



ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE of PENNSYLVANIA COURTS

# NEWS RELEASE

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## Pennsylvania Supreme Court Adopts First Rules of Evidence

**HARRISBURG, MAY 8, 1998** – The Supreme Court of Pennsylvania announced its adoption today of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's first Rules of Evidence. The effective date of the Rules will be October 1, 1998.

Modeled in part upon the Federal Rules of Evidence, Pennsylvania's new Rules of Evidence condense decades of Pennsylvania court decisions, rules and statutes so that practitioners and members of the judiciary can now have rules governing the admissibility of evidence available in a single reference. Prior to this historic event, lawyers and judges were required to consult several different resources in order to determine the admissibility of evidence in legal proceedings.

The Rules of Evidence were adopted by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court upon the recommendation of its Ad Hoc Committee on Evidence. Chaired by former Lycoming County president judge Thomas C. Raup, the Committee consisted of Villanova Law School professor Leonard Packel (Editor), Dauphin County Court of Common Pleas judge Richard A. Lewis, and attorneys: David F. Binder (of Raynes, McCarty Binder Ross & Mundy), Raymond J. Bradley (of Wolf Block Schorr & Solis Cohen), Charles B. Gibbons, Esquire (of Klett Lieber Rooney & Schorling), John Edward Iole (of Jones Day Reavis & Pogue), and Ellen M. Viakley (of Manifesto & Donahoe, P.C.). Editorial assistance was also provided by Kathryn M. Stanchi, Esquire, during her tenure with Villanova Law School. (Ms. Stanchi is now affiliated with Temple University.)

"The Ad Hoc Committee's work required detailed study and thoughtful deliberation prior to its submission of a proposal for the Supreme Court's consideration," said Chief Justice John P. Flaherty. "I commend the committee members' efforts and those of my colleague, Justice Ronald D. Castille, who served as the Court's liaison to the Committee."

"My colleagues and I also appreciate the considerable input from members of the bar and the public which the Ad Hoc Committee received following publication of the proposed rules for public comment," said Chief Justice Flaherty. "The expertise gained during a public comment period is always of considerable value in shaping a final proposal."

Mr. Justice Castille also noted the significant contributions by the Legislature and praised state Senate Judiciary Committee chair Stewart J. Greenleaf, and former state senator Craig Lewis for their efforts as well as the efforts of many other members of the General Assembly for their cooperation in the review and adoption process of this project.

Chief Justice Flaherty said the Supreme Court believes the new Rules of Evidence will be of enormous benefit to judges and the practicing bar and will promote greater efficiency within the judicial system.

An order adopting a standing Supreme Court committee to oversee the Rules of Evidence will be issued in the near future. The Committee on the Rules of Evidence will operate similarly to other existing Supreme Court committees.

The Pennsylvania Rules of Evidence are available for immediate review on the Pennsylvania Judiciary Internet website at: <http://www.courts.state.pa.us>.

Copies of the Rules of Evidence have also been mailed to the president judge of the Court of Common Pleas of each judicial district and should appear in the *Pennsylvania Bulletin* in the near future.

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