

THE MARTINDALE-HUBBELL<sup>SM</sup>  
RATING SYSTEM

CV<sup>®</sup>

BV<sup>®</sup>

AV<sup>®</sup>

# 10 FACTS

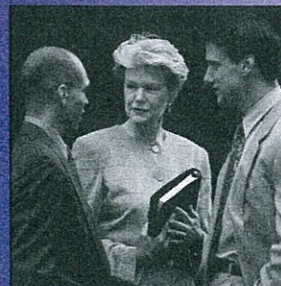
Every Lawyer  
Should Know



LexisNexis<sup>™</sup>  
Martindale-Hubbell<sup>®</sup>



In a recent survey, 92% of private practice lawyers polled said the Martindale-Hubbell ratings were important in evaluating a firm's capabilities.\*



*For over 100 years, Martindale-Hubbell ratings have been an integral part of Martindale-Hubbell's service to the legal community. The goal of this highly valued rating system is to provide unbiased, peer-based ratings for lawyers and law firms within the United States and Canada. Ratings attest to a lawyer's legal ability and professional ethics and reflect the confidential opinions of the Bar and the Judiciary.*

*This brochure has been developed to provide lawyers with the facts they should know about the Martindale-Hubbell Rating System and we encourage you to retain it for future reference.*

## MARTINDALE-HUBBELL<sup>SM</sup> RATINGS



A definitive statement of a lawyer's above-average ability and unquestionable ethics



An indication of an exemplary reputation and well-established practice



A reflection of having achieved the highest levels of professional skill and integrity

\* Survey by Altman Weil, Inc. 2000





## 1 Most ratings are initiated by Martindale-Hubbell.

The rating process is typically initiated by Martindale-Hubbell in five-year intervals after admission to the Bar. In larger cities, where it often takes longer to build a reputation, ten years is the norm. Rating reviews can also be requested by a lawyer, partner, marketing director or colleague.

## 2 Ratings are established by attorneys for attorneys.

To determine a rating, we request confidential opinions from members of the Bar, including those who are rated and those who are not. In addition, members of the Judiciary are queried. We begin the process by asking lawyers to complete written questionnaires evaluating lawyers within their local Bar. When necessary, Martindale-Hubbell Field Representatives also participate in this process by conducting personal interviews. However, no rating is established or altered solely on the basis of a Field Representative's report.

The opinions we receive are based on direct, professional knowledge of the lawyers under review. All rating review materials are kept strictly confidential.

## 3 The rating process is comprehensive and impartial.

On average, we contact more than 400,000 individuals to establish or confirm ratings for over 115,000 attorneys each year. To maintain impartiality, no one law firm can submit more than two evaluations for a particular lawyer.

## 4 Lawyers are rated on both Legal Ability and General Ethical Standards.

### Legal Ability Ratings

This rating takes into consideration the standard of ability for the area in which the lawyer practices, the lawyer's expertise, nature of practice and other professional qualifications. Legal Ability ratings are:

- C – Good to High
- B – High to Very High
- A – Very High to Preeminent

### General Ethical Standards Rating

This rating covers adherence to professional standards of conduct and ethics, reliability, diligence and other criteria relevant to the discharge of professional responsibilities. The General Ethical Standards rating is:

- V – Very High

An attorney will not receive a Legal Ability rating unless he or she has been endorsed for a "V". Only when both categories of ratings are confirmed will a lawyer receive a rating.



**5 All ratings are positive indicators of an attorney's professional reputation.**

Each of the ratings speaks well of an attorney's ethics and professional stature. The CV rating is a good first rating for lawyers and a definitive statement of above-average ability and very high ethics. The BV rating is an excellent rating for more experienced lawyers. An AV rating is a significant accomplishment, evidence that a lawyer's peers rank him or her at the highest level of professional excellence.

**6 A law firm is given the rating of its highest-rated principal.**

Rating reviews are not conducted of law partnerships or professional corporations. Generally, a law firm is given the rating of its highest-rated principal. The rating of a firm has no bearing on the individual rating of any lawyer connected with it.

**7 There are many lawyers for whom no rating is published.**

Some attorneys request not to have any rating published, while others may not be rated due to the length of time in practice, the size of the Bar or other factors unrelated to their competence or ethical standards. Also, if a lawyer's practice is limited or specialized, there may be little opportunity for others to form a professional opinion. The absence of a rating should not be construed as unfavorable.

**8 We conduct regular re-examinations of existing ratings.**

To maintain accuracy and dependability, the rating review process is an ongoing one. An attorney's rating will generally improve over time, reflecting his or her career development. But, ratings can also be reduced or removed if results do not support a published rating.

**9 Your participation is vital to the rating process.**

Lawyers and judges who receive rating inquiries should complete and return them to us as soon as possible. By participating in the rating process, members of the Bar provide an invaluable service to their colleagues in the legal community.

**10 There are guidelines for promoting Martindale-Hubbell ratings.**

Ratings are intended for the use of lawyers in the practice of their profession and not the general public. You may reference your Martindale-Hubbell rating in printed lawyer-to-lawyer communications (such as law firm brochures), professional announcements, and legal directories targeted to lawyers and law firms. Here are the guidelines for each type of communication: