

Proper Way to Address Clients

Folks:

I represent Bill and Sue. Sue is a doctor. Not a fake doctor, but a real doctor. Is it

1. Dear Mr. and Dr?
2. Dear Dr. and Mr?
3. Dear something else?

Thanks,

Dear Dr. Smith and Mr. Jones, or whatever.

I don't think it really matters but I'd list her first, just because.

Ronald Jones, Florida

Doing estate planning I am interacting with clients in their personal, not professional, capacity and therefore do not use Dr.

Deb Matthews, Virginia

Yes, but, in my experience a lot of people with honorific titles expect them to be used; They got the doctorate and they like to be addressed as such. I'd rather use it than not and risk irritating them; now if they say "oh, it's Mr. (or Mrs.) not Dr" than fine.

Ronald Jones

Ron is correct. Mr. and Dr.

My wife is a veterinarian, so we had several veterinarian friends at our wedding. I learned this when we addressed their invitations.

Dan Gerber, Illinois

My general rule is, however they introduce themselves to me; if they say they're "Dr." then that is what I use; if they introduce themselves as Reverend or Father, then that's what I'm going to use. If they don't use it in particular setting it's going to be Mr. or Ms but if I'm going to err, it's going to be on side of using the title.

Ronald Jones

What's a fake doctor? Aren't all doctors doctors? A Ph.D is a doctor. A J.D. is a doctor. I am assuming you meant that she is an M.D. rather than a Ph.D. but even dentists have earned a doctorate, DDM. Those other than MDs are still real doctors and worthy of the title. The only doctors who probably should not use "Dr." are the ones who purchased a fake doctorate online. Never ran into any of them but I hear that there are many. Just sayin' ...

Lyza L. Sandgren (not a lawyer), Georgia

#2. She outranks him so I would use Dr. Sue Jones and Mr. Bill Jones.

Regards,

Kristin Haugen, Minnesota

Is it the order in which to list them that's causing agita? Why does it matter? If someone has a doctorate, you should probably use the honorific unless you are going to go with first names, but I hope no one in this century is going to get worked up because a letter to two people mentions the woman first.

Kevin W. Grierson, Virginia

This is generally the rule that I follow, except if the doctor/wife is the "real" client, then it would be Dr. and Mr. (I do PI, so the real client is the injured party, not the spouse with a derivative claim)

If they have different last names, then nothing looks good so it is usually just Dr. Sue & Mr. Bob.

However, this is only for formal letters and e-mails that have a chance of making it into a court pleading. I much prefer just Bob & Sue, but that is not always appropriate.

Bruce Wingate, New York

We had a lawyer who insisted on being called Doctor. I thought he was being pretentious.

Pat Williams, New Jersey

Dr. always goes first. Emily Post goes into more detail than you could possibly want. <http://emilypost.com/advice/guide-to-addressing-correspondence/>

Kelcey Patrick-Ferree, Iowa

Dear Abby says Mr. & Dr.

She didn't state a reason, but arguably it's because convention puts the man first on everything.

Sincerely,

Corrine Bielejeski, California

It's good to know that someone else reads Emily Post!

http://www.americanbar.org/content/newsletter/publications/solo_newsletter_home/mannerborn.html

jennifer rose, Mexico

Thanks. I am going to just go with Mr. and Dr. These folks aren't going to be worked up about it. I don't know who is a better resource - Emily Post or Dear Abby.
