

Board for Certification of Genealogists Code of Ethics

As a practicing genealogist, mindful of my responsibilities to the public, the genealogical consumer, and my fellow practitioners, I do hereby pledge to strive for the highest level of truth and accuracy in all phases of my work; to work in my client's best interests and protect my client's privacy, exclusive access, and proprietary rights in any work done for hire; to act honorably toward other genealogists and the profession as a whole; and to adhere to the Board for Certification of Genealogists Standards of Conduct.

Standards of Conduct

To the public:

- I will delineate my fees, abilities, and/or publications in a true and realistic fashion.
- I will not publish nor publicize as fact anything I know to be false, doubtful, or unproven; nor will I be a party directly or indirectly to such action by others.
- I will quote documents precisely and cite as sources only those documents I have personally used.
- I will present the purpose, practice, scope, and possibilities of genealogical research within a realistic framework.

To the individual consumer:

- I will furnish only facts that I can substantiate with adequate documentation; and I will not withhold any data necessary for the consumer's purpose.
- I will keep confidential any personal or genealogical information given me by the consumer, unless I receive written consent to the contrary.
- I will reveal to the consumer any personal or financial interests which might compromise my professional obligations.
- I will undertake paid research commissions only with the explicit consent from the consumer as to scope and fee. Any payment in excess of the contract will be returned.

- I will seek from the consumer all prior information and documentation related to the research commission and will not knowingly repeat the work without explanation as to good cause.
- I will seek from the client the goals and scope of the research question and, to the best of my abilities, address the research and report to that question.
- If I cannot resolve a research problem within the limitations of time or budget established by contract, I will explain the reasons why; and if other feasible avenues are available, I will suggest them.
- I will embark on research only within the client's authorization until receiving permission to continue; I agree not to misrepresent the possibilities of additional research.
- If the research question addressed involves analysis of data in order to provide proof of a genealogical relationship or identity, I will advise the client that the conclusions are based on the preponderance of the evidence available and that absolute proof is usually impossible.
- I will not publish nor circulate research or reports to which the consumer has a proprietary right without prior written consent of the consumer — whether payment was made directly, or to an employer or agent.

To the profession:

- I will act, speak and write in a manner which I believe to be in the best interests of the profession.
- I will participate in exposing genealogical charlatans but will not knowingly injure or attempt to injure, without demonstrable justification, the professional reputation, prospects, or practice of another genealogist.
- I will not attempt to supplant another genealogist already employed by a client or agency. I will substitute for another researcher only with specific written instructions provided by the client or agency.
- I will not represent as my own the work of another. This includes works that are copyrighted, in the public domain, or unpublished. This pledge includes reports, lecture handouts, or audio/visual tapes. In citing another's work, I will give proper credit; and before using another's materials, I will obtain permission.

(Dated) _____ (Signed) _____