



Kansas City Metropolitan Bar Association

## PRESS RELEASE

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**For Immediate Publication**

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### **New KCMBA Principles of Civility Submitted for Comment**

Kansas City, Mo. — The Kansas City Metropolitan Bar Association has published its new KCMBA Principles of Civility for comment. The Principles of Civility are KCMBA's proposed response to what has been perceived as a decline in civility in the bar and are intended to update and replace the Tenets of Professional Courtesy, published by KCMBA in 1987. The comment period runs through Feb. 28, 2013.

The Principles of Civility are the result of significant inquiry, research and discussion by the Blue Ribbon Committee, appointed in 2012 by then KCMBA President Nancy Kenner, to examine the 1987 Tenets of Professional Courtesy, draft revisions to the Tenets and address civility in our legal community. The Committee is chaired by Fritz Riesmeyer of Seigfreid, Bingham, PC and consists of the following judges and attorneys: Jennifer Gille Bacon, Polsinelli Shughart PC; Jeanne K. Peters-Baker, Prosecuting Attorney, 16th Judicial Circuit of Missouri; Judge Thomas E. Foster, 10th Judicial District Court of Kansas, Johnson County; Professor Barbara Glesner Fines, UMKC School of Law; W. Brian Gaddy, Gaddy Weis LLC; Christopher C. Javillonar, Bryan Cave LLP; Jill M. Katz, Jill M. Katz, LLC; Timothy P. McCarthy, Gilliland & Hayes, P.A.; Jessica E. Merrigan, Lathrop & Gage LLP; Jerome Murphy, The Murphy Law Firm; Phyllis A. Norman-Komoroski, Langdon & Emison; Judge Marco A. Roldan, 16th Judicial Circuit Court of Missouri, Jackson County; Vickie Schatz, Wm. Dirk Vandever, The Popham Law Firm, PC; and Judge Brian C. Wimes, U.S. District Court, Western District of Missouri.

The original Tenets of Professional Courtesy were adopted by KCMBA in 1987 after concern over declining professionalism and professional courtesy among the bar. Although well-reasoned and well-intentioned, there was significant concern that these Tenets were increasingly unknown or ignored over the years since their adoption.

Oct. 8, 2012, KCMBA convened a Civility Summit, which had attendance of more than 200 attorneys and judges. The Civility Summit was the idea of KCMBA past President Jerry Wolf and is recognized as one of the first of its kind. The Summit included an expert panel of lawyers and judges who candidly addressed professionalism and civility in our community. The panel consisted of moderator Larry Ward, Polsinelli Shughart PC, and panelists Lynne J. Bratcher, Bratcher Gockel & Kingston, LC; Judge J. Charles Droege, 10th Judicial District Court of Kansas, Johnson County; Willie J. Epps, Jr., Shook, Hardy & Bacon L.L.P; Judge Fernando J. Gaitan, United States District Court, Western District of Missouri; and Sue A. Sperry, Assurant Employee Benefits.

Small group discussions, led by Honorable Duane Benton, U.S. Court of Appeals for the 8<sup>th</sup> Circuit, focused on the current state of professionalism, civility and professional courtesy in our legal community. Summit attendees provided considerable input that resulted in significant data that was digested and provided to the Blue Ribbon Committee to assist in drafting new tenets.

The Blue Ribbon Committee recommended changing the name from Tenets of Professional Responsibility to Principles of Civility, as it more applicably describes the content and intent of the document. Additionally, the Blue Ribbon Committee significantly rewrote the Tenets of Professional Courtesy, keeping many of the timeless issues and modernizing the approach with feedback primarily from the Civility Summit small group discussions.

Comments from the bar and judiciary are encouraged and very important in helping the Committee understand how the proposed Principles may affect the local practice. Response and comments on the Principles of Civility can be submitted by Feb. 28, 2013, to [info@kcmba.org](mailto:info@kcmba.org) or in hard copy to KCMBA, 2300 Main St., Suite 100, Kansas City, Missouri 64108 or by fax at 816-474-0103. All comments will be considered by the Blue Ribbon Committee. The draft Principles of Civility may be viewed at [www.kcmba.org](http://www.kcmba.org). Release of the final Principles of Civility is anticipated in spring 2013.

Fritz Riesmeyer commented, “As the Chair of the KCMBA Blue Ribbon Civility Committee, I am happy to submit our draft of the KCMBA Principles of Civility, which are the result of considerable work by the Committee. We very much appreciate the opportunity to work on this most interesting project and look forward incorporating feedback into the final Principles.”

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The Kansas City Metropolitan Bar Association serves approximately 5,000 members in the nine-county Kansas City metro area: Johnson and Wyandotte counties in Kansas and Cass, Clay, Jackson, Johnson, Lafayette, Platte and Ray counties in Missouri. The mission of this Association is to serve our members and our community by promoting justice, professional excellence and respect for the law.

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