

**STATEMENT REGARDING COURTROOM OPPORTUNITIES  
FOR NEWER LAWYERS**

**MARK R. HORNAK, CHIEF UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE**

Courtroom opportunities for relatively new attorneys, particularly those who practice at larger firms or in more complex areas of the law, can be hard to come by.

I encourage the active participation of such attorneys in all court proceedings. Based on my experience, these newer lawyers are more than up to the task, and they can effectively handle not only relatively routine matters (such as discovery motions), but also more complex matters (such as motions for summary judgment, evidentiary hearings, or the examination of witnesses at trial).

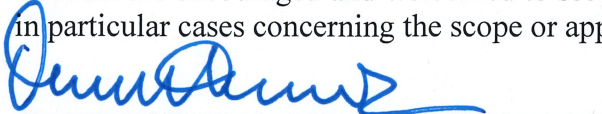
In an effort to increase advocacy opportunities for newer lawyers, I will relax the usual requirement that only a single lawyer may present an argument, and will allow a more experienced lawyer to “back up” a newer lawyer in the examination of witnesses so long as doing so will not unduly prolong the proceeding, not prejudice the opposing party, and not result in undue “double dipping”. Newer lawyers who actively participate in evidentiary hearings, including examining a witness at trial, should be accompanied and supervised by a more experienced attorney. The Court will regulate the proceedings to make sure that in the end, all sides of an issue get a fair shake.

Of course, all lawyers are expected to meet the high professional standards emblematic of our Court. Attorneys appearing in court are expected to be appropriately prepared, regardless of experience. For example, an attorney who is arguing a motion for summary judgment is expected to be thoroughly familiar with the factual record and the applicable law. In short, all lawyers should know and understand the “rules of the road”.

I would ask that all attorneys appearing in court have a degree of authority commensurate with the proceeding that they are assigned to handle. For example, an attorney appearing at a scheduling conference ordinarily must have the full authority to propose and agree to a discovery or trial schedule and any other matters reasonably likely to arise at the conference, to address and argue any then-pending motion, and to discuss the status of any settlement discussions.

I have implemented this approach for more than five years, and have been uniformly impressed with exceptional in-court presentations by newer lawyers. Our more experienced lawyers are encouraged to engage their newer colleagues in advocacy opportunities in our Court. I believe that they will be inspired and energized by doing so, as I have been seeing those efforts in action.

Counsel are encouraged and welcomed to seek additional guidance from the Court as appropriate in particular cases concerning the scope or application of this statement.



Mark R. Hornak  
Chief United States District Judge

Dated: July, 2022