

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF TEXAS

Misc. Docket No. 91-~~0060~~

APPROVAL OF LOCAL RULES OF HARRISON COUNTY

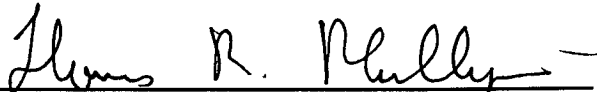
ORDERED:


Pursuant to Rule 3a of the Texas Rules of Civil Procedure, the Supreme Court approves the following local rules, which have been previously approved by the presiding judge of the appropriate administrative judicial region and submitted to this Court:


Local Rules of Practice for Harrison County, dated May 30, 1991.

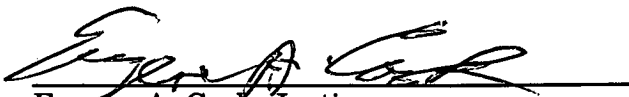
The approval of these rules is temporary, pending further orders of the Court.


SIGNED AND ENTERED this 27th day of August, 1991.


Thomas R. Phillips, Chief Justice

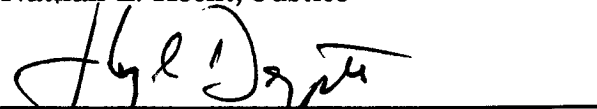

Raul A. Gonzalez, Justice



Oscar H. Mauzy, Justice

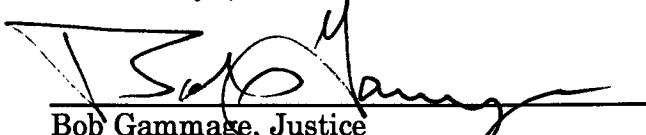

Eugene A. Cook, Justice


Jack Hightower, Justice


Nathan L. Hecht, Justice

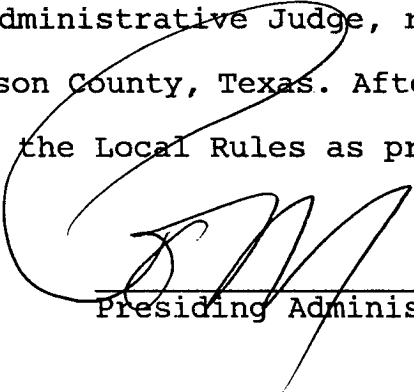

Lloyd Doggett, Justice


John Cornyn, Justice


Bob Gammage, Justice

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

On this the 26th day of July 1991, I, Judge Pat McDowell, Presiding Administrative Judge, reviewed the proposed Local Rules for Harrison County, Texas. After consideration of the same I hereby approve the Local Rules as proposed.



Presiding Administrative Judge

May 30, 1991

TO: ALL HARRISON AND GREGG COUNTY ATTORNEYS

FROM: HONORABLE BONNIE LEGGAT
Judge, 71st Judicial District Court
Harrison County, Texas

Dear Attorney:

Enclosed, you will find proposed Local Rules of Practice for Harrison County.

The proposed Local Rules constitute a re-numbering of the current rules and amendments intended to conform the Harrison County Local Rules to the Texas Rules of Civil Procedure effective September 1, 1990, and to the proposed Pattern Local Rules as suggested by the Texas Pattern Suggested Local Rules as promulgated by the Statewide Suggested Pattern Local Rules Committee of the State Bar of Texas.

Pursuant to Rule 3a, Texas Rules of Civil Procedure, these proposed local rules will not become effective until at least thirty (30) days after publication in a manner reasonably calculated to bring it to the attention of attorneys practicing before this court. Therefore, these rules will become effective on August 1, 1991.

These rules are subject to the Texas Rules of Civil Procedure and no time period herein is intended to alter the Rules of Civil Procedure.

The rules will be submitted to the Supreme Court of Texas for their approval sixty (60) days from this date.

The proposed rules are intended to make practice easier and in conformity with the statewide practice in order to facilitate the practice in this court. Any comments or suggestions will be welcome.

Sincerely,

Bonnie Leggat
District Judge

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HARRISON COUNTY LOCAL RULES

Rule 1.10 Time Standards for Case Processing

The Court will strive to ensure that as far as reasonably possible, all cases shall be brought to trial or final disposition in conformity with the following time standards:

- a) Original criminal cases within six months if on bond, or 30 days if incarcerated;
- b) Probation revocations within 30 days of arrest;
- c) Civil jury cases within 24 months;
- d) Family law cases, contested, within 6 months of filing;
- e) Family law cases, uncontested, within 3 months of end of waiting period.

Rule 1.11 Court Sessions:

By law the 71st Judicial District Court shall have six terms of court each year consisting of two months each. The Clerk shall issue a calendar approved by the Court prior to each term of court, setting forth the weeks for jury cases and non-jury cases.

The Court shall designate Jury Commissioners at the beginning of the term of court. The Jury Commissioners shall report to the Court on the first Wednesday of the term at 9:00 o'clock a.m. The Court shall empanel the Grand Jury on Tuesday of the fourth week of the term at 9:00 a.m.

Cases shall be scheduled so that cases will not conflict with the docket calls and the proceedings concerning the Grand Jury

Commissioners and Grand Juries.

Uncontested matters and routine matters of short duration may be heard at 8:30 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. Law matters and motions will be heard from 1:00 - 1:30 p. m. A court reporter will be available. The parties shall schedule the matter with the Court Coordinator 24 hours in advance. The Coordinator will have files pulled and available for the court.

Rule 1.12 Filing and Assignment of Cases:

Pursuant to the Rules of the Supreme Court of Texas requiring that the Court file various reports documenting its case load including the age of all of its cases from the effective date of these Rules, all cases filed hereafter shall be numbered as follows: The first number of the cause will be the last two numbers of the year in which the cause is filed followed by a dash and, followed by a four digit number with the numbers beginning 0001 for the first case filed in the year and each case filed thereafter shall be numbered consecutively.

All criminal cases shall be preceded by the letters CR, followed by the last two digits of the year in which the case is filed followed by a dash and then followed by a three digit number with the first criminal case being filed in the year CR__-001, and each case filed thereafter to be numbered consecutively.

Rule 1.14 Request for Settings - Non-Jury Cases:

a) At any time after the filing of an answer upon the

request of any party or the Judge's own motion, the court clerk, acting upon the direction of the Judge, shall set the case for trial on the non-jury docket.

b) When requesting a setting for a non-jury trial, the approximate length of time required for the trial shall be given in order to facilitate scheduling.

c) The request for a non-jury trial setting may be made by telephone or by mail. The party obtaining the setting shall notify all parties of the setting.

d) Uncontested cases may be heard between 8:30 a.m - 9:00 a.m. by requesting a setting the day before. Matters of law or motions may be heard between 1:00 - 1:30 p. m. each day by requesting a setting the day before. A court reporter will be available.

Rule 1.15 Request for Settings - Jury Cases:

a) Jury trials will be granted only when a Jury Fee has been paid at least thirty (30) days before the Monday of the week in which the case is set for trial.

b) Demand for a trial by jury shall not be occasion for advancement or substantial delay of the trial or of any other proceeding in the case. If the case is already set for nonjury trial when a timely and proper demand for a jury is made, the court may try the case with a jury on the same setting, add the case to the list of jury cases for the next jury week, or set the case at some other concurrent time in the court's discretion.

c) Nothing in this rule shall be construed to prevent the more rapid trial of jury or nonjury cases when the time requirements of either category of trials shall make more expeditious handling of one category possible.

d) A jury docket will be called at 1:30 p.m. on the first Monday of each term for case setting for that or subsequent terms. Parties may agree on a setting or a party may obtain a setting without the necessity of the case being placed upon jury docket or appearance at a docket, by notifying the Court Coordinator and with the consent of the Court to the setting. The party obtaining the setting shall notify all parties of the setting.

Rule 1.16, Request for Preferential Settings:

a) See Government Code 23.101, et seq., for matters that by law will be given primary or secondary priority.

b) In addition, a case may be preferentially set when because of unusual circumstances, more than ordinary difficulty would be encountered in having all counsel and witnesses available for a regular setting.

c) Motions for preferential setting must be written and filed with notice to all parties by docket call or, if the case has not been placed on the docket, then filed 30 days before the requested setting.

Rule 1.17 Emergency and Special Meetings:

a) All applications for ex parte relief shall state whether

or not within the knowledge of applicant and his attorney, the opposing party is represented by counsel, and if so, the name of such counsel.

b) Whenever immediate action is required in an emergency when the Clerk's office is not open for emergencies, the case shall at the earliest practicable time be docketed on motions filed with the Clerk. Except in emergencies, no application for immediate or temporary relief shall be presented to the Judge until it has been filed with the Clerk.

Rule 1.18 Docket Calls and Announcements:

SETTINGS OF CIVIL TRIALS

a) The civil docket shall be held on the first Monday of the term of court at 1:30 o'clock p.m.

b) The purpose of docket call shall be to designate actual trial cases and to assign a numerical order of trial. It shall be accomplished by the court calling those cases which have been listed on a docket in chronological order determined by age or listed by preferential setting. The docket shall contain only those cases set by the Court or those which have indicated trial readiness in an original trial request or in a scheduling order. Readiness shall be confirmed at docket call.

c) The Court Coordinator of the District Judge shall keep a list of the order of the settings of jury trials, striking causes on the docket which have been contested and settled. Counsel may contact that office to determine the numerical standing for jury

selection. The current status of the jury docket will be posted in the office of the District Judge and updated upon notification of the cancellation of any case.

d) Docket call announcements of "Ready" if ready for any week may be made by letter.

e) If no announcement is made at docket call the case will be automatically removed from the jury docket and placed on the non-jury docket. It shall be deemed by the Court that the failure of counsel for any or all of the parties to attend the docket call shall be a waiver by the parties of any objection to placement of the case on the non-jury docket.

SETTINGS OF CRIMINAL TRIALS

a) After indictment, criminal cases will be given an arraignment date. The attorney may waive arraignment and make official appearance in the case in writing prior to the arraignment date and need not be present. If arraignment is not waived and no attorney is officially of record in the case, the Defendant shall appear, and if represented by counsel, both counsel and defendant shall appear with his attorney. Appointments of attorneys for indigents will be made at the time set for arraignment. Notice will be given the attorney appointed and a pre-trial and trial date assigned. In that event, the arraignment will be conducted at pre-trial.

b) At arraignment the case will also be set for pre-trial and trial. All pre-trial motions shall be filed within ten days of

the pre-trial.

c) The State, Defendant and Defense Counsel must be present at the pre-trial.

d) No attorney will be allowed to withdraw from a case without there first being a hearing. Counsel shall serve by certified mail a copy of the motion to withdraw notifying Defendant to appear at the hearing.

e) No cases will be continued without a written motion for continuance, and then only upon consent of the Court and upon a resetting date from the Court Coordinator.

Rule 1.19 Resetting Cases:

Cases that have been continued or that have not been reached may be carried over to the next available jury week or reset for trial at the discretion of the trial judge.

Rule 1.20 Dismissal Docket; Involuntary Dismissal:

The Court shall periodically, but at least twice each year, review the court's docket, and commensurate with the condition of the docket, the length of time a case has been filed, and other circumstances, have cases placed on the dismissal docket. When a case is placed on the dismissal docket, notice shall be mailed to all attorneys of record, or any party who has made an appearance, and who is not represented by counsel.

Unless a written motion for removal from the dismissal docket is filed prior to the expiration of twenty (20) days after the mailing of the notice, the case is subject to dismissal for lack of

prosecution at any time after the expiration of the twenty (20) day period.

Motions for removal from the dismissal docket shall set out the reason for past inactivity, and the date on which the case will be ready for trial. Action on any motion to remove the case from the dismissal docket may be taken by the court either after a hearing set for that purpose, or without a hearing. If the motion to remove from the dismissal docket is granted the court shall either:

- (a) make a specific trial setting for a time certain, or
- (b) provide that the case will be dismissed without further notice if not disposed of by a certain deadline, in which case the burden for disposing of the case or obtaining an extension of the dismissal deadline for good cause shall be upon the party or attorney asserting the cause of action subject to dismissal.

This dismissal docket procedure is cumulative, and not exclusive, and nothing herein shall prevent a cause from being dismissed for failure of any party seeking affirmative relief to appear for a trial, pre-trial, or other hearing, or for any other reason authorized by law or the Rules for Civil Procedure.

Rule 1.21 Suspense Docket:

If a case has been stayed because it relates to a bankruptcy proceeding, or if a case cannot proceed due to a legal or factual impediment, then such case is to be transferred to a "Suspense Docket" for suspension of further action and the file delivered to

the clerk for storage.

Rule 3.10 Presentment of Pre-Trial Pleas and Motions:

a) No dilatory pleas or motions or exceptions shall be heard less than ten (10) days before the date on which the case is set for trial, provided that the pleadings to which same are directed has been on file more than thirty (30) days at the time of the hearing.

b) If a pre-trial is set and the pleading to which exceptions are directed has been on file seven (7) days or more before pre-trial, such exceptions shall be presented at pre-trial.

c) If a pre-trial is set and the pleading to which exceptions are directed is filed less than seven (7) days before pre-trial, or is filed after pre-trial but not more than seven (7) days before trial, it shall be the duty of counsel urging such exceptions to obtain a hearing, give the required notice, and present such exceptions before the day of the trial.

d) If no pre-trial is set, it shall be the duty of counsel urging such exceptions to obtain a hearing, give the required notice, and present such exceptions as herein provided.

e) At hearings on specific motions and preliminary matters other than scheduling conferences and pretrial conferences, it shall be sufficient if counsel present is prepared to proceed on the matter at issue. In the absence of a specific order to the contrary, a party is not required to be represented by counsel who will try the case, or who is familiar with all aspects of the case,

except at scheduling conferences and pretrial conferences.

f) No motion or special exception will be set for hearing until the moving party shall first communicate with opposing counsel to determine whether a contemplated motion will be opposed. If the motion will not be opposed, the moving party shall accompany a motion with a proposed order signed by counsel for all parties indicating approval of same. If the motion will be opposed, the moving party shall state at the beginning of their motion as follows: "A conference was held on (date) with (name), attorney for opposing party, on the merits of this motion. Agreement could not be reached; therefore, it is presented to the Court for a determination."

Rule 3.11 Disposition Motions and Other Preliminary
Matters.

a) Preliminary matters which require a hearing by the Court may be disposed of either (a) by hearing before the Court or (b) upon such written authorities as counsel may forward to the Court, following which the Court may rule in chambers without any hearing as provided in this rule. Any party is entitled to a hearing so long as the same is requested prior to the time that the Court makes its ruling.

b) Any party who desires a ruling on any matter pending shall request a ruling either by (a) requesting a hearing or (b) filing a statement with the authorities, if any, relied upon, along with a request for ruling by the court without a hearing. The

opposing party may, within ten (10) days after service of such statement, either (a) request a hearing or (b) file a written response.

c) If no hearing is requested within seven (7) days after the time for requesting a hearing or for filing a response has expired, the Judge, in the absence of counsel, shall examine the pleadings, authorities cited, and other papers and make such rulings as the Judge deems proper, note a memorandum of such ruling among the papers of the cause, and send copies of such memorandum to counsel for all parties.

d) Copies of all orders made pursuant to this rule shall be signed and forwarded to all counsel at the time they are entered.

Rule 3.12 Motions for Severance:

When a motion to sever is sustained, the severed claim shall be filed as a new case. The original case from which the claim is severed shall retain the original number given it by the Clerk of the Court. Before the severed claim is filed as a new case, the Clerk's requirement concerning deposit for costs shall be met.

Rule 3.13 Motions for Continuance:

a) No requests to pass, postpone, or reset any scheduling conference, pre-trial conference, or other preliminary hearing shall be granted unless all counsel for all parties have been notified and have had an opportunity to object.

b) Any ground for continuance of the trial setting shall be presented to the Court at least 7 days prior to the trial setting,

at the call of the docket, or at the pretrial conference, if any, whichever shall occur first, or shall be waived.

c) All motions for continuance of trial setting, including joint motions of all parties, shall be presented to the Court either in open court or in chambers and shall comply in civil cases with the Texas Rules of Civil Procedure, and in criminal cases with Chapter 29 of the Texas Code of Criminal Procedure. All motions for continuance must be signed by the party requesting same. Upon granting of a motion for continuance, a scheduling conference shall immediately be held, and the order granting such motion for continuance shall contain an order resetting the case for trial.

Rule 3.15' Motions for Summary Judgment:

Motions for summary judgment will be heard between 1:00 p.m. and 1:30 p.m. on the motions docket. Settings may be obtained at other times as may be necessary.

Rule 3.16 Motions for Treatment of Case as a Complex Case:

A motion of a party pursuant to Rule 6e of the Supreme Court Rules of Administration and Rule 1e of the Regional Rules of Judicial Administration must be filed and a ruling obtained to declare that the case is classified as a complex case, or special circumstances exist that make it impossible to adhere to the prescribed time standards. The Court may at any time, in the interest of Justice, determine that the case is complex or recognize the circumstances which, upon its declaration or order,

will classify the case as complex and thereafter the Court will invoke such standards as necessary to safeguard the rights of the litigants and expeditious processing of the case.

Rule 3.17 Motions for Referral of Disputes and Alternatives:

A court may, on its own motion or the motion of a party, refer a pending dispute for resolution to an alternative dispute resolution procedure provided for in Chapters 151, 152, or 154 of the Texas Civil Practice & Remedies Code. Any party may, within 10 days after receiving notification of a referral, file a written objection which sets forth a reasonable basis for the party's objection to referral.

Rule 3.18 Scheduling Conferences:

a) If no scheduling conference has been held by the expiration of 30 days from the date of the Court's order declaring the case to be a complex case, then such a conference shall be automatically scheduled by the Court. At any time such a conference is scheduled, the Court in which the case is pending shall notify all attorneys of record of the date and hour at which the attorneys are to appear for the purpose of conducting such conference.

b) Upon court approval, the scheduling conference may be held by telephone. The attorney requesting that the scheduling conference be held by telephone shall be responsible for arranging the conference call on the date and time scheduled by the court coordinator.

c) The scheduling conference shall be conducted informally, and shall be for the following purposes: 1) of becoming acquainted with the nature of the case and the issues presented; 2) determining the probable length of time required for trial; 3) fixing deadlines for joinder of additional parties, completion of discovery, or amendment of pleadings, if such deadlines are necessary; 4) to consider such other matters and make other orders as are necessary and proper under the circumstances in regard to handling of the case; 5) and to arrive at a trial date which all attorneys and the court may consider firm.

d) The Court shall make an order which recites any action taken or agreements made at the scheduling conference, and such order when entered shall control the subsequent course of action, unless later modified by the Court. See appendix for form of scheduling order.

Rule 3.19 Pre-Trial Conferences:

A pre-trial conference may be held at the request of the Court or of the attorneys. If the pre-trial conference is set at the request of the attorneys, it shall be held no later than seven (7) days prior to the date set for trial, unless the Court, on timely request of one or more attorneys, orders otherwise.

Rule 3.20 Compliance with Conference Procedures:

a) All scheduling conferences and pre-trial conferences shall be attended by a counsel who is familiar with the case and

fully authorized to state his party's position on the law and the facts, to make agreements as to scheduling, to enter into stipulations, and to enter into settlement negotiations. Attorneys for all parties shall be physically present at the scheduling conference unless arrangements have been made for such conference to be held by telephone.

b) Each attorney shall bring a calendar in order to arrange settings which do not conflict with any previous engagements of counsel. Under no circumstances may an attorney be represented at any scheduling conference or pretrial conference, whether held by telephone or otherwise, by any secretary or other non-lawyer personnel.

Rule 3.21. Non-Compliance with Conference Rules:

When counsel for either party, after notice and without good cause, fails to appear or is unprepared for a scheduling conference or pre-trial conference, the court may:

- a) Make all scheduling decisions and rule on all motions, exceptions or other matters;
- b) Declare any motions or exceptions prepared waived;
- c) Alter the trial setting or other scheduling matters, decline to set the case for trial or cancel a setting previously made;
- d) Pass and reset the conference, in which case the party represented shall be entitled to recover his reasonable attorney's fees and expenses.

e) Take such other action that is just and proper.

Rule 3.22 Discovery Motions:

All counsel are expected to engage in good faith negotiations pursuant to the discovery and deposition rules of the Texas Rules of Civil Procedure. Requests for hearings on motions for discovery, or for protection, or to quash interrogatories or requests for admissions, or on objections to any discovery, interrogatories or requests for admissions, or on objections to any discovery, will not be granted unless counsel filing the same certifies that he has attempted to obtain such discovery or relief from opposing counsel by agreement and has been unsuccessful, or shows good cause for not making such effort.

Rule 3.23 Settlements:

All trial counsel are urged to make a bona fide effort to settle cases before announcing ready for trial. The Court will expect counsel, before announcing ready, to confer with his client and with opposing counsel concerning settlement and to recommend an offer which is in his professional opinion reasonable, unless in his professional opinion the case is not such as to justify any offer whatsoever. When an attorney settles or dismisses a case which is set for trial, he shall give notice to the Court as soon as possible.

Rule 3.25 Witnesses/Exhibits:

Cases announced to be READY shall be in all respects ready, with witnesses and other evidence available so that the trial may proceed without delay. When out-of-county witnesses are to be called, the burden shall be on the party using such witnesses to have them available.

In so far as is possible, counsel for the parties shall pre-mark for identification all items to be introduced into evidence and further shall notify the Court as to those items upon which counsel can agree may be admitted into evidence without objection.

Objections to video tape which will be offered at the trial of the cause shall be made and heard at the Settlement/Pretrial Conference and if not made at that time shall be deemed waived. Parties are expected to edit video tapes to exclude inadmissible or repetitive or irrelevant material insofar as possible.

Rule 3.26 Jury Selection:

All parties will be prepared to select juries and proceed to trial on the date of setting, as reflected by the docket of the Court. All juries required for the week will be selected before any case will be tried, and all counsel with cases to be tried will be expected to take notice of the preceding voir dire examinations. Repetition of previous voir dire questions will not be permitted.

Rule 3.27 Jury Charges:

In all civil jury trial cases, anticipated special questions,

definitions and instructions shall be submitted to the Court in writing at or prior to the beginning of the trial (before jury selection). If a party fails to submit a proposed charge, the Court may re-set the case to another date.

Rule 4.10 Family Law Cases:

Uncontested Divorces and Other Uncontested Matters

On Tuesday through Friday of each week from 8:30 a.m. until 9:00 a. m. and from 1:00 p.m. until approximately 1:30 p.m. the court will be available to sign orders and to hear uncontested divorces and any other uncontested matters of very short duration.

A court reporter will be available if requested at the time the setting is obtained.

Family Law Cases. An inventory and appraisal shall be filed in divorce cases by both parties if no settlement has been reached concerning the division of the property. Each party should designate what property is requested by that party.

All divorce decrees must be entered no later than thirty (30) days after the granting of such divorce unless a time extension is granted by the Court.

Guidelines for Time for Possession of and Access to a Child or Children in Divorce Proceedings.

See attached.

Rule 6.12 Arrest/Initial Appearance:

After indictment all criminal cases will be given an

arraignment date. The attorney may waive arraignment and make official appearance in the case in writing prior to the arraignment date and need not be present. If arraignment is not waived the Defendant and Counsel shall appear.

Rule 6.13 Appointment of Counsel

Upon it being made known to the Court that a defendant has been incarcerated for 48 hours or more, 72 hours on a weekend, and wishes appointment of counsel, the Court shall consider proof of indigence. If indigent, the defendant will be appointed counsel.

Rule 6.14 Appearance of Defendant/Counsel

Appointed counsel shall be given written notice and telephone notice of the appointment, and any trial or pre-trial settings. If the defendant is incarcerated, the attorney is expected to interview or contact the defendant within 24 hours of notice of the appointment.

A lawyer enters an appearance by executing a bail bond or appeal bond or appearing at any hearing with respect to the defendant and the criminal episode.

Rule 6.15 Withdrawal of Counsel

No attorney who has made appearance as set forth in Rule 6.14 may withdraw without notifying the defendant by serving a copy of his motion to withdraw and notifying the defendant to appear at a hearing thereon. The State shall be notified by counsel of the motion and hearing .

No motion shall be granted if filed within 30 days of the trial setting unless the motion is to substitute new counsel.

Rule 10.12 Attorney Withdrawal:

In civil cases no attorney of record shall be permitted to withdraw from any case without presenting a motion and obtaining from the court an order granting leave to withdraw in compliance with Rule 10, T.R.C.P., or Art. 26.04, C.C.P. Such leave may be denied where the motion is presented so near the trial date as to require delay of the trial.

In criminal cases: see Rule 6.15

Rules 11 & 12 Adoption of Rules, Local Administration:

Pursuant to the constitutional powers and duties of the Judicial authority in the State of Texas, and under the authority of Rule 3a of the Rules of Civil Procedure, the following local Rules of Practice and Procedure are hereby adopted to govern the trial of all cases in the 71st Judicial District Court. Nothing contained in these Rules shall be construed or interpreted as interfering with the right of the trial Judge to make such orders, settings, or procedural directions as in his/her discretion may be necessary and proper for the expedient and orderly dispatch of the business of the Court. These rules are intended to be consistent with and subject to the Rules of Civil Procedure and the statutes and Constitution of the State of Texas.

The District Clerk shall mail a copy of these Rules to the members of the Bar Association in Harrison County and to such non-resident attorneys who make appearances before this Court.

The Clerk is ordered to spread a copy of these Rules upon the minutes and to furnish a copy to the Supreme Court of Texas.

This Court will be governed by these Rules, and all attorneys are required to become familiar with these rules and governed thereby. The Clerk of this Court has a copy of such Rules available upon request by the attorney of record, in any case pending.

Rule 13.10 Miscellaneous:

An attorney appointed as an Ad litem is expected to fully perform his functions as provided by law. Parties shall request, when necessary, appointment in advance of the hearing or trial to make full investigations of the matter.

No nihil dicit judgment will be entered unless the counsel requesting the hearing has notified the opposing counsel or party by certified mail or registered mail (as required by the Rules of Civil Procedure) of the time of the hearing. The rule does not apply to cases on the civil docket.