CIVILITY TOOLBOX

The State Bar California
180 Howard Street
San Francisco, CA 94105

July 17, 2009

THE STATE BAR
OF CALIFORNIA

Sheldon H. Sloan
Past President

180 Howard Street, San Francisco, California 94105 TEL: (415) 538-2000

July 17, 2009

> **"As officers of the court with responsibilities to the administration of justice, attorneys have an obligation to be professional with clients, other parties and counsel, the courts and the public. This obligation includes civility, professional integrity, personal dignity, candor, diligence, respect, courtesy, and cooperation, all of which are essential to the fair administration of justice and conflict resolution."**
>
> **[*California Attorney Guidelines of Civility and Professionalism*]**

Dear Bar Leader:

During my tenure as President of the Board of Governors of the State Bar of California in 2007, the Board took a giant stride forward to address issues of civility in the practice of law in California by adopting the *California Attorney Guidelines of Civility and Professionalism*. The *Guidelines* provide best practices of civility in the practice of law and are offered to promote both the effectiveness and the enjoyment of the practice of law and economical client representation. As we all know, uncivil or unprofessional conduct not only disserves the individuals involved, it demeans the profession as a whole and our system of justice. A growth in uncivil conduct in the legal profession caused me to initiate the effort for Board adoption of civility and professionalism guidelines.

I hope you will join me in encouraging California attorneys to engage in best practices of civility by making the *Guidelines* their personal standards and goals. Attorneys in your organization can do this by taking the pledge that appears at the end of the *Guidelines*. And I hope your bar association will join the State Bar by adopting the *Guidelines* and implementing them for your membership. If your organization already has a code of professionalism, the *California Attorney Guidelines of Civility and Professionalism* should be complementary to what you have.

The Attorney Civility Task Force, which drafted the *Guidelines* for the Board of Governors, has created a **Civility Toolbox** to assist bar associations and California attorneys in the ongoing effort to promote civility and professionalism in the practice of law. Resources include the *Guidelines*, the attorney pledge, a sample resolution for bar associations and local court order. Since we are finding that the *Guidelines* have been a popular MCLE subject, we have also included a sample PowerPoint presentation for an MCLE program. The **Civility Toolbox** is located on the State Bar's Web site at www.calbar.ca.gov, under:

- **Reports** (Published reports in 2007);
- **Member Benefits>Member Services Center**;
- **Ethics** (Ethics Information); and
- **Attorney Resources>Law Practice Management**

In closing, I encourage you to step forward and support this effort to promote civility in the legal profession, and I hope the **Civility Toolbox** will be useful for this purpose.

Sincerely,

President of the Board of Governors
October 2006 - September 2007

Note: The above links are no longer available or have since then moved.

- **Reports (Published reports in 2007)**; → **no longer available**
- **Member Benefits>Member Services Center**; → **no longer available**
- **Ethics (Ethics Information)**; and → **http://calbar.ca.gov/ethics**
- **Attorney Resources>Law Practice Management** → **Member Services>Law Office Management**

Attorney Civility Task Force

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Guidelines Timeline

- August 2006
- Attorney Civility Initiative

JULY 28, 2006 | LAW PRACTICE

Let's Open Wide the Pipeline to Diversity of Legal Profession

Forum Column

By Sheldon Sloan

"Civility and courtesy ... are expected and not to be equated with weakness."

Confession: I stole that from the Santa Clara County Bar's Code of Professionalism. However, like many of you, I see it as just plain old common sense - and also as an excellent starting point for a year in which I hope we can bring some measure of civility and courtesy back to our practices, both in our courtrooms as well as in our interactions with each other.

When I ran three years ago for a seat on the State Bar Board of Governors, I hoped to improve the image and welfare of lawyers and help the public see all the good things that lawyers do. While serving on the board, I came to see more clearly that, as lawyers, we hold our image in our own hands - that if we practice our profession in a more civil manner, then the public will be more open to assessing what we do rather than how badly or inappropriately we behave while we're doing it.

Some may call me old-fashioned, but I say to them: You can practice the law and do a good job for your client without being rude and aggressive and causing a lot of trouble for everybody. That's why I hope to make my upcoming term as State Bar president a year in which we bring back professionalism, and along with it some public respect.

This should not be difficult. Most of us just need to hearken back to what our moms and dads and schoolteachers tried to instill in us when we were kids and apply it to our chosen profession: A good lawyer doesn't need to schedule depositions when an opponent is out of town on vacation.

A good lawyer doesn't need to serve documents in a way that unfairly limits the other party's opportunity to respond.

Big firm lawyers don't need to try to crush opposing sole practitioners by papering them to death.

And no lawyer should ever make false, misleading or exaggerated statements while grandstanding for the cameras or any other means of reaching the public.

As I said, all just plain common sense. And all, I note, included in different sections of Santa Clara's excellent Code of Professionalism.

During my years as a lawyer, on the bench and on the State Bar board, there is one excellent life lesson I can say I have learned well: Don't try to reinvent the wheel - and certainly don't spend State Bar dues doing it - when you have such good friends in Santa Clara County, and elsewhere, who already have done most of the work.

This code hits all the important points: responsibilities to the public and to the client; scheduling; continuances and extensions of time; service of papers; punctuality; writings submitted to the court; communications with adversaries; discovery; motion practice; dealing with nonparty witnesses; ex parte communications with the court; settlement and ADR; trials and hearings; default; social relationships; privacy; and communication about the legal system and with participants. I commend you to read the full document: www.scbba.com. I've also been sent another excellent one, this one done by the legislative section of the State Bar, and can be found at www.calbar.ca.gov/litigation.

No doubt other excellent, all-inclusive codes also exist. I intend that we take Santa Clara's, the State Bar litigation section's and any others, form a task force and tweak the existing documents into a statewide code to be approved by the new board of governors. We can do this in the first few months of the new board year that starts at our annual meeting in early October if the board of governors approves my idea.

Then our real work begins. It is our job as stewards of the State Bar to figure out how to get the lawyers of California to sign on to a pledge to our new statewide code of professionalism and institute these ideals into action. This will be the real test. If we fail to get the word out, or fail to motivate our membership to sign on, our work will go for naught and our avenue to public understanding and respect will narrow even more.

It would be a great shame if our effort to gain more public respect falters just as the State Bar's other excellent ongoing project, Pipeline to Diversity, is beginning to come to fruition.

Sheldon Sloan is president-elect of the State Bar of California. A former municipal court judge, he is of-counsel for Lewis, Brisbois, Bisgaard & Smith in Los Angeles.

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- February 2007
  - Informal Feedback and Public Hearings on Proposed California Attorney Civility Standards

- May 2007
  - Proposal for California Attorney Guidelines of Civility and Professionalism: Request authorization for 30-day public comment period

- July 2007
  - Proposal for “California Attorney Guidelines of Civility and Professionalism” – Return From 30-day Public Comment and Recommendation For Adoption

- July 20, 2007
  - State Bar Approves Civility Guidelines

CIVILITY GUIDELINES OVERVIEW

March 20, 2009

SUMMARY

At the request of Shelly Sloan, then President-Elect of the Board of Governors of the State Bar, the Board appointed the Attorney Civility Task Force in August 2006 to study and recommend aspirational civility guidelines for adoption by the Board. After extensively vetting draft guidelines throughout the state, in May 2007 the task force reported to the Board Committee on Member Oversight (MOC) with a request for public comment on a proposed new set of voluntary guidelines called the "California Attorney Guidelines of Civility and Professionalism". MOC authorized publication of the proposal for a 30-day public comment period.

After reviewing the public comments, the task force further revised the Guidelines. In July 2007, the Board adopted the Guidelines as best practices of civility in the practice of law in California.

Since the Board's adoption of the Guidelines in 2007, ongoing interest throughout the state has resulted in adoption and implementation of the Guidelines at local levels.

BACKGROUND

In 1995, the Commission on the Future of the Legal Profession and the State Bar of California ("Futures Commission") issued its report, "The Future of the California Bar". Among other things, this report made recommendations to promote professionalism[1] . Recommendation 58 stated that the California legal profession should consider adoption of an aspirational, statewide code of professionalism containing a broad list of aspirational goals and precatory duties, which would define the desired goals and aims of the legal profession and the desired qualities of proper professional practice. The report noted there is some concern that an aspirational code would create confusion regarding its binding effect or precedential value and result in "grey letter" rules of conduct. However, the Commission believed that a code of professionalism would send an important message to the membership with a long-range salutary effect. The Futures Commission viewed attorney civility as a central tenet of professionalism and that the absence of civility undermines the proper administration of justice. The commission believed that civility is especially important given our adversarial system of justice.[2]

In 1997, the State Bar and the American Bar Association co-sponsored a "Conference on Professionalism for the 21st Century." Unfortunately, veto of the State Bar's dues bill in the Fall of 1997 caused an interruption in the Bar's work on professionalism.

THE ATTORNEY CIVILITY TASK FORCE

In mid-2006, Sheldon Sloan was elected the next President of the Board of Governors. President-Elect Sloan voiced concern about a perceived decline in civility in the practice of law.

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[1] The Futures Commission viewed professionalism as encompassing ethical practice, competence, civility, service to the public, and self-regulation. (Futures Commission final report, pp. 101-102.)

[2] Futures Commission final report, pp. 106, 108.

At his urging, the Board appointed an Attorney Civility Task Force[3] and charged it with considering whether it is more appropriate to recommend one set of voluntary, aspirational civility goals or to recommend an alternative, such as a sample selection of existing civility goals.

The task force quickly reached consensus to recommend one set of civility guidelines that could be applicable anywhere in the state on a voluntary basis. The task force believed it appropriate to recommend two versions as a package-- the entire text of guidelines with detailed examples and a shortened 2-page version without the examples. The task force synthesized provisions from other codes and added text for additional subjects in order to make the scope of the draft guidelines broad enough for statewide application, regardless of location or area of practice.

The task force strongly believed the guidelines should reflect a wide range of views. In February and March of 2007, the draft guidelines were circulated for informal vetting and feedback, which included two public hearings, vetting at bar association MCLE programs and law school classes, and feedback from approximately thirty individuals and bar organizations. The task force incorporated suggestions from the feedback into every section of the guidelines.

"CALIFORNIA ATTORNEY GUIDELINES OF CIVILITY AND PROFESSIONALISM"

In May 2007, MOC authorized a 30-day public comment period for the proposed "California Attorney Guidelines of Civility and Professionalism". The Guidelines were published in the California Bar Journal, online, by e-blast to voluntary bar associations in California, and were sent to 200 individuals and organizations that had requested the earlier draft in February and March.

Introduction

The Introduction to the Guidelines sets their context and states the intention that the Guidelines foster a level of civility and professionalism as the standard of civility in the practice of law in California. The Introduction states that the Guidelines are not mandatory rules of professional conduct, nor rules of practice or standards of care, and that the Guidelines are not to be used as the independent basis for disciplinary charges or claims of professional negligence. This kind of statement is considered important for the Guidelines. Because these are Guidelines of a mandatory integrated state bar, it is important to distinguish between the mandatory Rules of Professional Conduct, which must be approved by the California Supreme Court for disciplinary purposes, and voluntary civility guidelines adopted by the Board of Governors without additional approval by the Supreme Court for disciplinary purposes.[4]

Twenty-one Sections of the Guidelines

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[3] Task force members were: Marguerite Downing (chair); Mary Alexander; Terry Bridges; Michael W. Case; Richard L. Crabtree; Dean Dennis; Hon. Richard L. Fruin., Jr.; Forentino R. Garza; Hon. Everett A. Hewlett, Jr.; Diane L. Karpman; Hon. Loren E. McMaster; Donald F. Miles (individually, not as a State Bar Court judge); Richard Rubin; Francis S. Ryu; Sherry M. Saffer; Cynthia Sands; Thomas G. Stolpman; Hon. Brian C. Walsh; Lei-Chala I. Wilson; and Alan S. Yochelson.

[4] For this reason, "guidelines" was selected over "code", "standards", "rules", or other words having a mandatory connotation.

Twenty-one sections address civility issues in client relations and responsibilities to the profession, public and administration of justice, in addition to civility issues and responsibilities in attorney-attorney relationships.

* Section 1 [Responsibilities to the Justice System]
* Section 2 [Responsibilities to the Public and the Profession]
* Section 3 [Responsibilities to the Client and Client Representation]
* Section 4 [Communications]
* Section 5 [Punctuality]
* Section 6 [Scheduling, Continuances and Extensions of Time]
* Section 7 [Service of Papers]
* Section 8 [Writings submitted to the Court, Counsel or Other Parties]
* Section 9 [Discovery]
* Section 10 [Motion Practice]
* Section 11 [Dealing with Nonparty Witnesses]
* Section 12 [Ex Parte Communication with the Court]
* Section 13 [Settlement and Alternative Dispute Resolution]
* Section 14 [Conduct in Court]
* Section 15 [Default]
* Section 16 [Social Relationships with Judicial Officers, Neutrals and Court Appointed Experts]
* Section 17 [Privacy]
* Section 18 [Negotiation of Written Agreements].
* Section 19 [Additional provision for Family Law Practitioners]
* Section 20 [Additional provision for Criminal Law Practitioners].
* Section 21 [Court Proceedings]

Many of the sections are for civil litigation practice. In addition, since the Guidelines are intended for all California attorneys, some sections cover other subjects or areas of law. To avoid unwieldiness, there was a limit on the number of other areas of law that could be covered. To the extent that guidelines could apply to other areas of practice, the spirit of the Guidelines would permit extending the guidelines as appropriate.

Attorney Pledge
An optional pledge appears at the end of the Guidelines for attorneys who wish to take the pledge.

Adoption by the Board of Governors
In July 2007, after the task force made further revisions to incorporate suggestions made in public comment, the Board of Governors adopted the “California Attorney Guidelines of Civility and Professionalism” as a model set of guidelines for members, voluntary bar associations and courts to use and implement in a way that is effective for the local legal community.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GUIDELINES

Since their adoption by the Board, there has been on-going interest in the educational value of the Guidelines as a model of best practices of civility in the practice of law in California. That interest has been expressed in a variety of activities, including the following:

- March 18, 2008, the Board of Directors of the Riverside County Bar Association approved and adopted the Guidelines.

- March 26, 2008, the Board of Directors of the Leo A. Deegan Inn of Court adopted a resolution approving and adopting the Guidelines.

- April 24, 2008, the San Diego County Bar Association introduced an updated Attorney Code of Conduct. The Attorney Code of Conduct was a cornerstone of the bar association's 2008 Campaign on Civility, Integrity and Professionalism.

- September 2008, a program on the Guidelines was given at the State Bar's annual meeting in Monterey, California. A similar program had been given at the annual meeting in 2007.

- June 11, 2008, the Joseph B. Campbell Inn of Court adopted the Guidelines.

- July 1, 2008, the Sacramento Superior Court recognized the existence of the Guidelines, effective this date. (Local rule 9.22)

- January 2009, the Schwartz/Levi American Inn of Court presented a program in civility in the practice of law.

- March 18, 2009, a program on the judge's role in ensuring civility and professionalism civility opened the 2009 Civil Law Institute sponsored by the California Center for Judicial Education and Research.

California Attorney Guidelines of Civility and Professionalism

FAQs

(July 2009)

1. **What are the California Attorney Guidelines of Civility and Professionalism?**

The Guidelines are voluntary goals of best practices of civility in the practice of law in California.

2. **Why are California Attorney Guidelines of Civility and Professionalism necessary?**

Uncivil or unprofessional conduct not only disserves the individuals involved, it demeans the profession as a whole and our system of justice. The Guidelines promote both the effectiveness and the enjoyment of the practice of law and economical client representation by providing best practices of civility in the practice of law.

3. **How were the Guidelines developed?**

In 2007, the Board of Governors appointed a task force of attorneys and judges from every State Bar district. The task force recommended the California Attorney Guidelines of Civility and Professionalism to the Board after studying civility codes of other organizations, adapting provisions from those codes and creating new provisions for practice in California, and incorporating feedback from members, judicial officers, the public, organizations and others in two periods of public comment and two public hearings.

4. **Why are there two sets of Guidelines?**

The two versions are complementary. The version with examples gives detail to illustrate problem areas and best practices for the subject of the Section. The two-page version is a concise summary that can be conveniently carried by the attorney when out of the office.

5. **Do the Guidelines create standards of conduct or standards of care?**

No. The Introduction says they do not create standards of conduct or standards of care, and they do not supplant any rules or laws that govern attorney conduct. The Guidelines are not an independent basis for imposition of discipline or a finding of malpractice.

6. **How are the Guidelines different from the Rules of Professional Conduct or laws on the practice of law in California?**

Unlike the California Rules of Professional Conduct, the Supreme Court of California has not approved the Guidelines or mandated that California attorneys follow the Guidelines. Similarly, the Guidelines do not have the force of legislative enactments.

7. **Are the Guidelines mandatory?**

The Guidelines are cast in terms of “should”, not “must”. The State Bar follows the usage conventions of the California Supreme Court, which is that “should” expresses a preference, a nonbinding recommendation or non-mandatory conduct.

8. **If they are not mandatory, why should an attorney abide by the Guidelines?**

Civility in the practice of law promotes effectiveness and enjoyment of the practice of law. They also promote economical client representation. Conversely, uncivil conduct not only disserves clients, it demeans the profession and the American system of justice.

9. **Are these Guidelines for statewide, local, law firm or individual use?**

The Guidelines may be adopted for use by any or all of these. Courts, too, may adopt or endorse the Guidelines as best practices to be followed.

10. **If the guidelines are adopted by our local bar association or law firms, what should be done to implement them?**

Entities implement the Guidelines in a variety of ways to keep them viable, alive, and relevant. The Guidelines can be implemented by a number actions, including the following: through MCLE programs; by publicizing in bar association directories those attorneys who have taken the pledge; through local courts endorsement of the Guidelines; publicly posting the Guidelines and signed pledge; writing news articles on the subject of civility and professionalism; and through a mentor system for best practices of civility in the profession.

11. **My organization already has a code of professionalism. How do the Guidelines relate to my organization’s code of professionalism?**

The Guidelines are intended to be complementary with codes of professionalism adopted by bar associations in California.

12. **Do the Guidelines denigrate an attorney’s duty of zealous representation?**

No. Attorneys are officers of the court with responsibilities to the administration of justice, the courts, the public, and other counsel, in addition to attorneys’ duties to their clients. Civility, professional integrity, personal dignity, candor, diligence, respect, courtesy, and cooperation are all essential to the fair administration of justice and conflict resolution.

13. **Why do some Guidelines seem redundant to local rules of court or some rules of professional conduct?**

The Guidelines address problems in conduct that have been observed as arising from a local rule of court or other prescribed rule. The examples given in the Guidelines illustrate what do to, or not do, to address a particular situation.

14. **There is no statement that the Guidelines are enforceable through sanctions. Is this intentional?**

Yes. Sanctions can be expected to lead to a less collegial relationship among counsel, and tend to undermine the civility effort. Sanctions also tend to increase the costs and expenses of the case.

15. **Section 16 seems to diverge from existing law. What is the reason for this?**

When an attorney has any close, personal relationships with judicial officers, neutrals and court appointed experts, the law places a burden of disclosure on the judicial officer. The Guidelines go beyond that burden, so that as a matter of courtesy and to avoid a waste of court resources, an attorney should notify an opposing counsel of party if the attorney has a close, personal relationship with one of these categories of people.

16. **There is nothing in the Guidelines for my area of law. Do they apply to me?**

Yes, they could. The Guidelines are potentially applicable to all California attorneys. To avoid becoming unwieldy, the Guidelines do not cover all areas of law. However, to the extent that the guidelines could apply to areas of practice that are not mentioned, the spirit of the Guidelines would permit extending them as appropriate.

California Attorney
Guidelines of Civility and Professionalism

The State Bar of California
180 Howard Street
San Francisco, CA 94105-1639

Adopted by the Board of Governors on
July 20, 2007

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CALIFORNIA ATTORNEY
GUIDELINES OF CIVILITY AND PROFESSIONALISM

(Adopted July 20, 2007)

INTRODUCTION

As officers of the court with responsibilities to the administration of justice, attorneys have an obligation to be professional with clients, other parties and counsel, the courts and the public. This obligation includes civility, professional integrity, personal dignity, candor, diligence, respect, courtesy, and cooperation, all of which are essential to the fair administration of justice and conflict resolution.

These are guidelines for civility. The Guidelines are offered because civility in the practice of law promotes both the effectiveness and the enjoyment of the practice and economical client representation. The legal profession must strive for the highest standards of attorney behavior to elevate and enhance our service to justice. Uncivil or unprofessional conduct not only disserves the individual involved, it demeans the profession as a whole and our system of justice.

These voluntary Guidelines foster a level of civility and professionalism that exceed the minimum requirements of the mandated Rules of Professional Conduct as the best practices of civility in the practice of law in California. The Guidelines are not intended to supplant these or any other rules or laws that govern attorney conduct. Since the Guidelines are not mandatory rules of professional conduct, nor rules of practice, nor standards of care, they are not to be used as an independent basis for disciplinary charges by the State Bar or claims of professional negligence.

The Guidelines are intended to complement codes of professionalism adopted by bar associations in California. Individual attorneys are encouraged to make these guidelines their personal standards by taking the pledge that appears at the end. The Guidelines can be applicable to all lawyers regardless of practice area. Attorneys are encouraged to comply with both the spirit and letter of these guidelines, recognizing that complying with these guidelines does not in any way denigrate the attorney's duty of zealous representation.

SECTION 1
RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

The dignity, decorum and courtesy that have traditionally characterized the courts and legal profession of civilized nations are not empty formalities. They are essential to an atmosphere that promotes justice and to an attorney's responsibility for the fair and impartial administration of justice.

SECTION 2
RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE PUBLIC AND THE PROFESSION

An attorney should be mindful that, as individual circumstances permit, the goals of the profession include improving the administration of justice and contributing time to persons and organizations that cannot afford legal assistance.

An attorney should encourage new members of the bar to adopt these guidelines of civility and professionalism and mentor them in applying the guidelines.

SECTION 3
RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE CLIENT AND CLIENT REPRESENTATION

An attorney should treat clients with courtesy and respect, and represent them in a civil and professional manner. An attorney should advise current and potential clients that it is not acceptable for an attorney to engage in abusive behavior or other conduct unbecoming a member of the bar and an officer of the court.

As an officer of the court, an attorney should not allow clients to prevail upon the attorney to engage in uncivil behavior.

An attorney should not compromise the guidelines of civility and professionalism to achieve an advantage.

SECTION 4
COMMUNICATIONS

An attorney's communications about the legal system should at all times reflect civility, professional integrity, personal dignity, and respect for the legal system. An attorney should not engage in conduct that is unbecoming a member of the Bar and an officer of the court.

For example, in communications about the legal system and with adversaries:

a. An attorney's conduct should be consistent with high respect and esteem for the civil and criminal justice systems.

b. This guideline does not prohibit an attorney's good faith expression of dissent or criticism made in public or private discussions for the purpose of improving the legal system or profession.

c. An attorney should not disparage the intelligence, integrity, ethics, morals or behavior of the court or other counsel, parties or participants when those characteristics are not at issue.

d. Respecting cultural diversity, an attorney should not disparage another's personal characteristics.

e. An attorney should not make exaggerated, false, or misleading statements to the media while representing a party in a pending matter.

f. An attorney should avoid hostile, demeaning or humiliating words.

g. An attorney should not create a false or misleading record of events or attribute to an opposing counsel a position not taken.

h. An attorney should agree to reasonable requests in the interests of efficiency and economy, including agreeing to a waiver of procedural formalities where appropriate.

i. Unless specifically permitted or invited by the court or authorized by law, an attorney should not correspond directly with the court regarding a case.

Nothing above shall be construed as discouraging the reporting of conduct that fails to comply with the Rules of Professional Conduct.

SECTION 5
PUNCTUALITY

An attorney should be punctual in appearing at trials, hearings, meetings, depositions and other scheduled appearances.

For example:

a. An attorney should arrive sufficiently in advance to resolve preliminary matters.

b. An attorney should timely notify participants when the attorney will be late or is aware that a participant will be late.

SECTION 6
SCHEDULING, CONTINUANCES AND EXTENSIONS OF TIME

An attorney should advise clients that civility and courtesy in scheduling meetings, hearings and discovery are expected as professional conduct.

For example:

a. An attorney should consider the scheduling interests of the court, other counsel or party, and other participants, should schedule by agreement whenever possible, and should send formal notice after agreement is reached.

b. An attorney should not arbitrarily or unreasonably withhold consent to a request for scheduling accommodations or engage in delay tactics.

c. An attorney should promptly notify the court and other counsel of problems with key participants' availability.

d. An attorney should promptly notify other counsel and, if appropriate, the court, when scheduled meetings, hearings or depositions must be cancelled or rescheduled, and provide alternate dates when possible.

In considering requests for an extension of time, an attorney should consider the client's interests and need to promptly resolve matters, the schedules and willingness of others to grant reciprocal extensions, the time needed for a task, and other relevant factors.

Consistent with existing law and court orders, an attorney should agree to reasonable requests for extensions of time that are not adverse to a client's interests.

For example:

a. Unless time is of the essence, an attorney should agree to an extension without requiring motions or other formalities, regardless of whether the requesting counsel previously refused to grant an extension.

b. An attorney should agree to an appropriate continuance when new counsel substitutes in.

c. An attorney should advise clients that failing to agree with reasonable requests for time extensions is inappropriate.

d. An attorney should not use extensions or continuances for harassment or to extend litigation.

e. An attorney should place conditions on an agreement to an extension only if they are fair and essential or if the attorney is entitled to impose them, for instance to preserve rights or seek reciprocal scheduling concessions.

f. If an attorney intends that a request for or agreement to an extension shall cut off a party's substantive rights or procedural options, the attorney should disclose that intent at the time of the request or agreement.

SECTION 7
SERVICE OF PAPERS

The timing and manner of service of papers should not be used to the disadvantage of the party receiving the papers.

For example:

a. An attorney should serve papers on the attorney who is responsible for the matter at his or her principal place of work.

b. If possible, papers should be served upon counsel at a time agreed upon in advance.

c. When serving papers, an attorney should allow sufficient time for opposing counsel to prepare for a court appearance or to respond to the papers.

d. An attorney should not serve papers to take advantage of an opponent's absence or to inconvenience the opponent, for instance by serving papers late on Friday afternoon or the day preceding a holiday.

e. When it is likely that service by mail will prejudice an opposing party, an attorney should serve the papers by other permissible means.

SECTION 8
WRITINGS SUBMITTED TO THE COURT, COUNSEL OR OTHER PARTIES

Written materials directed to counsel, third parties or a court should be factual and concise and focused on the issue to be decided.

For example:

a. An attorney should not make ad hominem attacks on opposing counsel.

b. Unless at issue or relevant in a particular proceeding, an attorney should avoid degrading the intelligence, ethics, morals, integrity, or personal behavior of others.

c. An attorney should clearly identify all revisions in a document previously submitted to the court or other counsel.

SECTION 9
DISCOVERY

Attorneys are encouraged to meet and confer early in order to explore voluntary disclosure, which includes identification of issues, identification of persons with knowledge of such issues, and exchange of documents.

Attorneys are encouraged to propound and respond to formal discovery in a manner designed to fully implement the purposes of the Civil Discovery Act.

An attorney should not use discovery to harass an opposing counsel, parties, or witnesses. An attorney should not use discovery to delay the resolution of a dispute.

For example:

a. As to Depositions:

1. When another party notices a deposition for the near future, absent unusual circumstances, an attorney should not schedule another deposition in the same case for an earlier date without opposing counsel's agreement.

2. An attorney should delay a scheduled deposition only when necessary to address scheduling problems and not in bad faith.

3. An attorney should treat other counsel and participants with courtesy and civility, and should not engage in conduct that would be inappropriate in the presence of a judicial officer.

4. An attorney should remember that vigorous advocacy can be consistent with professional courtesy, and that arguments or conflicts with other counsel should not be personal.

5. An attorney questioning a deponent should provide other counsel present with a copy of any documents shown to the deponent before or contemporaneously with showing the document to the deponent.

6. Once a question is asked, an attorney should not interrupt a deposition or make an objection for the purpose of coaching a deponent or suggesting answers.

7. An attorney should not direct a deponent to refuse to answer a question or end the deposition without a legal basis for doing so.

8. An attorney should refrain from self-serving speeches and speaking objections.

b. As to Document Demands:

1. Document requests should be used only to seek those documents that are reasonably needed to prosecute or defend an action.

2. An attorney should not make demands to harass or embarrass a party or witness or to impose an inordinate burden or expense in responding.

3. If an attorney inadvertently receives a privileged document, the attorney should promptly notify the producing party that the document has been received.

4. In responding to a document demand, an attorney should not intentionally misconstrue a request in such a way as to avoid disclosure or withhold a document on the grounds of privilege.

5. An attorney should not produce disorganized or unintelligible documents, or produce documents in a way that hides or obscures the existence of particular documents.

6. An attorney should not delay in producing a document in order to prevent opposing counsel from inspecting the document prior to or during a scheduled deposition or for some other tactical reason.

c. As to Interrogatories:

1. An attorney should narrowly tailor special interrogatories and not use them to harass or impose an undue burden or expense on an opposing party.

2. An attorney should not intentionally misconstrue or respond to interrogatories in a manner that is not truly responsive.

3. When an attorney lacks a good faith belief in the merit of an objection, the attorney should not object to an interrogatory. If an interrogatory is objectionable in part, an attorney should answer the unobjectionable part.

SECTION 10
MOTION PRACTICE

An attorney should consider whether, before filing or pursuing a motion, to contact opposing counsel to attempt to informally resolve or limit the dispute.

For example:

a. Before filing demurrers, motions to strike, motions to transfer venue, and motions for judgment on the pleadings, an attorney should engage in more than a pro forma effort to resolve the issue.

b. In complying with any meet and confer requirement in the California Code of Civil Procedure, an attorney should speak personally with opposing counsel and engage in a good faith effort to resolve or informally limit an issue.

c. An attorney should not engage in conduct that forces an opposing counsel to file a motion and then not oppose the motion.

d. An attorney who has no reasonable objection to a proposed motion should promptly make this position known to opposing counsel, who then may file an unopposed motion or avoid filing a motion.

e. After opposing a motion, if an attorney recognizes that the movant's position is correct, the attorney should promptly advise the movant and the court of this change in position.

f. Because requests for monetary sanctions, even if statutorily authorized, can lead to the destruction of a productive relationship between counsel or parties, monetary sanctions should not be sought unless fully justified by the circumstances and necessary to protect a client's legitimate interests and then only after a good faith effort to resolve the issue informally among counsel.

SECTION 11
DEALING WITH NONPARTY WITNESSES

It is important to promote high regard for the profession and the legal system among those who are neither attorneys nor litigants. An attorney's conduct in dealings with nonparty witnesses should exhibit the highest standards of civility.

For example:

a. An attorney should be courteous and respectful in communications with nonparty witnesses.

b. Upon request, an attorney should extend professional courtesies and grant reasonable accommodations, unless to do so would materially prejudice the client's lawful objectives.

c. An attorney should take special care to protect a witness from undue harassment or embarrassment and to state questions in a form that is appropriate to the witness's age and development.

d. An attorney should not issue a subpoena to a nonparty witness for inappropriate tactical or strategic purposes, such as to intimidate or harass the nonparty.

e. As soon as an attorney knows that a previously scheduled deposition will or will not, in fact, go forward as scheduled, the attorney should notify all counsel.

f. An attorney who obtains a document pursuant to a deposition subpoena should, upon request, make copies of the document available to all other counsel at their expense.

SECTION 12
EX PARTE COMMUNICATION WITH THE COURT

In a social setting or otherwise, an attorney should not communicate ex parte with a judicial officer on the substance of a case pending before the court, unless permitted by law.

SECTION 13
SETTLEMENT AND ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION

An attorney should raise and explore with the client and, if the client consents, with opposing counsel, the possibility of settlement and alternative dispute resolution in every matter as soon as possible and, when appropriate, during the course of litigation.

For example:

a. An attorney should advise a client at the outset of the relationship of the availability of informal or alternative dispute resolution.

b. An attorney should attempt to evaluate a matter objectively and to de-escalate any controversy or dispute in an effort to resolve or limit the controversy or dispute.

c. An attorney should consider whether alternative dispute resolution would adequately serve a client's interest and dispose of the controversy expeditiously and economically.

d. An attorney should honor a client's desire to settle the dispute quickly and in a cost-effective manner.

e. An attorney should use an alternative dispute resolution process for purposes of settlement and not for delay or other improper purposes, such as discovery.

f. An attorney should participate in good faith, and assist the alternative dispute officer by providing pertinent and accurate facts, law, theories, opinions and arguments in an attempt to resolve a dispute.

g. An attorney should not falsely hold out the possibility of settlement as a means for terminating discovery or delaying trial.

SECTION 14
CONDUCT IN COURT

To promote a positive image of the profession, an attorney should always act respectfully and with dignity in court and assist the court in proper handling of a case.

For example:

a. An attorney should be punctual and prepared.

b. An attorney's conduct should avoid disorder or disruption and preserve the right to a fair trial.

c. An attorney should maintain respect for and confidence in a judicial office by displaying courtesy, dignity and respect toward the court and courtroom personnel.

d. An attorney should refrain from conduct that inappropriately demeans another person.

e. Before appearing in court, an attorney should advise a client of the kind of behavior expected of the client and endeavor to prevent the client from creating disorder or disruption in the courtroom.

f. An attorney should make objections for legitimate and good faith reasons, and not for the purpose of harassment or delay.

g. An attorney should honor an opposing counsel's requests that do not materially prejudice the rights of the attorney's client or sacrifice tactical advantage.

h. While appearing before the court, an attorney should address all arguments, objections and requests to the court, rather than directly to opposing counsel.

i. While appearing in court, an attorney should demonstrate sensitivity to any party, witness or attorney who has requested, or may need, accommodation as a person with physical or mental impairment, so as to foster full and fair access of all persons to the court.

SECTION 15
DEFAULT

An attorney should not take the default of an opposing party known to be represented by counsel without giving the party advance warning.

For example an attorney should not race opposing counsel to the courthouse to knowingly enter a default before a responsive pleading can be filed. This guideline is intended to apply only to taking a default when there is a failure to timely respond to complaints, cross-complaints, and amended pleadings.

SECTION 16
SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH JUDICIAL OFFICERS, NEUTRALS AND COURT APPOINTED EXPERTS

An attorney should avoid even the appearance of bias by notifying opposing counsel or an unrepresented opposing party of any close, personal relationships between the attorney and a judicial officer, arbitrator, mediator or court-appointed expert and allowing a reasonable opportunity to object.

SECTION 17
PRIVACY

An attorney should respect the privacy rights of parties and nonparties.

For example:

a. An attorney should not inquire into, attempt or threaten to use, private facts concerning any party or other individuals for the purpose of gaining an advantage in a case. This guideline does not preclude inquiry into sensitive matters relevant to an issue, as long as the inquiry is pursued as narrowly as possible.

b. If an attorney must inquire into an individual's private affairs, the attorney should cooperate in arranging for protective measures, including stipulating to an appropriate protective order, designed to assure that the information revealed is disclosed only for purposes relevant to the pending litigation.

c. Nothing herein shall be construed as authorizing the withholding of information in violation of applicable law.

SECTION 18
NEGOTIATION OF WRITTEN AGREEMENTS

An attorney should negotiate and conclude written agreements in a cooperative manner and with informed authority of the client.

For example:

a. An attorney should use boilerplate provisions only if they apply to the subject of the agreement.

b. If an attorney modifies a document, the attorney should clearly identify the change and bring it to the attention of other counsel.

c. An attorney should avoid negotiating tactics that are abusive; that are not made in good faith; that threaten inappropriate legal action; that are not true; that set arbitrary deadlines; that are intended solely to gain an unfair advantage or take unfair advantage of a superior bargaining position; or that do not accurately reflect the client's wishes or previous oral agreements.

d. An attorney should not participate in an action or the preparation of a document that is intended to circumvent or violate applicable laws or rules.

In addition to other applicable Sections of these Guidelines, attorneys engaged in a transactional practice have unique responsibilities because much of the practice is conducted without judicial supervision.

For example:

a. Attorneys should be mindful that their primary goals are to negotiate in a manner that accurately represents their client and the purpose for which they were retained.

b. Attorneys should successfully and timely conclude a transaction in a manner that accurately represents the parties' intentions and has the least likely potential for litigation.

c. With client approval, attorneys should consider giving each party permission to contact the employees of the other party for the purpose of promptly and efficiently obtaining necessary information and documents.

SECTION 19
ADDITIONAL PROVISION FOR FAMILY LAW PRACTITIONERS

In addition to other applicable Sections of these Guidelines, in family law proceedings an attorney should seek to reduce emotional tension and trauma and encourage the parties and attorneys to interact in a cooperative atmosphere, and keep the best interest of the children in mind.

For example:

a. An attorney should discourage and should not abet vindictive conduct.

b. An attorney should treat all participants with courtesy and respect in order to minimize the emotional intensity of a family dispute.

c. An attorney representing a parent should consider the welfare of a minor child and seek to minimize the adverse impact of the family law proceeding on the child.

SECTION 20
ADDITIONAL PROVISION FOR CRIMINAL LAW PRACTITIONERS

In addition to other applicable Sections of these Guidelines, criminal law practitioners have unique responsibilities. Prosecutors are charged with seeking justice, while defenders must zealously represent their clients even in the face of seemingly overwhelming evidence of guilt. In practicing criminal law, an attorney should appreciate these roles.

For example:

a. A prosecutor should not question the propriety of defending a person accused of a crime.

b. Appellate counsel and trial counsel should communicate openly, civilly and without rancor, endeavoring to keep the proceedings on a professional level.

SECTION 21
COURT PROCEEDINGS

Judges are encouraged to become familiar with these Guidelines and to support and promote them where appropriate in court proceedings.

ATTORNEY'S PLEDGE

I commit to these Guidelines of Civility and Professionalism and will be guided by a sense of integrity, cooperation and fair play.

I will abstain from rude, disruptive, disrespectful, and abusive behavior, and will act with dignity, decency, courtesy, and candor with opposing counsel, the courts and the public.

As part of my responsibility for the fair administration of justice, I will inform my clients of this commitment and, in an effort to help promote the responsible practice of law, I will encourage other attorneys to observe these Guidelines.

_____ _____
(Signature) (Date)

_____
(Print Name)

California Attorney
Guidelines of Civility and Professionalism

(Abbreviated Without Examples)

The State Bar of California
180 Howard Street
San Francisco, CA 94105-1639

Adopted by the Board of Governors on
July 20, 2007

California Attorney Guidelines of Civility and Professionalism

(Abbreviated, adopted July 20, 2007)

INTRODUCTION. As officers of the court with responsibilities to the administration of justice, attorneys have an obligation to be professional with clients, other parties and counsel, the courts and the public. This obligation includes civility, professional integrity, personal dignity, candor, diligence, respect, courtesy, and cooperation, all of which are essential to the fair administration of justice and conflict resolution.

These are guidelines for civility. The Guidelines are offered because civility in the practice of law promotes both the effectiveness and the enjoyment of the practice and economical client representation. The legal profession must strive for the highest standards of attorney behavior to elevate and enhance our service to justice. Uncivil or unprofessional conduct not only disserves the individual involved, it demeans the profession as a whole and our system of justice.

These voluntary Guidelines foster a level of civility and professionalism that exceed the minimum requirements of the mandated Rules of Professional Conduct as the best practices of civility in the practice of law in California. The Guidelines are not intended to supplant these or any other rules or laws that govern attorney conduct. Since the Guidelines are not mandatory rules of professional conduct, nor rules of practice, nor standards of care, they are not to be used as an independent basis for disciplinary charges by the State Bar or claims of professional negligence.

The Guidelines are intended to complement codes of professionalism adopted by bar associations in California. Individual attorneys are encouraged to make these guidelines their personal standards by taking the pledge that appears at the end. The Guidelines can be applicable to all lawyers regardless of practice area. Attorneys are encouraged to comply with both the spirit and letter of these guidelines, recognizing that complying with these guidelines does not in any way denigrate the attorney's duty of zealous representation.

SECTION 1. The dignity, decorum and courtesy that have traditionally characterized the courts and legal profession of civilized nations are not empty formalities. They are essential to an atmosphere that promotes justice and to an attorney's responsibility for the fair and impartial administration of justice.

SECTION 2. An attorney should be mindful that, as individual circumstances permit, the goals of the profession include improving the administration of justice and contributing time to persons and organizations that cannot afford legal assistance.

An attorney should encourage new members of the bar to adopt these guidelines of civility and professionalism and mentor them in applying the guidelines.

SECTION 3. An attorney should treat clients with courtesy and respect, and represent them in a civil and professional manner. An attorney should advise current and potential clients that it is not acceptable for an attorney to engage in abusive behavior or other conduct unbecoming a member of the bar and an officer of the court.

As an officer of the court, an attorney should not allow clients to prevail upon the attorney to engage in uncivil behavior.

An attorney should not compromise the guidelines of civility and professionalism to achieve an advantage.

SECTION 4. An attorney's communications about the legal system should at all times reflect civility, professional integrity, personal dignity, and respect for the legal system. An attorney should not engage in conduct that is unbecoming a member of the Bar and an officer of the court.

Nothing above shall be construed as discouraging the reporting of conduct that fails to comply with the Rules of Professional Conduct.

SECTION 5. An attorney should be punctual in appearing at trials, hearings, meetings, depositions and other scheduled appearances.

SECTION 6. An attorney should advise clients that civility and courtesy in scheduling meetings, hearings and discovery are expected as professional conduct.

In considering requests for an extension of time, an attorney should consider the client's interests and need to promptly resolve matters, the schedules and willingness of others to grant reciprocal extensions, the time needed for a task, and other relevant factors.

Consistent with existing law and court orders, an attorney should agree to reasonable requests for extensions of time that are not adverse to a client's interests.

SECTION 7. The timing and manner of service of papers should not be used to the disadvantage of the party receiving the papers.

SECTION 8. Written materials directed to counsel, third parties or a court should be factual and concise and focused on the issue to be decided.

SECTION 9. Attorneys are encouraged to meet and confer early in order to explore voluntary disclosure, which includes identification of issues, identification of persons with knowledge of such issues, and exchange of documents.

Attorneys are encouraged to propound and respond to formal discovery in a manner designed to fully implement the purposes of the California Discovery Act.

An attorney should not use discovery to harass an opposing counsel, parties or witnesses. An attorney should not use discovery to delay the resolution of a dispute.

SECTION 10. An attorney should consider whether, before filing or pursuing a motion, to contact opposing counsel to attempt to informally resolve or limit the dispute.

SECTION 11. It is important to promote high regard for the profession and the legal system among those who are neither attorneys nor litigants. An attorney's conduct in dealings with nonparty witnesses should exhibit the highest standards of civility.

SECTION 12. In a social setting or otherwise, an attorney should not communicate ex parte with a judicial officer on the substance of a case pending before the court, unless permitted by law.

SECTION 13. An attorney should raise and explore with the client and, if the client consents, with opposing counsel, the possibility of settlement and alternative dispute resolution in every case as soon possible and, when appropriate, during the course of litigation.

SECTION 14. To promote a positive image of the profession, an attorney should always act respectfully and with dignity in court and assist the court in proper handling of a case.

SECTION 15. An attorney should not take the default of an opposing party known to be represented by counsel without giving the party advance warning.

SECTION 16. An attorney should avoid even the appearance of bias by notifying opposing counsel or an unrepresented opposing party of any close, personal relationships between the attorney and a judicial officer, arbitrator, mediator or court-appointed expert and allowing a reasonable opportunity to object.

SECTION 17. An attorney should respect the privacy rights of parties and non-parties.

SECTION 18. An attorney should negotiate and conclude written agreements in a cooperative manner and with informed authority of the client.

In addition to other applicable Sections of these Guidelines, attorneys engaged in a transactional practice have unique responsibilities because much of the practice is conducted without judicial supervision.

SECTION 19. In addition to other applicable Sections of these Guidelines, in family law proceedings an attorney should seek to reduce emotional tension and trauma and encourage the parties and attorneys to interact in a cooperative atmosphere, and keep the best interests of the children in mind.

SECTION 20. In addition to other applicable Sections of these Guidelines, criminal law practitioners have unique responsibilities. Prosecutors are charged with seeking justice, while defenders must zealously represent their clients even in the face of seemingly overwhelming evidence of guilt. In practicing criminal law, an attorney should appreciate these roles.

SECTION 21. Judges are encouraged to become familiar with these Guidelines and to support and promote them where appropriate in court proceedings.

ATTORNEY'S PLEDGE. I commit to these Guidelines of Civility and Professionalism and will be guided by a sense of integrity, cooperation and fair play.

I will abstain from rude, disruptive, disrespectful, and abusive behavior, and will act with dignity, decency, courtesy, and candor with opposing counsel, the courts and the public.

As part of my responsibility for the fair administration of justice, I will inform my clients of this commitment and, in an effort to help promote the responsible practice of law, I will encourage other attorneys to observe these Guidelines.

ATTORNEY'S PLEDGE

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As part of my responsibility for the fair administration of justice, I will inform my clients of this commitment and, in an effort to help promote the responsible practice of law, I will encourage other attorneys to observe these Guidelines.

_____ _____
(Signature) (Date)

_____
(Print Name)

RESOLUTION OF [_____]
APPROVING AND ADOPTING CALIFORNIA ATTORNEY GUIDELINES OF CIVILITY AND PROFESSIONALISM

RECITALS

A. As officers of the court with responsibilities to the administration of justice, attorneys have an obligation to be professional with clients, other parties and counsel, the courts and the public. This obligation includes civility, professional integrity, personal dignity, candor, diligence, respect, courtesy, and cooperation, all of which are essential to the fair administration of justice and conflict resolution.

B. Civility and professionalism have been affected by a number of factors, as a result of which there is a need for attorneys to recommit themselves to the principles of civility and professionalism.

C. On July 20, 2007, the Board of Governors of the State Bar of California adopted California Attorney Guidelines of Civility and Professionalism.

D. The Board of Directors of [_____] are of the unanimous opinion that the Guidelines will be of significant assistance in encouraging members of [_____] to continue to enhance their reputation and commitment to civility and professionalism.

RESOLUTION

The Board of Directors of [_____] hereby approves and endorses the California Attorney Guidelines of Civility and Professionalism and recommends that all members of [_____] commit to and agree to be guided by such Guidelines.

Dated: _____

_____

[_____]

By: _____

California Attorney Guidelines of Civility and Professionalism

Sample Court Order

1. The Court expects counsel to be familiar with and follow the California Guidelines of Civility and Professionalism. A copy may be obtain on the web at this URL: http://calbar.ca.gov/calbar/pdfs/reports/Atty-Civility-Guide.pdf.

   Uncivil or unprofessional behavior will not be tolerated.

2. The Court expects parties to resolve all disputes regarding scheduling or time extensions without the necessity of Court involvement.

Note: The above link to the document has been moved can now be found at: http://ethics.calbar.ca.gov/Ethics/Civility.aspx.

AGENDA ITEM

JULY 136
Proposal for new "California Attorney Guidelines of Civility and Professionalism – Return from Public Comment

Date: July 20, 2007

TO: Members, Board Committee on Member Oversight
Members, Board of Governors

FROM: Attorney Civility Task Force

SUBJECT: Proposal for "California Attorney Guidelines of Civility and Professionalism" – Return From 30-Day Public Comment And Recommendation For Adoption

Executive Summary

The Attorney Civility Task Force was appointed this Board year to study and recommend to the Board one or more model sets of aspirational civility guidelines.

At the May 2007 meeting, the task force reported to the Board Committee on Member Oversight (MOC) with a recommendation for a new voluntary set of guidelines called the "California Attorney Guidelines of Civility and Professionalism". MOC authorized publication of the proposal for a 30-day public comment period.

This agenda item returns the proposal from public comment. In response to public comments, the task force further revised the Guidelines and now recommends their adoption, as set forth in Attachments 1 and 2.

Questions or comment may be directed to Mary Yen at mary.yen@calbar.ca.gov or (415) 538-2369.

This agenda item reflects the Attorney Civility Task Force's recommendation for guidelines of civility and professionalism, following public comment. No additional public comment period is required because modifications were only made in response to comments and do not raise new topics. The recommended Guidelines are at Attachments 1 and 2.

BACKGROUND

In 1995, the Commission on the Future of the Legal Profession and the State Bar of California ("Futures Commission") issued "The Future of the California Bar". Among other things, this report made recommendations intended to promote professionalism[1].

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[1] The Futures Commission viewed professionalism as encompassing ethical practice, competence, civility, service to the public, and self-regulation. (Futures Comm'n final report, pp. 101-102.)

Recommendation 58 stated that the California legal profession should consider adoption of an aspirational, statewide code of professionalism containing a broad list of aspirational goals and precatory duties, which would define the desired goals and aims of the legal profession and the desired qualities of proper professional practice. The report noted there is some concern that an aspirational code would create confusion regarding its binding effect or precedential value and result in "grey letter" rules of conduct. However, the Commission believed that a code of professionalism would send an important message to the membership with a long-range salutary effect. The Futures Commission viewed attorney civility as a central tenet of professionalism and that the absence of civility undermines the proper administration of justice. The commission believed that civility is especially important given our adversarial system of justice.[2]

In 1997, the State Bar and the American Bar Association (ABA) co-sponsored a "Conference on Professionalism for the 21st Century." Chief Justice Ronald George of the California Supreme Court gave opening remarks. He emphasized that professionalism is a key component of public confidence in the justice system and encouraged further study of professionalism issues.[3] Unfortunately, later in 1997 the State Bar's dues bill was vetoed, which interrupted the Bar's work on this subject.

Since the Futures Commission's report was issued in 1995, various local, state and national bar organizations have adopted or updated civility guidelines. Currently, at least ten of the larger voluntary bar associations in California, and many of the mandatory integrated Bars of other states, have adopted civility guidelines[4].

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[2] Futures Commission final report, pp. 106, 108.

[3] A report from the "Conference on Professionalism for the 21st Century" includes the Chief Justice's opening remarks in which he said:

> "The ability of the justice system to perform its role in our society rests in large part on the consent and confidence of those it serves. Whether the lack of faith that we see is grounded in actual flaws or in misguided perceptions, we must take seriously the public's views and work on many fronts to improve our relationship with those we serve. . . . . ¶Whether based on the cost of litigation, undue emphasis on the business end of practice, or unrestrained advocacy, many members of the public perceive lawyers as part of the problem, not part of the solution. And within the profession itself, many lawyers decry what they see as a decline in civility and collegiality, an increase in sharp practices, and the resulting low public opinion and loss of respect."

[4] California bar associations that have civility and professionalism guidelines include: Alameda County Bar Association; Beverly Hills Bar Association; Contra Costa County Bar Association; Los Angeles County Bar Association; Marin County Bar Association; Orange County Bar Association; Sacramento County Bar Association; San Diego County Bar Association; Santa Clara County Bar Association; and Ventura County Bar Association.

Among the mandatory Bars that have adopted civility guidelines are: the Alabama State Bar; the State Bar of Arizona; The Florida Bar; the Hawaii State Bar; the Louisiana State Bar; the Mississippi State Bar; the Missouri Bar; the State Bar of Montana; the Nebraska State Bar; the Nevada State Bar; the State Bar of New Mexico; the Oregon State Bar; the Rhode Island Bar; the Virginia Bar; the Washington State Bar; and the West Virginia State Bar.

THE ATTORNEY CIVILITY TASK FORCE

The Attorney Civility Task Force[5] was charged with considering whether it is more appropriate to recommend one set of voluntary, aspirational civility goals or to recommend an alternative, such as a sample selection of existing civility goals. Either version could be used by individual members or by local bars, especially those have not adopted civility guidelines. The thought was that the Board would adopt guidelines, then assume responsibility for publicizing them and encouraging attorneys to take a civility pledge.

The task force met six times. It quickly reached consensus to recommend one set of civility guidelines that could be applicable statewide on a voluntary basis. The task force believed it appropriate to recommend two variations of essentially the same set of guidelines. One version contains the entire text of guidelines with detailed examples. The task force believed that a 2-page version, without the examples, is useful too. Therefore, this recommendation is for two versions as a package. The task force synthesized provisions from other codes into it an existing code of professionalism and drafted text for remaining subjects.[6]

The task force wanted its proposal to reflect a broad range of views. The schedule was adjusted to incorporate a period of informal vetting and feedback in February and March. Approximately 30 individuals and bar entities submitted written feedback. Six attorneys also spoke at two public hearings. The draft standards were vetted at bar association MCLE programs and law school classes where task force members participated. In response to the feedback, the task force incorporated suggestions into virtually every Section of the draft.

PROPOSED "GUIDELINES OF CIVILITY AND PROFESSIONALISM"

In light of the informal feedback period, MOC authorized a 30-day comment period at its May 2007 meeting. The proposed Guidelines were published in the *California Bar Journal,* online, and were sent by e-blast to all voluntary bar associations in California and to 200 individuals and organizations that had requested the earlier draft in February and March.

Recent activity in adopting or updating civility guidelines include: in 2006 the ABA's Family Law Section and the State Bar's Litigation Section each adopted civility codes; in 2005 the Pennsylvania Bar updated its civility code; in 2004 the Hawaii State Bar and Supreme Court amended their professionalism and civility guidelines; and in 2003 the Alameda County Bar Association amended its Statement of Professionalism and Civility.

[5] The task force consists of: Marguerite Downing (chair); Mary Alexander; Terry Bridges; Michael W. Case; Richard L. Crabtee; Dean Dennis; Hon. Richard L. Fruin., Jr.; Forentino R. Garza; Hon. Everett A. Hewlett, Jr.; Diane L. Karpman; Hon. Loren E. McMaster; Donald F. Miles (individually, not as a State Bar Court judge); Richard Rubin; Francis S. Ryu; Sherry M. Saffer; Cynthia Sands; Thomas G. Stolpman; Hon. Brian C. Walsh; Lei-Chala I. Wilson; and Alan S. Yochelson.

[6] The task force is indebted to the Santa Clara Bar Association whose Code of Professionalism was relied upon as the starting point. The task force drew from approximately 20 civility and professionalism codes, including the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers, the American Board of Trial Advocates, and others.

The Introduction sets the context and states the intention that the Guidelines foster a level of civility and professionalism as the standard of civility in the practice of law in California. The Introduction states that the Guidelines are not mandatory rules of professional conduct, nor rules of practice or standards of care, and that the Guidelines are not to be used as the independent basis for disciplinary charges or claims of professional negligence. This kind of statement is typically found in introductions to codes of professionalism and is considered important for these Guidelines. Because these will be Guidelines of a mandatory integrated state bar, it is important to distinguish between the mandatory rules of professional conduct that must be approved by the California Supreme Court for disciplinary purposes, and voluntary civility guidelines adopted by the Board of Governors without additional approval by the Supreme Court for disciplinary purposes.[7]

The Introduction is followed by 21 sections, as listed below. These address civility issues in client relations and responsibilities to the profession, public and administration of justice, in addition to attorney-attorney relationships. An optional Attorney Pledge appears at the end.

* Section 1 [Responsibilities to the Justice System]
* Section 2 [Responsibilities to the Public and the Profession]
* Section 3 [Responsibilities to the Client and Client Representation]
* Section 4 [Communications]
* Section 5 [Punctuality]
* Section 6 [Scheduling, Continuances and Extensions of Time]
* Section 7 [Service of Papers]
* Section 8 [Writings submitted to the Court, Counsel or Other Parties]
* Section 9 [Discovery]
* Section 10 [Motion Practice]
* Section 11 [Dealing with Nonparty Witnesses]
* Section 12 [Ex Parte Communication with the Court]
* Section 13 [Settlement and Alternative Dispute Resolution]
* Section 14 [Conduct in Court]
* Section 15 [Default]
* Section 16 [Social Relationships with Judicial Officers, Neutrals and Court Appointed Experts]
* Section 17 [Privacy]
* Section 18 [Negotiation of Written Agreements].
* Section 19 [Additional provision for Family Law Practitioners]
* Section 20 [Additional provision for Criminal Law Practitioners].
* Section 21 [Court Proceedings]

Many of the guidelines are for civil litigation practice. Since the Guidelines are intended for all California attorneys, other areas of law are included too. Still other areas of law could be covered, but the task force did not want the Guidelines to become unwieldy. To the extent that guidelines could apply to other areas of practice, the spirit of the Guidelines would permit extending the guidelines as appropriate.

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[7] For this reason, and in response to feedback, the word “guidelines” was selected in order to avoid using “code”, “standards” or “rules”, which have a mandatory connotation.

PUBLIC COMMENT RECEIVED

The proposal received 31 written comments, as indicated briefly below. A longer summary of the comments is at Attachment 5. Actual comments will be available at your meeting.

Christine J. Kim, Deputy County Counsel, County of Tehama. The Guidelines are long overdue, comprehensive and clear. Offers a suggestion for Section 19.

Thomas J. Lincoln, Attorney, The Guidelines look good.

David Casselman, Attorney. Nice work. Offers a couple of suggestions.

Jonathan Weiss, Attorney. Observed two attorneys in court who demonstrated the sort of professionalism proposed in the Guidelines.

Linda A. Iannelli, Attorney. The Guidelines are fine. Would like a guideline for civility at voluntary bar association events.

Jim Flanagan, Attorney. The Guidelines are common sense. They can be implemented through law schools, continuing education and publication in general newspapers.

J. Daniel Holsenback and Christopher Healey, Attorneys. The Guidelines are well written and reflect careful consideration of the issues. Offers a suggestion for Section 9 and suggests language to encourage law firms to include professional and civil conduct in their training for new lawyers.

Corrine Bielejeski, law clerk to Hon. Edward Jellen, U.S. Bankruptcy Court. The Guidelines cover a variety of subjects and cover them well. Offers editorial suggestions.

Jonathan G. Stein, Attorney. The Guidelines need an enforcement mechanism.

Clarke Stone, President, Santa Clara County Bar Association (SCCBA). SCCBA supports the Guidelines. They should be promoted as a model set of Guidelines for voluntary bar associations to use and implement in a way that is effective for the local legal community and bench. Promoting the Guidelines as a model will reduce confusion that the Guidelines are mandatory and eliminate any impression that they are disciplinary rules, or will be used for disciplinary purposes, or are being promoted for use by the bench as a basis for sanctions. SCCBA offers suggestions for the Introduction and specific Sections. SCCBA also offers an alternative viewpoint that the Guidelines are overly general and broad, that they duplicate Rules of Professional Conduct, and that they will result in a potential disciplinary standard without procedural due process in implementation.

Jason Bezis, Attorney. The short version is concise and will facilitate practitioners' internalization of the goals. The Guidelines will not reign in uncivil attorneys. The Bar should discipline attorneys for uncivil conduct as well as adopt Guidelines.

Philip Andreen, Attorney. Suggests three specific guidelines for adoption.

William Hansult, Attorney. The Guidelines need teeth, like sanctions. Asks that a specific situation be covered.

Leonard J. Umina, Nonattorney. The Guidelines should be enforceable with penalties for violation.

John Amberg, Chair of COPRAC. The Guidelines are still too long, too detailed and too general. Some topics are covered by the Rules of Professional Conduct, the State Bar Act, and civility codes of voluntary bar associations and courts. The Guidelines appear to create duties that are inconsistent and confusing, and may lead to unintended consequences. Substantial bodies of rules and statutes already occupy this field. To the extent the Guidelines duplicate existing rules, they will be confusing. The Guidelines set standards that may be inconsistent with fiduciary duties to clients and the law. The Attorney Pledge is unnecessary. Assuming Guidelines will be adopted, COPRAC offers specific comments for the Introduction and specified Sections.

Gerald McNally, Attorney. Opposes the Guidelines in any form but Aspirational. These rules could be interpreted as a limit on an attorney's duty of zealous representation.

Patrick Byrne, Attorney. The long version is too long and detailed. Most of the guidelines are common sense to those who learned them from senior partners over the years. Suggests a few adages to add.

Scott Kays, President, California Judges Association. Commends the task force. If CJA's board has comments, they will be forwarded. (Note - none received)

Karen Fletcher, J.D. Revise California's Rules of Discovery to mirror the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. Discovery in federal court require attorneys to be more civil.

Ronald S. Mintz, Attorney. Sends an example of uncivil conduct.

Martin Grayson, Attorney. Sends an article he wrote on civility.

Evan Jenness, Attorney. Opposes both versions. Even as advisory rules, these will increase the complexity of analyzing issues of professionalism and ethics, and promote confusion. Other rules, ethics opinions, court rules and judicial decisions already delineate the standard of conduct for lawyers. Many of the proposed standards of conduct are redundant, vague and amenable to conflicting interpretations. The guidelines will be further fodder for attorney misconduct claims. The standards could be inconsistent with attorneys' duties under certain circumstances. He questions the propriety of encouraging judges to become familiar with the Guidelines and promote them.

Joseph Chairez, President, Orange County Bar Association. Local civility guidelines are more appropriate. Teaching civility should be left to law schools, local bar associations, and MCLE programs. With the State Bar's imprimatur, the Guidelines are likely to be cited in an adversary context, and may be subverted into standards of conduct from which a standard of care arises. The Guidelines duplicate existing rules or statutes and may be inconsistent with them. Many of the guideline areas are best left to local standards

and to an extant body of law. The guidelines are vague. If guidelines are necessary to reign in uncivil behavior, forward the Guidelines to the Rules Revision Commission for consideration. That will lead to conformity and less confusion. Comments on specific Sections are offered.

Louisa Lau, Chair, Los Angeles County Bar Association's Professional Responsibility and Ethics Committee (LACBA's PRE Committee). The committee unanimously recommends against adoption. They are concerned the Guidelines will be used in discipline and civil litigation to establish a standard of care. "Should" and "should not" suggests obligations, not mere recommendations. The Guidelines impose on all attorneys standards that may be irrelevant to them. Local bar associations can better formulate civility standards. Professional conduct standards should be left to an existing extensive body of law. Civility is best taught in law schools, voluntary bar organizations, or MCLE. Forward the guidelines to the Rules Revision Commission to consider whether any of the proposals should be incorporated into ethics rules. If the State Bar elects to proceed, offers several comments, including that the long version is too long, detailed and repetitive; the Guidelines should be revised to be consistent with standards of conduct; many guidelines are vague and amenable to conflicting interpretations. Also offers suggestions for specific guidelines.

Patricia Daehnke, Chair, LACBA's Litigation Section. The Executive Committee unanimously recommends against adoption. They agree with the comments of LACBA's PRE Committee. The guidelines do little to advance civility and would create confusion as lawyers bounce from one standard to another. The Attorney Pledge resembles a loyalty oath and should be eliminated.

Robin Yeager, Chair, LACBA's Individual Rights Section. The Guidelines are not necessary. The Introduction states the Guidelines are not to be used for discipline or professional negligence, however, they may be used as a standard when a statute is being prosecuted. The Guidelines clash with lawyer's First Amendment rights to speak.

Janet Levine, President, Los Angeles chapter of the Federal Bar Association. Opposes adoption. The chapter is not convinced the Guidelines would further the cause of justice. The chapter adopts the comments of LACBA's PRE Committee, and joins the Orange County Bar Association and LACBA's Litigation Section in opposing adoption.

Stephanie Patterson, Investigator, Dep't of Consumer Affairs, Los Angeles County. Disagrees with the proposal.

Tim Jensen, Attorney. The proposal is ridiculous. You will never effectively change the behavior of attorneys.

G. Kirk Ellis, Attorney. This is a bad joke and will add to the cost of legal representation.

Tim Kelleher, Attorney. This will not change human behavior. It will create another layer of regulation for the unwary.

TASK FORCE'S RESPONSE TO COMMENTS

The task force considered all written comments. Major responsive revisions are listed below. No additional public comment period is required because the modifications were only made in response to comments and do not raise new topics. Revisions are shown in legislative style at Attachments 3 and 4.

1. Introduction: * replace "standards" with "best practices" of civility[8]

   * replace "minimal" with "minimum" Rules of Professional Conduct

   * replace the last sentence of the Introduction

   * insert the Introduction into the 2-page version of the Guidelines to clarify their context

2. Section 4: * delete unnecessary language in example (g)

   * simplify the language in example (i)

3. Section 9[9]: * add the words "parties, or witnesses" to the guideline.

   * delete former example (5) as redundant

4. Section 12: * clarify that the guideline applies in social settings as well as in court

5. Section 15: * reformat the example

6. Section 18: * consistent with the examples, apply the section to litigation as well as transactional practice and reorganize the examples accordingly

7. Section 19: * consistent with the title, change the guideline text to apply to family law practice generally rather than to specific areas of family law practice

   * reduce redundancy and delete former example (b)

8. Section 20: * consistent with the guidelines being best practices and not duties, replace "special duties" with "unique responsibilities"

   * delete former examples (a) and (b), which duplicate other guidelines

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[8] Some public comments equate the guidelines with duties, rules or standards. This modification further distinguishes the guidelines as best practices, not standards.

[9] Section 9 has been criticized as being too detailed and as overlapping with existing requirements for the practice of law. Each example has been reviewed multiple times to assure that an issue of civility justifies it.

The task force offers these comments on three suggestions that were not accepted:

> First, the task force retains the word "should" in order to conform to the State Bar's use of "should" in other contexts, such as in the project to rewrite State Bar rules into a simpler, unified set of rules. The State Bar follows the Judicial Council's use of "should". The Introductory Statement to the California Rules of Court states that the Judicial Council's rules and standards use "should" to indicate a nonbinding recommendation, that "should" indicates nonmandatory conduct.
>
> Second, several reviewers thought that Section 16 diverges from existing law, which places a burden of disclosure on the judicial officer. The task is aware of existing law and recommends the guideline in order to provide opposing counsel with an early opportunity to bring a motion to disqualify. This is a matter of courtesy, avoids wasting court resources, and does not diverge from existing law.
>
> Third, the task force recommends against enforcement through sanctions. The task force holds the view that sanctions would lead to a less collegial relationship among counsel and would tend to undermine civility efforts. In addition, if members thought they would be subject to sanctions for taking the pledge, they would likely be hesitant to take it.[10]

Finally, there is on-going interest in the educational value of the Guidelines as a model of best practices of civility in the practice of law in California. The task force continues to receive requests for speakers at bar association and law school educational programs, some of which will take place into the next Board year.[11]

FISCAL IMPACT

None known.

BOARD BOOK IMPACT

There is no impact on the Board Book.

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[10] Interest in sanctions for uncivil conduct traces back to *U.S. v. Wunsch* (9th Cir.1996), 84 F.3d 1110, which held that a provision in Bus. and Prof. Code §6068 (f) was unconstitutionally vague. That provision used to state, in relevant part, that it is the duty of an attorney to abstain from an "offensive personality". After W*unsch*, it became difficult to find a basis in discipline for conduct that had been deemed offensive under section 6068(f). The State Bar's Commission on the Revision of the Rules of Professional Conduct is proposing to address uncivil conduct through a new rule 8.4, which would state: "It is professional misconduct for a lawyer to: …(d) engage in conduct in connection with the practice of law that is prejudicial to the administration of justice."

[11] Santa Barbara Women Lawyers, Orange County Bar Association, the Federal Bar Association, and Western State School of Law, have asked for speakers at MCLE programs to be given between August and November.

RECOMMENDED RESOLUTIONS

Should the Board Committee on Member Oversight concur with the recommendation of the Attorney Civility Task Force, it would be appropriate to adopt the following resolution:

> **RESOLVED** that, following consideration of public comment, the Board Committee on Member Oversight recommends that the Board of Governors adopt the proposed California Attorney Guidelines of Civility and Professionalism, in the form attached at Attachments 1 and 2.

Should the Board of Governors concur with the recommendation of the Board Committee on Member Oversight, it would be appropriate to adopt the following resolution:

> **RESOLVED** that, following consideration of public comment and upon recommendation of the Board Committee on Member Oversight, the Board of Governors hereby adopts the California Attorney Guidelines of Civility and Professionalism, in the form attached at Attachments 1 and 2.

Attachments:

1) California Attorney Guidelines of Civility and Professionalism (14-page version, clean)
2) California Attorney Guidelines of Civility and Professionalism (2-page version, clean)
3) California Attorney Guidelines of Civility and Professionalism (14-page version, with legislative style edits)
4) California Attorney Guidelines of Civility and Professionalism (2-page version, with legislative style edits)
5) Chart of public comment received