

Glossary of Terms

Alternate Jurors - Additional Juror (s) impaneled in a civil or criminal case to be utilized in case of sickness or disability of another juror; generally in trials with expectedly long duration.

Charge to the Jury - The final address by a judge to the jury before verdict, in which the judge sums up the case, and instructs the jury as to the rules of law which apply to the various issues in the case, and which they must observed.

Civil Case - Laws concerned with civil or private rights and remedies, as contrasted with criminal laws.

Court Clerk - Officer of the court who may be responsible for filing and docketing pleadings, motions, judgments, etc., issues process, and keeps records of court proceedings. Functions and duties of clerks of courts are usually specified by statute or court rules.

Court Of Common Pleas - Courts wherein all civil and criminal actions are begun (except such as are brought before courts of inferior jurisdiction).

Court Officers - Individuals who assist in the smooth operation of the court by tending to the needs of not only the presiding judge but of witness and jurors.

Criminal Case - An action instituted to punish an infraction of the criminal laws.

Cross-Examine - The examination of a witness upon a trial or hearing, or upon taking a deposition, by the party opposed to the one who produced him, upon his evidence given in chief, to test its truth, to further develop it, or for other purposes.

Defendant - The person defending or denying; the party against whom relief or recovery is sought in an action or suit or the accused in a criminal case.

Defense Attorney - Attorney who files his or her appearance on behalf of a defendant and represents such in civil or criminal case.

Deliberate - To weigh, ponder, discuss, regard upon, consider. To examine and consult in order to form an opinion. To weigh in the mind; to consider the reasons for and against; to consider maturely; reflect upon, as to deliberate a question; to weigh the arguments for and against a proposed course of action.

Deputy Sheriffs - One appointed to act in the place and stead of the sheriff in the official business of the latter's office.

District Attorney - Under the state governments, the prosecuting officer who represents the state in each judicial district.

Excused for Cause - With respect to removal from a position, such as a juror for reasons that law and public policy recognize as sufficient warrant for removal. (See Peremptory Strikes below).

Impartiality - Favoring neither; disinterested; treating all alike; unbiased; equitable, fair, and just.

Judge - An officer so named in his commission, who presides in some court; a public officer, appointed to preside and to administer the law in a court of justice;

the chief member of a court and charged with the control of proceedings and the decision of questions of law and discretion.

Jurisdiction - Power and authority of a court to hear and determine a judicial proceeding; power to render judgment.

Juror Summons - A written order ordering that a person to appear for jury duty.

Magisterial Courts - Courts of limited jurisdiction that may be divisions of courts of general jurisdiction, and may have concurrent jurisdiction with other courts. Commonly their jurisdiction is restricted to the handling of small claims, minor offenses or preliminary hearings.

Magisterial District Judges - A judicial Magistrate of inferior rank having jurisdiction limited to that prescribed by statute in civil matters and jurisdiction over minor criminal offenses, committing more serious crimes to higher courts.

Peers - Equals; those who are man's equal in rank and station.

Peremptory Strikes -The right of a party to challenge a juror with out assigning, or being required to assign, a reason for the challenge. (See Excused for cause).

Plaintiff - A person who brings in action; the party who complains or sues in a civil action and is so named on the record. In which he/she seeks remedial relief for an injury to rights.

Presumed Innocent - A principle that no person may be convicted of a crime unless the government has proved guilt beyond a reasonable doubt. A criminal defendant is presumed to be innocent unless and until the Commonwealth proves otherwise.

Rules of Conduct - The model rules of Professional Conduct of the American Bar Association set standards for such matters as client-lawyer relationships, fees, conflict of interest, role of lawyer as council or as advocate, transactions with persons other than clients, responsibilities of law firms and associations, public service, and dissemination of information about legal services. Such Rules replaced the former ABA Code of Professional Responsibility.

Sequestered - To separate or isolate; to sequester jurors is to isolate them from contact with the public during the course of a sensational trial.

Striking of Jurors - The selecting or nominating of a jury out of the whole number returned as jurors on the panel. It is especially used of the selection of a special jury, where a panel is prepared by the proper office, and the parties, in turn, strike off a certain number of names, until the list is reduced to twelve. A jury thus chosen is called a "struck jury."

Summations - On the trial of an action to a jury, a recapitulation by attorneys and, sometimes, a judge of the evidence adduced, in order to draw the attention of the jury to the salient points at issue. The council for each party has the right to offer a summation of the evidence, if he has adduced any, and the judge sums up the whole in his charge to the jury.

Testimony - Evidence given by a competent witness under oath or affirmation; as distinguished from evidence derived from writings and other sources.⁸