


Throughout 2024, NCRA's 125th anniversary year, the JCR will be featuring articles from past publications. We hope that you enjoy this look into our shared history.

FROM THE
Archives

Reprinted from the proceedings of the 1927 conference, the following is an excerpt from the transcript of the introduction of the Association's first Code of Ethics. The proceedings are a part of the Robert H. Clark Library collection donated to the National Court Reporters Foundation.

Report Of The Committee On Ethics

BY GORDON L. ELLIOT, DES MOINES, IOWA

SSOCIATIONS without number—many long since forgotten; some still struggling feebly against the smothering dust of oblivion; others gravid in the womb of time, or virile, forceful factors in our civilization—have now and then attempted to prescribe modes of conduct for their members through Codes of Ethics. Terse or verbose, specific or general, in simple language or legal phrase, one and all but reiterate and affirm the sublime words uttered twenty centuries ago by the King of Kings—words which yet speak, in no small voice, directly and insistently to our heart of hearts: Whatsoever ye would that men

should do to you, do ye even so to them. Puny and inconsequential as may seem the efforts of others when measured by this standard which has come down to all mankind with the long and winnowing march of the years, so must appear any endeavor to write for our association, rules for proper action. Humbly hesitant before such attempt to “gild refined gold,” but translating the Golden Rule into the terminology of our workaday world, your committee suggests, if it seems wise to adopt one (for officials primarily, and for general practitioners so far as applicable), the following NSRA code of ethics.

NSRA CODE OF ETHICS

Cheerfulness and courtesy to court and counsel, litigants and witnesses, even under the most trying circumstances;

Promptness in attendance on sessions;

Decorum and dignity in dress and deportment befitting an honorable and learned profession;

Respect for and obedience to laws without as well as within the halls of justice;

Absolute impartiality as between those who contend for supremacy in the forum where his pen writes the sole and unquestioned record, precluding hint of impropriety or suspicion of lack of integrity attaching to his conduct;

Honesty and fair dealing with clients, associates and fellow reporters;

The highest accuracy and skill in reporting, with a constant striving for self-improvement; and diligence, exactness and painstaking care in the preparation of the transcript—the finished product by which the shorthand reporter is judged; thereby reflecting credit not only upon the individual but upon all similarly engaged;

Insistence upon such just compensation and fair laws as will attract and hold educate and talented men and women in a work arduous in the extreme—a courtroom day paced by unleashed, goaded human passions, followed by an office

night where time is ever the essence, converting the turmoil of the daylight hours into the calm, black-typed pages of “the record,” to be conned upon the morrow in the trial, weeks hence in the abstract upon appeal, or years later on some collateral issue unthought of when the now cold and staring words fell white-hot from the lips of the actors in the great drama of a modern legal trial;

And, withal, a sincere and impelling interest in his vocation and this association, that so long as any member derives his livelihood from the honored and trusted position of shorthand reporter he shall say, neither from fancies duress nor with secret reservations, but freely and joyfully, “Whose salt I eat, his song I sing,” and resolve to dedicate a commensurate portion of his energy, time and money, without bickering and without selfishness, to the common good of “The Silent Man” at the table between the bench and bar.

Respectfully submitted,

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GEO. L. HART,

RALPH W. PETERS,

JOHN COLLINS,

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