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March 13, 2002

# Today's News Update

## Wednesday, March 13

**Carlos H. Jenkins**, who was elected to the Civil Court from the Bronx last November, left the bench on March 8 under circumstances that could implicate his standing at the bar, sources report. Office of Court Administration spokesman David Bookstaver would confirm only that Mr. Jenkins had resigned from the bench for "personal reasons." Mr. Bookstaver added that Mr. Jenkins, while on the bench, had tried cases referred from other judges and had no inventory of cases that needed to be redistributed after he resigned. Mr. Jenkins could not be reached for comment.

**The Office of Court Administration** announced yesterday that it has consolidated its three internal investigative offices into a single unit under the leadership of Sherrill R. Spatz, a former Manhattan prosecutor, who has been OCA's Special Inspector General for Fiduciary Appointments. OCA's other two inspectors general - William Gallagher, the current head of the Office of Inspector General, and Desiree Kim who has been in charge of the Office of the Special Inspector General for Bias Matters - will now report to Ms. Spatz.

**The insurance lobby** is working Albany to prevent passage of legislation that would reinstate collision damage waivers on private passenger vehicle rentals. Under a 1988 law, collision damage waivers - where rental companies collect a daily fee in exchange for a promise not to hold the renter liable for accidental damage or loss - were banned. However, legislation is pending in both houses of the Legislature. Professional Insurance Agents of New York State Inc. has mounted a lobbying effort to defeat the legislation.

**Governor Pataki** yesterday proposed a constitutional amendment that would enable New Yorkers to amend and enact laws through initiative and referendum. Under the Governor's proposal, citizen initiatives could be placed on the ballot by securing signatures from 5 percent of the total voters in the last gubernatorial election (roughly 250,000). At

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