

Correctional Officers' Creed

To speak sparingly ... to act, not to argue ... to be in authority through personal presence ... to correct without nagging ... to speak with the calm voice of certainty ... to see everything, know what is significant and what not to notice ... to be neither insensitive to distress nor so distracted by pity as to miss what must elsewhere be seen ...

To do neither that which is unkind nor self-indulgent in its misplaced charity ... never to obey the impulse to tongue lash that silent insolence which in times past could receive the lash ... to be both firm and fair ... to know I cannot be fair simply by being firm, nor firm simply by being fair ...

To support the reputations of associates and confront them without anger, should they stand short of professional conduct ... to reach for knowledge of the continuing mysteries of human motivation ... to think; always to think ... to be dependable ... to be dependable first to my charges and associates, and thereafter to my duty as employee and citizen ... to keep fit .. to keep forever alert ... to listen to what is meant as well as what is said with words and with silences ...

To expect respect from my charges and my superiors yet never to abuse the one for abuses from the other ... for eight hours each working day to be an example of the person I could be at all times ... to acquiesce in no dishonest act ... to cultivate patience under boredom and calm during confusion ... to understand the why of every order I take or give ...

To hold freedom among the highest values though I deny it to those I guard ... to deny it with dignity that in my example they find no reason to lose their dignity ... to be prompt ... to be honest with all who practice deceit that they not find in me excuse for themselves ... to privately face down my fear that I not signal it ... to privately cool my anger that I not displace it on others ... to hold in confidence what I see and hear, which by the telling could harm or humiliate to no good purpose ... to keep my outside problems outside ... to leave inside that which should stay inside ... to do my duty.

-- Bob Barrington

Rikers JATC's entrance hall features a 1995 mural of the CO Creed authored by the late Prof. Robert Barrington of North Michigan University. The creed was widely distributed by the International Association of Correctional Officers. The above New York Correction History Society recreation uses the antique scroll from an image of the inmate-painted mural to frame the text that as been adapted by various correctional agencies.