

Courtesy Toward Clients

A lawyer should maintain a cordial and respectful relationship with clients and be courteously candid, even when there is a disagreement with the client as to the manner in which the client's case should proceed.

Courtesy Toward

Other Counsel

A lawyer should maintain a cordial and respectful relationship with other lawyers and should always be courteous and candid with opposing counsel, reserving the right to disagree without being disagreeable.

Before scheduling depositions, hearings, or motions, a lawyer should endeavor to contact opposing counsel and agree on a convenient time, date, and place so as to reasonably accommodate all counsel. When it becomes necessary to cancel scheduled hearings or depositions, opposing counsel should be notified promptly.

If a lawyer knows that his client is going to submit to a voluntary dismissal of a matter, the lawyer should promptly notify opposing counsel to avoid unnecessary trial preparation and expense.

A lawyer should refrain from curt or personally critical remarks concerning opposing counsel.

A lawyer should return other counsel's telephone calls and respond to written communications in a timely manner.

A lawyer in the courtroom should do the following whenever reasonably possible:

- avoid interruption of opposing counsel except when necessary to voice an objection.
- unless otherwise directed by the court, present an exhibit to opposing counsel before presenting the exhibit to a witness.
- avoid standing between the witness and opposing counsel during examination.
- provide opposing counsel with a copy of any opinion or document given to the court.
- encourage appropriate courtroom behavior by clients and witnesses.

Courtesy Toward Other

Personnel

A lawyer should act respectfully and speak cordially to all court personnel with an awareness that they are an integral part of the judicial system.

A lawyer should, whenever possible, be mindful of the constraints of time when filing papers, recording documents and initiating probate proceedings, and attempt to schedule in advance if extended time is anticipated.

Courtesy By the Court Toward Judges

Judges should accommodate reasonable personal requests by lawyers.

A judge should treat lawyers and litigants with courtesy, and, while maintaining control of proceedings, should attempt to do so in a manner intended to avoid personal humiliation.

Judges should conduct themselves in social settings in a way that recognizes attempts to avoid the perceptions of favoritism that may arise when they are seen with an attorney or party in pending litigation.

8000 Weston Parkway • Cary, NC 27513
P.O. Box 3688 • Cary, NC 27519
1.800.662.7407 • 919.677.0561 • www.ncbar.org
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NORTH CAROLINA
BAR ASSOCIATION
SEEKING LIBERTY & JUSTICE

*The North
Carolina
Lawyer*

**Professional
Counsel**

NORTH CAROLINA
BAR ASSOCIATION

As guardians of the American legal system, lawyers have a special responsibility to honor the rule of law and advance justice, to provide excellent service to their clients, to respect opposing parties and their counsel, and to serve the public and the profession. In recognition of these responsibilities, North Carolina lawyers subscribe to the following professional creed.

First and foremost, I will strive to do honor to the search for justice.

To the courts, and other tribunals, and to those who assist them, I offer respect, truthfulness, courtesy, and punctuality.

To my clients, I offer competence, faithfulness, diligence, courtesy, and good judgment. I will strive to represent them as I would want to be represented and to be worthy of their trust.

To opposing parties and their counsel, I offer fairness, integrity, courtesy, and civility. I will seek reconciliation and, if unsuccessful, will strive to make our dispute a dignified one.

To the public and our systems of justice, I offer service. I will strive to improve my professional skills, the law, and our legal system, to make the law and our legal system accessible to all, and to represent those in need of legal service without regard to the popularity of the cause.

To the profession, I offer my dedication to its highest goals and my diligence in seeking to achieve those goals. I will strive to keep our profession a high calling in the spirit of pro bono and public service, and to conduct myself at all times in a manner that will reflect honor upon the profession.

To the individual members of the profession, I offer my services in mentorship when requested and when consistent with the ethical representation of my clients.

The Principles of Professional Courtesy

In 1989, the North Carolina Bar Association's Bench, Bar, and Law School Liaison Committee — which is composed of judges, law school deans, and leading lawyers — responded to the perceived decline of professionalism in the Bar by identifying aspirational standards of professional conduct. The Committee emphasized that the standards were not meant to be minimum or mandatory, but instead to be the standards related to our profession as a higher calling. The Committee's standards were later adopted by the Association's Board of Governors. Now, more than a decade later, the Association has decided it is time for North Carolina lawyers to re-commit themselves to these Principles and to dedicate themselves anew to the legal profession as a higher calling.

The Preamble

The degree of respect which the general public holds for the legal profession is enhanced when the members of the profession demonstrate respect for one another. Civility and manners, no less than a deep-rooted, broad respect for the law, are the hallmarks of an enlightened and effective system of justice. Thoughtful, courteous conduct, manners, and attitudes, constantly practiced by the Bench and Bar alike, will improve both the reality and the public perception of our legal system.

It is hoped that these Principles will serve as a continuing reminder to both Bench and Bar that the successful, indeed the enjoyable, practice of law requires something more than professional competence and that new and seasoned lawyers alike will practice patience, courtesy, and civility at all levels and stages of their calling.

Courtesy Toward the Court

A lawyer should speak or write courteously and respectfully in all communications with the court.

A lawyer who has a personal or social relationship with a judge should never intimate that such relationship will have any bearing or influence on matters then pending or likely to be brought before that judge.

A lawyer should never suggest that a client contact the court concerning a case that is or is likely to be before the court, and conversely should, if the likelihood of such conduct is suspected, forcefully discourage it.

A lawyer should promptly notify the court, as well as all counsel and witnesses, of any delays, continuances, or cancellations of proceedings.

A lawyer appearing in a public proceeding should be attired in a manner that connotes respect for the court.

A lawyer should stand when addressing the court.

A lawyer should avoid visual or verbal displays of temper toward the court, and especially upon a bench ruling against him.