities

Civil Instructions

In 2001 and 2002 a working advisory committee reviewed every existing civil jury instruction. Substantial changes were made to many instructions; citations were updated; and, where appropriate, new instructions written. A

new edition of the Civil Jury Instructions, expanded to two volumes and including a companion CD-ROM, will be published in March 2003.

Criminal Instructions

With the retirement of Professor Arthur Murphy, the only editor ever for the Criminal Jury Instructions, a new editor has been appointed. Bruce A. Antkowiak is a professor at Duquesne University School of Law with 25 years of criminal law experience as a prosecutor and as defense counsel. Professor Antkowiak is currently recruiting additional Advisory Committee members with the goal of publishing a new edition of the Criminal Jury Instructions in early 2004.

PBI has initiated processes to publish new supplements or new editions of both the civil and criminal instructions at least every two years. The ultimate goal is to publish supplements or new editions on an annual basis.

Contact Person

Members of the bench and bar are urged to provide their comments and suggestions to the committee. Such comments are of great assistance to the reporters and subcommittee members in their ongoing efforts to ensure that the instructions reflect the current state of the law in Pennsylvania.

Those interested may contact David Hominik, PBI Publications Director. He can be reached at the Pennsylvania Bar Institute; 5080 Ritter Road; Mechanicsburg, PA 17055-6903; (800) 932-4637 or (717) 796-0804, ext. 2258; or dhominik@pbi.org. AQPC