

## Model Decorum Order

In the exercise of its inherent power to provide for the orderly disposition of all pretrial and trial proceedings of this case, the court *sua sponte* ORDERS, as follows:

### I. GALLERY SEATING

- a. These Gallery Seating Orders apply to all pre-trial and trial proceedings, except as to the judge's general *voir dire* of potential jurors due to severe space limitations of those proceedings. A special, but very limited, gallery seating will be provided for the judge's general *voir dire* of potential jurors.
- b. Seats in the gallery of the courtroom will be reserved for media personnel during the pre-trial, *voir dire*, and trial proceedings. These seats will be assigned pursuant to the Media Plan and approval by the judge.
- c. Seats in the gallery of the courtroom will be assigned to the general public during the trial. These seats will be assigned on a first come, first served basis.
- d. Seats will be assigned to the families of the deceased victim(s) in the case and the victim's coordinator or his/her designee.
- e. Seats in the gallery of the courtroom will be assigned to the defendant's family.
- f. Seats in the gallery of the courtroom will be assigned to the defense counsel team.
- g. Seats in the gallery of the courtroom will be assigned to the district attorney's office.
- h. Seats in the gallery of the courtroom will be assigned to the bailiffs, and such other seats as needed to enforce the Orders and Plans of the court and to ensure the due and proper administration of justice and security in this case.
- i. The seats will be assigned by the judge through the Court Operations Director. All persons assigned seats will be issued a tag indicating his/her seat assignment. Each person will display the tag on the outside of his/her clothing and sit in his/her assigned seat while in the courtroom.
- j. Courtroom pass tags for a specific date are to be turned in to the bailiff's desk upon exiting the courtroom and will be reallocated before the next half-day court session begins. Public seating will be allocated on a first come, first served basis. Courtroom passes for the public will be distributed for the morning session from 8:30a.m. to 8:45a.m. and for the afternoon session from 1:00p.m. to 1:15p.m. Public passes will be distributed at the jury pay window. The passes must be returned to the bailiff when leaving your designated session. If all passes for a specific session are not distributed during the designated time period, a pass may be obtained from the bailiff.
- k. Any seat not filled by the court's first recess will be filled with waiting public, or in the case where there is no member of the public waiting to come into the courtroom, with members of the media, except as qualified in this Order.
- l. Gallery seating assigned to the defense counsel team, district attorney's office, court operations director, victim coordinator, media reserved seating, clerk reserve seating, court reserved seating, and security seating will be permanently reserved to allow staff in each of these offices to enter

and leave the courtroom as necessary to provide support functions to the media, court, and counsel.

- m. All spectators, whether media, public, family, or court operations director designees, must be seated before court is in session and must remain in the courtroom (except for emergencies) until the next recess is called. No spectators will routinely be admitted while court is in session. Any person may leave anytime, but will only be readmitted after the next recess.

## **II. INNER SECTION OF THE COURTROOM (IN FRONT OF THE BAR)**

- a. No member of the media, family, students, or public will be allowed beyond the bar (the partition separating the gallery from the inner section of the courtroom) at any time, with the exception of those persons listed in Section II b below. Persons sitting in front of the bar are to be lawyers or approved staff of the defense or prosecution, law enforcement personnel actively involved with the defendant, witnesses called to the witness stand, members of the court's office, jurors, and the designated court reporters.
- b. Only members of the media designated by the Media Plan and expressly approved by written Order of the judge may be in the inner section of the courtroom at appropriate recesses and then only when supervised by the court reporter designee, bailiff, and district clerk representative. These persons shall remain in their designated locations at all times when court is in session.

## **III. GENERAL RULES**

- a. The media and public are reminded that any attempt by anyone without leave of the court to communicate with a member of the jury panel, juror, or alternate, respecting the case prior to return of a final judgment in the trial on the merits, and any attempt by anyone without leave of the court to communicate with or influence a member of the jury once selected as a juror or alternate in the proceedings, until the return of a final judgment in the trial on the merits, may be punished as a criminal cause of action and as criminal contempt of court and such other sanctions as deemed by the judge to be necessary for the due and proper administration of justice.
- b. No media interviews whatsoever will be permitted in the courtrooms, hallways, or security areas of the courthouse at any time. Interviews may be conducted in the designated press conference and interview area and the media rooms.
- c. The courtroom will be cleared of media until thirty minutes before court is scheduled to begin, and will be cleared of the public until fifteen minutes before court is scheduled to begin for the duration of the luncheon recess, and no later than thirty minutes after adjournment. An exception to this rule may occur if the clerk of the court or court reporter needs additional time to exhibit evidence to the media after the end of the day recess, or if prior permission of the judge is obtained for media set up.
- d. At no time will a potential juror, juror, or alternate be photographed. Once a final judgment has been entered in the trial on the merits, then a potential juror, juror, or alternate may voluntarily consent to his/her photographing.
- e. No audio recording of conferences involving counsel at the respective counsel tables or bench conferences with the judge will be permitted.

- f. No visual recording of the lips, so as to be readable by a lip reader, of conferences involving counsel at the respective counsel tables or bench conferences with the judge will be permitted.
- g. Only still cameras, television, and audio equipment that does not produce distracting sound or light shall be employed to cover the trial. The operator of such equipment shall not employ any artificial lighting device to supplement the existing light in the courtroom without approval of the judge.
- h. The media committee will give the court bailiff a weekly assignment of the pool media in the courtroom. This will include one camera person, two still photographers, one radio audio operator, and two sketch artists. This list will be given to the bailiff's office the Thursday before the week it goes into effect.
- i. The sketch artists shall remain in their assigned seats while the trial is in progress, except for recesses.
- j. No broadcasting, televising, recording, or photographic equipment shall be placed in or removed from the courtroom while court is in session. Television film magazines or still camera film or lenses may not be changed within the courtroom in any manner which is distracting or disruptive to the trial proceedings as determined by the bailiff or judge.

#### **IV. COURTROOM ATTIRE AND ACCESSORIES**

- a. Persons in the courtroom must be dressed in appropriate courtroom attire. This means the best business attire at your disposal. Gentlemen should, if available, wear dress-collared shirts, ties, slacks, belts, and suit jackets. Ladies should, if available, wear business suits. Students may wear school uniforms or other appropriate courtroom attire as instructed by his/her supervising faculty sponsor.
- b. No signs, banners, company or media logos, messages, clothing with messages, or other distracting, disruptive, or potentially improperly prejudicial material may be brought into, worn, or displayed in the courtrooms or security areas.
- c. No cell phones, pagers, computers, cameras, web cams, recorders, or other equipment may be brought into the courtroom except as specifically permitted by the judge's orders.

#### **V. COURTROOM DEMEANOR**

- a. Persons in the courtroom must remain silent during all proceedings. There will be no talking, shaking of heads of approval or disapproval of any statements, actions, rulings, testimony or proceedings, or any other signals or signs of approval or disapproval of the proceedings.
- b. Children are permitted in the courtroom only if they can conform their demeanor to that required of the adults by the court.
- c. There will be no reading of newspapers, magazines, books, or other materials during the court proceedings in the courtroom.

- d. There will be no drinks, snacks, chewing gum, smoking, or chewing tobacco in courtroom, except for water provided by the bailiff to the witnesses, jurors, or counsel with the permission of the judge.
- e. As in all cases, the atmosphere in the courtroom must be quiet, calm, and deliberative. Evidence in the case may be complex, graphic, emotional, and sometimes very tedious. All persons attending the trial must be willing to commit to a serious attitude if attending this trial.

## **VI. SANCTIONS**

There are no warnings. Any violation of the foregoing or other court Orders or Plans, and any conduct the judge finds disruptive or interruptive of the proceedings may result in:

- a. An order of temporary or permanent exclusion of the offender from the courtroom and security areas.
- b. An order of temporary or permanent exclusion of the media organization represented by the offender from the courtroom and security areas.
- c. Contempt of Court sanctions which carry with them confinement in the jail for up to six (6) months and/or a fine not to exceed five hundred dollars (\$500.00) for each offense.
- d. Such other sanctions as deemed necessary by the judge to ensure the due and proper administration of justice.

## **VII. NOTICE OF THIS ORDER**

Notice of this order shall be given by its posting on the website link at \_\_\_\_\_, posting outside the Court, and service upon lead counsel for the defense, district attorney, sheriff, and victim coordinator.

**SIGNED AND ORDERED** on this the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
JUDGE