



**THE HONORABLE  
JOSEPH B. CAMPBELL  
MENTOR PROGRAM HANDBOOK**

Adapted from the Virginia Law Foundation  
Mentor Program Handbook (with permission)

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## **I. GENERAL OVERVIEW**

### **GOAL**

The goal of the program is to provide a helpful, independent resource for less experienced lawyers for advice on topics such as ethics, practice management, procedure, and growth in the legal profession. The mentoring program is meant to be a part of a bridge between law school and the “real world” of legal practice. The program should provide an opportunity for both personal and professional growth.

A successful mentoring program will help the legal profession as a whole by assisting young lawyers in developing good character, competence, and a deeper appreciation for the profession as a whole that they can take into their future years of practice.

The program will provide less experienced lawyers, in both practices and larger practices, an outlet for independent, confidential advice on the practice of law and balancing life and practice. Although not intended as a networking program, it will also allow new lawyers an opportunity to meet, interact with, and learn from other, more experienced attorneys in their area.

This program is designed to supplement, not replace similar programs that may be in place in law firms.

### **QUALIFICATIONS**

1. The mentor program is voluntary.
2. Mentors and mentees must be licensed attorneys or bench officers.
3. Confidentiality between the Mentor and the Mentee is to be respected at all times.

### **LIMITATIONS**

Joseph Campbell Inn of Court Mentoring Program must not be used to establish a lawyer/client relationship, reveal any client confidences to the Mentor, or recruit business or establish “of counsel” relationships. No fees are to be accepted for information or advice given to a participant under the program.

It is not necessary that a mentor practice law in the same area(s) of law as his or her mentee. A mentor is not a tutor. A mentor’s focus with his or her mentee should be imparting his or her knowledge and experience about such matters as professionalism, civility, dealings with local counsel and judges, dealings with clients and office staff, law practice management issues and balancing professional demands with personal, family, and civic obligations. In responding to a specific legal question from his or her mentee, a

mentor should not be concerned about saying, "I don't know." However, the mentor should discuss how his or her mentee might find the answer to the question.

### **THE MENTOR/MENTEE RELATIONSHIP**

The mentor/mentee relationship is a two-way street, and there is much to be gained from the relationship by both parties. The mentee gains the guidance and training of an older, more knowledgeable practitioner, training that is often invaluable in the practice of law. At the same time, the mentor should be open to the new ideas and fresh perspective of the young mentee. Overall, it is a learning process for both parties, and both parties must be willing to learn from the process to make it work.

What is a Mentor? According to Merriam-Webster, a mentor is (1) a friend of Odysseus entrusted with the education of Odysseus' son Telemachus, or (2) a trusted counselor or guide or (3) professional model or coach. For the purpose of our program, a mentor is all of the above (with the exception of the friend of Odysseus part). A mentor is an advisor, trainer, and teacher. A good mentor is both a good person and a good lawyer. In the legal arena, the mentor is someone who is able to guide a young attorney in the practice of law, give the less experienced attorney instructional advice about local laws and customs, and help the mentee to grow personally, as well as professionally.

The mentor is the key to a successful mentor/mentee relationship. The mentor is the catalyst that begins the relationship and the fuel that keeps it going, although the mentee plays a key role as well.

## II. MENTOR GUIDELINES

### WHAT MAKES A GOOD MENTOR?

#### 10 Qualities of a good mentor

1. **Commitment:** The mentor should be committed to the role of mentoring and should have a genuine concern for the professional growth of his mentee.
2. **Listening:** The mentor must be able and willing to listen to his mentee. This is one of the most important qualities for a good mentor. Being a good sounding board is just as important as being able to impart wise bits of advice to the mentee.
3. **Communication:** Being able to effectively communicate is key to a successful mentor/mentee relationship. A good mentor is able to communicate openly with the mentee. The mentor is able to openly discuss sometimes delicate issues, including the common frustrations with the practice of law and the sometimes tough ethical issues that arise from time to time. Good communications includes praise when needed, constructive criticism when required, and discussions of issues in a productive manner.
4. **Flexibility:** As the mentee grows professionally, the methods of communication may need to change. Further, the mentor is generally not the know-all legal sage. The best mentors are those who understand that the mentoring process is a two – way street. They should be excited to learn from them as well.
5. **Positive Role Model:** A good mentor is a positive and loyal person. The mentor is well respected among his peers and other practitioners. Young minds are impressionable, even the minds of young attorneys. The person in charge of guiding a young mind should be an attorney with a positive and realistic attitude toward life and toward the practice of law.
6. **Guidance:** A good mentor acts as a guide to the mentee. The mentee is not merely a glorified law clerk for the mentor. The mentor should be able to help the mentee learn how and where to find the answers rather than merely providing the answers. This facilitates the mentee's independence, growth, and sense of accomplishment.
7. **Honesty:** A good mentor is honest. A good mentor will not sugar-coat or minimize problems or tough issues that arise. Others in the profession will not do so for the mentee. The legal profession is a tough but rewarding profession. Difficult issues are part of the game. A good mentor will aid and encourage the mentee in learning how to address some of those issues, while at the same time ensuring that the mentee realizes their importance.

8. **Realistic:** It is important to be realistic about the mentor/mentee relationship. The mentor will not have all of the answers all the time. A mentor should know when to ask for help, or refer to mentee to other sources of information or support.
9. **Be Yourself:** Pretending to be something else will make it harder to be a good mentor, and will reduce the effectiveness of the relationship.
10. **Respectful:** Although the mentee is a young or inexperienced attorney, he or she will deserve your respect, just as you would expect in return. The relationship will go much more smoothly and will produce greater results with mutual respect. This includes respecting each other's time, and realizing its value.

## GUIDELINES FOR MENTORS

1. **Study:** Read this handbook.
2. **Time Commitment:** Mentoring requires a certain time commitment and the Mentor should be prepared for that. The Mentor should meet in person with the Mentee at least twice a month for lunch. Each Mentor and Mentee should develop their own schedule.
3. **The Introduction:** Mentors will be expected to greet the new lawyer and welcome him/her to the program within two weeks of the assignment. You may also wish to set your first meeting; a lunch meeting is preferred. It is the Mentee's responsibility to set the agenda for the first meeting. Tell your assistant your Mentee's name and ensure that he or she knows of your commitment to the Mentee.
4. **Set The Specifics:** Establishing guidelines in the beginning will be helpful to both the busy Mentor and to the busy Mentee. Let your Mentee know the best time to reach you. To ensure follow-up, have a note in your calendar to contact your Mentee.
5. **Discussion:** Mentors must assist with general practice issues, particularly with ethics and professionalism questions, the value of reputations and situational advice about how to be successful.
6. **Arrange "Field Trips":** Expose the Mentee to situations that may be appropriate for their field of law. Attend an ethics or professionalism CLE seminar together and talk about it afterwards. Try to attend at least one Bar event with your Mentee. This is a great way to introduce your Mentee to other lawyers or judges. Friendship breeds civility, and that starts right here in the mentoring relationship.
7. **Relate Experiences:** Share your experiences; "war stories" are often the most effective illustration or teaching tool.
8. **Keep It Professional:** The role of the Mentor is a professional one. Encourage open communication with your Mentee, but remember that a Mentor is a counselor, not necessarily a best friend.
9. **Keep It Confidential And Conflict Free:** Discussion between Mentors and Mentees must remain confidential. Mentors and Mentees should discuss "hypothetical fact patterns" instead of specific cases to avoid potential conflicts of interest and to maintain client confidentiality.
10. **Maintain a Mentoring Relationship, Not a Legal One:** Mentors shall not be required to perform any research as a result of a Mentee inquiry.

Mentors must not accept employment as co-counsel, and Mentees must not refer their clients to Mentors, and vice versa. But Mentors are encouraged to provide Mentees with names of other lawyers who could act as co-counsel or to whom cases may be referred.

11. **Expectations of the Mentee:** Ask your Mentee what he or she expects to gain and hopes to accomplish from the relationship. Then, try to meet those expectations. Set goals and give assignments to your Mentee, if necessary.

### III. MENTEE GUIDELINES

#### GUIDELINES FOR MENTEES

1. **Study:** Read this handbook.
2. **Time Commitment:** Mentoring requires a certain time commitment, and the Mentee should be prepared for that. The Mentee should meet in person with their Mentor at least twice a month for lunch. Each Mentor and Mentee should develop their own schedule.
3. **Be Considerate:** Be mindful of your Mentor's schedule. Do not schedule a mentoring meeting and fail to show up on time. Take initiative. Your Mentor is likely to be busier than you are. If your mentor has to cancel a session or is a bit difficult to reach from time to time, do not be offended, but realize how demanding it can be for most lawyers to mentor others. Express gratitude for your Mentor's involvement and energies on your behalf.
4. **The Introduction:** It is the Mentor's responsibility to contact the Mentee. The Mentor should initiate the first call. You should plan to setup your first meeting; a lunch meeting is preferred. It is the Mentee's responsibility to set the agenda for the first meeting. Tell your assistant your Mentor's name and ensure that he or she knows of your commitment to the Mentor and will treat your Mentor as a "VIP".
5. **Set The Specifics:** Establishing guidelines in the beginning will be helpful to both the busy Mentor and to the busy Mentee. If you are easier to reach at a certain time, let your mentor know. To ensure follow-up, have a note in your calendar to contact your Mentor.
6. **Discussion:** Mentors must assist with general practice issues, particularly with ethics and professionalism questions, the value of reputations, and situational advice about how to be successful. Keep a file to drop in questions as they come up, e.g., things you overhear at a seminar or the courthouse, problems you resolved but about which you would like a reality check or clarifying theory vs. practice. Do not quarrel with the advice your Mentor provides. Listen well and reach across your differences to accept the guidance you sought and need.
7. **Arrange "Field Trips":** Be assertive – do not wait for the Mentor to schedule with you. Tell the Mentor about the type of activity that you want to be exposed to that is appropriate for your field of law. For instance, if you are a litigator, ask to see the Mentor in the courtroom. Attend an ethics or professionalism CLE seminar together and talk about it

afterwards. Try to attend at least one Bar event with your Mentor. This is a great way for your Mentor to introduce you to other lawyers and judges. Friendship breeds civility, and that starts right here in the mentoring relationship.

8. **Keep It Professional:** Remember that you have a professional relationship with your Mentor. A Mentor is a counselor, not necessarily a best friend.
9. **Keep It Confidential And Conflict Free:** Discussion between Mentors and Mentees must remain confidential. Mentors and Mentees should discuss “hypothetical fact patterns” instead of specific cases to avoid potential conflicts of interest and to maintain client confidentiality.
10. **Maintain a *Mentoring Relationship*, Not a Legal One:** Mentors shall not be required to perform any research as a result of a Mentee inquiry. Mentors must not accept employment as co-counsel, and Mentees must not refer their clients to Mentors, and vice versa. But Mentors are encouraged to provide Mentees with names of other lawyers who could act as co-counsel or to whom cases may be referred.

## IV. SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

### MENTOR'S LIST OF GENERAL ACTIVITIES

- Attend local civic group activities and functions so the Mentee is introduced to individuals outside of the legal community.
- Discuss “informal” local rules – what to know about certain judges or court staffs.
- Attend local and state bar association functions.
- Attend an Inns of Court function.
- Take a field trip to local and federal court houses.
- Introduce the Mentee to lawyers in your firm, especially the younger lawyers.
- Give the Mentee contact information for local and state bar association.
- Attend CLE events together.
- Take the Mentee out for lunch or cocktails after work.
- Give the Mentee a listing of all the young professional organizations in the community.
- Provide assistance/and or contact information if Mentee wishes to join local civic or charitable organizations as a member or board member.
- Act as a source of general information and legal knowledge for the Mentee.
- Take on a pro bono or community service project together.
- Research and write a scholarly article or cooperate on a CLE presentation.
- Discuss and share judicial council forms or other practice forms.
- Tell a career story – share the highs and lows of your career path.
- Mentor may want to use his or her personal influence to help Mentee gain exposure to special training.
- Ask the Mentee to select a book or article on something relating to his or her career field and report on the reading to you.

- Help the Mentee write short-range and long-range career development plans.
- Find ways to work together, e.g. discussing case strategy and/or the legal implications of a management decision.
- Talk about what you do everyday:
  - General description of your job.
  - Major tasks, subtasks, specific responsibilities.
  - How your job fits into the total organization.
  - How you spend a typical day.
  - Personal qualities needed for this type of work.
  - General opportunities for advancement.
  - Effects of economics on your specific job and on your occupation in general.
  - Other jobs you could do with your skills.
  - How you got started in your job.
  - Other jobs you have held, skills you developed from them, their relationship to your present job.
  - Skills you had to learn specifically for this job; how you acquired them.
  - Your recommendations to others for acquiring these skills; suggestions you would give someone applying for your job.
  - What you like most and least about your job.
  - What you would like to change if you could.
  - Interpersonal skills you find most important for your work and why.
  - Attitudes and values that are important to you and how they are reflected in your work.
  - Obstacles and barriers that you had to overcome to get where you are now.

## MENTEE'S LIST OF GENERAL ACTIVITIES

- Identify goals for the mentoring relationship and discuss with your Mentor.
- Share success with your Mentor, e.g., a case you recently won or a strategy that worked well.
- Share frustrations with your Mentor. Talk about the partner that is hard to get along with, the clients that have unrealistic expectations, and the court appearances that did not go well. Your Mentor has had the same experiences and can suggest alternative ways of handling the situation.
- Do some thinking and planning about career direction and goals; identify how the Mentor can help you meet these goals and ask specifically for help.
- Interview the Mentor about his or her career path, e.g., what were the barriers to overcome, the pit-falls along the way, about learning from failures as well as successes, etc.
- Be clear about what you want from your Mentor at any given time, e.g., do you want advice right now, a sympathetic ear to listen, or help with problem solving. Do not be afraid to ask for the specific type of support you want in different situations.
- Discuss a legal issue you are exploring.
- Discuss the issue of integrating personal and family life with career objectives and concerns, such as:
  - Family time
  - Leisure time
  - General health/diet/exercise
  - Stress factors: tension, fatigue, burn-out
  - Stimulation factors: excitement, challenge, opportunity
  - Where your present activities fit into your life: lifetime career or stepping stone to something else