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COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
THE TRIAL COURT

TRIAL JUROR'S HANDBOOK



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ities and responsibilities as a trial juror. This handbook will answer the questions that are most commonly asked. You are expected to read this handbook carefully so that you will be better prepared to serve as a trial juror.

The information in this handbook is general. It is not intended to take the place of the instructions of the judge. In the event of conflict, the judge's instructions must be followed.

This handbook has been prepared with the guidance and supervision of the Jury Management Advisory Committee. Comments and suggestions for the improvement of the handbook are welcome.

I trust that you will find your juror service an interesting and rewarding experience.

Respectfully,
Jury Commissioner for the Commonwealth

October 1994, Fifth Edition

Q. How do I get to the courthouse? Where will I park my car? Where will I eat lunch?

A. Maps, directions, and an indication of parking availability will be mailed to you as an appendix to this handbook approximately 10 days prior to your scheduled day of service. The jury officer will give you the location of local restaurants on your first day of service. You will have to pay for your lunch. You may bring a lunch, but refrigeration is not provided.

Q. Whom should I notify in the event I cannot appear for juror service?

A. The Jury Commissioner information telephone number is 1-800-THE-JURY and is only accessible from within Massachusetts. You may call the information number in the event that you cannot appear for juror service on your first scheduled day of service. However, if you have been selected for a trial and cannot appear on your second day of service, or any day thereafter, you must call the courthouse directly. You must be seriously ill or involved in an emergency. The court is very strict. Remember: the judge, parties, lawyers, witnesses, court personnel, and other jurors are relying on your presence.

Q. How long must I serve as a juror?

A. Your juror service will be as short as possible. If you are seated on a jury at the end of your first day, you must complete that trial. Most trials do not last longer than two or three days. If you are not seated on a trial at the end of your first day, you will be discharged at that time unless a judge orders otherwise. It is unusual for a juror to serve more than three days.

Q. What will be my hours as a juror?

A. Jury trials ordinarily are conducted between the hours of 9:00 A.M. and 4:30 P.M., with a one-hour recess for lunch. However, on the first morning of your juror service, you must report earlier for an orientation program. The exact time is stated in your summons or subsequent notice.

The trial judge controls courtroom activities. If you are impanelled on a jury, the judge will give you specific instructions on when you must report and when you may leave. If you are not impanelled on a jury, the officer in charge of jurors will discharge you as early as possible. Immediately prior to the lunch recess, the officer will call all of the trial sessions to determine if jurors may be needed during the afternoon. If there is no foreseeable need, all jurors will be discharged at that time. If there is a need, a sufficient number of jurors will be required to return after lunch and the remainder will be discharged. Even if you are required to return after lunch, you will be discharged as soon as it has been determined that you will not be needed.

Q. What should I wear?

A. Sitting on a jury is a serious occasion. Clothes appropriate to such an occasion should be worn. It is important that a juror's appearance and attitude reflect that seriousness.

Q. I received a standby juror notice. What does it mean?

A. If you receive notice informing you that you are a standby juror, you must be prepared to serve on the date designated in your summons or subsequent notice. However, you must call the standby telephone number at the courthouse anytime after 3:00 P.M. on the court day before your first day of juror service. The purpose of this call is to give you last-minute instructions as to whether or not you will have to appear. Be sure to use the telephone number provided in your standby juror notice. Be sure to make the call only during the designated period. The court will use a prerecorded message on an automatic telephone answering device. If you are instructed in the message not to report for juror service, you will have fulfilled all of your obligations for the calendar year only. If the message informs you that you must report for juror service you must appear as scheduled. An unexcused absence will be subject to the penalties set forth in your summons. Not all jurors are standby jurors. Do not assume that you are a standby juror unless you receive a separate notice stating that you are a standby juror.

Q. How do I find out if my juror service has been cancelled or postponed in a snow emergency?

A. There is a snow-emergency telephone line which you may call during a major snowstorm or other public emergency. This special telephone number will be given to you approximately two weeks prior to your first day of juror service. Also, you should listen to your local radio stations. It is very rare that juror service is cancelled or postponed. Unless you hear specifically that your juror service has been cancelled or postponed, you should assume that it will be held as scheduled.

Q. Will I be informed if a trial is going to be a long trial?

A. Occasionally there is an extended trial. In the event a trial is expected by the court to last more than three days, the trial judge shall announce this fact to jurors before the jury is impanelled. The trial judge may excuse a juror from performing juror service on such an extended trial upon a finding of hardship, inconvenience, or public necessity taking into consideration the expected length of the extended trial, but any juror so excused shall otherwise complete the term of juror service.

Q. If I have a problem concerning my juror service, will I be given an opportunity to discuss it with a judge?

A. You should make an attempt to resolve any personal problems prior to your first day of juror service by calling the Jury Commissioner's information telephone number listed above. On your first day of service the court shall hold a private hearing with each juror or employer of a juror who requests to be heard. The purpose of such hearings is to dispose of all urgent personal problems of jurors and employers as to possible postponements, limitations on the length of juror service, compensation, reimbursement, qualifications for juror service, and any other condition of juror service.

Q. What happens if there is an emergency while I am serving on the jury?

A. In an emergency, the judge can excuse you at any time during the trial even during jury deliberations. If excused, your place on the jury can be filled by an extra juror. Of course, the emergency must be real, and the judge will decide.

Q. Suppose there is an emergency at home while I am serving on the jury. How will my family contact me?

A. In an emergency, you may be contacted at the courthouse.

Q. What do I do if I am not feeling well or have some personal problem while serving on a jury?

A. You should be as comfortable as possible during your juror service. If you require assistance, bring the matter to the attention of the court officer. If the court officer cannot resolve your problem, the officer will notify the judge. If you cannot hear a witness or if you have to use the restroom during the trial, raise your hand and let the judge or court officer know of your problem. It is extremely important that you hear the testimony of each witness. Do not hesitate to raise your hand if you cannot hear or if you have a personal problem.

Q. I work a night shift. What is considered to be my first day of juror service?

A. A juror's primary obligation is to perform juror service. A juror must be free of compulsory non-jury work assignments insofar as any such assignments might interfere with the juror's availability, effectiveness, or peace of mind. Applying these principles to night shifts, a juror shall not be required to work beyond midnight on the day preceding the first day of juror service. In addition, a juror shall not be required to work a night shift during the term of juror service.

Q. Will my employer pay me while I am serving on a jury?

A. The law requires that each regularly employed juror shall be paid regular wages by the employer for the first three days, or part thereof, of juror service. Regular employment shall include part-time, temporary, and casual employment. If you are on the jury for more than the three days, the state will pay you \$50 per day after the third day. Many employers as a public service or under union contract will compensate an employee even after the third day so that the employee will not suffer financial loss because of juror service.

Q. My employer requires proof of my term of juror service in order to pay me for my first three days, or part thereof. Will I receive any documentation proving that I actually appeared at a courthouse and served as a juror?

A. Each week, the Office of Jury Commissioner will mail juror service certificates to those jurors who have performed juror service during the previous week. A juror who seeks compensation from an employer for juror service should give the employer's copy of the service certificate to the employer as soon as possible after its receipt.

Q. What if an employer cannot afford to pay an employee for juror service?

A. An employer may appear before a judge and explain why the duty to pay an employee for the first three days of juror service would cause extreme financial hardship. If the judge excuses the employer, the state will pay the employee up to \$50 per day from the first day of juror service. The judge may be reluctant to grant this excuse since most businesses are equipped to bear the occasional absence of an employee.

Q. I am self-employed. Who will pay me for juror service?

A. A self-employed person is treated no differently than any other employer. Self-employed jurors must compensate themselves for the first three days of juror service unless they can demonstrate extreme financial hardship to the judge. Under our jury system, the average citizen will serve less than one day per decade. Even a judge may be reluctant to excuse self-employed people from the duty to compensate themselves for the first three days of juror service. If you serve more than three days, the state will pay you up to \$50 per day after the third day.

Q. I am a homemaker. Who will pay me for juror service? Who will pay a student, retired, or unemployed person?

A. A homemaker, student, retired, or unemployed person may be reimbursed for reasonable out-of-pocket expenses (except food) incurred during the first three days of juror service. If you serve for more than three days, the state will pay you \$50 per day after the third day.

Q. How do I claim reimbursement? When will I receive payment?

A. If you claim out-of-pocket expenses, you must inform the officer in charge of jurors before the juror orientation program begins on your first day of juror service. If your claim is within prescribed guidelines, the officer will complete a form which you must sign. Otherwise, you will have to appear before the judge. The judge will decide whether or not you are entitled to reimbursement and, if so, the appropriate amount. If you are entitled to reimbursement, you will receive a check in the mail in approximately two weeks.

Q. If I am being paid by my employer or the state for juror service, am I entitled to be reimbursed for travel?

A. No. Your employer does not reimburse you for commuting to work. The same reasoning applies when you travel to serve as a juror. The only jurors who are entitled to be reimbursed for travel are those who are not being compensated by their employers or the state.

Q. Will I have to wait for long periods in the juror assembly room?

A. You should be prepared for a certain amount of waiting in the assembly room. Cases start at different times during the day. You may be called to a courtroom for possible impanelling on a jury early or late in the day. There are limited

reading materials provided for jurors, so it is advisable that you bring reading materials with you.

Q. What is the likelihood that I will actually be impanelled on a jury?

A. The overall probability is about fifty percent. However, it varies considerably from day to day. On some days, there is a high demand for jurors. Jurors not impanelled on their first trip to the courtroom may be sent to a second courtroom for possible impanelling. On other days, there is a low demand for jurors. This happens because more cases than expected are settled or are resolved without a jury or because ongoing cases last longer than expected. On these days, some jurors may never be sent to a courtroom for impanelment.

Q. How was I selected for juror service?

A. You were selected at random by a computer from population lists. Each year, each city and town compiles a list of all of its residents. Jurors are selected from these lists. Some people think that if they do not register to vote they will not be selected as a juror. This is wrong. Any person who is a resident of a city or town (and who meets certain other basic requirements such as being over eighteen years of age and able to speak and understand the English language) may be selected as a juror, even if not registered to vote.

Q. Are many people excused from serving on a jury?

A. No. Juror service is a civic duty which every citizen must perform. Doctors, nurses, lawyers, clergy, homemakers, legislators, police, firefighters, public officials, executives, laborers, teachers, students, and judges must serve. Your fellow jurors will be men and women, young and old, rich and poor - from different ethnic origins and religious backgrounds. The law has no class exemptions. Judges excuse some people based on individual incapacity. You will soon be able to verify that jurors represent a cross-section of the community by your own observations of your fellow jurors.

Q. Why is a jury required? Why does the court need juries to decide cases?

A. In our society, the government has limited powers over the people. Citizens from all walks of life participate every day in the administration of justice through the jury system. When the court impanels a jury, the court is carrying out the instructions of the Constitution. When you serve as a juror, you are exercising one of the rights that the people have reserved for themselves. Many injustices have been suffered by people in other countries when a king or dictator has had absolute power over the people. In this country, a citizen cannot be convicted by the government of a serious crime unless a jury, representing the people, consents with its verdict. This is why the right to a jury trial is a sacred right of our people. This is why it is a duty for every citizen to serve and to represent the people on a jury when selected for that purpose.

Q. What is a court?

A. A court is an official agency of government empowered to resolve disputes. Disputes may arise between private parties and between the government and private parties. In a jury trial, the court consists of the judge, jury, and lawyers working as a team to resolve a dispute.

Q. What is a criminal case?

A. A criminal case is a dispute between the government and an individual (or corporation) in which the government is represented by a prosecutor, usually an assistant district attorney. The accused, called the defendant, is represented by an attorney, referred to as a defense counsel.

Q. What is a civil case?

A. A civil case is a dispute between two parties in which the first party, called the plaintiff, accuses the second party, called the defendant, of violating some rule of civil law which has caused injury or damage to the plaintiff. The plaintiff seeks money damages from the defendant. Either party may be an individual or a corporation. The government also may be a party in a civil case. The plaintiff starts the legal action against the defendant. For example, the purchaser of a new house (plaintiff) may sue the seller (defendant) claiming that the seller violated the sales contract because the house was defective in that the roof leaked. The plaintiff-buyer might seek money damages from the defendant-seller to pay for the repair of the roof.

Q. How does the court resolve cases?

A. The court takes two steps in resolving disputes. First, it determines the truth or facts - what really happened in the dispute. Second, it applies the proper rules of law to the facts in order to resolve the dispute.

Q. What does the jury do in resolving cases?

A. The jury finds the truth. It decides the facts. This is the major function of the jury - to find the truth. The jury does not decide the rules of law to be applied to the facts in the case.

Q. What does the judge do in the trial?

A. The judge performs several functions. The judge guides and controls the conduct of the entire trial. The judge presides over the presentation of the evidence to the jury by the parties. It is the judge's responsibility to see that the jury hears and sees only the evidence that is legally admissible. After all of the evidence has been presented to the jury, the judge tells the jury the proper rules of law required to resolve the case. When the judge tells the jury what the rules of law are, this is called the judge's charge or judge's instructions to the jury.

Q. What do the lawyers do in the trial?

A. The lawyers represent and advise their clients on all aspects of the trial. The lawyers usually make opening statements in which they tell the jury what evidence they expect to produce. Lawyers may present to the jury the evidence essential to their client's claims or defenses. They may attempt to demonstrate to the jury weaknesses in the evidence of the opposing party. The lawyers present evidence primarily by asking questions of witnesses. When a witness is produced for one's own client, the lawyer's questioning is called "direct examination" of the witness. When the witness is produced for the opposing party, the lawyer's questioning is called "cross-examination" of the witness. In their closing arguments, the lawyers may review and sum up the evidence, comment on the reliability or unreliability of various witnesses, urge inferences favorable to their clients, and attempt to persuade the jury of the merits of the claims of their clients. During the trial, the lawyers may present arguments to the judge on points of law and legal procedure. These legal points are often discussed at the judge's bench out of hearing of the jury to avoid the accidental disclosure to the jury of inadmissible evidence.

Q. What is evidence?

A. Evidence includes testimony, i.e., the answers to the questions put to witnesses, and writings (contracts, letters, etc.) or physical objects called exhibits (such as photographs, weapons, etc.). Not everything heard and seen in the courtroom is evidence. The opening statements and closing arguments of the lawyers are not evidence. The lawyer's questions are not evidence. Even the statements and instructions of the judge are not evidence. The judge, in instructions to the jury, will explain exactly what the evidence is in any particular case.

Q. What is meant by a jury's taking a view?

A. If the judge decides that it is proper and desirable for the jury to view any of the locations described in a trial, arrangements will be made for the jury as a group to make a visit. A juror should never make a private investigation or take a private view. The observations made by a jury on an authorized view are evidence.

Q. What are jury deliberations?

A. After the jury has heard and observed all of the evidence and after the judge has given the instructions of law to the jury, the jury is sent to a private room to make its decisions in the case. The process by which jurors discuss and evaluate the evidence among themselves in a private room is called jury deliberations.

Q. What is meant by the rule that a case must be decided solely on the evidence?

A. This means that you must decide the case only on the evidence presented to you in the courtroom or on an authorized view. You should not consider anything you may have heard or seen outside the courtroom or anything you may have read in the newspapers or anything you may have seen or heard on television or radio.

Q. How is the foreperson of the jury selected? What does the foreperson do?

A. The trial judge selects the foreperson immediately after the jury has been impanelled. The foreperson is a discussion-leader of the jury during its deliberations. It is similar to being the chairperson of a committee or moderator of a group. The foreperson should encourage a full and free exchange of comments, observations, and opinions from all members of the jury. The foreperson should ensure that only one person speaks at a time, that every person has an opportunity to express views, and that no person monopolizes the deliberations. The foreperson also has the responsibility for communicating requests or questions on behalf of the jury to the judge and to report the jury's verdict to the clerk and judge in the courtroom. The foreperson should express opinions during deliberations, but these opinions are entitled to no more or less weight than those of other jurors. When votes are taken, the foreperson has one vote.

Q. What is a verdict?

A. During its deliberations, the jury decides the facts and applies the judge's instructions of law to them. At the conclusion of its deliberations, the jury must resolve the case by reaching a verdict. The verdict is the final decision of the jury. It resolves the case. Verdict means to speak the truth. In a criminal case, the verdict is "guilty" or "not guilty." In a civil case, the verdict is "for the plaintiff" or "for the defendant." If the verdict is for the plaintiff, the jury also decides, as part of its verdict, the amount of money damages the defendant must pay to the plaintiff. In some cases, the judge may direct the jury to answer special questions that relate to issues in the case.

Q. What is the size of a jury?

A. In the Superior Court Department, a jury consists of twelve persons. In the District Court Department, a jury usually consists of six persons. The judge will impanel one or more extra, or alternate jurors, in case a juror should become ill or be excused because of an emergency. The alternate jurors are not designated as such until immediately prior to jury deliberations. At that time, they are selected at random from all jurors except the foreperson. No juror should feel like a "second-stringer" during the trial. If an alternate juror should replace a juror during deliberations, the alternate has all of the powers and responsibilities of the other jurors.

Q. In order to reach a verdict, what consensus must be reached?

A. In every criminal case, there must be unanimous agreement, i.e., all members of the jury must agree before the verdict can be reached. In a civil case, ten jurors of a twelve-person jury must agree to a verdict.

Q. How should I act during deliberations?

A. Generally speaking, the jury is free to determine the procedures it will follow during deliberations, as long as the judge's instructions are followed. Some judges suggest that it is not a good idea to take a vote at the outset. This may result in some jurors digging in their heels at the start of deliberations - that is, feeling that they must stick to a certain conclusion before they have a chance to hear what other jurors think about the evidence. You should enter the deliberations with an open mind. You should not hesitate to change your opinion if it is shown to be wrong. You should not give up any opinion which you are convinced is correct. You should make a step-by-step analysis of the evidence you have heard and seen, trying to fit together the pieces of the factual puzzle which are most credible. No juror should dominate the discussion. No juror should remain quiet and leave the speaking to others. Everyone should participate. Each juror should be respectful and tolerant of the opinions of the other jurors. The jury should work together, analyzing the evidence, deciding what facts have been proved and what facts have not been proved. After you have determined all of the facts, apply the rules of law that the judge has given to you. Only then are you ready to reach a verdict. There is only one triumph in the jury room - that of ascertaining and declaring the truth.

Q. Being a juror is very difficult. What if I am not smart enough to be a good juror?

A. Remember that the function of a jury is to find the truth. Jurors have to decide which evidence to believe and which evidence not to believe. It is wrong to think that an individual who is highly educated is better equipped to determine which witnesses are telling the truth and which are not telling the truth. Moreover, the jury's verdict is a group decision. It is not the decision of any single person. You should have confidence in our Constitution which requires citizens, like you, to participate on a jury. If you forget a point, another juror may remember it, and you may remember a point that another juror has overlooked. For many centuries, our jury system has worked well with citizens serving as jurors.

Q. Suppose there is a lawyer or other professional person on the jury with me. Should I agree with whatever the person says?

A. Not necessarily. The special education of the lawyer or other professional person does not make for better qualification to determine which evidence is true and which is not true. You should not agree automatically. You should agree if your independent analysis of the facts and truth is the same. Another important point is that only the judge's instructions can tell the jury what are the appropriate rules of the law. The judge gives the legal issues in the case a great deal of study. It is the judge's responsibility to provide the jury with the correct rules of law in the instructions. All members of the jury, including lawyers and professional persons, are bound to apply the rules of law that the judge gives to them.

Q. What are the most important qualifications of a juror?

A. The most important qualifications of a juror are fairness and impartiality. The juror must be led by intelligence not by emotions, must put aside all bias and prejudice, and must decide the facts and apply the law impartially. The juror must treat with equal fairness the rich and poor, the old and the young, men and women, corporations and individuals, government and citizens, and must render justice without any regard for race, color, or creed.

Q. Before I am selected for a particular jury, will I be asked questions?

A. Before a jury is impanelled, the judge ordinarily will acquaint the jurors with the parties, witnesses, and circumstances in the case. The judge will ask the jurors as a group some or all of the following questions (or similar questions): Do you know any of the parties involved in this case? Do you know any of the witnesses? Do you know any of the lawyers? Do you have any prior knowledge of this case through your personal knowledge or by your reading about it in the newspapers or hearing about it on television or radio? Have you formed or expressed an opinion about this case or about this type of case? Do you have any bias or prejudice against either side? Do you have any personal interest in the case? Is there any other reason why you would not be impartial if you served as a juror in this case? The questions are intended to insure that the jurors will be fair and impartial. If your answer to any of these questions is "yes," or if there is any reason why you cannot be indifferent in the case, you should raise your hand and bring the matter to the attention of the judge. The judge will then decide whether or not you should be excused from that case.

Q. What is a challenge for cause?

A. In rare instances, usually very serious cases, the judge will ask questions of the jurors individually before the jury is impanelled. A judge may permit the lawyers to ask questions of the jurors under his or her supervision. These questions are intended to determine whether the juror can be impartial and fair in the case. Whenever the questioning discloses some reason why the juror might not be disinterested or indifferent in the case, the judge may excuse the juror from the particular case. This is known as a challenge or an excuse for cause.

Q. What is a peremptory challenge?

A. In addition to challenges for cause, the parties through their lawyers may challenge a limited number of jurors without giving any reasons. The lawyer simply asks that a certain juror be excused, and the judge will excuse the juror. This type of challenge or excuse is called "peremptory." Usually parties or lawyers who exercise peremptory challenges have reasons which seem sound to them for doing so. If you or a fellow juror are challenged peremptorily, you should not be offended or embarrassed. Remember: the peremptory challenge is simply a part of our justice system which gives the parties, through their lawyers, limited control over which jurors are impanelled in the case.

Q. May I take notes during the trial?

A. Some judges permit jurors to take notes during the trial. Other judges do not. You will have to follow the instructions of the judge. Even if you are permitted to take notes, you must be mindful that you are seeking the truth. Notes are just a memory aid. You should not permit note-taking to interfere with your concentration on the evidence or your ability to observe the demeanor of the witnesses. During deliberations, you must realize that just because you have noted a fact does not necessarily mean that the fact is true. At the conclusion of the trial, the clerk or court officer will collect and destroy all notes from all jurors.

Q. How should I act as a juror outside the courtroom? May I discuss an ongoing case with anyone?

A. While you are serving on a jury, you are part of the court. Indeed, jurors are "judges of the facts." It is important that you act as a judge. Not only must you be fair and impartial in the jury pool, you must appear to be fair and impartial at all times and in all places while you are on the jury. You should not talk to any lawyer, party, witness, or newsperson concerning an ongoing case. No matter how innocent such a conversation might be, it may appear improper to others, especially those whose rights and property are at stake in the trial. If any individual attempts to discuss an ongoing case with you, refuse to discuss the case and tell a court officer or clerk about the incident. You may see or hear lawyers, parties, witnesses, or newspersons in the hallways, elevators, cafeteria, or on the street. Do not discuss the case. If someone starts to discuss the case in your presence (even if the conversation is not directed to you), immediately interrupt and advise that you are a juror and the case must not be discussed in

your presence. If the individual persists, you must inform a court officer or clerk of the episode. You should not discuss an ongoing case with your family, friends, or neighbors. Your family and friends will respect your serious approach to being a juror. You should not discuss an ongoing case even with a fellow juror except during deliberations. At that time, all of the evidence will have been presented and your opinions as well as those of your fellow jurors will be shared with all members of the jury. In summary, you should refuse to discuss an ongoing case with anyone, except during deliberations.

Q. When the case is completed, will I be subject to questioning about my work as a juror?

A. Unless ordered or authorized by the court, counsel, litigants and their agents have no authority to question you about your work as a juror. Occasionally, a court will be persuaded by the attorneys that the interests of justice may require the interrogation of jurors. Such interrogation will take place at the direction of and under the supervision of the court. In that way, the integrity of the judicial system is preserved and jurors are not subject to harassment. You should know that there is no rule which requires you to discuss your juror service on a particular case with anyone after the verdict. Unless otherwise ordered or authorized by the court, you would be well advised not to reveal the names of the other jurors, how any juror voted at any state of deliberations, or any of the discussions or other sensitive matters that occurred during your secret deliberations in trying to reach a verdict. If any person should attempt to harass you or embarrass you or seek information which would harass or embarrass any juror or seek to learn what occurred in the privacy of your deliberations, you should report this to the court immediately. It is very important that the integrity of our jury system be maintained.

Q. Why do judges allow cases to be settled after they have begun? Doesn't this cause much jurors' time to be wasted?

A. There is one major difference between a judgement of the court and a settlement. The judgement is involuntarily imposed on the parties, whereas the settlement is an agreement or compromise voluntarily reached by the parties. Therefore, judges generally encourage settlements. Also, settlements save the time of judges, jurors, court personnel, lawyers, parties, and witnesses resulting in considerable savings to the state and parties. It is wrong to assume that jurors' time has been wasted when a trial ends in a settlement or a guilty plea. Even parties who thought they would never settle, do settle when faced with an imminent or ongoing jury trial. The specter of being examined and cross-examined before the judge and jury may not be comfortable for some people. The presence of the judge and jury, by itself, motivates many court settlements.

Q. Will I learn anything as a result of being a juror?

A. As a juror, you will have to make difficult judgements involving all of the human passions - love, hate, greed, anger, etc. You and your co-jurors are also human. Certain jurors may respond differently to one or more circumstances in the case. There may be good-faith differences of opinion among members of your jury during deliberations. Through fate, you and your co-jurors have been brought together in a search for justice. Justice means truth and fairness. You have no reason to believe that any other jury in any other place or time would do a better job than you will do. The experiences of centuries teach that our system of juries renders fair, impartial, and true verdicts. In addition to the performance of an important civic duty, it is sincerely hoped that you will learn a good deal about the courts and the judicial system. As has been the case for many jurors before you - the verdict is yours.

THE COURT SYSTEM IS COMMITTED
TO TREATING ALL JURORS FAIRLY
AND RESPECTFULLY, REGARDLESS OF RACE,
COLOR, RELIGIOUS CREED, NATIONAL ORIGIN,
SEX, AGE, ANCESTRY, HANDICAP,
OR SEXUAL ORIENTATION.
IF YOU FEEL THAT YOU HAVE EXPERIENCED
OR WITNESSED DISCRIMINATORY TREATMENT
DURING THE TERM OF YOUR SERVICE,
WE WOULD LIKE TO KNOW.

PLEASE CALL THE JURY INFORMATION LINE
AT 1-800-THE-JURY.
