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2
3 PREAMBLE

4 The American legal system is based on the principle that an independent, impartial, and
5 competent judiciary, composed of men and women of integrity, will interpret and apply
6 the law that governs our society. Thus, the judiciary plays a central role in defining and
7 establishing the American concepts of justice and the rule of law. Inherent in all of the
8 Rules contained in this Code are the precepts that judges, individually and collectively,
9 must respect and honor the judicial office as a public trust and strive to maintain and
10 enhance confidence in our legal system.

11 As highly visible symbols of government under the rule of law, judges should expect to
12 be the subject of public scrutiny, and should freely and willingly accept certain
13 restrictions on their conduct that might be viewed as burdensome by ordinary citizens. In
14 particular, judges should maintain the dignity of judicial office at all times, and avoid
15 both impropriety and the appearance of impropriety in their professional and personal
16 lives.

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18 The Model Code of Judicial Conduct is intended to establish standards for the ethical
19 conduct of judges and judicial candidates. It consists of broad statements called Canons,
20 specific Rules set forth under each Canon, and Comments to the Rules. The Scope,
21 Terminology, and Application sections provide additional interpretive guidance.

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23 This Code is not intended as an exhaustive guide for the conduct of judges and judicial
24 candidates, who are also governed in their judicial and personal conduct by general
25 ethical standards. The Code is intended, however, to provide guidance to assist them in
26 maintaining the highest standards of judicial and personal conduct.