PRONOUNS AND THE COURTS

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Why do this?

- Respectfully acknowledging an attorney's, litigant's, witness's, or juror's gender identity with the appropriate pronoun and honorific in court affirms everyone's dignity, cultivates fairness and equal treatment, promotes the appearance of the same, and earns the public's trust and confidence. While Court decorum is necessarily formal, it need not exclude people from being seen and heard.

- Yes, it can be hard to find the language, but it gets easier and more natural with practice. Modify these suggestions to make them your own and commit to using these practices consistently.

What to say in Person

1. **Introducing yourself in a meeting:** My name is Judge _____ and my pronouns are _____.

2. **Rule 16 Conferences and Oral Argument:**
   "Thank you for being available to discuss [subject matter] today. I'd like counsel to please introduce yourselves including giving me your full name and your honorific, such as Ms., Mx., or Mr., so I can address you respectfully throughout our meeting today."

3. **Criminal Docket:**
   Before calling the first case, give the general instruction: "I'd like counsel to introduce themselves giving me your full name and your honorific, such as Ms., Mx., or Mr., and if your client will be making an appearance, I ask you to please introduce them to the court by giving me their full name and their honorific, such as Ms., Mx., or Mr."

4. **Trial:**
   When walking attorneys through trial protocols, advise attorneys to "please be sure to introduce clients and witnesses with their honorifics so that I can be sure to address them respectfully throughout the trial."

5. **Jury Selection:**
   "Good morning members of the public. My name is Judge _____. I'd like each of you to introduce yourselves by giving me your full name. Please be sure to give me your honorific, such as Ms., Mx., or Mr., so that I can respectfully address you throughout our time together."

What to say when you err, and realize it in the moment. Avoid dwelling on the error. Apologize and return to the topic.

"I have erred and I am sorry for doing so. Can you tell me how I can respectfully address you today when I use your last name?"

When someone does not give an honorific or pronoun after you have asked, then assume the pronoun or honorific.

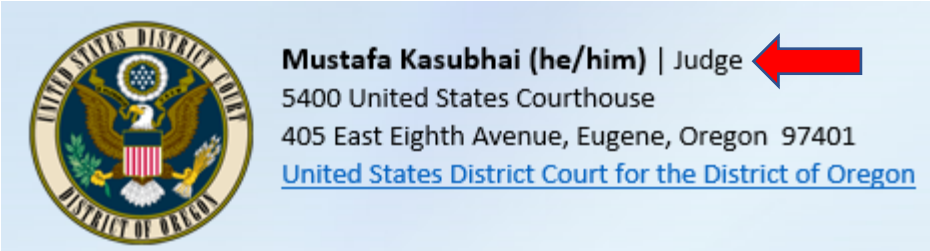
Compelling anyone to identify their pronouns at a time when they do not feel safe or comfortable for any reason undermines the inclusive purpose of this practice.

Language in Orders and Other Documents

1. **Case Management, Trial Management, Mediation, and other Scheduling Orders:** "Pronoun Usage. The parties and counsel are encouraged to advise the Court of their pronouns and honorifics (such as Mx., Ms., or Mr.). People appearing before this Court may provide their pronouns and honorifics in writing or orally when appearing for conferences, hearings, or trials. Attorneys are encouraged to identify their pronouns and honorifics in their signature lines when submitting documents for filing. Parties and counsel are instructed to address each other in all written documents and court proceedings by those previously identified pronouns and honorifics."

2. **Website:** include your pronouns next to your name. For example, see https://ord.uscourts.gov/index.php/court-info/our-judges/judge-kasubhai

3. **Email Signature:** 1. **Look for** pronouns and honorifics in email signature lines **and use** those pronouns and honorifics. 2. **Include** your pronouns and honorific. For example,



4. **Signature byline in all published and unpublished opinions:**

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Mustafa T. Kasubhai (he/him)
United States Magistrate Judge