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BELL COUNTY DISTRICT COURT LOCAL RULES

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SHELIA NORMAN
DISTRICT COURT
BELL COUNTY, TX
Shelia Norman

TITLE 1. RULES GOVERNING ALL PROCEEDINGS

RULE 1.1. CONDUCT AND COURTROOM DECORUM

a. Policy

Judges and attorneys have a duty to uphold the highest standards of conduct and to earn and promote public respect for the judiciary, the legal profession and the American system of justice.

b. The Texas Lawyer's Creed

The Standards of Professional Conduct in Section IV of The Texas Lawyer's Creed, as promulgated by the Texas Supreme Court and the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals are adopted and incorporated herein by reference as guidelines for participating in litigation in the District Courts of Bell County, Texas.

c. Conduct Required of Counsel

1. Counsel shall timely appear before the court at each setting and following each recess.
2. Counsel shall be appropriately attired for all court proceedings.

Male attorneys shall be dressed neatly in business suits or sportcoats, with slacks, dress shirt and tie. The shirt collar shall be buttoned. Blue jeans, sportswear and similar clothing are not considered appropriate courtroom attire.

Female attorneys shall be dressed in conservative dress or business attire. Blue jeans, sportswear and similar clothing are not considered appropriate courtroom attire.

3. Counsel shall rise and remain standing while addressing the Court, unless otherwise instructed.
4. Counsel shall address all statements, requests, and objections to the Court and not to opposing counsel.
5. Counsel shall not argue objections in the presence of the jury without prior leave of court.
6. Counsel shall not interrupt or talk over opposing counsel, except to state formal objections.

7. Counsel shall remain behind counsel table while examining witnesses, except with leave of court. If requested by counsel, counsel may stand at a podium while examining witnesses.
8. Counsel shall neither make nor insinuate derogatory or insulting remarks about opposing counsel.
9. Counsel shall address the Court as "Your Honor" or "Judge" and except with leave of court, shall refer to all counsel, parties and witnesses (except children) by their surnames, using such titles as Mr., Mrs., Miss, Ms., Dr., etc., as appropriate, and not by first names or nicknames, or any discriminatory or inappropriate classification.
10. Counsel shall request leave of court before approaching the bench or to approach the witness when necessary to work with documentary or tangible evidence.
11. Counsel shall not lean on the bench except as may be necessary to prevent jurors from overhearing bench conferences. Counsel shall not engage in personal discussions with the Court or each other during trial while in the presence of jurors, parties, or witnesses.
12. Counsel shall not use profanity in the courtroom.
13. Counsel shall advise counsel's clients, witnesses and others subject to counsel's control of these rules of conduct and courtroom decorum.

d. Conduct Required of All Persons

All persons in the courtroom during trials and other proceedings shall be attentive to the proceedings and shall refrain from any action which may disrupt the proceedings.

Therefore, all persons shall comply with the following:

1. All persons shall be appropriately attired for court proceedings.

All persons entering the courtroom shall be dressed in clothing reasonably befitting the dignity and solemnity of court proceedings. Tank tops, T-shirts, shorts, flip flops, and clothing that is tattered or soiled are among those items of clothing not considered appropriate courtroom attire. No hats, caps, sunglasses, or telephone ear-pieces shall be worn in the courtroom without prior approval.
2. No tobacco use in any form is permitted.
3. No bottles, beverage containers, paper cups or edibles are allowed in the courtroom, except as permitted by the Court.
4. No gum chewing is permitted.
5. No propping feet on tables or chairs is permitted.
6. No talking or unnecessary noise is permitted which interferes with the court proceeding.