

A STATEMENT OF PROFESSIONAL ASPIRATIONS FOR THE LEGAL PROFESSION IN THE 17th JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

We, the lawyers and judges of the 17th Judicial Circuit, as members of the legal profession, will conduct ourselves at all times with personal courtesy and professional integrity in the fullest sense of these terms. We will be mindful of our obligations to our shared profession, clients, community and to the legal system. We will act with civility and professionalism to resolve issues and disputes in a rational, peaceful and efficient manner.

1. We will be courteous.

As lawyers diligently advancing the legitimate interests of our clients, we will treat the court, other counsel, all parties and other persons in a civil and courteous manner, both within and outside of court proceedings and in all oral or written communications.

As judges, we will be courteous, patient and respectful to all persons having business before us. We will recognize that judges have the primary opportunity, obligation and authority to ensure that all proceedings are conducted in a civil and professional manner and we will manage those proceedings accordingly.

2. We will be cooperative.

While we fulfill our particular obligations within a representative system, we recognize that being an advocate does not preclude cooperation and never justifies any intentional misrepresentation nor any personal comments, arguments or accusations going beyond the facts or law of a particular dispute. A client's ill will toward an opponent need not be ours and will not define our relationship to other lawyers or the court nor dictate our choice of tactics or permissible professional conduct.

3. We will be responsive and timely.

Our communications to the court, to clients and among ourselves will be prompt and timely. As competent professionals, we will be well-prepared and ready to address issues and concerns as they arise. We will neither demand unreasonable deadlines nor fail to meet reasonable ones. We will cooperate with each other and neither seek delays without good cause and timely notice, nor unreasonably object to reasonable requests.

4. We will keep our word.

We will faithfully honor our representations, commitments and promises or explain in a timely manner why we cannot.

5. We will use fair tactics.

In professional dealings outside of court, we will conduct ourselves as we would if we were in the presence of the court. In this spirit, we will not use unfair tactics in resolving disputes. We will observe the Illinois Supreme Court's instruction that "it is the duty of all lawyers to seek resolution of disputes at the least cost in time, expense and trauma to all parties and to the courts."

6. We will represent our professional ideals.

We recognize that creating and reinforcing the spirit of professionalism among us is an ongoing process and one that can include such considerations as appropriate attire, speech and conduct in professional settings and an awareness of our professional standing in circumstances where a public perception of the legal profession is formed.

7. We will strive to improve the legal profession.

Recognizing that enhancement of the profession is both a collective and individual task, we will seek opportunities where we can be of service to the bench and Bar. When appropriate, we will request assistance from and give assistance to each other. We will be particularly mindful of the need to be supportive and helpful to new members of the profession.

8. We will strive to serve our community.

We recognize the importance of contributing to and serving the community in which we practice our profession.