

**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT
THIRD JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
MADISON COUNTY, ILLINOIS**

**GENERAL ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER
2008-C-7**

**ASPIRATIONAL CODE OF PROFESSIONALISM
Third Judicial Circuit of Illinois**

PREAMBLE

We, the **lawyers, judges and staff of the circuit court's office** of the Third Judicial Circuit, come together to adopt this aspirational code of professionalism. We are stewards of the law, and it is through cooperation, personal integrity and professional rapport that we are able to fairly resolve disputes in a rational, peaceful and efficient manner. As stated in the Preamble to the Illinois Rules of Professional Conduct,

"The practice of law is a public trust. Lawyers are the trustees of the system by which citizens resolve disputes among themselves, punish and deter crime and determine their relative rights and responsibilities toward each other and their government."

We believe that unprofessional conduct delays justice and diminishes the community's confidence in our legal system. It is our duty to promote the public's trust by following these standards of professional behavior, which will assist us in meeting our obligations to each other, the community, and the justice system.

In this code, we have restated our profession's highest aspirations. We invite the legal community to join us in creating and maintaining a professional environment which will better serve the needs of our clients and the legal system. This code does not add or detract from the responsibilities of lawyers and judges. It does not supercede the existing disciplinary code or standards of conduct. It represents our commitment to the principle that the judicial system function in an environment of mutual trust and respect.

1. WE WILL BE RESPECTFUL, POLITE AND COURTEOUS.

While recognizing our duty to zealously represent our client, we will be respectful, polite, courteous. We will not engage in offensive conduct toward other parties, counsel, witnesses or court personnel. We will treat others in a professional and civilized manner in all communication, written, oral and electronic. We will refrain from disparaging personal remarks and will treat opponents with fair consideration.

2. WE WILL BE COOPERATIVE WITH OTHERS.

In carrying out our duties, we will uphold the law and strive to meet our fundamental goal of resolving disputes rationally, peacefully and efficiently. Within our role as advocates, we will cooperate with the court, other lawyers, court personnel. We will follow court procedure. We will avoid unprofessional conduct and not allow our client's emotions to cloud our professional judgment and our personal integrity.

3. WE WILL STRIVE TO INCREASE PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IN THE LEGAL PROFESSION.

We will maintain and strive to enhance public confidence by preparing and competently representing those who seek our legal counsel. We will work to improve our system of justice to meet the needs of our rapidly changing society. We will defend the integrity of our profession against those who attempt to corrupt, abuse or defraud it.

4. WE WILL USE FAIR TACTICS.

We will not use strategic incivility to gain an advantage over our opponents. We will not misrepresent or distort the facts, misrepresent the law, engage in abusive discovery practices, or prolong litigation. We will not harass opponents or witnesses. We will use fair tactics in resolving disputes and remember that we are officers of the court, guardians of the system, protectors of fairness and the trustees of the law.

5. WE WILL BE PREPARED AND PUNCTUAL.

We will be prepared and punctual for meetings with our clients, conferences, depositions, court hearings, and trials. We will not seek delays without good cause and timely notice. We will be receptive to reasonable requests for extensions of time.

6. WE WILL KEEP OUR PROMISES.

We will faithfully adhere to all promises and agreements, both written and oral. We will honor local custom and rules, and comply with orders of the court. In the event that we cannot fulfill our promises, we will explain in good faith and give timely notice.

7. WE WILL PRESENT OURSELVES IN A PROFESSIONAL MANNER.

We are stewards of the law, and the community looks toward us for guidance. In our interactions with the community, and other members of the bench and bar, we shall conduct ourselves as professionals and recognize the need for appropriate attire, speech and conduct.

8. WE WILL SERVE OUR CLIENTS.

Our first obligation is to our clients. We will zealously represent them and maintain the trust they place in us. We will ensure confidential and loyal representation. We will follow all the rules of professional ethics and conduct.

9. WE WILL SERVE THE BENCH AND THE BAR.

We shall seek opportunities to serve the bench and bar. When appropriate, we will request assistance from, and provide assistance to, others. We will be mindful of the need to be supportive, helpful and respectful to new members of the profession. We will make all reasonable efforts to mentor new members and make them aware of this code of legal professionalism.

10. WE WILL SERVE OUR COMMUNITY.

We will, consistent with the Illinois Rules of Professional Conduct, accept our responsibility as officers of the court to use our training, experience and skills to ensure that legal services in the public interest are available. These services take many forms, including pro bono representation, legal assistance for the disabled, and participation in the organized bar's efforts at law reform. Each lawyer's contributions in this area are essential to the public's confidences in the judicial system. We acknowledge the diverse needs of those in our community and strive to ensure that we not only provide legal assistance, but assistance to the community as a whole.

On this 12th day of June, 2008 at a regular meeting of the Circuit Judges of the Third Judicial Circuit, State of Illinois, said meeting called pursuant to Notice, the Aspirational Code of Professionalism is approved and adopted by the undersigned being majority of all of the Circuit Judges of the Third Judicial Circuit.

It is further ordered that this order be filed in office of the Circuit Clerk of Madison County, Illinois and said order be made available to members of the bar and public.

___/s/ Ann Callis_____

___/s/ A. A. Matosian_____

___/s/ John Knight_____

___/s/ David A. Hyla_____

___/s/ Charles Romani_____

___/s/ Barbara Crowder_____

___/s/ Edward C. Ferguson_____

___/s/ Nicholas Byron_____

CIRCUIT JUDGES OF THE THIRD JUDICIAL CIRCUIT