120508 ADHOC JUDICIAL

CODE OF JUDICIAL CONDUCT

AS APPROVED BY THE HEADS OF COURT ON 5 DECEMBER 2009

Note:

The changes I made are mainly of a technical nature.

- Section 12 refers to "Code of Judicial Conduct" I amended the reference "Code of Judicial Conduct for Judges" to be in line with the reference in the Act.
- I changed the word "must" to "shall" as that is the word used in the Act.
- To promote consistence I used the singular- eg -"judge" as opposed to the plural "judges". There was no consistency in this regard.

CODE OF JUDICIAL CONDUCT FOR JUDGES ADOPTED IN TERMS OF SECTION 12 OF THE JUDICIAL SERVICE COMMISSION ACT 9 OF 1994

PREAMBLEreamble:

Whereas_

- •_-the supremacy of the Constitution, the rule of law, and the rights and freedoms enshrined in the Bill of Rights are the foundation of the democracy established by the Constitution;
- And whereas section 165(1) of the Constitution provides that the judicial authority of the Republic vests in the courts;
- And whereas section 165(2) of the Constitution provides that the courts are independent and subject only to the Constitution and the law, which they must apply without fear, favour or prejudice;
- And whereas section 174(8) of the Constitution provides that before judicial officers begin to perform their functions, they must take an oath, or affirm, in accordance with paragraph 6(1) of Schedule 2, that they "will uphold and protect the Constitution and the human rights entrenched in it, and will administer justice to all persons alike without fear, favour or prejudice, in accordance with the Constitution and the law.";

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- And whereas section 180(b) of the Constitution provides that national legislation may provide for any matter concerning the administration of justice that is not dealt with in the Constitution, including procedures for dealing with complaints about judicial officers;
- And whereas the Judicial Service Commission Act, 1994 (Act No. 9 of 1994) (the Act), seeks to maintain and promote the independence of the office of judge and judiciary as a whole, while at the same time acknowledging that it is necessary to create an appropriate and effective balance between protecting the independence and dignity of the judiciary when considering complaints about, and the possible removal from office of, judges as defined in section 7(1)(g) of the Act, and the overriding principles of openness, transparency and accountability that permeates the Constitution and that are equally applicable to judicial institutions and officers;
- And whereas it is necessary for public acceptance of its authority and integrity in order to
 fulfill its constitutional obligations that the judiciary should conform to ethical standards
 that are internationally generally accepted, more particularly as set out in the Bangalore
 Principles of Judicial Conduct (2001) as revised at the Hague (2002);

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- And whereas—Part II of Chapter 2 of the Act provides the legal framework for judicial conduct which judicial officers in South Africa must adhere to, and Part III and IV of Chapter 2 of the Act, particularly sections 14, 15, 16 and 17, specify mechanisms, structures and procedures to be applied if a judge acts in a manner unbecoming a judge in respect of any of the five grounds spelt out in section 14(3)(a) of the Act;
- And whereas-section 12 of the Act provides that the Chief Justice, acting in consultation
 with the Minister, must compile and maintain a Code of Judicial Conduct, which must be
 tabled by the Minister in Parliament for approval; and
- And whereas-section 12(5), read with section 14(3)(a) of the Act, specifically provides
 that the Code of Judicial Conduct shall serve as the prevailing standard judicial conduct,
 which judges must adhere to and that any willful or grossly negligent breach of the Code
 may amount to misconduct which will lead to disciplinary action in terms of section 14 of
 the Act;

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BE IT THEREFORE APPROVED by the Parliament of South Africa, a Code of Judicial Conduct for Judges, which judges must adhere to, as required in terms of section 12 read with section 14(4)(b) of the Act, as follows:-

Definitions

1. In this Code, unless the context otherwise indicates—
"this Code' means the Code of Judicial Conduct contemplated in section 12 of the Act;

Application

- 2. (1) This Code applies to every judge referred to in section 7(1)(g) of the Act who is performing active service and, unless the context indicates otherwise, also to—
- (a) a judge released from active service and who is liable to be called upon to perform judicial duties
- (b) an acting judge; and
- (c) a judicial officer.
- (2) A Judge not on active service is bound by this Code insofar as applicable.
- (3) Any willful or grossly negligent breach of this Code is a ground upon which a complaint against a judge may be lodged in terms of section 14(4)(b) of the Act.
- (4) Complaints must be dealt with in accordance with section 14, read with sections 15, 16, or 17 of the Act.
- (5) Any willful or grossly negligent breach of this Code amounts to misconduct by that judge.

Ojects and Interpretation

3.(1) In interpreting these rules the following apply:

Any willful or grossly negligent breach of this Code amounts to misconduct by the judge. However, disciplinary action is not appropriate for every infringement. Whether disciplinary action is appropriate, and the degree of discipline to be imposed, is determined by the provisions of the Act, and further through a reasonable application of the terms of the rule and

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<u>(d)</u>	_not as	k for	nor	accept	any	special	favour	or	dispensation	from	the	executive	or	any
	interes	t gro	up.											

Notes:

- 3A:-A judge acts fearlessly and according to his or her conscience because a judge is only accountable to the law.
- __Judges do not pay any heed to political parties or pressure groups_÷and perform all professional duties free from outside influence.
- Note 3B: Judges do not appear at public hearings before, or otherwise consult with, an executive
 or legislative body or official except on matters concerning the law, the legal system or the
 administration of justice.
- Note 3C: Judicial independence is not a private right or a principle for the benefit of judges as individuals. It denotes freedom of conscience for judges and non-interference in the performance of their decision-making. It does not justify judicial misbehavior and does not provide an excuse fro failing to perform judicial functions with due diligence or for otherwise acting contrary to these rules.
- Note 3D: Organs of state are constitutionally mandated to assist and protect the courts to ensure
 their independence, impartiality, dignity, accessibility, and effectiveness. The correlative is the
 right of every judge not to have his or her independence of mind disturbed by any person or
 organ of state.

To act honourably

______A judge shall always, and not only in the discharge of official duties, acts honourably and in a manner befitting judicial office and the status thereof.

(1) All activities of a judge must be compatible with the status of judicial office.

Notes:

- -4A:-A judge behaves in his or her professional and private life in manner that enhances with public trust in or respect for the judiciary and the judicial system.
- A judge avoids impropriety and the appearance of impropriety in all the judge's activities.
- Note 4B: A judge does not engage in conduct that is prejudicial to the effective and expeditious administration of the business of the court.

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 Note 4C: Judicial conduct is to be assessed objectively through the eyes of the reasonable person.

Compliance with the lawTo comply with the law

6. A judge shall at all times, also in relation to extra-judicial conduct, complyies with the law of the land.

Notes:

- •___5A:-Although they are independent, judges are pre-eminently obliged to comply with the law.
- Note 5B: A judge complies with the laws and rules that apply to the Judge's office.
- Note 5C: Offences involving moral turpitude are inexcusable.

Equality

- A jln conducting judicial proceedings judges shall at all times—
- (a) personally avoid and dissociate him- or herselfthemselves from comments or conduct by persons ____subject to his or hertheir control that are racist, sexist or otherwise manifest discrimination in ____-violation of the equality guaranteed by the Constitution;-
- (b) act In court and in chambers, judges always act courteously and respect the dignity of others;
- (c) in conducting judicial proceedings, judges-give special attention to the right of equality before the law and the right of equal protection and benefit of the law.
- (d) in A judge does not in the performance of judicial duties refrain from being manifest any biased or prejudiced.

- 6A: These provisions aree rule is not only, or even so much, aimed at promoting courtesy but at ensuring the degree of decorum which is essential for maintaining and enhancing the dignity of the judiciary and its business.
- Note 6B: Judges strive to be aware of and understand the many differences between persons and remain informed about changing social attitudes and values.

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 The multi-cultural nature of South African society calls for special sensitivity for the perceptions and sensibilities of all who are affected by court proceedings.

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8. A Judges shall—
(a) take reasonable steps to enhance the accessibility of the courts and to improve public
understanding of judicial proceedings; and-
(b) uUnless special circumstances require otherwise—
(i) e, conduct judicial proceedings; -and
(ii) announce are conducted and judges announce his or hertheir decisions and
supporting reasoning,
in open court.

Notes:

- •___-7A::The legitimacy of the judiciary depends on the public understanding of and confidence in the judicial process.
- •___The function of the judiciary fails if its proceedings are not understood.
- Note 7B: Judges are conscious of the desirability of complying with the spirit of the requirement that proceedings should take place in open court.
- Note 7C: Judges avoid unnecessary discussion in chambers (i.e. with the legal representatives in the absence of the parties) of matters that may be germane to the merits of the case.
- If what has happened in chambers has any effect on the course of the proceedings, those facts are placed on record in open court.

Fair trial

A judge <u>shall—</u>
(a) resolves disputes by making findings of fact and applying the appropriate law in a fair
hearing, which - This includes the duty to-
(i)observe the letter and spirit of the audi alteram-partom rule;
remain manifestly impartial; and
(ii) give adequate reasons for any decision;

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<u>(b)</u>	in conducting judicial proceedings
	<u>(i)</u> , a judge -maintains order <u>:</u>
	(ii)acts in accordance with commonly accepted decorum;
	(iii) remains patient and courteous to legal practitioners, parties and the public; and
	(iv) requires them to act likewise;
<u>(c)</u>	_A judge m anages legal proceedings in such a way as to <u>—</u>
	(i) strictly adhere to timeframes specified in law;
	(ii) expedite their conclusion as cost-effectively as possible; and
	(iii) does not shift the responsibility to hear and decide a matter to another judge; and
<u>(d)</u>	_A judge-does-not exert undue influence in order to promote a settlement or obtain a
conce	ession fromany party.

- 8A: The duty to grant a party a fair hearing does not preclude a judge from keeping a firm hand. Reasonable time limits may be laid down for argument, which may also be cut short when the judge is satisfied that more would not be of material assistance; the examination of witnesses should be curtailed if it exceeds reasonable bounds; applications for postponement and the like must be scrutinised for real merit and must be dealt with firmly and fairly.
- Note 8B: Reasons for decisions must be clear, cogent, complete and succinct. A number of decisions do not necessarily require reasons, e.g. unopposed cases and interlocutory rulings, because the reasons are usually self evident. If reasons in such cases are later reasonably required, they must be given with a reasonable time.
- Note 8C: A judge has the right to write judgments in a style and manner the judge thinks best. At the heart of judge's task is the necessity to make findings as to people's motives, credibility, honesty and competence.
- A judge may have occasion to express critical views about people during the course of argument or in judgments, e.g. by using unflattering adjectives in regard to a recalcitrant or overzealous party, an uncooperative lawyer, a foot-dragging witness and the like. However, harsh language should be avoided if possible and a judge may not, under the guise of performing judicial functions, make defamatory or derogatory statements actuated by personal spite, ill will, or improper, unlawful or ulterior motive.

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- Note 8D: Since judges are fallible and can err in relation to fact or law, such errors are to be dealt with though the normal appeal and review procedures. Such errors, even if made by courts of final instance, cannot give rise to valid complaints. Complaints against judges that are related to the merits of a decision or procedural ruling are to be dismissed at the outset. Disenchantment about a judicial decision does not justify disciplinary proceedings. Section 15(2)(c) of the Act specifically provides that a complaint against a judge must be dismissed if it is solely related to the merits of a judgment or order.
- Note 8E: A judge may in an appropriate case advise parties to consider settlement of a case; or
 put a provisional view in the course of argument. Justice may require that a party be afforded the
 opportunity to deal with such view.

Diligence

10A judge <u>shall—</u>
(a) performs all assigned judicial duties diligently;
(b) ; investigates the matter at hand thoroughly;
-(c) and disposes of the business of the court promptly and in an efficient and businesslike
manner;-
(d) A judge-gives judgment or any ruling in a case promptly and without undue delay;
(e)not engage in conduct that is prejudicial to the effective and expeditious administration of
justice or the business of the court;
(f) attends chambers during normal office hours and attends court during normal court
hours, unless such attendance is not reasonably required in order to perform any official duties;
(g) perform aAll official duties are to be performed properly, timeously, and in an orderly
manner _i -
(h) A judge-respects, and complyies with, the administrative requests of the head of court or
the relevantsenior judge;-
(i) A-judge-takes reasonable steps to maintain the necessary level of professional
competence in thelaw; and-
(j) <u>u</u> Upon resignation, ceasing to <u>be</u> on active service, or the expiry of an acting
appointment, a judge is obliged tocomplete all part-heard cases and to-deliver all reserved
judgments as soon as possible, as to do such work at the prescribed rate. If there is no

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prescribed rate,	the remuneration	does not excee	d that of an a	acting appointm	ent based on the
time involved.					

Notes:

- Note—9A: Unnecessary postponements, point-taking, undue formality and the like must be avoided.
- Note-98: Litigants are entitled to judgment as soon as reasonably possible. The ideal is to deliver all reserved judgments before the end of term, failing which, early the next term.
- Criminal proceedings, especially automatic reviews, applications for leave to appeal, and matters
 where personal liberty is involved, must be dealt with expeditiously.
- Note 9C: A judge keeps a record of all outstanding judgments and reports to the head of the particular court thereon if and when requested.
- Note 9D: A pattern of intemperate or intimidating treatment of lawyers and others, or of conduct

evidencing arbitrariness and abusiveness is prejudicial to the effective administration of justice.

Restraint

11.(1) A judge shall—
(a) sSave in the discharge of judicial office, a judge does not comment publicly on the merits
of any casepending before, or determined by, that judge or any other court;
(b) A-judge does not enter into a public debate about a case irrespective of criticism
leveled against thejudge, the judgment, or any other aspect of the case;
(c) -
A judge-refrains from any action which may be construed as designed to stifle legitimate
criticismof that or any other judge;-
(d) A judge respects the confidences of colleagues and is bound by professional secrecy
with regard to deliberations and to confidential information acquired in the course of his or her
official duties.
A judge-does-not disclose or use non-public information acquired in a judicial capacity for any
purposeunrelated to his or her judicial duties;-

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(e) A judge-avoids any personality issues with colleagues, lawyers and parties, and shall
seeks tofoster collegiality; and-
(\underline{f}) $\underline{\underline{u}}$ \underline{U} nless it is germane to judicial proceedings before the judge concerned, or to scholarly
presentation that is made for the purpose of advancing the study of law, a judge-refrains
frompublic criticism of another judge or branch of the judiciary
(2)A judge may participate in public debate on matters pertaining to legal subjects,
the judiciary, or the administration of justice, but does not express views in a manner which may
undermine the standing and integrity of the judiciary.

Notes:

- 40A: If comment about a judgment is required, the head of court, in that capacity, reacts in order to protect the judiciary as a whole. If the head of court fails to act, the judge concerned may_runder special circumstances, issue a statement in a reasoned and dignified manner preferably in open court or through the registrar to clarify the issue. The provisions rule does not prohibit academic debate of the legal issues that arose in a case.
- Note 10B: Formal deliberations among judges are and must remain confidential. Private consultation and debate are inherent in the functioning of a judge; and often a mere sounding board is helpful and confidentiality is also essential for this benefit of collegiality to function. But such occasions may not be used to influence a judge as to how a particular case should be decided.
- Note 10C: Criticising another judicial officer and criticising another judgment are separate matters. Personal criticism must be avoided unless necessary during the course of appeal proceedings.
- Note 10D:—Courtesy and collegiality towards colleagues are not merely good manners but indispensable attributes of a judge.

Association

12.(1) A judge shall not—
(a) does not belong to any political party or secret organisation organization and e. Excep
insofar as is necessary forthe discharge of judicial office, a judge does shall not becom
involved in any political controversy oractivity;-

(b) A judge does not take part in the activities of any organisation that practises
discrimination inconsistentwith the Constitution;-
(c) A judge does not lend the prestige of the judicial office to advance the private interests of
the judge orothers; and
(d) A-judge does not-use his or her judicial office to secure personal advancement or any
personal benefit.
Upon appointment, a judge severs all professional links and recovers speedily all
fees and other amounts outstanding and organises his or her personal business affairs to
minimize the potential for conflicts of interest.
(3) A judge previously in private practice does not sit in any case in which he or she,
or his or her former firm, is or was involved before the judge's appointment_; and a judge does
not sit in any case in which the former firm is involved until all indebtedness between the judge
and the firm has been settled.
An acting judge who is a practising attorney does not sit in any case in which the
acting judge's firm is or was involved as attorney of record or in any other capacity.
Notes:
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(1) A judge does not recuse him or herself on insubstantial grounds.

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Notes:

- 12A: Recusal is a matter regulated by the constitutional fair trial requirement, the common law and case law.
- Note 12B: A judge hears and decides cases allocated to him or her, unless disqualified. Sensitivity, distaste for the litigation or annoyance at the suggestion to recuse are not grounds for recusal.
- Note 12C: A judge's ruling on an application for recusal and the reasons for the ruling are stated
 in open court. A judge, unless there are exceptional circumstances, gives reasons for the
 decision.
- Note 12D: If a judge is of the view that there are not grounds for recusal but believes that there are facts which, if know to a party, might result in an application for recusal, such facts are to be made known timeoulsy to the parties, either by informing counsel in chambers or in open court, and the parties are to be given adequate time to consider the matter.
- Note 12E: Whether a judge ought to recuse him or herself is a matter to be decided by the judge concerned and a judge ought not to defer to the opinion of the parties or their legal representatives.

Extra-judicial activities of judges on active service

14.(1) A judge's judicial duties shall take precedence over all other duties and activities
statutory or otherwise.
In terms of section 11(1) of the Act, a judge performing active-service may not hold or perform
any other office of profit.
A judge's judicial duties take precedence over all other duties and activities, statutory or
otherwise.
(2) A j-dudges may be involved in extra-judicial activities, including those embodied in
their rights as citizens, if unless such activities
(a) are not incompatible with the confidence in, or the impartiality or the independence of
the judge;- or

(b) do not affect or may are not be-perceived to affect the judge's availability to deal
attentivelyand within a reasonable time with his or her judicial obligations.
(3)A judge shall not—
(a) does not accept any appointment that is inconsistent with or which is likely to be seen to
beinconsistent with an independent judiciary, or that could undermine the separations of
powers or the status of the judiciary;-
(b) A judge does not act as advocate, attorney, or legal adviser but may give informal legal
advice to familymembers, friends, charitable organisations and the like without
compensation;-
(c) not be A judge-is-not-involved in any undertaking, business, fundraising or other activity
that affects thestatus, independence or impartiality of the judge or is incompatible with
the judicialoffice;-
A judge is not (d) be engaged in financial and business dealings that may reasonably be
perceived toexploit the judge's judicial position or are incompatible with the judicial office; and
(e) A judge does not sit as a private arbitrator.
(4)A judge may
(a) act as a trustee of a family or public benefit trust but is not entitled to receive any
remuneration for such services;
(b) A judge may be a director of a private family company or member of a close corporation
but if thecompany or close corporation conducts business the judge many not perform an
executive function; and-
(c) A judge may be a director of a section 21 company.
Notes:
•13A:-A judge conducts extra-judicial activities so as to minimize the risk of conflict with judicial
obligations. These activities may not impinge on the judge's availability to perform any judicial obligations.
Note 13B: While judges should be available to use their judicial skill and impartiality to further the
public interest, they respect the separation of powers and the independence of the judiciary when
considering a request to perform non-judicial functions for or on behalf of the State, or when
performing such function.

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- Note 13C: Jjudges who are not on active service but are liable to be called upon to perform judicial duties arrange their affairs so as to be reasonably available for such duties if called upon.
- Note 13D: Business or financial dealings with members of the legal professions are to be avoided.
- Note 13E: Serving on university councils or governing bodies or boards of trustees of charitable institutions and the like is acceptable.

Extra-judicial income

15.(1) In terms of section 11(1) of the Act, a judge performing active service may not
receive in respect of any service any fees, emoluments, or other remuneration or allowances
apart from his or her salary and any other amount which may be payable to him or her in his or
her capacity as a judge, except insofar as the position with regard to royalties is regulated in the
Act.

	(2)A	iudae	shall	not
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- (a) does not receive any income or compensation that is incompatible with judicial office;
- (b) A judge does not directly or indirectly negotiate or accept remuneration, gift, advantage, or privilege that is ___incompatible with judicial office or that can reasonably be perceived as being intended to ___influence the judge in the performance of his or her judicial duties, or to serve as a ___reward for them; and-
- <u>(c)</u> A judge does not accept, hold or perform any other office of profit, or receive in respect of any service any ___fees, emoluments or other remuneration apart from the salary and any allowances __payable to the judge in a judicial capacity.

- 14A: Section 11(1) further provides that a judge may, with the written consent of the Minister
 acting in consultation with the Chief Justice, receive royalties for legal books written or edited by
 that judge.
- Note 14B: Judges may deliver public lectures or papers on appropriate subjects or teach at
 academic institutions and receive reasonable honorarium in respect thereof as well as
 subsistence and travel allowances or payments by way of reimbursement for such expenditure.

Informing

16.(1) A judge shall, with clear and reliable evidence of serious professional misconduct
or gross incompetence on the part of a legal practitioner or public prosecutor, informs the
relevant professional body or a Director of Public Prosecutions of such misconduct or
professional incompetence.
(2) Before commenting adversely on the conduct of a particular practitioner or
prosecutor in a judgment, the judge shallmust give that person the opportunity to deal with the
allegation.
(3)A judge who reasonably believes that a colleague has been acting in a manner
which is unbecoming of judicial office shall raises the matter with that colleague or with the head
of the court concerned.
Note <u>s:</u>
• 15A: The judge must usually await the conclusion of the proceedings before acting.
Note 15B: The reference to the appropriate authority is to be made in a neutral fashion and may
not be judgmental.
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Judges not on active service
17.(1) In terms of section $1\underline{12}(2)$ of the Act, a judge who has been discharged from
active service may only with the written consent of the Minister, acting after consultation with the
Chief Justice, hold or perform any other office of profit or receive in respect of any fees,
emoluments or other remuneration or allowances apart from his or her salary and any other
amount which may be payable to him or her in his or her capacity as judge.
(2) A Judges who isare not longer on active service or liable to be called upon to
perform judicial duties (herein referred to as \underline{a} retired judges) \underline{shall} always act honourably and in
a manner befitting with his or hertheir status.
(3)All activities of a judges no longer on active service shallmust be compatible with
his or hertheir status as a retired judges.
(4) A judge discharged from active service shalldoes not—

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(a) accept any appointment that is likely to affect or be seen to affect the independence of
the judiciary, or which could undermine the separation of powers or the status of the
judiciary and does not receive any income incompatible with judicial office;
(b) A Judge discharged from active service does not act as advocate, attorney or legal
adviser; and-
(c) be A judge discharged from active service is not involved in any undertaking, business,
fundraising, or other activity that isincompatible with the status of a judge.

- <u>16A:</u> A retired judge may accept an appropriate appointment to judge, whether as judge in another jurisdiction; as an arbitrator or mediator; in professional or semi-professional disciplinary matters; and the like.
- Note 16B: A retired judge does not sit as a director of a public company.
- Note16C: A retired judge does not become a member of a professional partnership or body corporate.
- Note 16D: A retired judge doe not enter party politics.