

CODE OF ETHICS

FOR JUDICIARY INTERPRETERS

CODE OF ETHICS

Every interpreter that comes to work for the United States District Court for the District of Puerto Rico must abide by a Professional Code of Ethics.

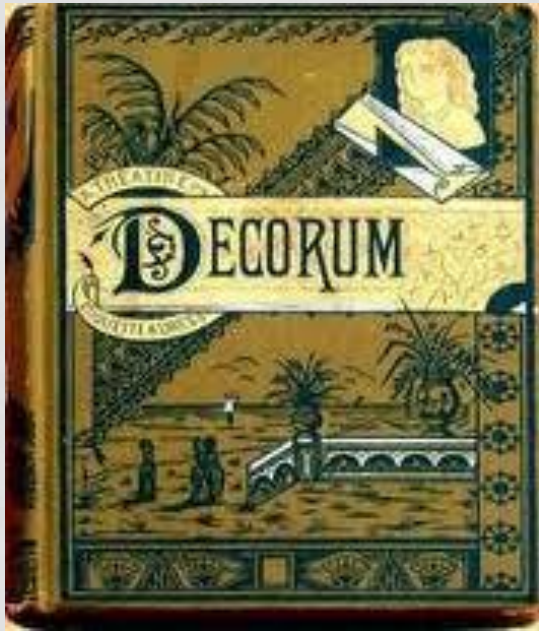


CANON 1

Official Court Interpreters act strictly in the interests of the court they serve.



CANON 2



Official Court Interpreters reflect proper court **decorum**, and act with **dignity** and **respect** to the officials and staff of the court.

CANON 3

Official Court Interpreters shall avoid professional or personal conduct that could discredit the court.



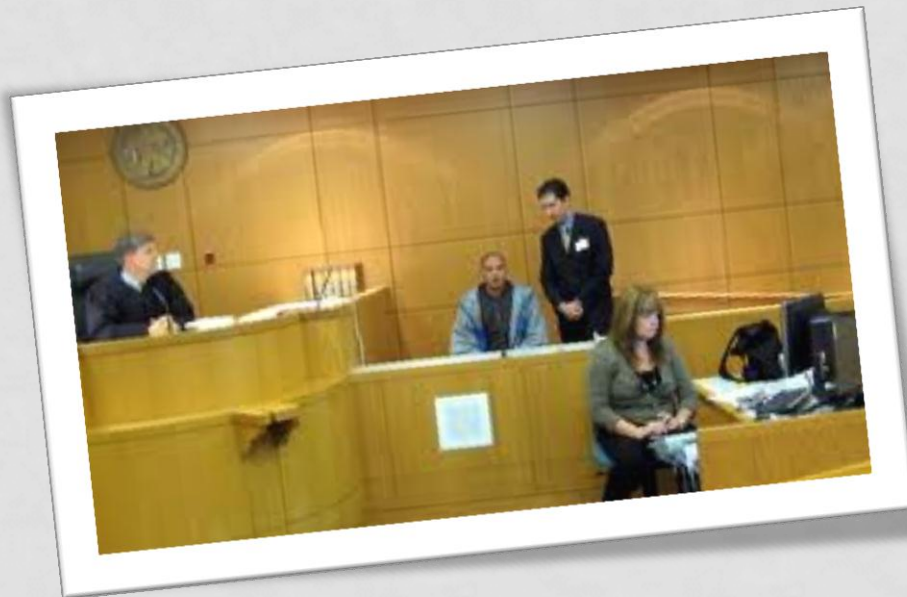
CANON 4



Official Court Interpreters, except upon a court order, shall not disclose any information of a confidential nature about court cases or any related matter, obtained during the performance of their official duties.

CANON 5

Official Court Interpreters fulfill a special duty to interpret **accurately** and **faithfully**, without indicating any personal bias, **avoiding even the appearance of partiality**.



CANON 6



Official Court Interpreters shall **refrain from giving advice** of any kind to any party or individual; from **expressing a personal opinion** in a matter before the court; and from making any **referrals**.

CANON 7

Official Court Interpreters shall **refrain from speaking to any representative of the news media**, while in the performance of his or her official duties, and **avoid any appearance of impropriety** at all times when approached by a representative of the news media.



CANON 8

Official Court Interpreters shall **maintain their neutrality** by avoiding undue contact with attorneys, except as strictly necessary to prepare adequately for their assignments.



CANON 9



Official Court Interpreters shall refrain from undue contact with any witnesses without the presence of the attorney who summoned said witness.

CANON 10

Official Court Interpreters shall avoid any **contact with jurors** who are actively serving on a matter before the court, unless otherwise ordered by the Court.



CANON 11

Official Court Interpreters shall refrain from **speaking directly to defendants and their families** without the presence of the attorney representing said defendant, and then only to address a specific interpreting issue related to his or her official duties.



CANON 12



Official Court Interpreters shall not accept any remuneration, gifts, gratuities, special favors, services, or **other valuable considerations** from any of the parties in a matter for which they have been called upon to perform their official duties.

CANON 12 (CONTINUED)

Likewise, Official Court Interpreters shall **not offer money or other items of value** to any of the parties, including witnesses, or relatives of the parties in any matter pending before the court.



CANON 12 (CONTINUED)

Official Court Interpreters shall **avoid all conflicts of interest or appearance of a conflict of interest at all times.**



CANON 12 (CONTINUED)



Should a conflict or potential conflict of interest arise in a case for which the interpreter has been called upon to act in his or her official capacity, the interpreter must *immediately notify the presiding judicial officer.*

CANON 13



Official Court Interpreters shall not use any information obtained in the course of their official duties, access to court records, facilities, or privileges, for their own personal gain, or for another person's gain.

CANON 14

Official Court Interpreters shall work **unobtrusively**, performing to the best of their abilities to assist the court in providing due process to all parties...



CANON 14 (CONTINUED)



...correcting any errors in their interpretation when they become or are made aware of such errors...

CANON 14 (CONTINUED)

...requesting clarification when statements to be interpreted are unclear, ambiguous, or contain terms unfamiliar to the Official Court Interpreter.



CANON 15



Official Court Interpreters shall, to the extent practicable, support each other by sharing their knowledge and expertise...

CANON 15 (CONTINUED)

...working as a **team**
in protracted
proceedings to avoid
mental fatigue and
maintain the highest
quality standards in
their performance...



CANON 15 (CONTINUED)



...and shall bring to the court's attention any factor or condition that may adversely affect their ability to perform in accordance with their oath.

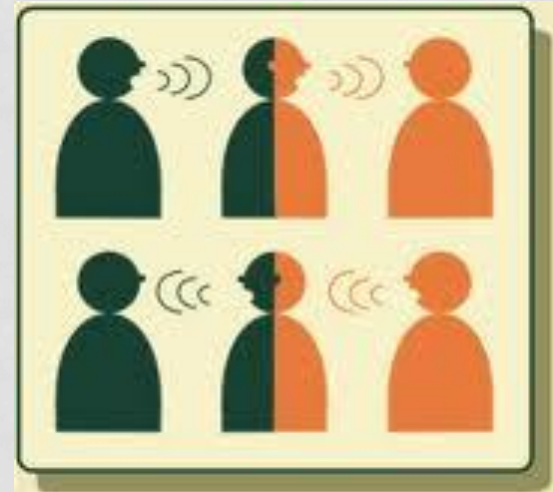
CANON 16



Official Court Interpreters are officers of the court sworn to interpret fully and accurately everything that is said during a proceeding, ***without omissions or embellishments...***

CANON 16 (CONTINUED)

- ...faithfully maintaining the **proper language level...**
- ...refraining from characterizing the testimony of a witness
- ...using the **first person singular** when interpreting for a witness or defendant, and the third person singular when referring to him or herself on the record



CANON 16 (CONTINUED)

- ...using the **consecutive** mode for all questions-and-answers exchanged with a non-English speaker
- ...and the **simultaneous** mode for all other colloquies.



CANON 17



Official Court Interpreters have a duty to continually **maintain and upgrade the skills and knowledge** required to perform their official duties.

CANON 18



Official Court Interpreters shall willingly accept and agree to be bound by this Code, and understand that appropriate **sanctions may be imposed** by the court for willful violations.

It is extremely important to be mindful of **cultural factors** that may result in objectionable conduct by a judiciary interpreter.



For example:

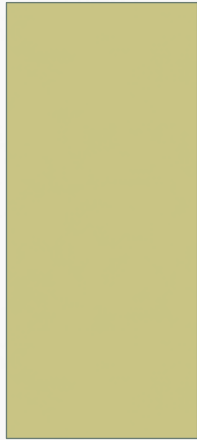
Interpreters must avoid friendly exchanges -- beyond polite greetings -- with attorneys, parties, or visitors related to either the attorneys or the parties in a case.

ETHICS

All freelance interpreters are considered OFFICIAL COURT INTERPRETERS while working on contract with the Courts.

The Code of Ethics applies equally to staff and contract interpreters.

Please see our other presentations about
interpreter services in the United States District
Court for the District of Puerto Rico.

- The Interpreting Profession
 - Interpreters in the United States District Court for the District of Puerto Rico
 - Getting Certified
- 
- Training and Continuing Education for Judiciary Interpreters

Aida M. Delgado-Colón, USDJ - Chief Judge

Frances Ríos-de Morán, Esq. - Clerk of Court

Becky Agostini - Court Services Manager



Created by:

Janis Palma, USCCI - Supervisory Interpreter
2013