

# CODE of ETHICS :

## WOOD COUNTY HISTORICAL CENTER, MUSEUM, & SOCIETY

*Approved and adopted by the WCHS Board of Trustees on August 8, 1999*

*Modified on December 1, 2019.*

*Any person representing the Wood County Historical Center, Museum, or Society, as paid County staff, paid Society staff, Trustee, or Volunteer, is expected to adhere to these sensible and ethical guidelines:*

The “**Wood County Historical Center/Museum**” may be defined as the fifty acre complex formerly comprising the Wood County Home or Infirmary site, which now includes the primary “museum” building and several outbuildings. It should be noted that the Wood County Historical Center/Museum is, administratively, a department of Wood County government under the direction of the Board of County Commissioners. The staff of the Historical Center/Museum are county employees. For ease of reading, the word “Museum” within this document refers to the Center, Museum, or County Staff.

The purpose of the Wood County Historical Center/Museum is to serve as a publicly accessible historic site and museum of general interest to the community.

The “**Wood County Historical Society**” is a private 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, which owns the collections that are housed and exhibited at the Historical Center/Museum. For ease of reading, the word “Society” within this document refers to the Wood County Historical Society.

The mission of the Wood County Historical Society is to make connections between the past, present, and future by capturing stories and cultivating memories of Wood County, Ohio, and the County Home. This is done through the interpretation and exhibition of its collections, through public programs and events, and educational outreach.

The Board of Trustees of the Wood County Historical Society, the staff at the Wood County Historical Center/Museum, and the volunteers associated with the Center/Museum and Society all serve and/or work for the public interest and as such, must understand and respect the various documents that provide for the Center/Museum’s and Society’s establishment, character, and governance such as the bylaws, mission statement, and adopted policies. As with the Society’s **Articles of Incorporation, Mission Statement and Bylaws**, this **Code of Ethics** is established as a fundamental document upon which all other and various policies rest.

### **Ethics for Trustees, Staff, and Volunteers:**

- A. Must endeavor to conduct activities in such a way that no conflict of interest will arise between personal interest and the policies, operations, and interests of the Museum or Society.
- B. Must maintain confidential information learned during involvement with either organization. This does not preclude public disclosure of information that is properly in the public domain or information that should be released in fulfilling the Museum’s or Society’s accountability to the public.
- C. Must act only as a part of the collective, not as an individual. Must neither act in a personal capacity to influence or otherwise use the actions of the organization on a personal behalf, nor attempt through questionable means to influence the decisions and actions of other members of the organization in any Museum or Society related matters.
- D. Must neither compete with the Historical Society, nor work against the Society, in acquiring items for the collection, for Museum/Society use, or for a personal collection. Must disclose knowledge of the availability of collections or resources, which have been deemed desirable by the Museum or Society.
- E. Trustees, Staff, Volunteers, or individuals who may act for them, may not acquire items from the collections of the Society in any manner.

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- F. May not act as an appraiser unless an appraiser's license has been obtained.
- G. Must not use Society/Museum affiliation to promote any personal collecting activities.
- H. Must not use in their home or business, or for any other personal purpose, any items that are a part of the Society's collections or any item under the guardianship of the Museum; or, with certain exceptions, use any other property, supplies, or resources of the Museum or the Society except for official business as approved by the Society President or Museum Director.
- I. Must not repair, restore, alter, or remove items that are a part of the Society's collection or any item under the guardianship of the Museum, without the express approval of the Director and/or Collections Committee of the Historical Society.
- J. Must never solicit or accept, directly or indirectly, any gift, gratuity, favor, loan, entertainment, or any other dispensations or items of value from any person, business, or group which has or is seeking to obtain contractual or other business, financial, or professional favors with either the Museum or the Society; or for the purpose of promoting projects of personal interest or that have not been sanctioned by the Society Board or Museum Director.
- K. Trustees shall avoid giving directions to, acting on behalf of, or soliciting administrative information from any Museum staff member, unless the Director is apprised and consents to such actions.
- L. Trustees shall not seek Museum staff assistance for personal needs other than would be rendered to the general public in similar circumstances or with similar needs.
- M. The Board shall not adopt any policy or activity that may jeopardize the basic non-profit status of the Society or reflect unfavorably upon it as an institution devoted to public service.
- N. Must be circumspect in referring others to outside suppliers of services such as appraisers and restorers. Whenever possible, more than a single qualified source should be provided.
- O. When acting on behalf of the Museum/Society, strive to the best of their ability with the information and resources provided them to interpret in a non-discriminatory manner the displays, exhibits, or mission of the Museum/Society, and to make the public aware of the history, primarily of the people of Wood County, Ohio.
- P. Hold safe the assets of the organization. Assets include financial holdings, real property, historic collections, copyrights, and reputation. Staff and Board Members accept the responsibility to avoid conflicts of interest and obey all state and federal laws governing service with a non-profit organization.
- Q. Secure support for the organization. Non-profit organizations need support through financial contributions and volunteer service. Trustees, Volunteers, and Staff should seek and provide contributions to support the organization based on personal resources of time, money, and relationships within the community.
- R. Ensure proper delegation of authority within the organization. This organization operates as a partnership between the Board of Wood County Commissioners, Wood County Park District, Society Board of Trustees, Museum Staff, Society Staff, Volunteers, and the public community. The positions of Society Board Officers, board members, and chairs of standing committees are established in the Society Bylaws.

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- S. Set policies that advance the Society's stated purpose. The Society Board of trustees, with recommendation from staff, committees, outside experts, provisions of local, state and federal law, and suggestions of constituent groups, assumes responsibility for setting, implementing, and monitoring/auditing Society Policies. All policies should be approved by majority vote and official board meetings.
- T. Attendance & Timesheets
- County paid staff – refer to the Wood County Employee Handbook for attendance and timesheet regulations.
  - Society paid staff – Society staff are to submit a paper and e-mail timesheet to the Society Bookkeeper and Museum Director every two weeks.
  - Volunteers & Board Members – all volunteers should log their hours on the Volunteer Log at the Front Entrance. This data is used for grants and reporting purposes.
- U. Museum/Society Representation. All employees, trustees, and volunteers should:
- Maintain a professional appearance and report to the Museum or Museum/Society function well-groomed, clean, and in appropriate attire that represents the Museum/Society in a positive way to the public.
  - Show courtesy and respect to one another. Avoid using abusive, threatening, or offensive language.
  - Conduct themselves in a manner that elicits pride in the Historical Society.
  - Maintain ethical standards that are within the laws of the State of Ohio, Wood County, and the Wood County Historical Society.
  - Any discrepancies, concerns, or altercations should be brought to the attention of the Museum Director or Society Board President.
  - The following activities are prohibited:
    - Falsification of any Historical Museum or Society record
    - Refusal to carry out instructions (insubordination)
    - Possession or sale of illegal drugs, firearms, or alcohol
    - Crime involving weapon, firearm, or explosive
    - Arson, open flame (with exception of permitted fire pit outdoors)
    - Reporting to the museum under the influence of alcohol or drugs
    - Harassing or threatening behavior
    - Destruction, alteration, or theft of County or Society property
    - Endangering the safety of another person