

IN THE TWENTIETH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR THE STATE OF FLORIDA

IN RE: STANDARDS OF COURTROOM
DECORUM

)
) ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER
) NO: 2.13
)

WHEREAS the Judges of the Circuit and County Courts of the Twentieth Judicial Circuit have agreed that certain basic principles of courtroom decorum and behavior should be formally stated for the benefit and guidance of those unfamiliar with local traditions, the following standards of decorum are hereby adopted:

AS TO COUNSEL

When appearing in any court of the Twentieth Judicial Circuit, unless excused by the presiding judge, all counsel shall abide by the following:

- (1) Stand as Court is opened, recessed or adjourned.
- (2) Stand when the jury enters or retires from the courtroom.
- (3) Stand when addressing, or being addressed by, the Court.
- (4) Stand at the lectern while examining any witness; except that counsel may approach the Clerk's desk or the witness for purposes of handling or tendering exhibits.
- (5) Stand at the lectern while making opening statements or closing arguments.
- (6) Address all remarks to the Court, not to opposing counsel.
- (7) Avoid disparaging personal remarks or acrimony toward opposing counsel and remain wholly detached from any ill-feeling between the litigants or witnesses.
- (8) Refer to all persons, including witnesses, other counsel and the parties by their surnames and not by their first or given names.
- (9) Only one attorney for each party shall examine or cross examine each witness. The attorney stating objections (if any) during direct examination shall be the attorney recognized for cross examination.
- (10) Request permission before approaching the bench.

- (11) Any paper or exhibit not previously marked for identification should first be submitted to the Clerk for marking before it is tendered to a witness; and any exhibit offered into evidence should, at the time of such offer, be handed to opposing counsel.
- (12) In making objections, counsel should briefly state only the legal grounds therefore without further elaboration unless such is requested by the Court.
- (13) In examining a witness, counsel shall not repeat or echo the answer given by the witness.
- (14) Offers or requests for stipulations shall be made out of the presence or hearing of the jury.
- (15) In opening statements and in arguments to the jury, counsel shall not express personal knowledge or opinion concerning any matter in issue.
- (16) Counsel shall instruct all persons at counsel table that gestures, facial expressions, audible comments, or the like, as manifestations of approval or disapproval during the testimony of witnesses, or at any other time, are absolutely prohibited.
- (17) All counsel shall dress in an appropriate manner consistent with the requirements of decorum and dignity appropriate to courtroom proceedings.

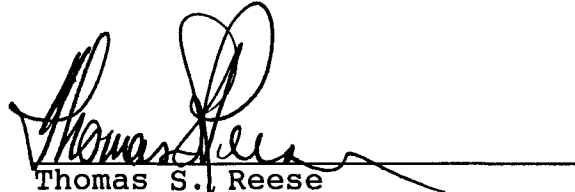
The standards set forth above are minimal, not all-inclusive, and are intended to supplement, not supplant or limit, the ethical obligations of counsel under the Rules of Professional Conduct. Individual judges may announce and enforce additional requirements or prohibitions, or may excuse compliance with any one or more of these standards.

AS TO NON-LAWYERS

- (1) All persons appearing before the Court shall endeavor to dress in a reasonably conservative manner consistent with the requirements of decorum and dignity appropriate to courtroom proceedings. Generally, shorts, tank-tops and other beach attire are not appropriate as courtroom attire.
- (2) All persons attending court proceedings shall refrain from making gestures, facial expressions, audible comments, applause, or the like, as manifestations of approval or disapproval during the testimony of a witness or during the oral presentation of counsel, or at any other time.

(3) In presentations before the Court, unrepresented parties shall observe the same rules of decorum which apply to attorneys.

WHEREFORE these standards are hereby adopted by the judges of the Circuit and County Courts of Lee County, Florida, this 9th day of November, 1992.


Thomas S. Reese
Chief Circuit Judge

History. - New.