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Martindale-Hubbell solicits confidential opinions from members of the Bar, including those who have ratings and those who do not. In addition, members of the Judiciary are queried. Opinions are solicited via written questionnaires and by Martindale-Hubbell representatives who conduct interviews.

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The Legal Ability Ratings (C, B, A) take into consideration the standard of ability for the area where the lawyer practices, the attorney's expertise, nature of the practice and qualifications relevant to the profession. Where a lawyer's practice is limited or specialized (such as in Mr. Lutkenhaus' case since he specializes in Social Security Disability Law & Virginia Workers Compensation Law), rating opinions are made on the basis of performance in those specific fields of law.

The General-Ethical Standards Rating (V) covers adherence to professional standards of conduct and ethics, reliability, diligence and other criteria relevant to the discharge of professional responsibilities.

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