



### **What is Ethics First?**

NCRA's "Ethics First" program has been developed for a single reason: To recognize our members who have made a commitment to abide by and promote the rules of the Code of Professional Ethics (COPE), particularly with regard to gift-giving.

Once a member signs on, the Ethics First logo is available for use by you in publicizing your participation in this program. You may go to the Ethics First home page to sign up for this unique program, download relevant educational material, and access the participant list.

Through its grassroots efforts, Ethics First seeks to positively educate court reporters, firms, and clients that the impartiality and neutrality of the court reporter is of utmost importance in maintaining an unbiased legal system. Getting the word out to attorneys, legal staff, and other consumers of court reporting services about the perils of accepting free gifts from court reporting firms is also one of the Ethics First committee charges.

President Melanie Humphrey-Sonntag has placed the Ethics First campaign at the top of her priority list this year. She created a new task force which has met and discussed developing educational materials that should be available to state associations and Ethics First members in the near future. Ethics First will also be giving presentations to state court reporting associations and state bar associations with goals of increasing court reporter membership in the program, as well as encouraging attorneys to hire firms and reporters who are Ethics First members.

In addition to our individual reporter members, who of course all agree to adhere to COPE, NCRA's Ethics First Committee invites all firms abiding by COPE to join Ethics First and to directly link to NCRA's Ethics First web site. This will assure your clients that you understand the ethical implications that gift-giving entails and are doing your part to ensure that the legal system remains entirely impartial. The Ethics First logo signals to your clients, to your peers, and to your competition that you refuse to risk compromising the judicial system through practices which are in conflict with COPE.

Please sign up today and help join this grassroots, nationwide effort to advocate for the neutrality of the court reporter in legal system.