

PRINCIPLES OF PROFESSIONALISM

In recent years, lawyers and the legal profession have come under increasing criticism from the public, clients, the judiciary and lawyers themselves for conduct that, while not a violation of a particular law or code of professional responsibility, is nevertheless unprofessional and demeaning to the high calling of the practice of law. Accordingly, we, as members of the Bar Association of the City of Richmond, believe it to be our individual and mutual obligation to conduct ourselves professionally at all times, and by our conduct to demonstrate our profound respect for the rule of law and the institutions upon which it depends. To this end, and in recognition that professionalism involves (i) a fundamental understanding of general principles of law and a mastery of one's chosen areas of practice, (ii) an understanding of and an adherence to high ethical standards of conduct and (iii) tolerance, respect and civility towards clients, opposing parties, colleagues and the judiciary, we commit ourselves:

- 1. To be good stewards of the legal profession by maintaining and enhancing our knowledge of and respect for the law.**
- 2. To know and appreciate the disciplinary rules and ethical dictates of the legal profession, to demand steadfast adherence to the Code of Professional Responsibility and to portray a respectable image of the profession when communicating to the public the availability of legal services.**
- 3. To cultivate public respect for the legal profession by acting in a forthright and discreet manner in all endeavors, by demonstrating devotion to the public good through public service in the community, and by defending our system of justice whenever it is challenged unfairly.**
- 4. To be mindful that service is the keystone of the legal profession and to strive to make legal assistance available to all persons without regard to the ability to offer compensation.**
- 5. To guard jealously the privilege and the obligation to accept representations involving controversial and unpopular causes and to make the public aware that legal services should be accessible to all persons.**
- 6. To be candid, courteous, truthful and reliable in our relationships with each other, our clients, opposing parties, and the judiciary, and to avoid conduct that we would regard as offensive if directed toward us.**
- 7. To remember that aggressive and zealous representation does not require abusive, belligerent and bellicose behavior.**
- 8. To be slow to take offense and quick to seek reconciliation when confronted with conduct that is arrogant and intolerant.**
- 9. To guard against permitting personal friendship with a colleague to undermine or affect one's professional duty to a client or the courts.**

10. To be mindful that the law is a learned profession; that the practice of law is a privilege as well as an honorable means of livelihood; and that every lawyer has the obligation to preserve and protect the high ideals of liberty and due process of law.