Rule 22. ELECTRONIC AND PHOTOGRAPHIC NEWS COVERAGE OF JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS

Unless otherwise provided by rule of the Supreme Court or otherwise ordered by the assigned judge after appropriate hearing (conducted after notice to all parties and counsel of record) and findings, representatives of the print and electronic public media may be present at and unobtrusively make written notes and sketches pertaining to any judicial proceedings in the superior courts. However, due to the distractive nature of electronic or photographic equipment, representatives of the public media utilizing such equipment are subject to the following restrictions and conditions:

(A) Persons desiring to broadcast/record/photograph official court proceedings must file a timely written request (form attached as Exhibit "A") with the judge involved prior to the hearing or trial, specifying the particular calendar/case or proceedings for which such coverage is intended; the type equipment to be used in the courtroom; the trial, hearing or proceeding to be covered; and the person responsible for installation and operation of such equipment.

(B) Approval of the judge to broadcast/record/photograph a proceeding, if granted, shall be granted without partiality or preference to any person, news agency, or type of electronic or photographic coverage, who agrees to abide by and conform to these rules, up to the capacity of the space designated therefor in the courtroom. Violation of these rules will be grounds for a reporter/technician to be removed or excluded from the courtroom and held in contempt.

(C) The judge may exercise discretion and require pooled coverage which would allow only one still photographer, one television camera and attendant, and one radio or tape recorder outlet and attendant. Photographers, electronic reporters and technicians shall be expected to arrange among themselves pooled coverage if so directed by the judge and to present the judge with a schedule and description of the pooled coverage. If the covering persons cannot agree on such a schedule or arrangement, the schedule and arrangements for pooled coverage may be designated at the judge's discretion.

(D) The positioning and removal of cameras and electronic devices shall be done quietly and, if possible, before or after the court session or during recesses; in no event shall such disturb the proceedings of the court. In every such case, equipment should be in place and ready to operate before the time court is scheduled to be called to order.

(E) Overhead lights in the courtroom shall be switched on and off only by court personnel. No other lights, flashbulbs, flashes or sudden light changes may be used unless the judge approves beforehand.

(F) No adjustment of central audio system shall be made except by persons authorized by the judge. Audio recordings of the court proceedings will be from one source, normally by connection to the courts central audio system. Upon prior approval of the court, other microphones may be added in an unobtrusive manner to the court's public address system.

(G) All television cameras, still cameras and tape recorders shall be assigned to a specific portion of the public area of the courtroom or specially designed access areas, and such equipment will not be permitted to be removed or relocated during the court proceedings.

(H) Still cameras must have quiet functioning shutters and advancers. Movie and television cameras and broadcasting and recording devices must be quiet running. If any equipment is determined by the judge to be of such noise as to be distractive to the court proceedings, then such equipment can be excluded from the courtroom by the judge.

(I) Pictures of the jury, whether by still, movie, or television cameras, shall not be taken except where the jury happens to be in the background of other topics being photographed. Audio recordings of the jury foreperson's announcement of the verdict, statements or questions to the judge may be made. Photographs and televising of the public and the courtroom are allowed, if done without disruption to the court proceedings.

(J) Reporters, photographers, and technicians must have and produce upon request of court officials credentials identifying them and the media company for which they work.

(K) Court proceedings shall not be interrupted by a reporter or technician with a technical or an equipment problem.

(L) Reporters, photographers, and technicians should do everything possible to avoid attracting attention to themselves. Reporters, photographers, and technicians will be accorded full right of access to court proceedings for obtaining public information within the requirements of due process of law, so long as it is done without detracting from the dignity and decorum of the court.

(M) Other than as permitted by these rules and guidelines, there will be no photographing, radio or television broadcasting, including videotaping pertaining to any judicial proceedings on the courthouse floor where the trial, hearing or proceeding is being held or any other courthouse floor whereon is located a superior court courtroom, whether or not the court is actually in session.

(N) No interviews pertaining to a particular judicial proceeding will be conducted in the courtroom except with the permission of the judge.

(O) All media plans heretofore approved by the Supreme Court for superior courts are hereby repealed.

(P) A request for installation and use of electronic recording, transmission, videotaping or motion picture or still photography of any judicial proceeding shall be evaluated pursuant to the standards set forth in OCGA § 151-10.1.

EXHIBIT "A"

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF _____ COUNTY

STATE OF GEORGIA

(STYLE OF CASE) CASE NO. ____

REQUEST TO INSTALL RECORDING AND/OR PHOTOGRAPHING EQUIPMENT PURSUANT TO RULES AND GUIDELINES FOR ELECTRONIC AND PHOTOGRAPHIC NEWS COVERAGE OF JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS.

Pursuant to Rule 22 of the Electronic and Photographic News Coverage of Judicial Proceedings in the Uniform Superior Court Rules, the undersigned hereby requests permission to install equipment in courtroom _____ in order to record, photograph or televise all or portions of the proceedings in the above captioned case.
Consistent with the provisions of the rules and guidelines, the undersigned desires to install the following described equipment: _____ in the following locations: _____. The proceedings that the undersigned desires to record, photograph or televise commence on (date) . Subject to direction from the court regarding possible pooled coverage, the undersigned wishes to install this equipment in the courtroom on (date) .The personnel who will be responsible for the installation and operation of this equipment during its use are: (identify appropriate personnel).

The undersigned hereby certifies that the equipment to be installed and the locations and operation of such equipment will be in conformity with the rules and guidelines issued by the court.

This _____ day of _____, 20__.

_____
(Individual Signature)

_____
(Representing/Firm)