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SEE OHIO RULES OF PROFESSIONAL  
CONDUCT**

## **CODE OF PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY**

### **PREFACE**

The Canons of this Code are statements of axiomatic norms, expressing in general terms the standards of professional conduct expected of lawyers in their relationships with the public, with the legal system, and with the legal profession. They embody the general concepts from which the Ethical Considerations and the Disciplinary Rules are derived.

The Ethical Considerations are aspirational in character and represent the objectives toward which every member of the profession should strive. They constitute a body of principles upon which the lawyer can rely for guidance in many specific situations.

The Disciplinary Rules, unlike the Ethical Considerations, are mandatory in character. The Disciplinary Rules state the minimum level of conduct below which no lawyer can fall without being subject to disciplinary action.

[Effective: July 15, 1974.]

## CANON 1

### A Lawyer Should Assist in Maintaining the Integrity and Competence of the Legal Profession

#### ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

**EC 1-1** A basic tenet of the professional responsibility of lawyers is that every person in our society should have ready access to the independent professional services of a lawyer of integrity and competence. Maintaining the integrity and improving the competence of the bar to meet the highest standards is the ethical responsibility of every lawyer.

**EC 1-2** The public should be protected from those who are not qualified to be lawyers by reason of a deficiency in education or moral standards or of other relevant factors but who nevertheless seek to practice law. To assure the maintenance of high moral and educational standards of the legal profession, lawyers should affirmatively assist courts and other appropriate bodies in promulgating, enforcing, and improving requirements for admission to the bar. In like manner, the bar has a positive obligation to aid in the continued improvement of all phases of pre-admission and post-admission legal education.

**EC 1-3** Before recommending an applicant for admission, a lawyer should satisfy himself that the applicant is of good moral character. Although a lawyer should not become a self-appointed investigator or judge of applicants for admission, he should report to proper officials all unfavorable information he possesses relating to the character or other qualifications of an applicant.

**EC 1-4** The integrity of the profession can be maintained only if conduct of lawyers in violation of the Disciplinary Rules is brought to the attention of the proper officials. A lawyer should reveal voluntarily to those officials all unprivileged knowledge of conduct of lawyers which he believes clearly to be in violation of the Disciplinary Rules. If in the course of an investigation by a grievance or ethics committee of a bar association or by the office of disciplinary counsel it is found that persons involved in the investigation may have violated federal or state criminal statutes, it is the duty of the investigatory agency to notify the appropriate law enforcement or prosecutorial authority of such alleged criminal violation. A lawyer should, upon request, serve on and assist committees and boards having responsibility for the administration of the Disciplinary Rules.

**EC 1-5** A lawyer should maintain high standards of professional conduct and should encourage fellow lawyers to do likewise. He should be temperate and dignified, and he should refrain from all illegal and morally reprehensible conduct. Because of his position in society, even minor violations of law by a lawyer may tend to lessen public confidence in the legal profession. Obedience to law exemplifies respect for law. To lawyers especially, respect for the law should be more than a platitude.

**EC 1-6** An applicant for admission to the bar or a lawyer may be unqualified, temporarily or permanently, for other than moral and educational reasons, such as mental or emotional instability. Lawyers should be diligent in taking steps to see that during a period of disqualification such person is not granted a license or, if licensed, is not permitted to practice. In like manner, when the disqualification has terminated, members of the bar should assist such person in being licensed, or, if licensed, in being restored to his full right to practice.

[Effective: October 5, 1970; EC 1-4 amended effective June 11, 1979.]

## **DISCIPLINARY RULES**

### **DR 1-101. MAINTAINING INTEGRITY AND COMPETENCE OF THE LEGAL PROFESSION.**

(A) A lawyer is subject to discipline if he has made a materially false statement in, or if he has deliberately failed to disclose a material fact requested in connection with, his application for admission to the bar.

(B) A lawyer shall not further the application for admission to the bar of another person known by him to be unqualified in respect to character, education, or other relevant attribute.

[Effective: October 5, 1970.]

**DR 1-102. MISCONDUCT.**

(A) A lawyer shall not:

- (1) Violate a Disciplinary Rule or, as a judicial candidate as defined in Canon 7 of the Code of Judicial Conduct, the provisions of the Code of Judicial Conduct applicable to judicial candidates.
- (2) Circumvent a Disciplinary Rule through actions of another.
- (3) Engage in illegal conduct involving moral turpitude.
- (4) Engage in conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation.
- (5) Engage in conduct that is prejudicial to the administration of justice.
- (6) Engage in any other conduct that adversely reflects on the lawyer's fitness to practice law.

(B) A lawyer shall not engage, in a professional capacity, in conduct involving discrimination prohibited by law because of race, color, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, marital status, or disability. This prohibition does not apply to a lawyer's confidential communication to a client or preclude legitimate advocacy where race, color, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, marital status, or disability is relevant to the proceeding where the advocacy is made.

[Effective: October 5, 1970; amended effective July 1, 1994; July 1, 1995.]

**DR 1-103. DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION TO AUTHORITIES.**

(A) A lawyer possessing unprivileged knowledge of a violation of DR 1-102 shall report such knowledge to a tribunal or other authority empowered to investigate or act upon such violation.

(B) A lawyer possessing unprivileged knowledge or evidence concerning another lawyer or a judge shall reveal fully such knowledge or evidence upon proper request of a tribunal or other authority empowered to investigate or act upon the conduct of lawyers or judges.

(C) Any knowledge obtained by a member of a committee or subcommittee of a bar association, or by a member, employee, or agent of a nonprofit corporation established by a bar association, designed to assist lawyers with substance abuse or mental health problems shall be privileged for all purposes under DR 1-103, provided the knowledge was obtained while the member, employee, or agent was performing duties as a member, employee, or agent of the committee, subcommittee, or nonprofit corporation.

[Effective: October 5, 1970; amended effective June 17, 1987; September 1, 1995; February 1, 2003.]

## **DR 1-104. DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION TO THE CLIENT.**

(A) A lawyer shall inform a client at the time of the client's engagement of the lawyer or at any time subsequent to the engagement if the lawyer does not maintain professional liability insurance in the amounts of at least one hundred thousand dollars per occurrence and three hundred thousand dollars in the aggregate or if the lawyer's professional liability insurance is terminated. The notice shall be provided to the client on a separate form set forth following this rule and shall be signed by the client.

(B) A lawyer shall maintain a copy of the notice signed by the client for five years after termination of representation of the client.

(C) The notice required by division (A) of this rule shall not apply to a lawyer who is engaged in either of the following:

- (1) Rendering legal services to a governmental entity that employs the lawyer;
- (2) Rendering legal services to an entity that employs the lawyer as in-house counsel.

### **NOTICE TO CLIENT Required by DR 1-104 Ohio Code of Professional Responsibility**

Pursuant to DR 1-104 of the Ohio Code of Professional Responsibility, I am required to notify you that I do not maintain professional liability (malpractice) insurance of at least \$100,000 per occurrence and \$300,000 in the aggregate.

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Attorney's Signature

### **CLIENT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

I acknowledge receipt of the notice required by DR 1-104 of the Ohio Code of Professional Responsibility that [insert attorney's name] does not maintain professional liability (malpractice) insurance of at least \$100,000 per occurrence and \$300,000 in the aggregate.

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Client's Signature

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Date

## **CANON 2**

### **A Lawyer Should Assist the Legal Profession in Fulfilling Its Duty to Make Legal Counsel Available**

#### **ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

**EC 2-1** The need of members of the public for legal services is met only if they recognize their legal problems, appreciate the importance of seeking assistance, and are able to obtain the services of acceptable legal counsel. Hence, important functions of the legal profession are to educate laymen to recognize their legal problems, to facilitate the process of intelligent selection of lawyers, and to assist in making legal services fully available.

##### **Recognition of Legal Problems**

**EC 2-2** The legal profession should assist laymen to recognize legal problems because such problems may not be self-revealing and often are not timely noticed. Therefore, lawyers acting under proper auspices should encourage and participate in educational and public relations programs concerning our legal system with particular reference to legal problems that frequently arise. Such educational programs should be motivated by a desire to benefit the public rather than to obtain publicity or employment for particular lawyers. Examples of permissible activities include preparation of institutional advertisements and professional articles for lay publications and participation in seminars, lectures, and civic programs. But a lawyer who participates in such activities should shun personal publicity.

**EC 2-3** Whether a lawyer acts properly in volunteering advice to a layman to seek legal services depends upon the circumstances. The giving of advice that one should take legal action could well be in fulfillment of the duty of the legal profession to assist laymen in recognizing legal problems. The advice is proper only if motivated by a desire to protect one who does not recognize that he may have legal problems or who is ignorant of his legal rights or obligations. Hence, the advice is improper if motivated by a desire to obtain personal benefit, secure personal publicity, or cause litigation to be brought merely to harass or injure another.

**EC 2-4** Since motivation is subjective and often difficult to judge, the motives of a lawyer who volunteers advice likely to produce legal controversy may well be suspect if he receives professional employment or other benefits as a result. A lawyer who volunteers advice that one should obtain the services of a lawyer generally should not himself accept employment, compensation, or other benefit in connection with that matter. However, it is not improper for a lawyer to volunteer such advice and render resulting legal services to close friends, relatives, former clients (in regard to matters germane to former employment), and regular clients.

**EC 2-5** A lawyer who writes or speaks for the purpose of educating members of the public to recognize their legal problems should carefully refrain from giving or appearing to give a general solution applicable to all apparently similar individual problems, since slight changes in fact situations may require a material variance in the applicable advice; otherwise, the public may be misled and misadvised. Talks and writings by lawyers for laymen should caution them not to attempt to solve individual problems upon the basis of the information contained therein.

### **Selection of a Lawyer: Generally**

**EC 2-6** Formerly a potential client usually knew the reputations of local lawyers for competency and integrity and therefore could select a practitioner in whom he had confidence. This traditional selection process worked well because it was initiated by the client and the choice was an informed one.

**EC 2-7** Changed conditions, however, have seriously restricted the effectiveness of the traditional selection process. Often the reputations of lawyers are not sufficiently known to enable laymen to make intelligent choices. The law has become increasingly complex and specialized. Few lawyers are willing and competent to deal with every kind of legal matter, and many laymen have difficulty in determining the competence of lawyers to render different types of legal services. The selection of legal counsel is particularly difficult for transients, persons moving into new areas, persons of limited education or means, and others who have little or no contact with lawyers.

**EC 2-8** Selection of a lawyer by a layman often is the result of the advice and recommendation of third parties--relatives, friends, acquaintances, business associates, or other lawyers. A layman is best served if the recommendation is disinterested and informed. In order that the recommendation be disinterested, a lawyer should not seek to influence another to recommend his employment. A lawyer should not compensate another person for recommending him, for influencing a prospective client to employ him, or to encourage future recommendations.

### **Selection of a Lawyer: Professional Notices and Listings**

**EC 2-9** Methods of advertising that are false, misleading or deceptive should be and are prohibited. However, the Disciplinary Rules recognize the value of giving assistance in the selection process through forms of advertising.

**EC 2-10** The name under which a lawyer conducts his practice may be a factor in the selection process. The use of a trade name or an assumed name could mislead laymen concerning the identity, responsibility, and status of those practicing thereunder. Accordingly, a lawyer in private practice should practice only under his own name, the name of a lawyer employing him, a partnership name composed of the name of one or more of the lawyers practicing in a partnership, or, if permitted by law, in the name of a professional legal corporation, which should be clearly designated as such. For many years some law firms have used a firm name retaining one or more names of deceased or retired partners and such practice is not improper if the firm is a bona fide successor of a firm in which the deceased or retired person was a member, if the use

of the name is authorized by law or by contract, and if the public is not misled thereby. However, the name of a partner who withdraws from a firm but continues to practice law should be omitted from the firm name in order to avoid misleading the public.

**EC 2-11** A lawyer occupying a judicial, legislative, or public executive or administrative position who has the right to practice law concurrently may allow his name to remain in the name of the firm if he actively continues to practice law as a member thereof. Otherwise, his name should be removed from the firm name, and he should not be identified as a past or present member of the firm; and he should not hold himself out as being a practicing lawyer.

**EC 2-12** In order to avoid the possibility of misleading persons with whom he deals, a lawyer should be scrupulous in the representation of his professional status. He should not hold himself out as being a partner or associate of a law firm if he is not one in fact, and thus should not hold himself out as a partner or associate if he only shares offices with another lawyer.

**EC 2-13** In some instances, a lawyer confines his or her practice to a particular field of law. Except as provided in the Rules for the Government of the Bar of Ohio, a lawyer should not be permitted to hold himself or herself out as a specialist or as having special training or ability, other than in the historically excepted fields of admiralty, trademark, and patent law.

**EC 2-14** The legal profession has developed lawyer referral systems designed to aid individuals who are able to pay fees but need assistance in locating lawyers competent to handle their particular problems. Use of a lawyer referral system enables a layman to avoid an uninformed selection of a lawyer because such a system makes possible the employment of competent lawyers who have indicated an interest in the subject matter involved. Lawyers should support the principle of lawyer referral systems and should encourage the evolution of other ethical plans which aid in the selection of qualified counsel.

#### **Financial Ability to Employ Counsel: Generally**

**EC 2-15** The legal profession cannot remain a viable force in fulfilling its role in our society unless its members receive adequate compensation for services rendered, and reasonable fees should be charged in appropriate cases to clients able to pay them. Nevertheless, persons unable to pay all or a portion of a reasonable fee should be able to obtain necessary legal services, and lawyers should support and participate in ethical activities designed to achieve that objective.

#### **Financial Ability to Employ Counsel: Persons Able to Pay Reasonable Fees**

**EC 2-16** The determination of a proper fee requires consideration of the interests of both client and lawyer. A lawyer should not charge more than a reasonable fee, for excessive cost of legal service would deter laymen from utilizing the legal system in protection of their rights. Furthermore, an excessive charge abuses the professional relationship between lawyer and client. On the other hand, adequate compensation is necessary in order to enable the lawyer to serve his client effectively and to preserve the integrity and independence of the profession.

**EC 2-17** The determination of the reasonableness of a fee requires consideration of all relevant circumstances, including those stated in the Disciplinary Rules. The fees of a lawyer will vary according to many factors, including the time required, his experience, ability, and reputation, the nature of the employment, the responsibility involved, and the results obtained. Suggested fee schedules and economic reports of state and local bar associations provide some guidance on the subject of reasonable fees. It is a commendable and longstanding tradition of the bar that special consideration is given in the fixing of any fee for services rendered a brother lawyer or a member of his immediate family.

**EC 2-18** As soon as feasible after a lawyer has been employed, it is desirable that he reach a clear agreement with his client as to the basis of the fee charges to be made. Such a course will not only prevent later misunderstanding but will also work for good relations between the lawyer and the client. It is usually beneficial to reduce to writing the understanding of the parties regarding the fee, particularly when it is contingent. A lawyer should be mindful that many persons who desire to employ him may have had little or no experience with fee charges of lawyers, and for this reason he should explain fully to such persons the reasons for the particular fee arrangement he proposes.

**EC 2-19** Contingent fee arrangements in civil cases have long been commonly accepted in the United States in proceedings to enforce claims. The historical bases of their acceptance are that (1) they often, and in a variety of circumstances, provide the only practical means by which one having a claim against another can economically afford, finance, and obtain the services of a competent lawyer to prosecute his claim, and (2) a successful prosecution of the claim produces a res out of which the fee can be paid. Although a lawyer generally should decline to accept employment on a contingent fee basis by one who is able to pay a reasonable fixed fee, it is not necessarily improper for a lawyer, where justified by the particular circumstances of a case, to enter into a contingent fee contract in a civil case with any client who, after being fully informed of all relevant factors, desires that arrangement. Because of the human relationships involved and the unique character of the proceedings, contingent fee arrangements in domestic relations cases are rarely justified. In administrative agency proceedings contingent fee contracts should be governed by the same considerations as in other civil cases. Public policy properly condemns contingent fee arrangements in criminal cases, largely on the ground that legal services in criminal cases do not produce a res with which to pay the fee.

**EC 2-20** A lawyer should not accept compensation or any thing of value incident to his employment or services from one other than his client without the knowledge and consent of his client after full disclosure.

**EC 2-21** Without the prior consent of his or her client, a lawyer should not associate in a particular matter another lawyer outside his or her firm. A fee may properly be divided between lawyers properly associated if: (1) the division is in proportion to the services performed or, if agreed to in writing by the client, all of the lawyers assume responsibility for representing the client; (2) the terms of the fee division and the identity of all lawyers sharing in the fee are disclosed in writing to the client prior to obtaining the client's consent; and (3) the total fee is reasonable.

**EC 2-22** A lawyer should be zealous in his efforts to avoid controversies over fees with clients and should attempt to resolve amicably any differences on the subject. He should not sue a client for a fee unless necessary to prevent fraud or gross imposition by the client.

#### **Financial Ability to Employ Counsel: Persons Unable to Pay Reasonable Fees**

**EC 2-23** A layman whose financial ability is not sufficient to permit payment of any fee cannot obtain legal services, other than in cases where a contingent fee is appropriate, unless the services are provided for him. Even a person of moderate means may be unable to pay a reasonable fee which is large because of the complexity, novelty, or difficulty of the problem or similar factors.

**EC 2-24** Historically, the need for legal services of those unable to pay reasonable fees has been met in part by lawyers who donated their services or accepted court appointments on behalf of such individuals. The basic responsibility for providing legal services for those unable to pay ultimately rests upon the individual lawyer, and personal involvement in the problems of the disadvantaged can be one of the most rewarding experiences in the life of a lawyer. Every lawyer, regardless of professional prominence or professional workload, should find time to participate in serving the disadvantaged. The rendition of free legal services to those unable to pay reasonable fees continues to be an obligation of each lawyer, but the efforts of individual lawyers are often not enough to meet the need. Thus it has been necessary for the profession to institute additional programs to provide legal services. Accordingly, legal aid offices, lawyer referral services, and other related programs have been developed, and others will be developed, by the profession. Every lawyer should support all proper efforts to meet this need for legal services.

#### **Acceptance and Retention of Employment**

**EC 2-25** A lawyer is under no obligation to act as adviser or advocate for every person who may wish to become his client; but in furtherance of the objective of the bar to make legal services fully available, a lawyer should not lightly decline proffered employment. The fulfillment of this objective requires acceptance by a lawyer of his share of tendered employment which may be unattractive both to him and the bar generally.

**EC 2-26** History is replete with instances of distinguished and sacrificial services by lawyers who have represented unpopular clients and causes. Regardless of his personal feelings, a lawyer should not decline representation because a client or a cause is unpopular or community reaction is adverse.

**EC 2-27** The personal preference of a lawyer to avoid adversary alignment against judges, other lawyers, public officials, or influential members of the community does not justify his rejection of tendered employment.

**EC 2-28** When a lawyer is appointed by a court or requested by a bar association to undertake representation of a person unable to obtain counsel, whether for financial or other reasons, he

should not seek to be excused from undertaking the representation except for compelling reasons. Compelling reasons do not include such factors as the repugnance of the subject matter of the proceeding, the identity or position of a person involved in the case, the belief of the lawyer that the defendant in a criminal proceeding is guilty, or the belief of the lawyer regarding the merits of the civil case.

**EC 2-29** Employment should not be accepted by a lawyer when he is unable to render competent service or when he knows or it is obvious that the person seeking to employ him desires to institute or maintain an action merely for the purpose of harassing or maliciously injuring another. Likewise, a lawyer should decline employment if the intensity of his personal feeling, as distinguished from a community attitude, may impair his effective representation of a prospective client. If a lawyer knows a client has previously obtained counsel, he should not accept employment in the matter unless the other counsel approves or withdraws, or the client terminates the prior employment.

**EC 2-30** Full availability of legal counsel requires both that persons be able to obtain counsel and that lawyers who undertake representation complete the work involved. Trial counsel for a convicted defendant should continue to represent his client by advising whether to take an appeal and, if the appeal is prosecuted, by representing him through the appeal unless new counsel is substituted or withdrawal is permitted by the appropriate court.

**EC 2-31** A decision by a lawyer to withdraw should be made only on the basis of compelling circumstances, and in a matter pending before a tribunal he must comply with the rules of the tribunal regarding withdrawal. A lawyer should not withdraw without considering carefully and endeavoring to minimize the possible adverse effect on the rights of his client and the possibility of prejudice to his client as a result of his withdrawal. Even when he justifiably withdraws, a lawyer should protect the welfare of his client by giving due notice of his withdrawal, suggesting employment of other counsel, delivering to the client all papers and property to which the client is entitled, cooperating with counsel subsequently employed, and otherwise endeavoring to minimize the possibility of harm. Further, he should refund to the client any compensation not earned during the employment.

**EC 2-32** As a party of the legal profession's commitment to the principle that high quality legal services should be available to all, attorneys are encouraged to cooperate with qualified legal assistance organizations providing prepaid legal services. Such participation should at all times be in accordance with the basic tenets of the profession: independence, integrity, competence and devotion to the interests of individual clients. An attorney so participating should make certain that his relationship with a qualified legal assistance organization in no way interferes with his independent, professional representation of the interests of the individual client. An attorney should avoid situations in which officials of the organization who are not lawyers attempt to direct attorneys concerning the manner in which legal services are performed for individual members, and should also avoid situations in which considerations of economy are given undue weight in determining the attorneys employed by an organization or the legal services to be performed for the member or beneficiary rather than competence and quality of service. An attorney interested in maintaining the historic traditions of the profession and

preserving the function of a lawyer as a trusted and independent advisor to individual members of society should carefully assess such factors when accepting employment by, or otherwise participating in, a particular qualified legal assistance organization, and while so participating should adhere to the highest professional standards of effort and competence.

[Effective: October 5, 1970; EC 2-33 adopted effective October 20, 1975; EC 2-3 and 2-9 amended effective March 1, 1986; EC 2-10 repealed and EC 2-11 to EC 2-33 renumbered effective March 1, 1986; EC 2-13 amended effective January 1, 1993.]

## **DR 2-101. PUBLICITY.**

(A) A lawyer shall not, on his or her own behalf or that of a partner, associate, or other lawyer affiliated with the lawyer or the lawyer's firm, use, or participate in the use of, any form of public communication, including direct mail solicitation, that:

(1) Contains any false, fraudulent, misleading, deceptive, self-laudatory, or unfair statement;

(2) Seeks employment in connection with matters in which the lawyer or law firm does not intend to actively participate in the representation, but that the lawyer or law firm intends to refer to other counsel, except that this provision shall not apply to organizations defined in DR 2-103(D)(1);

(3) Contains any testimonial of past or present clients pertaining to the lawyer's capability;

(4) Contains any claim that is not verifiable;

(5) Contains characterizations of rates or fees chargeable by the lawyer or law firm, such as "cut-rate," "lowest," "giveaway," "below cost," "discount," and "special;" however, use of characterizations of rates or fees such as "reasonable" and "moderate" is acceptable.

(B) Subject to the limitations contained in these rules:

(1) A lawyer or law firm may advertise services or the sale of a law practice through newspapers, periodicals, trade journals, "shoppers," and similar print media, outdoor advertising, radio and television, and written communication.

(2) A lawyer or law firm may permit or purchase inclusion of information in a telephone or city directory, subject to the following standards:

(a) The lawyer's or the firm's name, address, and telephone number may be listed alphabetically in the residential, business, or classified sections.

(b) Listing or display advertising in the classified section shall be limited to one or more of the following:

(i) under the general heading "Lawyers" or "Attorneys;"

(ii) if a lawyer or a firm meets the requirements of DR 2-105(A)(1), under the classification or heading identifying the field or area of practice in which the lawyer or firm is so qualified;

(iii) under a classification or heading that identifies the lawyer or firm by geographic location, certification as a specialist pursuant to DR 2-105(A)(4) or (5), or field of law as provided by DR 2-105(A)(6).

(c) Nothing contained in this rule shall prohibit a lawyer or law firm from permitting inclusion in reputable law lists and law directories intended primarily for the use of the legal profession, of such information as has traditionally appeared in those publications.

(3) Brochures or pamphlets containing biographical and informational data that is acceptable under these rules may be disseminated directly to clients, members of the bar, or others.

(C) A communication is false or misleading if it satisfies any of the following:

(1) Contains a material misrepresentation of fact or law, or omits a fact necessary to make the statement considered as a whole not materially misleading;

(2) Is likely to create an unjustified expectation about results the lawyer can achieve, or states or implies that the lawyer can achieve results by means that violate the Code of Professional Responsibility or other law;

(3) Is subjectively self-laudatory, or compares a lawyer's services with other lawyers' services, unless the comparison can be factually substantiated.

(D) The following information with regard to lawyers, law firms, or members of firms will be presumed to be informational rather than solely promotional or self-laudatory, and acceptable for dissemination under these rules, if accurate and presented in a dignified manner:

(1) Name or names of lawyer, law firm, and professional associates, together with their addresses and telephone numbers, with designations such as "Lawyer," "Attorney," "Law Firm";

(2) Field or fields of practice, limitations of practice, or areas of concentration, but only to the extent permitted by DR 2-105;

(3) Date and place of birth;

(4) Dates and places of admission to the bar of the state and federal courts;

(5) Schools attended, with dates of graduation and degrees conferred;

(6) Legal teaching positions held at accredited law schools;

(7) Authored publications;

- (8) Memberships in bar associations and other professional organizations;
- (9) Technical and professional licenses;
- (10) Military service;
- (11) Foreign language abilities;
- (12) Subject to DR 2-103, prepaid or group legal service programs in which the lawyer or firm participates;
- (13) Whether credit cards or other credit arrangements are accepted;
- (14) Office and telephone answering services hours.

(E)(1) Any of the following information with regard to fees and charges, if presented in a dignified manner, is acceptable for communication to the public in the manner stipulated by DR 2-101(B):

- (a) Fee for an initial consultation;
- (b) Availability upon request of either a written schedule of fees or of an estimate of the fee to be charged for specific services;
- (c) Contingent fee rates, subject to DR 2-106(C), provided that the statement discloses whether percentages are computed before or after deduction of costs and expenses and advises the public that, in the event of an adverse verdict or decision, the contingent fee litigant could be liable for payment of court costs, expenses of investigation, expenses of medical examinations, and costs incurred in obtaining and presenting evidence;
- (d) Fixed fee or range of fees for specific legal services or hourly fee rates, provided the statement discloses that:
  - (i) Stated fixed fees or range of fees will be available only to clients whose matters are included among the specified services;
  - (ii) If the client's matter is not included among the specified services or if no hourly fee rate is stated, the client will be entitled, without obligation, to a specific written estimate of the fee likely to be charged.

(2)(a) If a lawyer or a law firm quotes a fee for a service in an advertisement or direct mail solicitation, the service must be rendered for no more than the fee advertised or quoted.

(b) Unless otherwise specified in the advertisement, if a lawyer or a law firm includes any fee information in a publication that is published more frequently than one time per month,

the lawyer or law firm shall be bound by any representation made in the advertisement for a period of not less than thirty days after such publication. If a lawyer or law firm publishes any fee information in a publication that is published once a month or less frequently, the lawyer or law firm shall be bound by any representation made in the advertisement until the publication of the succeeding issue. If a lawyer or law firm advertises any fee information in a publication that has no fixed date for publication of a succeeding issue, the lawyer or law firm shall be bound by any representation made in the advertisement for a reasonable period of time after publication, but in no event less than one year.

(c) Unless otherwise specified, if a lawyer or law firm broadcasts any fee information by radio or television, the lawyer or law firm shall be bound by any representation made in the broadcast for a period of not less than thirty days after the date of the broadcast.

(F)(1) A lawyer shall not make any solicitation of legal business in person or by telephone, except as provided in DR 2-103 and DR 2-104.

(2) A lawyer or law firm may engage in written solicitation by direct mail addressed to persons or groups of persons who may be in need of specific legal service by reason of a circumstance, condition, or occurrence that is known or, upon reasonable inquiry, could be known to the soliciting lawyer or law firm, provided the letter of solicitation:

(a) Discloses accurately and fully the manner in which the lawyer or law firm became aware of and verified the identity and specific legal need of the addressee;

(b) Disclaims any prior acquaintance or contact with the addressee and avoids any personalization in approach unless the facts are otherwise;

(c) Disclaims or refrains from expressing any predetermined evaluation of the merits of the addressee's case;

(d) Conforms to standards required by these rules with respect to information acceptable for inclusion in media advertising by lawyers and law firms;

(e) Includes in its text and on the envelope in which mailed, in red ink and in type no smaller than 10 point, the recital –“ADVERTISEMENT ONLY.”

(3) The provisions of division (F)(2) of this rule shall not apply to organizations defined in DR 2-103(D)(1).

(4) Prior to mailing a written solicitation of legal business pursuant to division (F)(2) of this rule to a party who has been named as a defendant in a civil action, a lawyer or law firm shall verify that the party has been served with notice of the action filed against that party. Service shall be verified by consulting the docket of the court in which the action was filed to determine whether mail, personal, or residence service has been perfected or whether service by

publication has been completed. Division (F)(4) of this rule shall not apply to the solicitation of a debtor regarding representation of the debtor in a potential or actual bankruptcy action.

(G) A lawyer shall not directly or indirectly compensate or give any thing of value to representatives of the press, radio, television, or other communication medium in anticipation of or in return for professional publicity in a news item.

(H)(1) If a communication is sent by a lawyer to a prospective client or a relative of a prospective client within thirty days of an accident or disaster that gives rise to a potential claim for personal injury or wrongful death, the following "Understanding Your Rights" must be enclosed with the communication.

## **UNDERSTANDING YOUR RIGHTS\***

If you have been in an accident, or a family member has been injured or killed in a crash or some other incident, you have many important decisions to make. We believe it is important for you to consider the following:

- 1. Make and keep records** - If your situation involves a motor vehicle crash, regardless of who may be at fault, it is helpful to obtain a copy of the police report, learn the identity of any witnesses, and obtain photographs of the scene, vehicles, and any visible injuries. Keep copies of receipts of all your expenses and medical care related to the incident.
- 2. You do not have to sign anything** - You may not want to give an interview or recorded statement without first consulting with an attorney, because the statement can be used against you. If you may be at fault or have been charged with a traffic or other offense, it may be advisable to consult an attorney right away. However, if you have insurance, your insurance policy probably requires you to cooperate with your insurance company and to provide a statement to the company. If you fail to cooperate with your insurance company, it may void your coverage.
- 3. Your interests versus interests of insurance company** - Your interests and those of the other person's insurance company are in conflict. Your interests may also be in conflict with your own insurance company. Even if you are not sure who is at fault, you should contact your own insurance company and advise the company of the incident to protect your insurance coverage.
- 4. There is a time limit to file an insurance claim** - Legal rights, including filing a lawsuit, are subject to time limits. You should ask what time limits apply to your claim. You may need to act immediately to protect your rights.
- 5. Get it in writing** - You may want to request that any offer of settlement from anyone be put in writing, including a written explanation of the type of damages which they are willing to cover.
- 6. Legal assistance may be appropriate** - You may consult with an attorney before you sign any document or release of claims. A release may cut off all future rights against others, obligate you to repay past medical bills or disability benefits, or jeopardize future benefits. If your interests conflict with your own insurance company, you always have the right to discuss the matter with an attorney of your choice, which may be at your own expense.
- 7. How to find an attorney** - If you need professional advice about a legal problem but do not know an attorney, you may wish to check with relatives, friends, neighbors, your employer or co-workers who may be able to recommend an attorney. Your local bar association may have a lawyer referral service that can be found in the Yellow Pages.

**8. Check a lawyer's qualifications** - Before hiring any lawyer, you have the right to know the lawyer's background, training, and experience in dealing with cases similar to yours.

**9. How much will it cost?** - In deciding whether to hire a particular lawyer, you should discuss, and the lawyer's written fee agreement should reflect:

- a. How is the lawyer to be paid? If you already have a settlement offer, how will that affect a contingent fee arrangement?
- b. How are the expenses involved in your case, such as telephone calls, deposition costs, and fees for expert witnesses, to be paid? Will these costs be advanced by the lawyer or charged to you as they are incurred? Since you are obligated to pay all expenses even if you lose your case, how will payment be arranged?
- c. Who will handle your case? If the case goes to trial, who will be the trial attorney?

This information is not intended as a complete description of your legal rights, but as a checklist of some of the important issues you should consider.

**\*THE SUPREME COURT OF OHIO, WHICH GOVERNS THE CONDUCT OF LAWYERS IN THE STATE OF OHIO, NEITHER PROMOTES NOR PROHIBITS THE DIRECT SOLICITATION OF PERSONAL INJURY VICTIMS. THE COURT DOES REQUIRE THAT, IF SUCH A SOLICITATION IS MADE, IT MUST INCLUDE THE ABOVE DISCLOSURE.**

(2) The communication described in division (H)(1) of this rule must meet all of the other requirements of these rules.

(3) The communication described in division (H)(1) of this rule applies to any communication sent by a lawyer, on the lawyer's behalf, or by the lawyer's firm, partner, associate, or any other lawyer affiliated with the lawyer or the lawyer's firm.

[Effective: October 5, 1970; amended effective October 20, 1975; November 28, 1977; February 12, 1979; June 11, 1979; March 1, 1986; January 1, 1993; August 16, 1993; January 1, 2000; April 1, 2001; February 1, 2003.]

## **DR 2-102. PROFESSIONAL NOTICES, LETTERHEADS, AND OFFICES.**

(A) A lawyer or law firm may use or participate in the use of professional cards, professional announcement cards, office signs, letterheads, or similar professional notices or devices, that are in dignified form and comply with the following:

(1) A professional card of a lawyer identifying the lawyer by name and as a lawyer and giving the lawyer's addresses, telephone numbers, law firm name, and any information permitted under DR 2-105. A professional card of a law firm may also give the names of members and associates and may be used for identification.

(2) A brief professional announcement card stating new or changed associations or addresses, change of firm name, sale of a law practice, or similar matters pertaining to the professional offices of a lawyer or law firm. It shall not state the nature of the practice except as permitted under DR 2-105.

(3) A sign on or near the door of the office and in the building directory identifying the law office. The sign shall not state the nature of the practice, except as permitted under DR 2-105.

(4) A letterhead of a lawyer identifying the lawyer by name and as a lawyer, and giving the lawyer's addresses, telephone numbers, law firm name, associates, and any information permitted under DR 2-105. A letterhead of a law firm may also give the names of members and associates, and names and dates relating to deceased and retired members. A lawyer may be designated "Of Counsel" on a letterhead if the lawyer has a continuing relationship with a lawyer or law firm, other than as a partner or associate. A lawyer or law firm may be designated as "General Counsel" or by similar professional reference on stationery of a client if the lawyer or the firm devotes a substantial amount of professional time in the representation of that client. The letterhead of a law firm may give the names and dates of predecessor firms in a continuing line of succession.

(B) A lawyer in private practice shall not practice under a trade name, a name that is misleading as to the identity of the lawyer or lawyers practicing under the name, or a firm name containing names other than those of one or more of the lawyers in the firm, except that the name of a professional corporation or association, legal clinic, limited liability company, or registered partnership shall contain symbols indicating the nature of the organization as required by Gov. Bar R. III. If otherwise lawful, a firm may use as, or continue to include in, its name the name or names of one or more deceased or retired members of the firm or of a predecessor firm in a continuing line of succession. A lawyer who assumes a judicial, legislative, public executive, or administrative post or office shall not permit his or her name to remain in the name of a law firm or to be used in professional notices of the firm during any significant period in which the lawyer is not actively and regularly practicing law as a member of the firm, and during this period other members of the firm shall not use the lawyer's name in the firm name or in professional notices of the firm.

(C) A lawyer shall not hold himself or herself out as having a partnership with one or more other lawyers or professional corporations unless they are in fact partners.

(D) A partnership shall not be formed or continued between or among lawyers licensed in different jurisdictions unless all enumerations of the members and associates of the firm on its letterhead and in other permissible listings make clear the jurisdictional limitations on those members and associates of the firm not licensed to practice in all listed jurisdictions; however, the same firm name may be used in each jurisdiction.

(E) A lawyer who is engaged both in the practice of law and another profession or business shall not so indicate on the lawyer's letterhead, office sign, or professional card, nor shall the lawyer identify himself or herself as a lawyer in any publication in connection with his or her other profession or business.

(F) Nothing contained in this rule shall prohibit a lawyer from using or permitting the use, in connection with the lawyer's name, of an earned degree or title derived from an earned degree indicating the lawyer's training in the law.

(G) A legal clinic operated by one or more lawyers may be organized by the lawyer or lawyers for the purpose of providing standardized and multiple legal services. The name of the law office shall consist only of the names of one or more of the active practitioners in the organization, and may include the phrase "legal clinic" or words of similar import. The use of a trade name or geographical or other type of identification or description is prohibited. The name of any active practitioner in the clinic may be retained in the name of the legal clinic after the lawyer's death, retirement or inactivity because of age or disability, and the name must otherwise conform to other provisions of the Code of Professional Responsibility and The Supreme Court Rules for the Government of the Bar of Ohio. The legal clinic cannot be owned by, and profits or losses cannot be shared with, nonlawyers or lawyers who are not actively engaged in the practice of law in the organization.

[Effective: October 5, 1970; amended effective November 28, 1977; March 13, 1978; June 11, 1979; January 4, 1982; March 1, 1986; December 1, 1995; February 1, 2003.]

## **DR 2-103. RECOMMENDATION OF PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYMENT.**

(A) A lawyer shall not recommend employment, as a private practitioner, of himself or herself, his or her partner, or associate to a non-lawyer who has not sought the lawyer's advice regarding employment of a lawyer, except as provided in DR 2-101.

(B) A lawyer shall not compensate or give any thing of value to a person or organization to recommend or secure the lawyer's employment by a client, or as a reward for having made a recommendation resulting in the lawyer's employment by a client, except that the lawyer may pay the usual and reasonable fees or dues charged by any of the organizations listed in DR 2-103(D).

(C) A lawyer shall not request a person or organization to recommend or promote the use of the lawyer's services or those of the lawyer's partner or associate, or any other lawyer affiliated with the lawyer or the lawyer's firm, as a private practitioner, except that:

(1) The lawyer may request referrals from a lawyer referral service that refers the lawyer to prospective clients but only if the lawyer referral service conforms to all of the following:

(a) Operates in the public interest for the purpose of referring prospective clients to lawyers, pro bono and public service programs, and government, consumer, or other agencies who can provide the assistance the clients need in light of their financial circumstance, spoken language, any disability, geographical convenience, and the nature and complexity of their problem;

(b) Calls itself a lawyer referral service or a lawyer referral and information service;

(c) Is open to all lawyers who are licensed and admitted to the practice of law in Ohio who maintain an office in the geographical area to be served by the service and who meet reasonable, objectively determined experience requirements established by the service; pay the reasonable registration and membership fees established by the service; and maintain in force a policy of errors and omissions insurance in an amount established by the service;

(d) Establishes rules that prohibit lawyer members of the service from charging prospective clients to whom a client is referred, fees and or costs that exceed charges the client would have incurred had no lawyer referral service been involved;

(e) Establishes procedures to survey periodically clients referred to determine client satisfaction with its operations and to investigate and take appropriate action with respect to client complaints against lawyer members of the service, and the service and its employees;

(f) Establishes procedures for admitting, suspending, or removing lawyers from its roll of panelists and promulgates rules that prohibit the making of a fee generating referral to any lawyer who has an ownership interest in, or who operates or is employed by the lawyer referral

service, or who is associated with a law firm that has an ownership interest in, or operates or is employed by the lawyer referral service;

(g) Establishes subject-matter panels, eligibility for which shall be determined on the basis of experience and other substantial objectively determinable criteria;

(h) Does not, as a condition of participation in the referral service, limit the lawyer's selection of co-counsel to other lawyers listed with the referral service;

(i) Does not make a fee-generating referral to any lawyer who has an ownership interest in or who operates or is employed by the lawyer referral service or who is associated with a law firm that has an ownership interest in or operates or is employed by a lawyer referral service.

(j) Reports regularly to the Supreme Court Committee for Lawyer Referral and Information Services and complies with the record-keeping and requirements of and regulations adopted by the Committee.

(2) A lawyer participating in a lawyer referral service that meets the requirements of divisions (C)(1)(a) to (j) of this rule may:

(a) Be required, in addition to payment of a membership or registration fee as provided in divisions (C)(1)(c) of this rule, to pay a fee calculated as a percentage of legal fees earned by any lawyer panelist to whom the lawyer referral service has referred a matter. The income from the percentage fee shall be used only to pay the reasonable operating expenses of the service and to fund public service activities of the service or its sponsoring organization, including the delivery of pro bono public services;

(b) As a condition of participation in the service, be required to submit any fee disputes with a referred client to mandatory fee arbitration;

(c) Participate in moderate and no-fee panels and other special panels established by the service that respond to the referral needs of the consumer public, eligibility for which shall be determined on the basis of experience and other substantial objectively determinable criteria.

(3) The lawyer may cooperate with the legal service activities of any of the offices or organizations enumerated in divisions (D)(1) to (4) of this rule and may perform legal services for those to whom the lawyer was recommended by it to do such work if both of the following apply:

(a) The person to whom the recommendation is made is a member or beneficiary of such office or organization;

(b) The lawyer remains free to exercise independent professional judgment on behalf of the lawyer's client.

(D) A lawyer shall not knowingly assist a person or organization that furnishes or pays for legal services to others to promote the use of the lawyer's services or those of the lawyer's partner or associate or any other lawyer affiliated with the lawyer or the lawyer's firm except as permitted in DR 2-101(B). However, this does not prohibit a lawyer or the lawyer's partner or associate or any other lawyer affiliated with the lawyer or the lawyer's firm from being recommended, employed, or paid by, or cooperating with, assisting, and providing legal services for, one of the following offices or organizations that promote the use of the lawyer's services or those of the lawyer's partner or associate or any other lawyer affiliated with the lawyer or the lawyer's firm if there is no interference with the exercise of independent professional judgment on behalf of the lawyer's client:

(1) A legal aid office or public defender office:

- (a) Operated or sponsored by a duly accredited law school.
- (b) Operated or sponsored by a bona fide non-profit community organization.
- (c) Operated or sponsored by a governmental agency.
- (d) Operated, sponsored, or approved by a bar association.

(2) A military legal assistance office.

(3) A lawyer referral service that complies with division (C) of this rule.

(4) Any bona fide organization that recommends, furnishes, or pays for legal services to its members or beneficiaries provided all of the following conditions are satisfied:

(a) The organization, including any affiliate, is organized and operated so that no profit is derived by it from the rendition of legal services by lawyers, and that, if the organization is organized for profit, the legal services are not rendered by lawyers employed, directed, supervised, or selected by it except in connection with matters where the organization bears ultimate liability of its member or beneficiary.

(b) Neither the lawyer, the lawyer's partner, associate, or any other lawyer affiliated with the lawyer or the lawyer's firm, nor any non-lawyer, shall have initiated or promoted the organization for the primary purpose of providing financial or other benefit to the lawyer, partner, associate, or affiliated lawyer.

(c) The organization is not operated for the purpose of procuring legal work or financial benefit for any lawyer as a private practitioner outside of the legal services program of the organization.

(d) The member or beneficiary to whom the legal services are furnished, and not the organization, is recognized as the client of the lawyer in the matter.

(e) Any member or beneficiary who is entitled to have legal services furnished or paid for by the organization, if such member or beneficiary so desires, may select counsel other than that furnished, selected or approved by the organization; provided, however, that the organization shall be under no obligation to pay for the legal services furnished by the attorney selected by the beneficiary unless the terms of the legal services plan specifically provide for payment.

Every legal services plan shall provide that any member or beneficiary may assert a claim that representation by counsel furnished, selected, or approved by the organization would be unethical, improper, or inadequate under the circumstances of the matter involved. The plan shall provide for adjudication of a claim under division (D)(4)(e) of this rule and appropriate relief through substitution of counsel or providing that the beneficiary may select counsel and the organization shall pay for the legal services rendered by selected counsel to the extent that such services are covered under the plan and in an amount equal to the cost that would have been incurred by the plan if the plan had furnished designated counsel.

(f) The lawyer does not know or have cause to know that the organization is in violation of applicable laws, rules of court, and other legal requirements that govern its legal service operations.

(g) The organization has filed with the Supreme Court of Ohio, on or before the first day of January of each year, a report with respect to its legal service plan, if any, showing its terms, its schedule of benefits, its subscription charges, agreements with counsel, and financial results of its legal service activities or, if it has failed to do so, the lawyer does not know or have cause to know of the failure.

(E) Nothing in this rule prohibits a lawyer from accepting employment received in response to the lawyer's own advertising, provided the advertising is in compliance with DR 2-101.

[Effective: October 5, 1970; amended effective January 1, 1973; October 29, 1975; March 1, 1986, July 1, 1996; November 1, 1999.]

**DR 2-104. SUGGESTION OF NEED OF LEGAL SERVICES.**

(A) A lawyer who has given unsolicited advice to a nonlawyer that the nonlawyer should obtain counsel or take legal action shall not accept employment resulting from that advice, except that:

(1) A lawyer may accept employment by a close friend, relative, former client, if the advice is germane to the former employment, or one whom the lawyer reasonably believes to be a client.

(2) A lawyer may accept employment that results from the lawyer's participation in activities designed to educate nonlawyers to recognize legal problems, to make intelligent selection of counsel, or to utilize available legal services if the activities are conducted or sponsored by any of the offices or organizations enumerated in DR 2103(D)(1) through (4), to the extent and under the conditions prescribed in these rules.

(3) A lawyer who is recommended, furnished or paid by a qualified legal assistance organization enumerated in DR 2-103(D)(1) through (4) may represent a member or beneficiary of the organization, to the extent and under the conditions prescribed in these rules.

(4) Without affecting the lawyer's right to accept employment, a lawyer may speak publicly or write for publication on legal topics so long as the lawyer does not emphasize the lawyer's own professional experience or reputation and does not undertake to give individual advice.

(5) If success in asserting rights or defenses of the lawyer's client in litigation in the nature of a class action is dependent upon the joinder of others, a lawyer may accept, but shall not seek, employment from those contacted for the purpose of obtaining their joinder.

(B) Nothing in this rule prohibits a lawyer from accepting employment received in response to the lawyer's own advertising, provided the advertising is in compliance with DR 2-101.

[Effective: October 5, 1970; amended effective October 20, 1975; March 1, 1986; December 1, 1995.]

## **DR 2-105. LIMITATION OF PRACTICE.**

(A) A lawyer shall not hold himself or herself out publicly as a specialist or as limiting his or her practice, except as follows:

(1) A lawyer admitted to practice before the United States Patent Office may use the designation "Patents," "Patent Attorney," or "Patent Lawyer," or any combination of those terms, on his letterhead and office sign. A lawyer engaged in the trademark practice may use the designation "Trademarks," "Trademark Attorney," or "Trademark Lawyer," or any combination of those terms, on his letterhead and office sign, and a lawyer engaged in the admiralty practice may use the designation "Admiralty," "Proctor in Admiralty," or "Admiralty Lawyer," or any combination of those terms, on his letterhead and office sign.

(2) A lawyer may permit his name to be listed in lawyer referral service offices according to the fields of law in which he will accept referrals.

(3) A lawyer available to act as a consultant to or as an associate of other lawyers in a particular branch of law or legal service may distribute to other lawyers and publish in legal journals a dignified announcement of such availability, but the announcement shall not contain a representation of special competence or experience.

(4) A lawyer who is certified as a specialist in a particular field of law pursuant to the Supreme Court Rules for the Government of the Bar of Ohio may hold himself or herself out as a specialist only in accordance with those rules.

(5) A lawyer who has received certification from a private organization of special training, competence, or experience in a particular field of law may communicate the fact of the certification only if the certifying organization is bona fide, certification is issued only to lawyers who meet objective and consistently applied standards relevant to practice in that field of law that are higher than those required for admission to the practice of law, and certification is available to all lawyers who meet the standards. Any communication regarding certification shall comply with DR 2-101 and, unless the certifying organization is so approved, shall contain a statement that the certifying organization is not approved by the Supreme Court Commission on Certification of Attorneys as Specialists.

(6) A lawyer may state that his or her practice consists in large part or is limited to a field or fields of law. Except as provided in DR 2-105(A)(1), (4), and (5), a lawyer may not claim or imply special competence or experience in a field of law through use of the term "specialize" or otherwise.

[Effective: October 5, 1970; amended effective March 1, 1986; January 1, 1993.]

## **DR 2-106. FEES FOR LEGAL SERVICES.**

(A) A lawyer shall not enter into an agreement for, charge, or collect an illegal or clearly excessive fee.

(B) A fee is clearly excessive when, after a review of the facts, a lawyer of ordinary prudence would be left with a definite and firm conviction that the fee is in excess of a reasonable fee. Factors to be considered as guides in determining the reasonableness of a fee include the following:

(1) The time and labor required, the novelty and difficulty of the questions involved, and the skill requisite to perform the legal service properly.

(2) The likelihood, if apparent to the client, that the acceptance of the particular employment will preclude other employment by the lawyer.

(3) The fee customarily charged in the locality for similar legal services.

(4) The amount involved and the results obtained.

(5) The time limitations imposed by the client or by the circumstances.

(6) The nature and length of the professional relationship with the client.

(7) The experience, reputation, and ability of the lawyer or lawyers performing the services.

(8) Whether the fee is fixed or contingent.

(C) A lawyer shall not enter into an arrangement for, charge, or collect a contingent fee for representing a defendant in a criminal case.

[Effective: October 5, 1970.]

**DR 2-107. DIVISION OF FEES AMONG LAWYERS.**

(A) Division of fees by lawyers who are not in the same firm may be made only with the prior consent of the client and if all of the following apply:

(1) The division is in proportion to the services performed by each lawyer or, if by written agreement with the client, all lawyers assume responsibility for the representation;

(2) The terms of the division and the identity of all lawyers sharing in the fee are disclosed in writing to the client;

(3) The total fee is reasonable.

(B) In cases of dispute between lawyers arising under this rule, fees shall be divided in accordance with mediation or arbitration provided by a local bar association. Disputes that cannot be resolved by a local bar association shall be referred to the Ohio State Bar Association for mediation or arbitration.

(C) This rule does not prohibit payment to a former partner or associate pursuant to a separation or retirement agreement or payments made in conjunction with the sale of a law practice in accordance with DR 2-111.

[Effective: October 5, 1970; amended effective August 1, 1990; February 1, 2003.]

**DR 2-108. AGREEMENTS RESTRICTING THE PRACTICE OF A LAWYER.**

(A) A lawyer shall not be a party to or participate in a partnership or employment agreement with another lawyer that restricts the right of a lawyer to practice law after the termination of a relationship created by the agreement, except as a condition to payment of retirement benefits or the sale of a law practice in accordance with DR 2-111.

(B) In connection with the settlement of a controversy or suit, a lawyer shall not enter into an agreement that restricts his right to practice law.

[Effective: October 5, 1970; amended effective February 1, 2003.]

**DR 2-109. ACCEPTANCE OF EMPLOYMENT.**

(A) A lawyer shall not accept employment on behalf of a person if he knows or it is obvious that such person wishes to:

(1) Bring a legal action, conduct a defense, or assert a position in litigation, or otherwise have steps taken for him, merely for the purpose of harassing or maliciously injuring any person.

(2) Present a claim or defense in litigation that is not warranted under existing law, unless it can be supported by good faith argument for an extension, modification, or reversal of existing law.

[Effective: October 5, 1970.]

**DR 2-110. WITHDRAWAL FROM EMPLOYMENT.**

**(A) In General.**

(1) If permission for withdrawal from employment is required by the rules of a tribunal, a lawyer shall not withdraw from employment in a proceeding before that tribunal without its permission.

(2) In any event, a lawyer shall not withdraw from employment until the lawyer has taken reasonable steps to avoid foreseeable prejudice to the rights of his or her client, including giving due notice to his or her client, allowing time for employment of other counsel, delivering to the client all papers and property to which the client is entitled, and complying with applicable laws and rules.

(3) A lawyer who withdraws from employment shall refund promptly any part of a fee paid in advance that has not been earned, except when withdrawal is pursuant to DR 2-111.

**(B) Mandatory Withdrawal.** A lawyer representing a client before a tribunal, with its permission if required by its rules, shall withdraw from employment, and a lawyer representing a client in other matters shall withdraw from employment if the lawyer:

(1) Knows or it is obvious that the client is bringing the legal action, conducting the defense, or asserting a position in the litigation, or is otherwise having steps taken for the client, merely for the purpose of harassing or maliciously injuring any person.

(2) Knows or it is obvious that his or her continued employment will result in violation of a Disciplinary Rule.

(3) Has a mental or physical condition that renders it unreasonably difficult for the lawyer to carry out the employment effectively.

(4) Is discharged by the client.

**(C) Permissive Withdrawal.** If DR 2-110(B) is not applicable, a lawyer may not request permission to withdraw in matters pending before a tribunal, and may not withdraw in other matters, unless the request or withdrawal is because:

(1) The client:

(a) Insists upon presenting a claim or defense that is not warranted under existing law and cannot be supported by good faith argument for an extension, modification, or reversal of existing law.

(b) Personally seeks to pursue an illegal course of conduct.

(c) Insists that the lawyer pursue a course of conduct that is illegal or that is prohibited under the Disciplinary Rules.

(d) By other conduct renders it unreasonably difficult for the lawyer to carry out his or her employment effectively.

(e) Insists, in a matter not pending before a tribunal, that the lawyer engage in conduct that is contrary to the judgment and advice of the lawyer but not prohibited under the Disciplinary Rules.

(f) Deliberately disregards an agreement or obligation to the lawyer as to expenses or fees.

(2) The lawyer's continued employment is likely to result in a violation of a Disciplinary Rule.

(3) The lawyer's inability to work with co-counsel indicates that the best interests of the client likely will be served by withdrawal.

(4) The lawyer's mental or physical condition renders it difficult for him to carry out the employment effectively.

(5) The client knowingly and freely assents to termination of the lawyer's employment.

(6) The lawyer believes in good faith, in a proceeding pending before a tribunal, that the tribunal will find the existence of other good cause for withdrawal.

(7) The lawyer sells the law practice in accordance with DR 2-111.

[Effective: October 5, 1970; amended effective February 1, 2003.]

## **DR 2-111. SALE OF LAW PRACTICE**

(A)(1) Subject to the provisions of this rule, a lawyer or law firm may sell or purchase a law practice, including the good will of the practice. The law practice shall be sold in its entirety, except where a conflict of interest is present that prevents the transfer of representation of a client or class of clients. This rule shall not permit the sale or purchase of a law practice where the purchasing lawyer is buying the practice for the sole or primary purpose of reselling the practice to another lawyer or law firm.

(2) As used in this rule:

(a) “Purchasing lawyer” means either an individual lawyer or a law firm;

(b) “Selling lawyer” means an individual lawyer, a law firm, the estate of a deceased lawyer, or the representatives of a disabled or disappeared lawyer.

(B) The selling lawyer and the prospective purchasing lawyer may engage in general discussions regarding the possible sale of a law practice. Before the selling lawyer may provide the prospective purchasing lawyer with information relative to client representation or confidential material contained in client files, the selling lawyer shall require the prospective purchasing lawyer to execute a confidentiality agreement. The confidentiality agreement shall bind the prospective purchasing lawyer to preserve the confidences and secrets of the clients of the selling lawyer, consistent with DR 4-101, as if those clients were clients of the prospective purchasing lawyer.

(C) The selling lawyer and the purchasing lawyer may negotiate the terms of the sale of a law practice, subject to all of the following:

(1) The sale agreement shall include a statement by selling lawyer and purchasing lawyer that the purchasing lawyer is purchasing the law practice in good faith and with the intention of delivering legal services to clients of the selling lawyer and others in need of legal services.

(2) The sale agreement shall provide that the purchasing lawyer will honor any fee agreements between the selling lawyer and the clients of the selling lawyer relative to legal representation that is ongoing at the time of the sale. The purchasing lawyer may negotiate fees with clients of the selling lawyer for legal representation that is commenced after the date of the sale.

(3) The sale agreement may include terms that reasonably limit the ability of the selling lawyer to reenter the practice of law, including, but not limited to, the ability of the selling lawyer to reenter the practice of law for a specific period of time or to practice in a specific geographic area. The sale agreement shall not include terms limiting the ability of the selling lawyer to practice law or reenter the practice of law if the selling lawyer is selling his or her law

practice to enter academic, government, or public service or to serve as in-house counsel to a business.

(D)(1) Prior to completing the sale, the selling lawyer and purchasing lawyer shall provide written notice of the sale to the clients of the selling lawyer. For purposes of this rule, clients of the selling lawyer include all current clients of the selling lawyer and any closed files that the selling lawyer and purchasing lawyer agree to make subject of the sale. The written notice shall include all of the following:

(a) The anticipated effective date of the proposed sale;

(b) A statement that the purchasing lawyer will honor all existing fee agreements for legal representation that is ongoing at the time of sale and that fees for legal representation commenced after the date of sale will be negotiated by the purchasing lawyer and client;

(c) The client's right to retain other counsel or take possession of case files;

(d) The fact that the client's consent to the sale will be presumed if the client does not take action or otherwise object within ninety days of the receipt of the notice;

(e) Biographical information relative to the professional qualifications of the purchasing lawyer, including but not limited to applicable information set forth in DR 2-101(D)(1) to (11), information regarding any disciplinary action taken against the purchasing lawyer, and information regarding the existence, nature, and status of any pending disciplinary complaint certified by a probable cause panel pursuant to Gov. Bar R. V, Section 6(D)(1).

(2) If the seller is the estate of a deceased lawyer or the representative of a disabled or disappeared lawyer, the purchasing lawyer shall provide written notice to the clients, and the purchasing lawyer shall obtain written consent from each client to act on the client's behalf. The client's consent shall be presumed if no response is received from the client within ninety days of the date the notice was sent to the client at the client's last known address as shown on the records of the seller or the client's rights would be prejudiced by a failure to act during the ninety day period.

(3) If a client cannot be given notice, the representation of that client may be transferred to the purchaser only upon entry of an order authorizing the transfer by a court having jurisdiction. The seller may disclose to the court, *in camera*, information relating to the representation only to the extent necessary to obtain an order authorizing the transfer of the representation.

(4) The written notice to clients required by division (D)(1) and (2) of this rule shall be provided by certified mail, return receipt requested. In lieu of providing notice by certified mail, either the selling lawyer or purchasing lawyer, or both, may personally deliver the notice to a client. In the case of personal delivery, the lawyer providing the notice shall obtain written acknowledgement of the delivery from the client.

(E) Neither the selling lawyer nor the purchasing lawyer shall attempt to exonerate the lawyer or law firm from or limit liability to the former or prospective client for any malpractice or other professional negligence. DR 6-102 shall be incorporated in all agreements for the sale or purchase of a law practice. The selling lawyer or the purchasing lawyer, or both, may agree to provide for the indemnification or other contribution arising from any claim or action in malpractice or other professional negligence.

(F) The selling lawyer and the purchasing lawyer shall comply with the limitations, restrictions, or prohibitions contained in the Attorney's Oath of Office, the Supreme Court Rules for the Government of the Bar of Ohio, and the Code of Professional Responsibility, including but not limited to, DR 2-103, 3-102, 4-101, and 5-105.

[Effective: February 1, 2003.]

## CANON 3

### **A Lawyer Should Assist in Preventing the Unauthorized Practice of Law**

#### **ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

**EC 3-1** The prohibition against the practice of law by a layman is grounded in the need of the public for integrity and competence of those who undertake to render legal services. Because of the fiduciary and personal character of the lawyer-client relationship and the inherently complex nature of our legal system, the public can better be assured of the requisite responsibility and competence if the practice of law is confined to those who are subject to the requirements and regulations imposed upon members of the legal profession.

**EC 3-2** The sensitive variations in the considerations that bear on legal determinations often make it difficult even for a lawyer to exercise appropriate professional judgment, and it is therefore essential that the personal nature of the relationship of client and lawyer be preserved. Competent professional judgment is the product of a trained familiarity with law and legal processes, a disciplined, analytical approach to legal problems, and a firm ethical commitment.

**EC 3-3** A non-lawyer who undertakes to handle legal matters is not governed as to integrity or legal competence by the same rules that govern the conduct of a lawyer. A lawyer is not only subject to that regulation but also is committed to high standards of ethical conduct. The public interest is best served in legal matters by a regulated professional committed to such standards. The Disciplinary Rules protect the public in that they prohibit a lawyer from seeking employment by improper overtures, from acting in cases of divided loyalties, and from submitting to the control of others in the exercise of his judgment. Moreover, a person who entrusts legal matters to a lawyer is protected by the attorney-client privilege and by the duty of the lawyer to hold inviolate the confidences and secrets of his client.

**EC 3-4** A layman who seeks legal services often is not in a position to judge whether he will receive proper professional attention. The entrustment of a legal matter may well involve the confidences, the reputation, the property, the freedom, or even the life of the client. Proper protection of members of the public demands that no person be permitted to act in the confidential and demanding capacity of a lawyer unless he is subject to the regulations of the legal profession.

**EC 3-5** It is neither necessary nor desirable to attempt the formulation of a single, specific definition of what constitutes the practice of law. Functionally, the practice of law relates to the rendition of services for others that call for the professional judgment of a lawyer. The essence of the professional judgment of the lawyer is his educated ability to relate the general body and philosophy of law to a specific legal problem of a client; and thus, the public interest will be

better served if only lawyers are permitted to act in matters involving professional judgment. Where this professional judgment is not involved, non-lawyers, such as court clerks, police officers, abstracters, and many governmental employees, may engage in occupations that require a special knowledge of law in certain areas. But the services of a lawyer are essential in the public interest whenever the exercise of professional legal judgment is required.

**EC 3-6** A lawyer often delegates tasks to clerks, secretaries, and other lay persons. Such delegation is proper if the lawyer maintains a direct relationship with his client, supervises the delegated work, and has complete professional responsibility for the work product. This delegation enables a lawyer to render legal service more economically and efficiently.

**EC 3-7** The prohibition against a non-lawyer practicing law does not prevent a layman from representing himself, for then he is ordinarily exposing only himself to possible injury. The purpose of the legal profession is to make educated legal representation available to the public; but anyone who does not wish to avail himself of such representation is not required to do so. Even so, the legal profession should help members of the public to recognize legal problems and to understand why it may be unwise for them to act for themselves in matters having legal consequences.

**EC 3-8** Because a lawyer should not aid or encourage a nonlawyer to practice law, a lawyer should not practice law in association with a nonlawyer or otherwise share legal fees with a nonlawyer. This does not mean, however, that the pecuniary value of the interest of a deceased lawyer in his or her firm or practice may not be paid to his estate or specified persons such as a surviving spouse or heirs through the sale of a law practice or otherwise. In like manner, profit-sharing retirement plans of a lawyer or law firm that include nonlawyer office employees are not improper. These limited exceptions to the rule against sharing legal fees with nonlawyers are permissible since they do not aid or encourage nonlawyers to practice law.

**EC 3-9** Regulation of the practice of law is accomplished principally by the respective states. Authority to engage in the practice of law conferred in any jurisdiction is not *per se* a grant of the right to practice elsewhere, and it is improper for a lawyer to engage in practice where he is not permitted by law or by court order to do so. However, the demands of business and the mobility of our society pose distinct problems in the regulation of the practice of law by the states. In furtherance of the public interest, the legal profession should discourage regulation that unreasonably imposes territorial limitations upon the right of a lawyer to handle the legal affairs of his client or upon the opportunity of a client to obtain the services of a lawyer of his choice in all matters including the presentation of a contested matter in a tribunal before which the lawyer is not permanently admitted to practice.

[Effective: October 5, 1970; amended effective February 1, 2003.]

## **DISCIPLINARY RULES**

### **DR 3-101. AIDING UNAUTHORIZED PRACTICE OF LAW.**

- (A) A lawyer shall not aid a non-lawyer in the unauthorized practice of law.
- (B) A lawyer shall not practice law in a jurisdiction where to do so would be in violation of regulations of the profession in that jurisdiction.

[Effective: October 5, 1970.]

**DR 3-102. DIVIDING LEGAL FEES WITH A NON-LAWYER.**

(A) A lawyer or law firm shall not share legal fees with a nonlawyer, except that:

(1) An agreement by a lawyer with his or her firm, partner, or associate may provide for the payment of money, over a reasonable period of time after the lawyer's death, to the lawyer's estate or to one or more specified persons.

(2) An agreement to purchase the practice of a deceased, disabled, or disappeared lawyer in accordance with DR 2-111 may provide for the payment of money, over a reasonable period of time, to a nonlawyer.

(3) A lawyer who undertakes to complete unfinished legal business of a deceased lawyer may pay to the estate of the deceased lawyer a proportion of the total compensation that fairly represents the services rendered by the deceased lawyer.

(4) A lawyer or law firm may include nonlawyer employees in a retirement plan, even though the plan is based in whole or in part on a profit-sharing arrangement.

(5) A lawyer participating in a lawyer referral service that satisfies the requirements of DR 2-103(C) may pay to the service a fee calculated as a percentage of legal fees earned by the lawyer in his or her capacity as a lawyer to whom the service has referred a matter. This percentage fee is in addition to any reasonable membership or registration fee established by the service.

[Effective: October 5, 1970; amended effective: July 1, 1996; February 1, 2003.]

**DR 3-103. FORMING A PARTNERSHIP WITH A NON-LAWYER.**

(A) A lawyer shall not form a partnership with a non-lawyer if any of the activities of the partnership consist of the practice of law.

[Effective: October 5, 1970.]

## CANON 4

### A Lawyer Should Preserve the Confidences and Secrets of a Client

#### ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

**EC 4-1** Both the fiduciary relationship existing between lawyer and client and the proper functioning of the legal system require the preservation by the lawyer of confidences and secrets of one who has employed or sought to employ him. A client must feel free to discuss whatever he wishes with his lawyer and a lawyer must be equally free to obtain information beyond that volunteered by his client. A lawyer should be fully informed of all the facts of the matter he is handling in order for his client to obtain the full advantage of our legal system. It is for the lawyer in the exercise of his independent professional judgment to separate the relevant and important from the irrelevant and unimportant. The observance of the ethical obligation of a lawyer to hold inviolate the confidences and secrets of his client not only facilitates the full development of facts essential to proper representation of the client but also encourages laymen to seek early legal assistance.

**EC 4-2** The obligation to protect confidences and secrets obviously does not preclude a lawyer from revealing information when his client consents after full disclosure, when necessary to perform his professional employment, when permitted by a Disciplinary Rule, or when required by law. Unless the client otherwise directs, a lawyer may disclose the affairs of his client to partners or associates of his firm. It is a matter of common knowledge that the normal operation of a law office exposes confidential professional information to nonlawyer employees of the office, particularly secretaries and those having access to the files; and this obligates a lawyer to exercise care in selecting and training his employees so that the sanctity of all confidences and secrets of his clients may be preserved. If the obligation extends to two or more clients as to the same information, a lawyer should obtain the permission of all before revealing the information. A lawyer must always be sensitive to the rights and wishes of his client and act scrupulously in the making of decisions which may involve the disclosure of information obtained in his professional relationship. Thus, in the absence of consent of his client after full disclosure, a lawyer should not associate another lawyer in the handling of a matter; nor should he, in the absence of consent, seek counsel from another lawyer if there is a reasonable possibility that the identity of the client or his confidences or secrets would be revealed to such lawyer. Both social amenities and professional duty should cause a lawyer to shun indiscreet conversations concerning his clients.

**EC 4-3** Unless the client otherwise directs, it is not improper for a lawyer to give limited information from his files to an outside agency necessary for statistical, bookkeeping, accounting, data processing, banking, printing, or other legitimate purposes, provided he exercises due care in the selection of the agency and warns the agency that the information must be kept confidential.

**EC 4-4** The attorney-client privilege is more limited than the ethical obligation of a lawyer to guard the confidences and secrets of his client. This ethical precept, unlike the evidentiary privilege, exists without regard to the nature or source of information or the fact that others share the knowledge. A lawyer should endeavor to act in a manner which preserves the evidentiary privilege; for example, he should avoid professional discussions in the presence of persons to whom the privilege does not extend. A lawyer owes an obligation to advise the client of the attorney-client privilege and timely to assert the privilege unless it is waived by the client.

**EC 4-5** A lawyer should not use information acquired in the course of the representation of a client to the disadvantage of the client and a lawyer should not use, except with the consent of his client after full disclosure, such information for his own purposes. Likewise, a lawyer should be diligent in his efforts to prevent the misuse of such information by his employees and associates. Care should be exercised by a lawyer to prevent the disclosure of the confidences and secrets of one client to another, and no employment should be accepted that might require such disclosure.

**EC 4-6** The obligation of a lawyer to preserve the confidences and secrets of clients continues after the termination of employment. A lawyer should also provide for the protection of the confidences and secrets of clients following the termination of the practice of the lawyer, whether termination is due to death, disability, or retirement. For example, a lawyer might provide for the personal papers of the client to be returned to the client and for the papers of the lawyer to be delivered to another lawyer or to be destroyed. In determining the method of disposition, the instructions and wishes of the client should be a dominant consideration.

[Effective: October 5, 1970; amended effective February 1, 2003.]

## DISCIPLINARY RULES

### **DR 4-101. PRESERVATION OF CONFIDENCES AND SECRETS OF A CLIENT.**

(A) "Confidence" refers to information protected by the attorney-client privilege under applicable law, and "secret" refers to other information gained in the professional relationship that the client has requested be held inviolate or the disclosure of which would be embarrassing or would be likely to be detrimental to the client.

(B) Except when permitted under DR 4-101(C), a lawyer shall not knowingly:

(1) Reveal a confidence or secret of his client.

(2) Use a confidence or secret of his client to the disadvantage of the client.

(3) Use a confidence or secret of his client for the advantage of himself or of a third person, unless the client consents after full disclosure.

(C) A lawyer may reveal:

(1) Confidences or secrets with the consent of the client or clients affected, but only after a full disclosure to them.

(2) Confidences or secrets when permitted under Disciplinary Rules or required by law or court order.

(3) The intention of his client to commit a crime and the information necessary to prevent the crime.

(4) Confidences or secrets necessary to establish or collect his fee or to defend himself or his employees or associates against an accusation of wrongful conduct.

(D) A lawyer shall exercise reasonable care to prevent his employees, associates, and others whose services are utilized by him from disclosing or using confidences or secrets of a client, except that a lawyer may reveal the information allowed by DR 4-101(C) through an employee.

[Effective: October 5, 1970.]

## **CANON 5**

### **A Lawyer Should Exercise Independent Professional Judgment on Behalf of a Client**

#### **ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

**EC 5-1** The professional judgment of a lawyer should be exercised, within the bounds of the law, solely for the benefit of his client and free of compromising influences and loyalties. Neither his personal interests, the interests of other clients, nor the desires of third persons should be permitted to dilute his loyalty to his client.

##### **Interests of a Lawyer That May Affect His Judgment**

**EC 5-2** A lawyer should not accept proffered employment if his personal interests or desires will, or there is a reasonable probability that they will, affect adversely the advice to be given or services to be rendered the prospective client. After accepting employment, a lawyer carefully should refrain from acquiring a property right or assuming a position that would tend to make his judgment less protective of the interests of his client.

**EC 5-3** The self-interest of a lawyer resulting from his ownership of property in which his client also has an interest or which may affect property of his client may interfere with the exercise of free judgment on behalf of his client. If such interference would occur with respect to a prospective client, a lawyer should decline employment proffered by him. After accepting employment, a lawyer should not acquire property rights that would adversely affect his professional judgment in the representation of his client. Even if the property interests of a lawyer do not presently interfere with the exercise of his independent judgment, but the likelihood of interference can reasonably be foreseen by him, a lawyer should explain the situation to his client and should decline employment or withdraw unless the client consents to the continuance of the relationship after full disclosure. A lawyer should not seek to persuade his client to permit him to invest in an undertaking of his client nor make improper use of his professional relationship to influence his client to invest in an enterprise in which the lawyer is interested.

**EC 5-4** If, in the course of his representation of a client, a lawyer is permitted to receive from his client a beneficial ownership in publication rights relating to the subject matter of the employment, he may be tempted to subordinate the interests of his client to his own anticipated pecuniary gain. For example, a lawyer in a criminal case who obtains from his client television, radio, motion picture, newspaper, magazine, book, or other publication rights with respect to the case may be influenced, consciously or unconsciously, to a course of conduct that will enhance the value of his publication rights to the prejudice of his client. To prevent these potentially differing interests, such arrangements should be scrupulously avoided prior to the termination of

all aspects of the matter giving rise to the employment, even though his employment has previously ended.

**EC 5-5** A lawyer should not suggest to the lawyer's client that a gift be made to the lawyer or for the lawyer's benefit. If a lawyer accepts a gift from the lawyer's client, the lawyer is peculiarly susceptible to the charge that the lawyer unduly influenced or overreached the client. If a client voluntarily offers to make a gift to the client's lawyer, the lawyer may accept the gift, but before doing so, the lawyer should urge that the client secure disinterested advice from an independent, competent person who is cognizant of all the circumstances. Unless the client is related by blood or marriage, a lawyer should insist that an instrument in which the lawyer's client desires to name the lawyer beneficially be prepared by another lawyer selected by the client.

**EC 5-6** A lawyer should not consciously influence a client to name him as executor, trustee, or lawyer in an instrument. In those cases where a client wishes to name his lawyer as such, care should be taken by the lawyer to avoid even the appearance of impropriety.

**EC 5-7** The possibility of an adverse effect upon the exercise of free judgment by a lawyer on behalf of his client during litigation generally makes it undesirable for the lawyer to acquire a proprietary interest in the cause of his client or otherwise to become financially interested in the outcome of the litigation. However, it is not improper for a lawyer to protect his right to collect a fee for his services by the assertion of legally permissible liens, even though by doing so he may acquire an interest in the outcome of litigation. Although a contingent fee arrangement gives a lawyer a financial interest in the outcome of litigation, a reasonable contingent fee is permissible in civil cases because it may be the only means by which a layman can obtain the services of a lawyer of his choice. But a lawyer, because he is in a better position to evaluate a cause of action, should enter into a contingent fee arrangement only in those instances where the arrangement will be beneficial to the client.

**EC 5-8** A financial interest in the outcome of litigation also results if monetary advances are made by the lawyer to his client. Although this assistance generally is not encouraged, there are instances when it is not improper to make loans to a client. For example, the advancing or guaranteeing of payment of the costs and expenses of litigation by a lawyer may be the only way a client can enforce his cause of action, but the ultimate liability for such costs and expenses must be that of the client.

**EC 5-9** Occasionally a lawyer is called upon to decide in a particular case whether he will be a witness or an advocate. If a lawyer is both counsel and witness, he becomes more easily impeachable for interest and thus may be a less effective witness. Conversely, the opposing counsel may be handicapped in challenging the credibility of the lawyer when the lawyer also appears as an advocate in the case. An advocate who becomes a witness is in the unseemly and ineffective position of arguing his own credibility. The roles of an advocate and of a witness are inconsistent; the function of an advocate is to advance or argue the cause of another, while that of a witness is to state facts objectively.

**EC 5-10** Problems incident to the lawyer-witness relationship arise at different stages; they relate either to whether a lawyer should accept employment or should withdraw from employment. Regardless of when the problem arises, his decision is to be governed by the same basic considerations. It is not objectionable for a lawyer who is a potential witness to be an advocate if it is unlikely that he will be called as a witness because his testimony would be merely cumulative or if his testimony will relate only to an uncontested issue. In the exceptional situation where it will be manifestly unfair to the client for the lawyer to refuse employment or to withdraw when he will likely be a witness on a contested issue, he may serve as advocate even though he may be a witness. In making such decision, he should determine the personal or financial sacrifice of the client that may result from his refusal of employment or withdrawal therefrom, the materiality of his testimony, and the effectiveness of his representation in view of his personal involvement. In weighing these factors, it should be clear that refusal or withdrawal will impose an unreasonable hardship upon the client before the lawyer accepts or continues the employment. Where the question arises, doubts should be resolved in favor of the lawyer testifying and against his becoming or continuing as an advocate.

**EC 5-11** A lawyer should not permit his personal interests to influence his advice relative to a suggestion by his client that additional counsel be employed. In like manner, his personal interests should not deter him from suggesting that additional counsel be employed; on the contrary, he should be alert to the desirability of recommending additional counsel when, in his judgment, the proper representation of his client requires it. However, a lawyer should advise his client not to employ additional counsel suggested by the client if the lawyer believes that such employment would be a disservice to the client, and he should disclose the reasons for his belief.

**EC 5-12** Inability of co-counsel to agree on a matter vital to the representation of their client requires that their disagreement be submitted by them jointly to their client for his resolution, and the decision of the client shall control the action to be taken.

**EC 5-13** A lawyer should not maintain membership in or be influenced by any organization of employees that undertakes to prescribe, direct, or suggest when or how he should fulfill his professional obligations to a person or organization that employs him as a lawyer. Although it is not necessarily improper for a lawyer employed by a corporation or similar entity to be a member of an organization of employees, he should be vigilant to safeguard his fidelity as a lawyer to his employer free from outside influences.

### **Interests of Multiple Clients**

**EC 5-14** Maintaining the independence of professional judgment required of a lawyer precludes his acceptance or continuation of employment that will adversely affect his judgment on behalf of or dilute his loyalty to a client. This problem arises whenever a lawyer is asked to represent two or more clients who may have differing interests, whether such interests be conflicting, inconsistent, diverse, or otherwise discordant.

**EC 5-15** If a lawyer is requested to undertake or to continue representation of multiple clients having potentially differing interests, he must weigh carefully the possibility that his judgment

may be impaired or his loyalty divided if he accepts or continues the employment. He should resolve all doubts against the propriety of the representation. A lawyer should never represent in litigation multiple clients with differing interests; and there are few situations in which he would be justified in representing in litigation multiple clients with potentially differing interests. If a lawyer accepted such employment and the interests did become actually differing, he would have to withdraw from employment with likelihood of resulting hardship on the clients; and for this reason it is preferable that he refuse the employment initially. On the other hand, there are many instances in which a lawyer may properly serve multiple clients having potentially differing interests in matters not involving litigation. If the interests vary only slightly, it is generally likely that the lawyer will not be subjected to an adverse influence and that he can retain his independent judgment on behalf of each client; and if the interests become differing, withdrawal is less likely to have a disruptive effect upon the causes of his clients.

**EC 5-16** A lawyer representing a fiduciary that owes fiduciary duties to third parties does not solely by representation of the fiduciary engage in multiple representation even if the third parties' interests conflict with the interests of the fiduciary or other third parties. As used in this Ethical Consideration, "fiduciary" includes only a trustee under an express trust or an executor, administrator, or personal representative.

**EC 5-17** In those instances in which a lawyer is justified in representing two or more clients having differing interests, it is nevertheless essential that each client be given the opportunity to evaluate his need for representation free of any potential conflict and to obtain other counsel if he so desires. Thus before a lawyer may represent multiple clients, he should explain fully to each client the implications of the common representation and should accept or continue employment only if the clients consent. If there are present other circumstances that might cause any of the multiple clients to question the undivided loyalty of the lawyer, he should also advise all of the clients of those circumstances.

**EC 5-18** Typically recurring situations involving potentially differing interests are those in which a lawyer is asked to represent co-defendants in a criminal case, co-plaintiffs in a personal injury case, an insured and his insurer, and beneficiaries of the estate of a decedent. Whether a lawyer can fairly and adequately protect the interests of multiple clients in these and similar situations depends upon an analysis of each case. In certain circumstances, there may exist little chance of the judgment of the lawyer being adversely affected by the slight possibility that the interests will become actually differing; in other circumstances, the chance of adverse effect upon his judgment is not unlikely.

**EC 5-19** A lawyer employed or retained by a corporation or similar entity owes his allegiance to the entity and not to a stockholder, director, officer, employee, representative, or other person connected with the entity. In advising the entity, a lawyer should keep paramount its interests and his professional judgment should not be influenced by the personal desires of any person or organization. Occasionally, a lawyer for an entity is requested by a stockholder, director, officer, employee, representative, or other person connected with the entity to represent him in an individual capacity; in such case the lawyer may serve the individual only if the lawyer is convinced that differing interests are not present.

**EC 5-20** A lawyer may represent several clients whose interests are not actually or potentially differing. Nevertheless, he should explain any circumstances that might cause a client to question his undivided loyalty. Regardless of the belief of a lawyer that he may properly represent multiple clients, he must defer to a client who holds the contrary belief and withdraw from representation of that client.

**EC 5-21** A lawyer is often asked to serve as an impartial arbitrator or mediator in matters which involve present or former clients. He may serve in either capacity if he first discloses such present or former relationships. After a lawyer has undertaken to act as an impartial arbitrator or mediator, he should not thereafter represent in the dispute any of the parties involved.

### **Desires of Third Persons**

**EC 5-22** The obligation of a lawyer to exercise professional judgment solely on behalf of his client requires that he disregard the desires of others that might impair his free judgment. The desires of a third person will seldom adversely affect a lawyer unless that person is in a position to exert strong economic, political, or social pressures upon the lawyer. These influences are often subtle, and a lawyer must be alert to their existence. A lawyer subjected to outside pressures should make full disclosure of them to his client; and if he or his client believes that the effectiveness of his representation has been or will be impaired thereby, the lawyer should take proper steps to withdraw from representation of his client.

**EC 5-23** Economic, political, or social pressures by third persons are less likely to impinge upon the independent judgment of a lawyer in a matter in which he is compensated directly by his client and his professional work is exclusively with his client. On the other hand, if a lawyer is compensated from a source other than his client, he may feel a sense of responsibility to someone other than his client.

**EC 5-24** A person or organization that pays or furnishes lawyers to represent others possesses a potential power to exert strong pressures against the independent judgment of those lawyers. Some employers may be interested in furthering their own economic, political, or social goals without regard to the professional responsibility of the lawyer to his individual client. Others may be far more concerned with establishment or extension of legal principles than in the immediate protection of the rights of the lawyer's individual client. On some occasions, decisions on priority of work may be made by the employer rather than the lawyer with the result that prosecution of work already undertaken for clients is postponed to their detriment. Similarly, an employer may seek, consciously or unconsciously, to further its own economic interests through the actions of the lawyers employed by it. Since a lawyer must always be free to exercise his professional judgment without regard to the interests or motives of a third person, the lawyer who is employed by one to represent another must constantly guard against erosion of his professional freedom.

**EC 5-25** To assist a lawyer in preserving his professional independence, a number of courses are available to him. For example, a lawyer should not practice with or in the form of a professional

legal corporation, even though the corporate form is permitted by law, if any director, officer, or stockholder of it is a non-lawyer. Although a lawyer may be employed by a business corporation with non-lawyers serving as directors or officers, and they necessarily have the right to make decisions of business policy, a lawyer must decline to accept direction of his professional judgment from any layman. Various types of legal aid offices are administered by boards of directors composed of lawyers and laymen. A lawyer should not accept employment from such an organization unless the board sets only broad policies and there is no interference in the relationship of the lawyer and the individual client he serves. Where a lawyer is employed by an organization, a written agreement that defines the relationship between him and the organization and provides for his independence is desirable since it may serve to prevent misunderstanding as to their respective roles. Although other innovations in the means of supplying legal counsel may develop, the responsibility of the lawyer to maintain his professional independence remains constant, and the legal profession must insure that changing circumstances do not result in loss of the professional independence of the lawyer.

[Effective: October 5, 1970; amended May 1, 1996; November 1, 1999.]

## DISCIPLINARY RULES

### **DR 5-101. REFUSING EMPLOYMENT WHEN THE INTERESTS OF THE LAWYER MAY IMPAIR THE LAWYER'S INDEPENDENT PROFESSIONAL JUDGMENT.**

(A)(1) Except with the consent of the client after full disclosure, a lawyer shall not accept employment if the exercise of professional judgment on behalf of the client will be or reasonably may be affected by the lawyer's financial, business, property, or personal interests.

(2) Notwithstanding the consent of the client, a lawyer shall not knowingly prepare, draft, or supervise the preparation or execution of a will, codicil, or *inter vivos* trust for a client in which any of the following are named as beneficiary:

- (a) the lawyer;
- (b) the lawyer's law partner or a shareholder of the lawyer's firm;
- (c) an associate, paralegal, law clerk, or other employee in the lawyer's firm or office;
- (d) a lawyer acting "of counsel" in the lawyer's firm;
- (e) the spouses, siblings, natural or adoptive children, or natural or adoptive parents of any of those described in divisions (A)(2)(a) through (d) of this rule.

(3) Division (A)(2) of this rule shall not apply if the client is related by blood or marriage to the beneficiary within the third degree of relationship as defined by the law of Ohio.

(B) A lawyer shall not accept employment in contemplated or pending litigation if the lawyer knows or it is obvious that the lawyer or a lawyer in the firm ought to be called as a witness, except that the lawyer may undertake the employment and the lawyer or a lawyer in the firm may testify:

- (1) If the testimony will relate solely to an uncontested matter.
- (2) If the testimony will relate solely to a matter of formality and there is no reason to believe that substantial evidence will be offered in opposition to the testimony.
- (3) If the testimony will relate solely to the nature and value of legal services rendered in the case by the lawyer or the firm to the client.
- (4) As to any matter, if refusal would work a substantial hardship on the client because of the distinctive value of the lawyer or the firm as counsel in the particular case.

[Effective: October 5, 1970; amended May 1, 1996.]

**DR 5-102. WITHDRAWAL AS COUNSEL WHEN THE LAWYER BECOMES A WITNESS.**

(A) If, after undertaking employment in contemplated or pending litigation, a lawyer learns or it is obvious that he or a lawyer in his firm ought to be called as a witness on behalf of his client, he shall withdraw from the conduct of the trial and his firm, if any, shall not continue representation in the trial, except that he may continue the representation and he or a lawyer in his firm may testify in the circumstances enumerated in DR 5-101(B)(1) through (4).

(B) If, after undertaking employment in contemplated or pending litigation, a lawyer learns or it is obvious that he or a lawyer in his firm may be called as a witness other than on behalf of his client, he may continue the representation until it is apparent that his testimony is or may be prejudicial to his client.

[Effective: October 5, 1970.]

**DR 5-103. AVOIDING ACQUISITION OF INTEREST IN LITIGATION.**

(A) A lawyer shall not acquire a proprietary interest in the cause of action or subject matter of litigation the lawyer is conducting for a client, except that a lawyer may:

- (1) Acquire a lien granted by law to secure the lawyer's fee or expenses.
- (2) Contract with a client for a reasonable contingent fee in a civil case.

(B) While representing a client in connection with contemplated or pending litigation, a lawyer shall not advance or guarantee financial assistance to the client, except that a lawyer may advance or guarantee the expenses of litigation, including court costs, expenses of investigation, expenses of medical examination, and costs of obtaining and presenting evidence, the repayment of which may be contingent on the outcome of the matter.

[Effective: October 5, 1970; amended effective June 14, 1999.]

**DR 5-104. LIMITING BUSINESS RELATIONS WITH A CLIENT.**

(A) A lawyer shall not enter into a business transaction with a client if they have differing interests therein and if the client expects the lawyer to exercise his professional judgment therein for the protection of the client, unless the client has consented after full disclosure.

(B) Prior to conclusion of all aspects of the matter giving rise to his employment, a lawyer shall not enter into any arrangement or understanding with a client or a prospective client by which he acquires an interest in publication rights with respect to the subject matter of his employment or proposed employment.

[Effective: October 5, 1970.]

**DR 5-105. REFUSING TO ACCEPT OR CONTINUE EMPLOYMENT IF THE INTERESTS OF ANOTHER CLIENT MAY IMPAIR THE INDEPENDENT PROFESSIONAL JUDGMENT OF THE LAWYER.**

(A) A lawyer shall decline proffered employment if the exercise of his independent professional judgment in behalf of a client will be or is likely to be adversely affected by the acceptance of the proffered employment, except to the extent permitted under DR 5-105(C).

(B) A lawyer shall not continue multiple employment if the exercise of his independent professional judgment in behalf of a client will be or is likely to be adversely affected by his representation of another client, except to the extent permitted under DR 5-105(C).

(C) In the situations covered by DR 5-105(A) and (B), a lawyer may represent multiple clients if it is obvious that he can adequately represent the interest of each and if each consents to the representation after full disclosure of the possible effect of such representation on the exercise of his independent professional judgment on behalf of each.

(D) If a lawyer is required to decline employment or to withdraw from employment under DR 5-105, no partner or associate of his or his firm may accept or continue such employment.

[Effective: October 5, 1970.]

**DR 5-106. SETTLING SIMILAR CLAIMS OF CLIENTS.**

(A) A lawyer who represents two or more clients shall not make or participate in the making of an aggregate settlement of the claims of or against his clients, unless each client has consented to the settlement after being advised of the existence and nature of all the claims involved in the proposed settlement, of the total amount of the settlement, and of the participation of each person in the settlement.

[Effective: October 5, 1970.]

**DR 5-107. AVOIDING INFLUENCE BY OTHERS THAN THE CLIENT.**

(A) Except with the consent of his client after full disclosure, a lawyer shall not:

(1) Accept compensation for his legal services from one other than his client.

(2) Accept from one other than his client any thing of value related to his representation of or his employment by his client.

(B) A lawyer shall not permit a person who recommends, employs, or pays him to render legal services for another to direct or regulate his professional judgment in rendering such legal services.

(C) A lawyer shall not practice with or in the form of a professional corporation or association authorized to practice law for a profit, if:

(1) A non-lawyer owns any interest therein, except that a fiduciary representative of the estate of a lawyer may hold the stock or interest of the lawyer for a reasonable time during administration;

(2) A non-lawyer is a corporate director or officer thereof; or

(3) A non-lawyer has the right to direct or control the professional judgment of a lawyer.

[Effective: October 5, 1970.]

## CANON 6

### A Lawyer Should Represent a Client Competently

#### ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

**EC 6-1** Because of his vital role in the legal process, a lawyer should act with competence and proper care in representing clients. He should strive to become and remain proficient in his practice and should accept employment only in matters which he is or intends to become competent to handle.

**EC 6-2** A lawyer is aided in attaining and maintaining his competence by keeping abreast of current legal literature and developments, participating in continuing legal education programs, concentrating in particular areas of the law, and by utilizing other available means. He has the additional ethical obligation to assist in improving the legal profession, and he may do so by participating in bar activities intended to advance the quality and standards of members of the profession. Of particular importance is the careful training of his younger associates and the giving of sound guidance to all lawyers who consult him. In short, a lawyer should strive at all levels to aid the legal profession in advancing the highest possible standards of integrity and competence and to meet those standards himself.

**EC 6-3** While the licensing of a lawyer is evidence that he has met the standards then prevailing for admission to the bar, a lawyer generally should not accept employment in any area of the law in which he is not qualified. However, he may accept such employment if in good faith he expects to become qualified through study and investigation, as long as such preparation would not result in unreasonable delay or expense to his client. Proper preparation and representation may require the association by the lawyer of professionals in other disciplines. A lawyer offered employment in a matter in which he is not and does not expect to become so qualified should either decline the employment or, with the consent of his client, accept the employment and associate a lawyer who is competent in the matter.

**EC 6-4** Having undertaken representation, a lawyer should use proper care to safeguard the interests of his client. If a lawyer has accepted employment in a matter beyond his competence but in which he expected to become competent, he should diligently undertake the work and study necessary to qualify himself. In addition to being qualified to handle a particular matter, his obligation to his client requires him to prepare adequately for and give appropriate attention to his legal work.

**EC 6-5** A lawyer should have pride in his professional endeavors. His obligation to act competently calls for higher motivation than that arising from fear of civil liability or disciplinary penalty.

**EC 6-6** A lawyer should not seek, by contract or other means, to limit his or her individual liability to clients for malpractice. A lawyer who properly handles client affairs has no need to attempt to limit liability for professional activities, and a lawyer who does not properly handle client affairs should not be permitted to do so. A lawyer who is a stockholder in or is associated with a professional legal corporation may, however, limit his or her liability for malpractice of associates in the corporation, but only to the extent permitted by law. A lawyer who sells or purchases a law practice may enter into an agreement for contribution or indemnification with the other lawyer in accordance with DR 2-111.

[Effective: October 5, 1970; amended effective February 1, 2003.]

## **DISCIPLINARY RULES**

### **DR 6-101. FAILING TO ACT COMPETENTLY.**

(A) A lawyer shall not:

- (1) Handle a legal matter which he knows or should know that he is not competent to handle, without associating with him a lawyer who is competent to handle it.
- (2) Handle a legal matter without preparation adequate in the circumstances.
- (3) Neglect a legal matter entrusted to him.

[Effective: October 5, 1970.]

**DR 6-102. LIMITING LIABILITY TO CLIENT.**

Except as permitted in DR 2-111(C), a lawyer shall not attempt to exonerate himself or herself from or limit his or her liability to a client for personal malpractice.

[Effective: October 5, 1970; amended effective February 1, 2003.]

## **CANON 7**

### **A Lawyer Should Represent a Client Zealously Within the Bounds of the Law**

#### **ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

**EC 7-1** The duty of a lawyer, both to his client and to the legal system, is to represent his client zealously within the bounds of the law, which includes Disciplinary Rules and enforceable professional regulations. The professional responsibility of a lawyer derives from his membership in a profession which has the duty of assisting members of the public to secure and protect available legal rights and benefits. In our government of laws and not of men, each member of our society is entitled to have his conduct judged and regulated in accordance with the law; to seek any lawful objective through legally permissible means; and to present for adjudication any lawful claim, issue, or defense.

**EC 7-2** The bounds of the law in a given case are often difficult to ascertain. The language of legislative enactments and judicial opinions may be uncertain as applied to varying factual situations. The limits and specific meaning of apparently relevant law may be made doubtful by changing or developing constitutional interpretations, inadequately expressed statutes or judicial opinions, and changing public and judicial attitudes. Certainty of law ranges from well-settled rules through areas of conflicting authority to areas without precedent.

**EC 7-3** Where the bounds of law are uncertain, the action of a lawyer may depend on whether he is serving as advocate or adviser. A lawyer may serve simultaneously as both advocate and adviser, but the two roles are essentially different. In asserting a position on behalf of his client, an advocate for the most part deals with past conduct and must take the facts as he finds them. By contrast, a lawyer serving as adviser primarily assists his client in determining the course of future conduct and relationships. While serving as advocate, a lawyer should resolve in favor of his client doubts as to the bounds of the law. In serving a client as adviser, a lawyer in appropriate circumstances should give his professional opinion as to what the ultimate decisions of the courts would likely be as to the applicable law.

#### **Duty of the Lawyer to a Client**

**EC 7-4** The advocate may urge any permissible construction of the law favorable to his client, without regard to his professional opinion as to the likelihood that the construction will ultimately prevail. His conduct is within the bounds of the law, and therefore permissible, if the position taken is supported by the law or is supportable by a good faith argument for an extension, modification, or reversal of the law. However, a lawyer is not justified in asserting a position in litigation that is frivolous.

**EC 7-5** A lawyer as adviser furthers the interest of his client by giving his professional opinion as to what he believes would likely be the ultimate decision of the courts on the matter at hand and by informing his client of the practical effect of such decision. He may continue in the representation of his client even though his client has elected to pursue a course of conduct contrary to the advice of the lawyer so long as he does not thereby knowingly assist the client to engage in illegal conduct or to take a frivolous legal position. A lawyer should never encourage or aid his client to commit criminal acts or counsel his client on how to violate the law and avoid punishment therefor.

**EC 7-6** Whether the proposed action of a lawyer is within the bounds of the law may be a perplexing question when his client is contemplating a course of conduct having legal consequences that vary according to the client's intent, motive, or desires at the time of the action. Often a lawyer is asked to assist his client in developing evidence relevant to the state of mind of the client at a particular time. He may properly assist his client in the development and preservation of evidence of existing motive, intent, or desire; obviously, he may not do anything furthering the creation or preservation of false evidence. In many cases a lawyer may not be certain as to the state of mind of his client, and in those situations he should resolve reasonable doubts in favor of his client.

**EC 7-7** In certain areas of legal representation not affecting the merits of the cause or substantially prejudicing the rights of a client, a lawyer is entitled to make decisions on his own. But otherwise the authority to make decisions is exclusively that of the client and, if made within the framework of the law, such decisions are binding on his lawyer. As typical examples in civil cases, it is for the client to decide whether he will accept a settlement offer or whether he will waive his right to plead an affirmative defense. A defense lawyer in a criminal case has the duty to advise his client fully on whether a particular plea to a charge appears to be desirable and as to the prospects of success on appeal, but it is for the client to decide what plea should be entered and whether an appeal should be taken.

**EC 7-8** A lawyer should exert his best efforts to insure that decisions of his client are made only after the client has been informed of relevant considerations. A lawyer ought to initiate this decision-making process if the client does not do so. Advice of a lawyer to his client need not be confined to purely legal considerations. A lawyer should advise his client of the possible effect of each legal alternative. A lawyer should bring to bear upon this decision-making process the fullness of his experience as well as his objective viewpoint. In assisting his client to reach a proper decision, it is often desirable for a lawyer to point out those factors which may lead to a decision that is morally just as well as legally permissible. He may emphasize the possibility of harsh consequences that might result from assertion of legally permissible positions. In the final analysis, however, the lawyer should always remember that the decision whether to forego legally available objectives or methods because of non-legal factors is ultimately for the client and not for himself. In the event that the client in a non-adjudicatory matter insists upon a course of conduct that is contrary to the judgment and advice of the lawyer but not prohibited by Disciplinary Rules, the lawyer may withdraw from the employment.

**EC 7-9** In the exercise of his professional judgment on those decisions which are for his determination in the handling of a legal matter, a lawyer should always act in a manner consistent with the best interests of his client. However, when an action in the best interest of his client seems to him to be unjust, he may ask his client for permission to forego such action.

**EC 7-10** The duty of a lawyer to represent his client with zeal does not militate against his concurrent obligation to treat with consideration all persons involved in the legal process and to avoid the infliction of needless harm.

**EC 7-11** The responsibilities of a lawyer may vary according to the intelligence, experience, mental condition or age of a client, the obligation of a public officer, or the nature of a particular proceeding. Examples include the representation of an illiterate or an incompetent, service as a public prosecutor or other government lawyer, and appearances before administrative and legislative bodies.

**EC 7-12** Any mental or physical condition of a client that renders him incapable of making a considered judgment on his own behalf casts additional responsibilities upon his lawyer. Where an incompetent is acting through a guardian or other legal representative, a lawyer must look to such representative for those decisions which are normally the prerogative of the client to make. If a client under disability has no legal representative, his lawyer may be compelled in court proceedings to make decisions on behalf of the client. If the client is capable of understanding the matter in question or of contributing to the advancement of his interests, regardless of whether he is legally disqualified from performing certain acts, the lawyer should obtain from him all possible aid. If the disability of a client and the lack of a legal representative compel the lawyer to make decisions for his client, the lawyer should consider all circumstances then prevailing and act with care to safeguard and advance the interests of his client. But obviously a lawyer cannot perform any act or make any decision which the law requires his client to perform or make, either acting for himself if competent, or by a duly constituted representative if legally incompetent.

**EC 7-13** The responsibility of a public prosecutor differs from that of the usual advocate; his duty is to seek justice, not merely to convict. This special duty exists because: (1) the prosecutor represents the sovereign and therefore should use restraint in the discretionary exercise of governmental powers, such as in the selection of cases to prosecute; (2) during trial the prosecutor is not only an advocate but he also may make decisions normally made by an individual client, and those affecting the public interest should be fair to all; and (3) in our system of criminal justice the accused is to be given the benefit of all reasonable doubts. With respect to evidence and witnesses, the prosecutor has responsibilities different from those of a lawyer in private practice: the prosecutor should make timely disclosure to the defense of available evidence, known to him, that tends to negate the guilt of the accused, mitigate the degree of the offense, or reduce the punishment. Further a prosecutor should not intentionally avoid pursuit of evidence merely because he believes it will damage the prosecution's case or aid the accused.

**EC 7-14** A government lawyer who has discretionary power relative to litigation should refrain from instituting or continuing litigation that is obviously unfair. A government lawyer not having such discretionary power who believes there is lack of merit in a controversy submitted to him should so advise his superiors and recommend the avoidance of unfair litigation. A government lawyer in a civil action or administrative proceeding has the responsibility to seek justice and to develop a full and fair record, and he should not use his position or the economic power of the government to harass parties or to bring about unjust settlements or results.

**EC 7-15** The nature and purpose of proceedings before administrative agencies vary widely. The proceedings may be legislative or quasi-judicial, or a combination of both. They may be ex parte in character, in which event they may originate either at the instance of the agency or upon motion of an interested party. The scope of an inquiry may be purely investigative or it may be truly adversary looking toward the adjudication of specific rights of a party or of classes of parties. The foregoing are but examples of some of the types of proceedings conducted by administrative agencies. A lawyer appearing before an administrative agency, regardless of the nature of the proceeding it is conducting, has the continuing duty to advance the cause of his client within the bounds of the law. Where the applicable rules of the agency impose specific obligations upon a lawyer, it is his duty to comply therewith, unless the lawyer has a legitimate basis for challenging the validity thereof. In all appearances before administrative agencies, a lawyer should identify himself, his client if identity of his client is not privileged, and the representative nature of his appearance. It is not improper, however, for a lawyer to seek from an agency information available to the public without identifying his client.

**EC 7-16** The primary business of a legislative body is to enact laws rather than to adjudicate controversies, although on occasion the activities of a legislative body may take on the characteristics of an adversary proceeding, particularly in investigative and impeachment matters. The role of a lawyer supporting or opposing proposed legislation normally is quite different from his role in representing a person under investigation or on trial by a legislative body. When a lawyer appears in connection with proposed legislation, he seeks to affect the lawmaking process, but when he appears on behalf of a client in investigatory or impeachment proceedings, he is concerned with the protection of the rights of his client. In either event, he should identify himself and his client, if identity of his client is not privileged, and should comply with applicable laws and legislative rules.

**EC 7-17** The obligation of loyalty to his client applies only to a lawyer in the discharge of his professional duties and implies no obligation to adopt a personal viewpoint favorable to the interests or desires of his client. While a lawyer must act always with circumspection in order that his conduct will not adversely affect the rights of a client in a matter he is then handling, he may take positions on public issues and espouse legal reforms he favors without regard to the individual views of any client.

**EC 7-18** The legal system in its broadest sense functions best when persons in need of legal advice or assistance are represented by their own counsel. For this reason a lawyer should not communicate on the subject matter of the representation of his client with a person he knows to be represented in the matter by a lawyer, unless pursuant to law or rule of court or unless he has

the consent of the lawyer for that person. If one is not represented by counsel, a lawyer representing another may have to deal directly with the unrepresented person; in such an instance, a lawyer should not undertake to give advice to the person who is attempting to represent himself, except that he may advise him to obtain a lawyer.

### **Duty of the Lawyer to the Adversary System of Justice**

**EC 7-19** Our legal system provides for the adjudication of disputes governed by the rules of substantive, evidentiary, and procedural law. An adversary presentation counters the natural human tendency to judge too swiftly in terms of the familiar that which is not yet fully known; the advocate, by his zealous preparation and presentation of facts and law, enables the tribunal to come to the hearing with an open and neutral mind and to render impartial judgments. The duty of a lawyer to his client and his duty to the legal system are the same: to represent his client zealously within the bounds of the law.

**EC 7-20** In order to function properly, our adjudicative process requires an informed, impartial tribunal capable of administering justice promptly and efficiently according to procedures that command public confidence and respect. Not only must there be competent, adverse presentation of evidence and issues, but a tribunal must be aided by rules appropriate to an effective and dignified process. The procedures under which tribunals operate in our adversary system have been prescribed largely by legislative enactments, court rules and decisions, and administrative rules. Through the years certain concepts of proper professional conduct have become rules of law applicable to the adversary adjudicative process. Many of these concepts are the bases for standards of professional conduct set forth in the Disciplinary Rules.

**EC 7-21** The civil adjudicative process is primarily designed for the settlement of disputes between parties, while the criminal process is designed for the protection of society as a whole. Threatening to use, or using, the criminal process to coerce adjustment of private civil claims or controversies is a subversion of that process; further, the person against whom the criminal process is so misused may be deterred from asserting his legal rights and thus the usefulness of the civil process in settling private disputes is impaired. As in all cases of abuse of judicial process, the improper use of criminal process tends to diminish public confidence in our legal system.

**EC 7-22** Respect for judicial rulings is essential to the proper administration of justice; however, a litigant or his lawyer may, in good faith and within the framework of the law, take steps to test the correctness of a ruling of a tribunal.

**EC 7-23** The complexity of law often makes it difficult for a tribunal to be fully informed unless the pertinent law is presented by the lawyers in the cause. A tribunal that is fully informed on the applicable law is better able to make a fair and accurate determination of the matter before it. The adversary system contemplates that each lawyer will present and argue the existing law in the light most favorable to his client. Where a lawyer knows of legal authority in the controlling jurisdiction directly adverse to the position of his client, he should inform the tribunal of its

existence unless his adversary has done so; but, having made such disclosure, he may challenge its soundness in whole or in part.

**EC 7-24** In order to bring about just and informed decisions, evidentiary and procedural rules have been established by tribunals to permit the inclusion of relevant evidence and argument and the exclusion of all other considerations. The expression by a lawyer of his personal opinion as to the justness of a cause, as to the credibility of a witness, as to the culpability of a civil litigant, or as to the guilt or innocence of an accused is not a proper subject for argument to the trier of fact. It is improper as to factual matters because admissible evidence possessed by a lawyer should be presented only as sworn testimony. It is improper as to all other matters because, were the rule otherwise, the silence of a lawyer on a given occasion could be construed unfavorably to his client. However a lawyer may argue, on his analysis of the evidence, for any position or conclusion with respect to any of the foregoing matters.

**EC 7-25** Rules of evidence and procedure are designed to lead to just decisions and are part of the framework of the law. Thus while a lawyer may take steps in good faith and within the framework of the law to test the validity of rules, he is not justified in consciously violating such rules and he should be diligent in his efforts to guard against his unintentional violation of them. As examples, a lawyer should subscribe to or verify only those pleadings that he believes are in compliance with applicable law and rules; a lawyer should not make any prefatory statement before a tribunal in regard to the purported facts of the case on trial unless he believes that his statement will be supported by admissible evidence; a lawyer should not ask a witness a question solely for the purpose of harassing or embarrassing him; and a lawyer should not by subterfuge put before a jury matters which it cannot properly consider.

**EC 7-26** The law and Disciplinary Rules prohibit the use of fraudulent, false, or perjured testimony or evidence. A lawyer who knowingly participates in introduction of such testimony or evidence is subject to discipline. A lawyer should, however, present any admissible evidence his client desires to have presented unless he knows, or from facts within his knowledge should know, that such testimony or evidence is false, fraudulent, or perjured.

**EC 7-27** Because it interferes with the proper administration of justice, a lawyer should not suppress evidence that he or his client has a legal obligation to reveal or produce. In like manner, a lawyer should not advise or cause a person to secrete himself or to leave the jurisdiction of a tribunal for the purpose of making him unavailable as a witness therein.

**EC 7-28** Witnesses should always testify truthfully and should be free from any financial inducements that might tempt them to do otherwise. A lawyer should not pay or agree to pay a non-expert witness an amount in excess of reimbursement for expenses and financial loss incident to his being a witness; however, a lawyer may pay or agree to pay an expert witness a reasonable fee for his services as an expert. But in no event should a lawyer pay or agree to pay a contingent fee to any witness. A lawyer should exercise reasonable diligence to see that his client and lay associates conform to these standards.

**EC 7-29** To safeguard the impartiality that is essential to the judicial process, veniremen and jurors should be protected against extraneous influences. When impartiality is present, public confidence in the judicial system is enhanced. There should be no extrajudicial communication with veniremen prior to trial or with jurors during trial by or on behalf of a lawyer connected with the case. Furthermore, a lawyer who is not connected with the case should not communicate with or cause another to communicate with a venireman or a juror about the case. After the trial, communication by a lawyer with jurors is permitted so long as he refrains from asking questions or making comments that tend to harass or embarrass the juror or to influence actions of the juror in future cases. Were a lawyer to be prohibited from communicating after trial with a juror, he could not ascertain if the verdict might be subject to legal challenge, in which event the invalidity of a verdict might go undetected. When an extrajudicial communication by a lawyer with a juror is permitted by law, it should be made considerately and with deference to the personal feelings of the juror.

**EC 7-30** Vexatious or harassing investigations of veniremen or jurors seriously impair the effectiveness of our jury system. For this reason, a lawyer or anyone on his behalf who conducts an investigation of veniremen or jurors should act with circumspection and restraint.

**EC 7-31** Communications with or investigations of members of families of veniremen or jurors by a lawyer or by anyone on his behalf are subject to the restrictions imposed upon the lawyer with respect to his communications with or investigations of veniremen and jurors.

**EC 7-32** Because of his duty to aid in preserving the integrity of the jury system, a lawyer who learns of improper conduct by or towards a venireman, a juror, or a member of the family of either should make a prompt report to the court regarding such conduct.

**EC 7-33** A goal of our legal system is that each party shall have his case, criminal or civil, adjudicated by an impartial tribunal. The attainment of this goal may be defeated by dissemination of news or comments which tend to influence judge or jury. Such news or comments may prevent prospective jurors from being impartial at the outset of the trial and may also interfere with the obligation of jurors to base their verdict solely upon the evidence admitted in the trial. The release by a lawyer of out-of-court statements regarding an anticipated or pending trial may improperly affect the impartiality of the tribunal. For these reasons, standards for permissible and prohibited conduct of a lawyer with respect to trial publicity have been established.

**EC 7-34** The impartiality of a public servant in our legal system may be impaired by the receipt of gifts or loans. A lawyer, therefore, is never justified in making a gift or a loan to a judge, a hearing officer, or an official or employee of a tribunal.

**EC 7-35** All litigants and lawyers should have access to tribunals on an equal basis. Generally, in adversary proceedings a lawyer should not communicate with a judge relative to a matter pending before, or which is to be brought before, a tribunal over which he presides in circumstances which might have the effect or give the appearance of granting undue advantage to one party. For example, a lawyer should not communicate with a tribunal by a writing unless a copy thereof

is promptly delivered to opposing counsel or to the adverse party if he is not represented by a lawyer. Ordinarily an oral communication by a lawyer with a judge or hearing officer should be made only upon adequate notice to opposing counsel, or, if there is none, to the opposing party. A lawyer should not condone or lend himself to private opportunities by another with a judge or hearing officer on behalf of himself or his client.

**EC 7-36** Judicial hearings ought to be conducted through dignified and orderly procedures designed to protect the rights of all parties. Although a lawyer has the duty to represent his client zealously, he should not engage in any conduct that offends the dignity and decorum of proceedings. While maintaining his independence, a lawyer should be respectful, courteous, and above-board in his relations with a judge or hearing officer before whom he appears. He should avoid undue solicitude for the comfort or convenience of judge or jury and should avoid any other conduct calculated to gain special consideration.

**EC 7-37** In adversary proceedings, clients are litigants and though ill feeling may exist between clients, such ill feeling should not influence a lawyer in his conduct, attitude, and demeanor towards opposing lawyers. A lawyer should not make unfair or derogatory personal reference to opposing counsel. Haranguing and offensive tactics by lawyers interfere with the orderly administration of justice and have no proper place in our legal system.

**EC 7-38** A lawyer should be courteous to opposing counsel and should accede to reasonable requests regarding court proceedings, settings, continuances, waiver of procedural formalities, and similar matters which do not prejudice the rights of his client. He should follow local customs of courtesy or practice, unless he gives timely notice to opposing counsel of his intention not to do so. A lawyer should be punctual in fulfilling all professional commitments.

**EC 7-39** In the final analysis, proper functioning of the adversary system depends upon cooperation between lawyers and tribunals in utilizing procedures which will preserve the impartiality of tribunals and make their decisional processes prompt and just, without impinging upon the obligation of the lawyer to represent their clients zealously within the framework of the law.

[Effective: October 5, 1970.]

## DISCIPLINARY RULES

### **DR 7-101. REPRESENTING A CLIENT ZEALOUSLY.**

(A) A lawyer shall not intentionally:

(1) Fail to seek the lawful objectives of his client through reasonably available means permitted by law and the Disciplinary Rules, except as provided by DR 7-101(B). A lawyer does not violate this Disciplinary Rule, however, by acceding to reasonable requests of opposing counsel which do not prejudice the rights of his client, by being punctual in fulfilling all professional commitments, by avoiding offensive tactics, or by treating with courtesy and consideration all persons involved in the legal process.

(2) Fail to carry out a contract of employment entered into with a client for professional services, but he may withdraw as permitted under DR 2-110, DR 5102, and DR 5-105.

(3) Prejudice or damage his client during the course of the professional relationship, except as required under DR 7-102(B).

(B) In his representation of a client, a lawyer may:

(1) Where permissible, exercise his professional judgment to waive or fail to assert a right or position of his client.

(2) Refuse to aid or participate in conduct that he believes to be unlawful, even though there is some support for an argument that the conduct is legal.

[Effective: October 5, 1970.]

**DR 7-102. REPRESENTING A CLIENT WITHIN THE BOUNDS OF THE LAW.**

(A) In his representation of a client, a lawyer shall not:

(1) File a suit, assert a position, conduct a defense, delay a trial, or take other action on behalf of his client when he knows or when it is obvious that such action would serve merely to harass or maliciously injure another.

(2) Knowingly advance a claim or defense that is unwarranted under existing law, except that he may advance such claim or defense if it can be supported by good faith argument for an extension, modification, or reversal of existing law.

(3) Conceal or knowingly fail to disclose that which he is required by law to reveal.

(4) Knowingly use perjured testimony or false evidence.

(5) Knowingly make a false statement of law or fact.

(6) Participate in the creation or preservation of evidence when he knows or it is obvious that the evidence is false.

(7) Counsel or assist his client in conduct that the lawyer knows to be illegal or fraudulent.

(8) Knowingly engage in other illegal conduct or conduct contrary to a Disciplinary Rule.

(B) A lawyer who receives information clearly establishing that:

(1) His client has, in the course of the representation, perpetrated a fraud upon a person or tribunal, shall promptly call upon his client to rectify the same, and if his client refuses or is unable to do so, he shall reveal the fraud to the affected person or tribunal.

(2) A person other than his client has perpetrated a fraud upon a tribunal shall promptly reveal the fraud to the tribunal.

[Effective: October 5, 1970.]

**DR 7-103. PERFORMING THE DUTY OF PUBLIC PROSECUTOR OR OTHER GOVERNMENT LAWYER.**

(A) A public prosecutor or other government lawyer shall not institute or cause to be instituted criminal charges when he knows or it is obvious that the charges are not supported by probable cause.

(B) A public prosecutor or other government lawyer in criminal litigation shall make timely disclosure to counsel for the defendant, or to the defendant if he has no counsel, of the existence of evidence, known to the prosecutor or other government lawyer, that tends to negate the guilt of the accused, mitigate the degree of the offense, or reduce the punishment.

[Effective: October 5, 1970.]

**DR 7-104. COMMUNICATING WITH ONE OF ADVERSE INTEREST.**

(A) During the course of his representation of a client a lawyer shall not:

(1) Communicate or cause another to communicate on the subject of the representation with a party he knows to be represented by a lawyer in that matter unless he has the prior consent of the lawyer representing such other party or is authorized by law to do so.

(2) Give advice to a person who is not represented by a lawyer, other than the advice to secure counsel, if the interests of such person are or have a reasonable possibility of being in conflict with the interests of his client.

[Effective: October 5, 1970.]

**DR 7-105. THREATENING CRIMINAL PROSECUTION.**

(A) A lawyer shall not present, participate in presenting, or threaten to present criminal charges solely to obtain an advantage in a civil matter.

[Effective: October 5, 1970.]

## **DR 7-106. TRIAL CONDUCT.**

(A) A lawyer shall not disregard or advise his client to disregard a standing rule of a tribunal or a ruling of a tribunal made in the course of a proceeding, but he may take appropriate steps in good faith to test the validity of such rule or ruling.

(B) In presenting a matter to a tribunal, a lawyer shall disclose:

(1) Legal authority in the controlling jurisdiction known to him to be directly adverse to the position of his client and which is not disclosed by opposing counsel.

(2) Unless privileged or irrelevant, the identities of the clients he represents and of the persons who employed him.

(C) In appearing in his professional capacity before a tribunal, a lawyer shall not:

(1) State or allude to any matter that he has no reasonable basis to believe is relevant to the case or that will not be supported by admissible evidence.

(2) Ask any question that he has no reasonable basis to believe is relevant to the case and that is intended to degrade a witness or other person.

(3) Assert his personal knowledge of the facts in issue, except when testifying as a witness.

(4) Assert his personal opinion as to the justness of a cause, as to the credibility of a witness, as to the culpability of a civil litigant, or as to the guilt or innocence of an accused; but he may argue, on his analysis of the evidence, for any position or conclusion with respect to the matters stated herein.

(5) Fail to comply with known local customs of courtesy or practice of the bar or a particular tribunal without giving to opposing counsel timely notice of his intent not to comply.

(6) Engage in undignified or discourteous conduct which is degrading to a tribunal.

(7) Intentionally or habitually violate any established rule of procedure or of evidence.

[Effective: October 5, 1970.]

## **DR 7-107. TRIAL PUBLICITY.**

(A) A lawyer who is participating or has participated in the investigation or litigation of a matter shall not make an extrajudicial statement that a reasonable person would expect to be disseminated by means of public communication if the lawyer knows or reasonably should know that it will have a substantial likelihood of materially prejudicing an adjudicative proceeding in the matter.

(B) Notwithstanding division (A) of this rule, a lawyer may state any of the following:

(1) The claim, offense, or defense involved and, except when prohibited by law, the identity of the persons involved;

(2) Information contained in a public record;

(3) That an investigation of a matter is in progress;

(4) The scheduling or result of any step in litigation;

(5) A request for assistance in obtaining evidence and information necessary to obtain evidence;

(6) A warning of danger concerning the behavior of a person involved, when there is reason to believe that there exists the likelihood of substantial harm to an individual or to the public interest;

(7) In a criminal case, in addition to divisions (B)(1) to (6) of this rule, any of the following:

(a) The identity, residence, occupation, and family status of the accused;

(b) If the accused has not been apprehended, information necessary to aid in apprehension of that person;

(c) The fact, time, and place of arrest;

(d) The identity of investigating and arresting officers or agencies and the length of the investigation.

(C) Notwithstanding division (A) of this rule, a lawyer may make a statement that a reasonable lawyer would believe is required to protect a client from the substantial undue prejudicial effect of recent publicity not initiated by the lawyer or the lawyer's client. A statement made pursuant to this division shall be limited to the information necessary to mitigate the recent adverse publicity.

(D) No lawyer associated in a firm or government agency with a lawyer subject to division (A) of this rule shall make a statement prohibited by division (A) of this rule.

[Effective: October 5, 1970; amended effective January 1, 1996.]

## **DR 7-108. COMMUNICATION WITH OR INVESTIGATION OF JURORS.**

(A) Before the trial of a case a lawyer connected therewith shall not communicate with or cause another to communicate with anyone he knows to be a member of the venire from which the jury will be selected for the trial of the case.

(B) During the trial of a case:

(1) A lawyer connected therewith shall not communicate with or cause another to communicate with any member of the jury.

(2) A lawyer who is not connected therewith shall not communicate with or cause another to communicate with a juror concerning the case.

(C) DR 7-108(A) and (B) do not prohibit a lawyer from communicating with veniremen or jurors in the course of official proceedings.

(D) After discharge of the jury from further consideration of a case with which the lawyer was connected, the lawyer shall not ask questions of or make comments to a member of that jury that are calculated merely to harass or embarrass the juror or to influence his actions in future jury service.

(E) A lawyer shall not conduct or cause, by financial support or otherwise, another to conduct a vexatious or harassing investigation of either a venireman or a juror.

(F) All restrictions imposed by DR 7-108 upon a lawyer also apply to communications with or investigations of members of a family of a venireman or a juror.

(G) A lawyer shall reveal promptly to the court improper conduct by a venireman or a juror, or by another toward a venireman or a juror or a member of his family, of which the lawyer has knowledge.

[Effective: October 5, 1970.]

**DR 7-109. CONTACT WITH WITNESSES.**

(A) A lawyer shall not suppress any evidence that he or his client has a legal obligation to reveal or produce.

(B) A lawyer shall not advise or cause a person to secrete himself or to leave the jurisdiction of a tribunal for the purpose of making him unavailable as a witness therein.

(C) A lawyer shall not pay, offer to pay, or acquiesce in the payment of compensation to a witness contingent upon the content of his testimony or the outcome of the case. But a lawyer may advance, guarantee, or acquiesce in the payment of:

(1) Expenses reasonably incurred by a witness in attending or testifying.

(2) Reasonable compensation to a witness for his loss of time in attending or testifying.

(3) A reasonable fee for the professional services of an expert witness.

[Effective: October 5, 1970.]

**DR 7-110. CONTACT WITH OFFICIALS.**

(A) A lawyer shall not give or lend any thing of value to a judge, official, or employee of a tribunal.

(B) In an adversary proceeding, a lawyer shall not communicate, or cause another to communicate, as to the merits of the cause with a judge or an official before whom the proceeding is pending, except:

(1) In the course of official proceedings in the cause.

(2) In writing if he promptly delivers a copy of the writing to opposing counsel or to the adverse party if he is not represented by a lawyer.

(3) Orally upon adequate notice to opposing counsel or to the adverse party if he is not represented by a lawyer.

(4) As otherwise authorized by law.

[Effective: October 5, 1970.]

## **DR 7-111. CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION**

(A)(1) A lawyer shall not disclose or cause to be disclosed, without appropriate authorization, information regarding the probable or actual decision in a case or legal proceeding pending before a court, including the vote of a justice, judge, or court in a case pending before the Supreme Court, a court of appeals, or a panel of judges of a trial court, prior to the announcement of the decision by the court or journalization of an opinion, entry, or other document reflecting that decision under either of the following circumstances:

(a) The probable or actual decision is confidential because of statutory or rule provisions;

(b) The probable or actual decision clearly has been designated to the justice or judge as confidential when confidentiality is warranted because of the status of the proceedings or the circumstances under which the information was received and preserving confidentiality is necessary to the proper conduct of court business.

(2) Nothing in division (A)(1) of this rule shall prohibit the disclosure of any of the following:

(a) A decision that has been announced on the record or in open court, but that has not been journalized in a written opinion, entry, or other document;

(b) Information regarding the probable or actual decision in a pending case or legal proceeding to a justice, judge, or employee of the court;

(c) Other information that is a matter of public record or that may be disclosed pursuant to law.

(B)(1) No lawyer shall obtain or attempt to obtain information, without appropriate authorization, from a justice, judge, or court employee regarding the probable or actual decision in a case or legal proceeding pending before a court, including the vote of a justice or judge in a case pending before the Supreme Court or a court of appeals, prior to announcement of the decision by the court or journalization of an opinion, entry, or other document reflecting that decision under either of the following circumstances:

(a) The probable or actual decision is confidential because of statutory or rule provisions;

(b) The probable or actual decision clearly has been designated to the justice or judge as confidential when confidentiality is warranted because of the status of the proceedings or the circumstances under which the information was received and preserving confidentiality is necessary to the proper conduct of court business.

(2) Nothing in division (B)(1) of this rule shall prohibit a lawyer from obtaining or attempting to obtain either of the following:

(a) A decision that has been announced on the record or in open court, but that has not been journalized in a written opinion, entry, or other document;

(b) Information regarding the probable or actual decision in a pending case or legal proceeding from a justice, judge, or other employee of the court in which the lawyer is employed;

(c) Other information that is a matter of public record or that may be disclosed pursuant to law.

(C) The imposition of discipline upon a lawyer for violation of division (A) or (B) of this rule shall not preclude prosecution for a violation of any applicable provision of the Revised Code, including, but not limited to, division (B) of section 102.03 of the Revised Code.

[Effective: October 24, 1994.]

## CANON 8

### A Lawyer Should Assist in Improving the Legal System

#### ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

**EC 8-1** Changes in human affairs and imperfections in human institutions make necessary constant efforts to maintain and improve our legal system. This system should function in a manner that commands public respect and fosters the use of legal remedies to achieve redress of grievances. By reason of education and experience, lawyers are especially qualified to recognize deficiencies in the legal system and to initiate corrective measures therein. Thus they should participate in proposing and supporting legislation and programs to improve the system, without regard to the general interests or desires of clients or former clients.

**EC 8-2** Rules of law are deficient if they are not just, understandable, and responsive to the needs of society. If a lawyer believes that the existence or absence of a rule of law, substantive or procedural, causes or contributes to an unjust result, he should endeavor by lawful means to obtain appropriate changes in the law. He should encourage the simplification of laws and the repeal or amendment of laws that are outmoded. Likewise, legal procedures should be improved whenever experience indicates a change is needed.

**EC 8-3** The fair administration of justice requires the availability of competent lawyers. Members of the public should be educated to recognize the existence of legal problems and the resultant need for legal services, and should be provided methods for intelligent selection of counsel. Those persons unable to pay for legal services should be provided needed services. Clients and lawyers should not be penalized by undue geographical restraints upon representation in legal matters, and the bar should address itself to improvements in licensing, reciprocity, and admission procedures consistent with the needs of modern commerce.

**EC 8-4** Whenever a lawyer seeks legislative or administrative changes, he should identify the capacity in which he appears, whether on behalf of himself, a client, or the public. A lawyer may advocate such changes on behalf of a client even though he does not agree with them. But when a lawyer purports to act on behalf of the public, he should espouse only those changes which he conscientiously believes to be in the public interest.

**EC 8-5** Fraudulent, deceptive, or otherwise illegal conduct by a participant in a proceeding before a tribunal or legislative body is inconsistent with fair administration of justice, and it should never be participated in or condoned by lawyers. Unless constrained by his obligation to preserve the confidences and secrets of his client, a lawyer should reveal to appropriate authorities any knowledge he may have of such improper conduct.

**EC 8-6** Judges and administrative officials having adjudicatory powers ought to be persons of integrity, competence, and suitable temperament. Generally, lawyers are qualified, by personal observation or investigation, to evaluate the qualifications of persons seeking or being considered for such public offices, and for this reason they have a special responsibility to aid in the selection of only those who are qualified. It is the duty of lawyers to endeavor to prevent political considerations from outweighing judicial fitness in the selection of judges. Lawyers should protest earnestly against the appointment or election of those who are unsuited for the bench and should strive to have elected or appointed thereto only those who are willing to forego pursuits, whether of a business, political, or other nature, that may interfere with the free and fair consideration of questions presented for adjudication. Adjudicatory officials, not being wholly free to defend themselves, are entitled to receive the support of the bar against unjust criticism. While a lawyer as a citizen has a right to criticize such officials publicly, he should be certain of the merit of his complaint, use appropriate language, and avoid petty criticisms, for unrestrained and intemperate statements tend to lessen public confidence in our legal system. Criticisms motivated by reasons other than a desire to improve the legal system are not justified.

**EC 8-7** Since lawyers are a vital part of the legal system, they should be persons of integrity, of professional skill, and of dedication to the improvement of the system. Thus a lawyer should aid in establishing, as well as enforcing, standards of conduct adequate to protect the public by insuring that those who practice law are qualified to so.

**EC 8-8** Lawyers often serve as legislators or as holders of other public offices. This is highly desirable, as lawyers are uniquely qualified to make significant contributions to the improvement of the legal system. A lawyer who is a public officer, whether full or part-time, should not engage in activities in which his personal or professional interests are or foreseeably may be in conflict with his official duties.

**EC 8-9** The advancement of our legal system is of vital importance in maintaining the rule of law and in facilitating orderly changes; therefore, lawyers should encourage, and should aid in making, needed changes and improvements.

[Effective: October 5, 1970.]

## **DISCIPLINARY RULES**

### **DR 8-101. ACTION AS A PUBLIC OFFICIAL.**

(A) A lawyer who holds public office shall not:

(1) Use his public position to obtain, or attempt to obtain, a special advantage in legislative matters for himself or for a client under circumstances where he knows or it is obvious that such action is not in the public interest.

(2) Use his public position to influence, or attempt to influence, a tribunal to act in favor of himself or of a client.

(3) Accept any thing of value from any person when the lawyer knows or it is obvious that the offer is for the purpose of influencing his action as a public official.

[Effective: October 5, 1970.]

**DR 8-102. STATEMENTS CONCERNING JUDGES AND OTHER ADJUDICATORY OFFICERS.**

(A) A lawyer shall not knowingly make false statements of fact concerning the qualifications of a candidate for election or appointment to a judicial office.

(B) A lawyer shall not knowingly make false accusations against a judge or other adjudicatory officer.

[Effective: October 5, 1970.]

## CANON 9

### **A Lawyer Should Avoid Even the Appearance of Professional Impropriety**

#### **ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

**EC 9-1** Continuation of the American concept that we are to be governed by rules of law requires that the people have faith that justice can be obtained through our legal system. A lawyer should promote public confidence in our system and in the legal profession.

**EC 9-2** Public confidence in law and lawyers may be eroded by irresponsible or improper conduct of a lawyer. On occasion, ethical conduct of a lawyer may appear to laymen to be unethical. In order to avoid misunderstandings and hence to maintain confidence, a lawyer should fully and promptly inform his client of material developments in the matters being handled for the client. While a lawyer should guard against otherwise proper conduct that has a tendency to diminish public confidence in the legal system or in the legal profession his duty to clients or to the public should never be subordinate merely because the full discharge of his obligation may be misunderstood or may tend to subject him or the legal profession to criticism. When explicit ethical guidance does not exist, a lawyer should determine his conduct by acting in a manner that promotes public confidence in the integrity and efficiency of the legal system and the legal profession.

**EC 9-3** After a lawyer leaves judicial office or other public employment, he should not accept employment in connection with any matter in which he had substantial responsibility prior to his leaving, since to accept employment would give the appearance of impropriety even if none exists.

**EC 9-4** Because the very essence of the legal system is to provide procedures by which matters can be presented in an impartial manner so that they may be decided solely upon the merits, any statement or suggestion by a lawyer that he can or would attempt to circumvent those procedures is detrimental to the legal system and tends to undermine public confidence in it.

**EC 9-5** Separation of the funds of a client from those of his lawyer not only serves to protect the client but also avoids even the appearance of impropriety, and therefore commingling of such funds should be avoided.

**EC 9-6** Every lawyer owes a solemn duty to uphold the integrity and honor of his profession; to encourage respect for the law and for the courts and the judges thereof; to observe the Code of Professional Responsibility; to act as a member of a learned profession, one dedicated to public service; to cooperate with his brother lawyers in supporting the organized bar through the devoting of his time, efforts, and financial support as his professional standing and ability

reasonably permit; to conduct himself so as to reflect credit on the legal profession and to inspire the confidence, respect, and trust of his clients and of the public; and to strive to avoid not only professional impropriety but also the appearance of impropriety.

[Effective: October 5, 1970.]

## **DISCIPLINARY RULES**

### **DR 9-101. AVOIDING EVEN THE APPEARANCE OF IMPROPRIETY.**

(A) A lawyer shall not accept private employment in a matter upon the merits of which he has acted in a judicial capacity.

(B) A lawyer shall not accept private employment in a matter in which he had substantial responsibility while he was a public employee.

(C) A lawyer shall not state or imply that he is able to influence improperly or upon irrelevant grounds any tribunal, legislative body, or public official.

[Effective: October 5, 1970.]

## **DR 9-102. PRESERVING IDENTITY OF FUNDS AND PROPERTY OF A CLIENT.**

(A) All funds of clients paid to a lawyer or law firm, other than advances for costs and expenses, shall be deposited in one or more identifiable bank accounts maintained in the state in which the law office is situated and no funds belonging to the lawyer or law firm shall be deposited therein except as follows:

(1) Funds reasonably sufficient to pay bank charges may be deposited therein.

(2) Funds belonging in part to a client and in part presently or potentially to the lawyer or law firm must be deposited therein, but the portion belonging to the lawyer or law firm may be withdrawn when due unless the right of the lawyer or law firm to receive it is disputed by the client, in which event the disputed portion shall not be withdrawn until the dispute is finally resolved.

(B) A lawyer shall:

(1) Promptly notify a client of the receipt of his funds, securities, or other properties.

(2) Identify and label securities and properties of a client promptly upon receipt and place them in a safe deposit box or other place of safekeeping as soon as practicable.

(3) Maintain complete records of all funds, securities, and other properties of a client coming into the possession of the lawyer and render appropriate accounts to his client regarding them.

(4) Promptly pay or deliver to the client as requested by a client the funds, securities, or other properties in the possession of the lawyer which the client is entitled to receive.

(C) A lawyer, law firm, or estate of a deceased lawyer who sells a law practice shall transfer all funds held pursuant to DR 9-102(A) to the lawyer or law firm purchasing the law practice at the time client files are transferred.

(D) Nothing in the Code of Professional Responsibility shall be interpreted to prohibit compliance by a lawyer, a law firm, or an ancillary business related to the practice of law in which the lawyer is a principal with the provisions of sections 3953.231, 4705.09, and 4705.10 of the Revised Code and any rules adopted by the Ohio Legal Assistance Foundation pursuant to section 120.52 of the Revised Code.

(E) No lawyer, law firm, or ancillary business related to the practice of law shall fail to do any of the following:

(1) Maintain funds of clients or third persons in an interest-bearing trust account that is established in an eligible depository institution as required by sections 3953.231, 4705.09, and

4705.10 of the Revised Code or any rules adopted by the Ohio Legal Assistance Foundation pursuant to section 120.52 of the Revised Code;

(2) Notify the Ohio Legal Assistance Foundation, in a manner required by rules adopted by the Ohio Legal Assistance Foundation pursuant to section 120.52 of the Revised Code, of the existence of an interest-bearing trust account;

(3) Comply with the reporting requirement contained in Gov. Bar R. VI, Section 1(F).

[Effective: October 5, 1970; amended effective June 19, 1985; November 1, 2002; February 1, 2003.]

## **DEFINITIONS\***

As used in the Disciplinary Rules of the Code of Professional Responsibility:

(1) “Differing interests” include every interest that will adversely affect either the judgment or the loyalty of a lawyer to a client, whether it be a conflicting, inconsistent, diverse, or other interest.

(2) “Law firm” includes a legal professional association, corporation, legal clinic, limited liability company, registered partnership, or any other organization under which a lawyer may engage in the practice of law pursuant to the Supreme Court Rules for the Government of the Bar of Ohio.

(3) “Person” includes a corporation, an association, a trust, a partnership, and any other organization or legal entity.

(4) “Professional legal corporation” means a corporation, or an association treated as a corporation, authorized by law to practice law for profit.

(5) “State” includes the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and other federal territories and possessions.

(6) “Tribunal” includes all courts and all other adjudicatory bodies.

(7) “A Bar association” includes a bar association of specialists as referred to in DR 2-105(A)(1) or (4).

(8) “Qualified legal assistance organization” means an office or organization of one of the four types listed in DR 2-103(D)(1)-(4), inclusive that meets all the requirements thereof.

(9) “Ancillary business related to the practice of law” includes, but is not limited to, a title insurance company that is owned, operated, or owned and operated by a lawyer or law firm and that is subject to section 3953.231 of the Revised Code.

\* “Confidence” and “secret” are defined in DR 4-101(A).

[Effective: October 5, 1970; amended effective October 20, 1975; June 11, 1979; November 1, 2002.]