

PREAMBLE

Our legal system is based on the principle that an independent, fair, impartial and competent judiciary will interpret and apply the laws that govern us. The role of the judiciary is central to American concepts of justice and the rule of law. Intrinsic to all sections of this Code of Judicial Conduct are the precepts that judges, individually and collectively, must respect and honor the judicial office as a public trust and strive to enhance and maintain confidence in our legal system. The judge is an arbiter of facts and law for the resolution of disputes and a highly visible symbol of government under the rule of law.

Public confidence in the judiciary is eroded by improper conduct by judges. A judge should avoid all impropriety and appearance of impropriety, and should expect to be the subject of public scrutiny. The public should expect, and a judge should therefore accept, certain restrictions on the judge's conduct that might be viewed as burdensome by the ordinary citizen and should do so freely and willingly.

The Code of Judicial Conduct is not intended as an exhaustive guide for the conduct of judges. They should also be governed in their judicial and personal conduct by general ethical standards. The Code is intended, however, to state basic standards which should govern the conduct of all judges and to provide guidance to assist judges in establishing and maintaining high standards of judicial and personal conduct.

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UPHOLDING THE INTEGRITY, IMPARTIALITY AND INDEPENDENCE OF THE JUDICIARY

An independent and honorable judiciary is indispensable to justice in our society. A judge should participate in establishing, maintaining and enforcing high standards of conduct, and should personally observe those standards so that the integrity, impartiality and independence of the judiciary is preserved. The provisions of this Code are to be construed and applied to further that objective.