TENETS OF PROFESSIONALISM

The Minnesota Defense Lawyers Association is aware that applicable rules or codes of professional responsibility generally provide only minimum standards of acceptable conduct. Since we aspire to the highest ideals of professionalism, we hereby adopt these tenets and agree to abide by them in the performance of our professional services for clients.

1. We will conduct ourselves before the court in a manner which demonstrates respect for the law and preserves the decorum and integrity of the judicial process.

2. We recognize that professional courtesy is consistent with zealous advocacy. We will be civil and courteous to all with whom we come in contact and will endeavor to maintain a collegial relationship with our adversaries.

3. We will cooperate with opposing counsel when scheduling conflicts arise and calendar changes become necessary. We will also agree to opposing counsel’s request for reasonable extensions of time when the legitimate interests of our clients will not be adversely affected.

4. We will keep our clients well-informed and involved in making the decisions that affect their interests, while, at the same time, avoiding emotional attachment to our clients and their activities which might impair our ability to render objective and independent advice.

5. We will counsel our clients, in appropriate cases, that initiating or engaging in settlement discussions is consistent with zealous and effective representation.

6. We will attempt to resolve matters as expeditiously and economically as possible.

7. We will honor all promises or commitments, whether oral or in writing, and strive to build a reputation for dignity, honesty and integrity.

8. We will not make groundless accusations of impropriety or attribute bad motives to other attorneys without good cause.

9. We will not engage in discovery practices or any other course of conduct designed to harass the opposing party or cause needless delay.

10. We will seek sanctions against another attorney only when fully justified by the circumstances and necessary to protect a client’s lawful interests, and never for mere tactical advantage.

11. We will not permit business concerns to undermine or corrupt our professional obligations.

12. We will strive to expand our knowledge of the law and to achieve and maintain proficiency in our areas of practice.

13. We are aware of the need to preserve the image of the legal profession in the eyes of the public and will support programs and activities that educate the public about the law and the legal system.

14. We will not allow race, gender, religion, age or other suspect classifications to improperly motivate our actions.

15. We will adhere to the proposition that law firm marketing practices shall be governed by the principles of honesty and integrity.

Adopted by the MDLA Board of Directors on June 23, 1994.