

COFO

Approximately two weeks ago, at a staff meeting in Jackson (at which Henry Aaronson's resignation was announced), it was decided that I would, on a temporary basis, take the responsibility of assigning and watching over all cases involving COFO. I have been doing and will continue to do this until I leave Mississippi. Unfortunately, I will soon receive the results of the New York State Bar Examination which I took December 1st and 2nd. When this happens I will have to leave to return to New York (for at least a week or two) in order to fill in all the necessary forms (if I passed) and take the examination over again in March if I failed.

As the matter stands now there is no one to take over the responsibility when I leave. This poses a serious problem that merits serious thought.

The alternatives open ~~to~~ to COFO are three: a new staff counsel, a COFO staff person, appointed legal coordinator (like Hunter Moray used to be); or leaving matters to legal groups operating in Mississippi (National Lawyers Guild or NAACP Legal Defense Fund and Educational Fund).

If sufficient money and a proper person can be found, it seems clear that a staff counsel would be the best choice. Presumably he would best understand COFO attitudes and legal problems. Further by assigning and following cases he would be able to exercise a great degree of control over the way matters are being handled. If a staff counsel is not feasible, I feel that there should be a staff person installed as a legal coordinator. In this way there is at least someone in the organization who has some concept of the overall COFO legal picture.

Of course the decision is up to the staff. I only hope that something will be done. I am always available to offer any assistance which I can give.

Bill Kopit