BCG
BOARD FOR CERTIFICATION OF GENEALOGISTS
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Genealogist's Code of Ethics (March 2025)

To protect the public

- I will not publish or publicize as fact anything I know to be false, doubtful, or unproved; nor will I be a party, directly or indirectly, to such action by others.
- I will identify my sources for all information and cite only those I have personally used.
- I will quote sources precisely, avoiding any alterations that I do not clearly identify as editorial interpretations.
- I will present the purpose, practice, scope, and possibilities of genealogical research within a realistic framework.
- I will delineate my abilities, publications, and/or fees in a true and realistic fashion.
- I will not publish any personal, genealogical, or genetic information disclosed to me unless I have informed consent or omit personally identifying detail. I will also treat publicly available information about living people with sensitivity and will not publish any information with foreseeable potential for harm.

To protect the client (paying or pro bono)

- I will provide competent professional services to my client. Competent services require the genealogical knowledge, skill, thoroughness, and preparation reasonably necessary for the rendering of the client work.
- I will act with reasonable diligence and promptness in handling client work.
- I will keep my clients reasonably informed about the status of the client-requested services.
- I will reveal to the client any personal or financial interests that might compromise my professional obligations.

The words Certified Genealogist and its acronym, CG, are a registered certification mark, and the designations Certified Genealogical Lecturer and its acronym, CGL, are service marks of the Board for Certification of Genealogists®, used under license by board certificants after periodic evaluation.

- I will undertake paid research commissions only after a clear agreement as to scope and fee.
- I will, to the best of my abilities, address my research to the issue raised by the client and report to that question.
- I will seek from the client all prior information and documentation related to the research and will not knowingly repeat the work as billable hours without explanation as to good cause.
- I will furnish only facts I can substantiate with adequate documentation; and I will not withhold any data necessary for the client's purpose.
- If the research question involves analysis of data in order to establish a genealogical relationship or identity, I will report that the conclusions are based on the weight of the available evidence and that absolute proof of genealogical relationships is usually not possible.
- If I cannot resolve a research problem within the limitations of time or budget established by contract, I will explain the reasons why.
- If other feasible avenues are available, I will suggest them; but I will not misrepresent the possibilities of additional research.
- I will return any advance payment that exceeds the hours and expenses incurred.
- I will not publish or circulate reports in which a client or colleague has a proprietary interest without that person's informed consent. I will respect this interest whether my report was made directly to the client or to an employer or agent.

To protect the profession

- I will act, speak, and write in a manner I believe to be in the best interests of the profession and scholarship of genealogy.
- I will participate in exposing genealogical fraud; but I will not otherwise knowingly injure or attempt to injure the reputation, prospects, or practice of another genealogist.

- I will not attempt to supplant another genealogist already employed by a client or agency. I will substitute for another researcher only with specific, written consent of and instructions provided by the client or agency.
- I will not represent as my own the work of another. This includes works that are copyrighted, in the public domain, or unpublished. This pledge includes reports, lecture materials, audio/visual tapes, compiled records, and authored essays.
- I will not reproduce for public dissemination, in an oral or written fashion, the work of another genealogist, writer, or lecturer without that person's written consent. In citing another's work, I will give proper credit.

To protect people who provide DNA samples

- When seeking DNA from a living person for genealogical research, I will explain
    a) how I would use and share their genetic information and the risks and benefits of that use and sharing;
    b) the possibility and consequences of discovering unanticipated relatives, unknown medical conditions, unexpected ethnic backgrounds, and intentional misinformation about such situations;
    c) options for openness and privacy, how other researchers could or could not access the data; and why complete anonymity and privacy can never be guaranteed.

  After providing this information, I will request and comply with the consent, freely given by the person providing the DNA sample or that person's guardian or legal representative.
- When working with DNA test results of living people, I will not publish personally identifying information without each test taker's consent. I will not privately share a match list without the list owner's consent. If I have the list owner's consent, I may privately share details of a match without the match's consent.