



Supreme Court of California
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NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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“Civility” Oath Rule Adopted by Supreme Court *Will apply to new lawyers*

San Francisco—The California Supreme Court today announced that it has adopted rule 9.4 of the California Rules of Court to supplement the attorney oath for new lawyers. The oath will include a statement that the attorney will strive to conduct himself or herself with dignity, courtesy, and integrity.

“Rule 9.4 Oath required when admitted to practice law” was adopted by the Supreme Court at its administrative conference on April 23, 2014, and will be added to [Title 9. Rules On Law Practice, Attorneys, And Judges](#) of the California Rules of Court effective May 23, 2014. The adoption of the rule was consistent with the nationwide efforts, led in part by the American Board of Trial Advocates (ABOTA), to include a “civility” provision to the oaths taken by lawyers admitted to the bar in jurisdictions nationwide.

Mr. Mark Robinson, Jr., commented “As president of ABOTA and also as a member of California’s Judicial Council, I really praise the Chief Justice and the Supreme Court regarding the passing of the courtesy and integrity oath. We need lawyers who are courteous to other lawyers and to the courts, and we need lawyers with integrity. This is a great thing for justice here in California and it’s great for the Judicial Council, national ABOTA, and the people of California.”

Rule 9.4 states “In addition to the language required by Business and Professions Code section 6067, the oath to be taken by every person on admission to practice law is to conclude with the following: ‘As an officer of the court, I will strive to conduct myself at all times with dignity, courtesy, and integrity.’ ”

“The State Bar was pleased to work with Doug DeGrave and CAL-ABOTA in urging the court to adopt this additional measure, and it is our belief that it will create an added reinforcement for attorneys entering the bar in California to remember the principles of professionalism that brought them to the practice in the first place and in particular in their dealings with clients, other attorneys, and judges” said Mr. Patrick Kelly, immediate past-president of the State Bar of

California, “This was the highest priority for Doug and I, so we’re delighted that the court has made this addition to the rules.”

With the adoption of the new rule, the entire oath to be taken upon the admission to practice law will now be as follows: “I solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of California, and that I will faithfully discharge the duties of an attorney and counselor at law to the best of my knowledge and ability. As an officer of the court, I will strive to conduct myself at all times with dignity, courtesy, and integrity.”

According to Mr. Douglas DeGrave, immediate past president of the California Chapters of the American Board of Trial Advocates (CAL-ABOTA), “This revision to the oath is an historic moment for the legal community. This change in the oath should remind us of our obligations beyond that of zealous advocacy on behalf of our clients. As professionals, we have an obligation to conduct ourselves with dignity, courtesy, and integrity. Many have forgotten these very principles to which we, as professionals, should always adhere. As an organization, CAL-ABOTA is proud of this accomplishment and our partnership with the State Bar. Needless to say, we are very pleased with the adoption of rule 9.4.”

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The Supreme Court of California is the state’s highest court and its decisions are binding on all other California state courts. The court’s primary role is to decide matters of statewide importance and to maintain uniformity in the law throughout California by reviewing matters from the six districts of the California Courts of Appeal and the fifty-eight county superior courts (the trial courts). Among its other duties, the court also decides all capital appeals and related matters and reviews both attorney and judicial disciplinary matters.