

NOTICE TO THE BAR

LAW FIRM NAMES – AMENDMENTS TO RPC 7.5 AND COURT RULES 1:21-1A, 1:21-1B, AND 1:21-1C

The Supreme Court has adopted amendments to Rule of Professional Conduct 7.5 (“Law Firm Names and Letterheads”) so as to remove the requirement that the law firm name include the name of a lawyer and describe the nature of the firm’s legal practice. The Court also adopted similar amendments to Court Rules 1:21-1A, 1:21-1B, and 1:21-1C, concerning law firms that practice in a corporate form such as a professional services corporation, limited liability company, or limited liability partnership. The amendments were adopted September 9, 2020 and were effective upon adoption.

The Court took this action based on its review of the RPCs and Court Rules to ensure compliance with constitutional principles. Up to this point the Court had required that the name of a lawyer practicing with the firm be the official designation of a New Jersey law firm; the inclusion of lawyers’ names in the law firm name provides information to consumers about the identity of the firm’s lawyers.

For purposes of consistency and to ensure compliance with constitutional principles, the Court removed the requirement that a lawyer’s name be part of the law firm name and that the law firm name describe “the nature of the firm’s legal practice in terms that are accurate, descriptive, and informative.” RPC 7.5(e). The Court, however, retained the requirement that a law firm trade name must not be “misleading, comparative, or suggestive of the ability to retain results.” RPC 7.5(e). To ensure that consumers have necessary information about the lawyers in

the firm, the Court's amendments to RPC 7.5 include a requirement that when a law firm name does not include the name of a lawyer, any advertisement, letterhead, or other communication containing the law firm name must include the name of at least one licensed New Jersey lawyer who is responsible for the firm's New Jersey practice or the local office of that practice. RPC 7.5(e). Other paragraphs in RPC 7.5 have been amended for clarity.

The amendments to RPC 7.5 and Court Rules 1:21-1A, 1:21-1B, and 1:21-1C are appended to this notice.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Glenn A. Grant", is written over a horizontal line.

Glenn A. Grant, J.A.D.
Acting Administrative Director
of the Courts

Dated: September 10, 2020