

The code of ethics as a shield: Should your first instinct be “no”?”

Presenter: Judy Jenner

In this (perhaps) controversial session, the presenter will play devil’s advocate and ask if we are doing a disservice to the profession by having our first reaction be “no” to any (reasonable?) request that could possibly be an ethics issue. The interpreter, a federally certified Spanish court interpreter, is a proponent of thoroughly analyzing the issue and always running it by the involved attorneys to determine if there really is an ethics issue instead of saying “no” right away. While this presentation may sound controversial, its final goal is to invite fellow interpreters to play a more active role in the judiciary and not letting the code of ethics handicap you. For instance: judges have repeatedly said publicly that they want to meet interpreters in their chambers to learn more about interpreting. However, the vast majority of interpreters don’t want to take judges up on this offer, citing an ethics issue, even if the judge is inviting them. Who’s right? Let’s discuss and challenge some assumptions. This session will be highly interactive and will be governed by simple participation rule: agree to disagree and learn and grow. The presenter is not an attorney, but is married to one.

Goals:

- Strive to overcome the (understandable) knee-jerk reaction to saying “no” to requests without thoroughly analyzing the issue
- Understand what a conflict of interest really is if and when you are not a party to the proceedings
- Learn to follow best suggested practices when dealing with potential ethics issues
- Process how to become a better advocate for the profession by having better interaction with other players from the judiciary

Judy Jenner bio:

Judy Jenner is a Spanish and German business and legal translator, conference interpreter, and federally certified Spanish court interpreter as well as state-certified court interpreter in Nevada, California, and Washington. She has an MBA in marketing and runs her boutique translation and interpreting business, Twin Translations, with her twin sister Dagmar. She was born in Austria and grew up in Mexico City. She is a former in-house translation department manager. She writes the blog *Translation Times* and the "Entrepreneurial Linguist" column for *The ATA Chronicle*, serves as one of the ATA spokespersons, and is a frequent conference speaker at conferences around the country and the world. She is the co-author of *The Entrepreneurial Linguist: The Business-School Approach to Freelance Translation*, which has sold more than 10,000 copies. Judy also holds a master’s degree in Spanish/English conference interpreting from Glendon College at York University in Toronto, Canada and teaches interpreting at the University of California-San Diego and at her alma mater, the University of Nevada-Las Vegas. Her special talent is memorizing airport codes.