

# THE PATH TO COMPLIANCE

## HONESTLY ....How will you be remembered?

Our society has placed professional engineers and land surveyors in a position of special trust because their practice directly affects the public's health, safety, property and welfare. The public has the right to expect that engineers and land surveyors will provide their services with integrity, fairness and most of all, honesty. To maintain the public trust, professional obligation to society demands that honesty be practiced in all professional and business affairs.

The absolute necessity of honesty in the practice of engineering and surveying in maintaining the public trust is reflected in the enforcement sections of our licensing statute. Most all of the violations contained in that law are related to dishonest practice. Many violations specifically use words like dishonesty, fraud, and false testimony. For example:

1. The practice of any fraud or deceit in obtaining or attempting to obtain or renew a certificate of licensure
2. Knowingly making false statements or signing false statements, certificates or affidavits
3. Providing false testimony or information to the Board

There are other violations in the statute that do not actually contain the word honesty, but consist in large part of deliberate dishonest practice:

1. Performing engineering or surveying services outside any of the licensee's areas of competence
2. Signing, affixing the professional engineer's or land surveyor's seal....to documents, or revisions thereof, which have not been prepared by, or under the direct control and personal supervision of the professional engineer or land surveyor in responsible charge;

Whether or not the word 'honesty' is used, it is an essential element of ethical conduct that is required of each licensee whether it is in the preparing of reports and plans or submitting a reference for an applicant. Deliberately lying or making false statements in a report, omitting crucial information on a survey or set of plans or misleading a governmental reviewing agency are clearly the extreme examples of dishonest conduct that must be reported and disciplinary action taken. The same however is true for signing and sealing plans not done under the licensee's direct control and personal supervision, or practicing outside of the licensee's area of expertise. Not only are these practices potentially harmful to the public, but they are also demeaning to the professions.

Providing false information to the Board or signing an application or renewal that contains false statements are also dishonest practices that are unnecessary and can lead to serious disciplinary action. Examples of this kind of activity are falsely answering the questions on the application or renewal forms about whether or not you have been disciplined by another board or been convicted of a crime. If those things have happened, it is much better to report honestly to the board than to give a dishonest answer that is likely to result in serious disciplinary action.

Reporting continuing education credit earned also requires honesty and a high degree of personal ethics that accompanies professional licensure. If you have let the renewal period lapse without earning enough continuing education hours, do not fabricate hours and falsely report. If you have completed an on-line course in one hour that advertises that it is valued for 8 hours, the ethical action is to report one hour of credit.

**(Continued on Page 11)**



**Bruce Pitts, PLS**  
**Director of Enforcement**

---

---

## **HONESTLY ...How will you be**

### **remembered? By Bruce Pitts, PLS (continued from page 7)**

Continuing education is intended to improve skills, expand knowledge and to keep licensees up to date with the current practice in their field and not to be a revenue source for questionable providers offering overstated hours of substandard class work.

The public trusts that engineers and land surveyors are going to perform to the highest degree of ethical and honest conduct. Our laws and rules have been written to assist those aspiring to attain that goal and to enable enforcement actions against those who choose not to comply. Take a moment and look in the mirror and ask yourself what type of a mentor you are for those working under you. How will YOU be remembered. *Excerpts From An E-mail Sent By Gary Brickley, PE, PLS Regarding The Passing of Mr. Raymond Fox, Jr., PE 2956, PLS 7 - (printed with Mr. Brickley's permission)*

*Raymond Fox retired from the firm a few years ago but made routine checks to make sure we are still looking after everyone. He was a World War II Veteran. He was wounded in France and served under Patton with the 101<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division. He was part of Patton's Army that rolled into Bastogne during the battle of the Bulge. He often joked that his proudest moment of the War was when he was ordered to take the Budweiser Brewery in Yugoslavia ahead of the Russian Army.*

*Mr. Fox severed briefly as Altus City Engineer in the early 1950's. He and Gene Drechlser have managed to build a successful Engineering and Surveying firm for over 50 years, since they partnered in 1960.....*

*Mr. Fox was a humble man during my time with him. I do not think he understood how much we all respected his advice and opinions. He often struggled to make sure he was giving his clients the best advice in his last years of practice. He felt like he had an obligation to do so much better than others given his experience. As his last intern, he spent time every morning with me. He asked questions but did not direct the outcome. He just made sure everything was being considered. He respected the opinion of others as long as he satisfied himself that you had considered all pertinent information.*

*He was truly one of the most honorable men I have ever worked with. It cannot be overstated that we have lost another of America's Greatest Generation and an American Patriot.*