# CODE OF ETHICS

Recognizing that persons who hold public office have been given a public trust and that the stewardship of such office demands the highest levels of ethical and moral conduct, any person serving on the Montgomery County Board of Supervisors should adhere to the following Code of Ethics:

1. Uphold the Constitution, laws and regulations of the United States, the Commonwealth of Virginia and Montgomery County, and never knowingly be a party to their evasion.

2. Be loyal to moral principles and the interests of the citizens of the county.

3. Give a full measure of effort and service to the position of trust for which stewardship has been granted; giving earnest effort and best thought to the performance of duties.

4. Seek to find and use the most equitable, efficient, effective, and economical means for getting tasks accomplished.

5. Adopt policies and programs that support the rights and recognize the needs of all citizens regardless of race, gender, age, religion, creed or country of origin. Avoid adopting policies, supporting programs or engaging in Board activities that discriminate against or offend individuals because of race, gender, age, religion, creed or country of origin.

6. Ensure the integrity of the actions of the Board of Supervisors by avoiding discrimination through the dispersing of, or requesting, special favors or unfair privileges to anyone, whether for remuneration or not. A member should never request or accept for himself or herself or for family members, favors or benefits under circumstances which might be construed by reasonable persons as influencing the performance of governmental duties, or employees.

7. Make no private promises of any kind binding upon the duties of any office, since a public servant has no private word which can be binding on public duty.

8. Engage in no business with the county government, either directly or indirectly, which is inconsistent with the conscientious performance of government duties except as may be consistent with the State and Local Government Conflict of Interest Act.

9. Never use any information gained confidentially in the performance of governmental duties as a means of making private profit.

10. Expose through appropriate means and channels, corruption, misconduct, or neglect of duty whenever discovered.

11. Adhere to the principle that the public's business should be conducted in the public view by observing and following the letter and spirit of the Freedom of Information Act using closed sessions to deal with sensitive personnel, legal, contractual or other issues as provided by the Code of Virginia.

12. Avoid using the position of public trust to gain access to the media for the purposes of criticizing colleagues or citizens, impugning their integrity or vilifying their personal beliefs.

13. Make sure, when responding to the media, that a clear distinction is made between personal opinion or belief and a decision made by the Board of Supervisors.

14. Review orally and in public session at the annual organizational meeting each of these principles.

15. Pledge to honor and uphold these principles, ever conscious that public office is a public trust.

16. The Board recognizes that its primary role is to make policy and therefore will focus on issues pertaining to programs, operations and issues.

17. The Board recognizes that discussion of personnel matters are to remain confidential, must be discussed through appropriate channel processes, and that it is the obligation of each Board member to protect the privacy of the individual.

18. Board members will follow the procedure of communicating directly with the County Administrator and the Chairman of the Board. On personnel matters or matters relating to incidents, issues, or problems, the Board will follow the procedure of communicating directly with the Chairman or the County Administrator. Especially in situations where Board members might conceivably be construed as attempting to supervise, direct, or interfere with county personnel and the performance of their duties.

## STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

Recognizing that persons holding a position of public trust are under constant observation by the media and interested county residents, and recognizing that maintaining the integrity and dignity of the public office is essential for maintaining high levels of public confidence in our institutions of government, every member of the Montgomery County Board of Supervisors should adhere to the following Standards of Conduct:

1. Avoid, during public meetings and during the performance of public duties, the use of abusive, threatening or intimidating language or gestures directed at colleagues, citizens, or personnel.

2. Pay all taxes due to the county, state, or national government.

3. Attend all regularly scheduled meetings of the boards or committees to which he or she has been assigned, resigning whenever personal circumstances preclude regular attendance.

4. Avoid a private lifestyle that casts public doubt upon the integrity and competence of the county government.

5. Make a conscientious effort to be well prepared for each meeting.

6. Offer criticism of county employees only in private meetings with appropriate individuals or in closed session.

7. Work to create a positive environment in public meetings where citizens will feel comfortable in their roles as observers or participants.

8. Maintain an attitude of courtesy and consideration toward all colleagues.

9. Be tolerant. Allow citizens, employees, or colleagues sufficient opportunity to present their views.

10. Be respectful and attentive. Avoid comments, body language or distracting activity that conveys a message of disrespect for the presentations from citizens, personnel or colleagues.

11. Be concise. Avoid the practice of taking more time to address an issue before the body than is necessary and essential for an adequate consideration of those matters being discussed.