



# The Rodsmith's Guild™ Bylaws



## I. Entities and Acceptance

The Bylaws, policies, and procedures of the Rodsmith's Guild, hereinafter referred to as the Guild, are herein set forth, and any individual or entity that seeks to receive, retain, or advance a membership in the Guild, hereinafter referred to as the Solicitor, agrees to be bound by all terms and conditions herein set forth, and so indicates their acceptance and agreement of same by their acceptance of an Invitation extended by the Guild.

## II. Mission Statement

The mission of the Rodsmith's Guild is to identify and distinguish skilled craftsmen in the rodsmithing trades; to promote and protect those trades through the sharing of knowledge and skills; and to perpetuate those skills in future tradesmen.

## III. Invitations, Titles, and Trades

Invitations are an offer for a Title of membership in the Guild. Titles awarded by the Guild are indicative of the Solicitor's level of expertise, workmanship, and knowledge in a Guild recognized Trade. The Titles recognized and awarded by the Guild are (listed in ascending order): Apprentice, Journeyman, and Master.

Trades recognized by the Guild are disciplines employed in the fabrication and finishing of a fishing rod. The specific Trades recognized by the Guild are defined as:

**Designer:** An individual that develops and specifies the design parameters for the fabrication of a rod blank.

**Maker:** An individual that fabricates the rod blank based upon the design parameters specified by the Designer.

**Builder:** An individual that assembles the various components into a completed fishing rod.

## IV. Membership

Membership in the Guild is awarded to the Solicitor when they accept an Invitation extended by the Guild for a Title in a recognized Trade, and once accepted, the Solicitor is considered a Member of the Guild.

A Member may advance or increase in Title by soliciting an Invitation for advancement within a Trade, or to obtain a Title in a separate recognized Trade.

Any Invitation extended by the Guild must be accepted by the Solicitor within ten (10) days from the date it is extended. Failure of the Solicitor to do so will result in the automatic withdrawal of the Invitation, and no notice of this withdrawal will be provided to the Solicitor.

An Invitation is deemed to be formally accepted when the Solicitor pays the associated Annual Dues, and/or provides the Guild with written notice of their acceptance of the Invitation.

Solicitors may solicit an Invitation in any Trade, but are not allowed to solicit an Invitation for a Trade in which an Invitation has been extended, denied, or withdrawn in the preceding three hundred and sixty five (365) days.



# The Rodsmith's Guild™ Bylaws



## V. Solicitation

The process of soliciting the Guild for an Invitation requires the Solicitor to submit a Request for Review form. Upon receipt of this form, the Guild staff will verify the information, and check the references provided by the Solicitor. If the Solicitor is deemed to be a qualified candidate for membership, a Review Board will be organized to evaluate the workmanship of the Solicitor. In the event that sample work is required for evaluation, and is requested by the Review Board, the Solicitor will be contacted by the Guild staff and asked to submit the requested amount of sample work. Upon completing their evaluation of the workmanship of the Solicitor, each Review Board Member will render a decision to either extend or deny an Invitation to the Solicitor, and the majority rules.

An exception to the previously described solicitation process occurs when a Solicitor has a sponsoring Member with a Journeyman or Master Title in the Trade they are seeking a Title in. A sponsored solicitation only requires the Solicitor to submit the Request for Review form. Upon receipt of this form, the Guild staff will verify the information and sponsorship provided by the Solicitor. If the Solicitor is deemed to be a qualified candidate, they are immediately extended an Invitation for the Title of Apprentice in the Trade(s) of their sponsoring Member.

## VI. Review Boards

A Review Board is an ad-hoc Board organized from Members that have been awarded the Title of Journeyman or Master. Each Review Board will have a minimum of three (3) Members, and when asked to serve by Guild staff, service on Review Boards is a condition of membership in the Guild.

The primary function of a Review Board is to evaluate evidence and render decisions based upon the evidence provided. All decisions rendered are decided by a vote, wherein the majority rules, and all decisions by a Review Board are considered final, with an appeal process only available to those individuals whose membership is revoked by a Review Board.

### Confidentiality:

To ensure that Members are able to freely evaluate and render decisions based on the evidence provided to them, the identity of all Review Board Members remains confidential, and only the Guild staff knows who the Members serving on a Review Board are.

### Purposes:

A Review Board is organized as needed for the purposes of: evaluating sample work and extending or denying Invitations; to serve as mediators in client/Member disputes; and to act as a disciplinary council to consider the revocation of membership or Title of an existing Member.

## VII. Advancement

The Guild recognizes and awards the Titles of: Apprentice, Journeyman, and Master. These Titles are awarded to connote the level of expertise and experience in a recognized Trade that a Member has obtained, and every Title must be solicited for.



## The Rodsmith's Guild™ Bylaws



### Apprentice:

The Title of Apprentice is only awarded to a Solicitor that has solicited membership in the Guild through the sponsorship of an existing Member, and they are not required to submit client or peer references, or have their workmanship evaluated by a Review Board. An Invitation is extended to these Solicitors solely on the endorsement of their sponsoring Member, and upon acceptance, the Apprentice is under the tutelage and oversight of the sponsoring Member. As such, an Apprentice is considered to be a Member that is acquiring the skills and knowledge associated with a Journeyman in their recognized Trade, and they are required to include their Title with any association or reference to the Guild, Guild membership, or a recognized Trade.

### Journeyman:

The Title of Journeyman is awarded to a Solicitor that solicits an Invitation, and meets the following requirements:

Submit a Request for Review along with a minimum of five (5) client or personal references that can be verified by the Guild staff, and whose recommendation of the Solicitor will include personal knowledge and experience with the character, business dealings, and/or level of workmanship the Solicitor is capable of in the recognized Trade(s) the Solicitor is seeking Title in. The use of Member references is highly encouraged, however, a Solicitor's Sponsoring Member is not eligible to be included as one of the required references.

If the references are approved by the Guild staff, then the Solicitor's Request For Review proceeds to the verification of their workmanship. In the event that there is insufficient evidence acceptable to the Review Board of the Solicitor's workmanship, this verification may require the evaluation of up to three (3) samples of work that represent the Solicitor's expertise in the Trade(s) they are seeking a Title in. However, under no circumstances will an Invitation for a Title of membership be denied if actual sample work has not been evaluated by a Review Board. If the submission of sample work is deemed to be required, and is requested of the Solicitor, the requested sample work must be postmarked within ten (10) days of the request for sample work for it to be considered by a Review Board, unless the Solicitor receives prior written approval for an extension from the Guild staff. Upon receipt of any requested sample work, the Guild staff will present it to a Review Board for evaluation.

A Review Board will determine if the workmanship exhibited by the Solicitor is considered to be, at a minimum, equal to the quality of work exhibited by a production rod company. (e.g. Temple Fork Outfitters, Sage, Orvis) If the Review Board deems that the Solicitor has met this minimum standard by a majority of the Members evaluating the Solicitor's workmanship, then an Invitation for the Title of Journeyman is extended to the Solicitor. If the majority deems the workmanship to be below the established standard, then the Solicitor's request is denied. In the event a Solicitor is seeking a Title in multiple Trades, the Review Board may deem the sample work to have met the standard in one or more of the Trades, and deny the Solicitor's request in the other(s).



## The Rodsmith's Guild™ Bylaws



### Master:

The Title of Master is awarded to Solicitors that have the required expertise, knowledge, and skill in a recognized Trade(s), AND have perpetuated their expertise, knowledge and skills in others. As such, the Title of Master is awarded to a Solicitor that solicits an Invitation and meets the following requirements:

Submit a Request for Review along with a minimum of five (5) client or personal references that have not previously been submitted, AND a minimum of three (3) Member references (excluding their sponsoring Member if applicable) who have been awarded a minimum Title of Journeyman in the recognized Trade(s) in which a Master Title is being sought. In lieu of the three (3) required Member references described, a Solicitor may substitute two (2) non-Member references that are highly skilled in the recognized Trade for each required Member reference. All references must attest to the Solicitor's honesty and character, and of their expertise and workmanship in the recognized Trade(s) in which a Title is being sought. Additionally, the Member references (or required substitutions as previously described) must deem the level of expertise and workmanship of the Solicitor to be of the highest quality; verify that the Solicitor has been instrumental in teaching them the skills and knowledge of the Trade; and as a skilled tradesman in the recognized Trade(s) they fully endorse the awarding of the Title of Master to the Solicitor.

If the references are approved by the Guild staff, then the Solicitor's Request For Review proceeds to the verification of their workmanship. In the event that there is insufficient evidence acceptable to the Review Board of the Solicitor's workmanship, this verification may require the evaluation of up to three (3) samples of work that represent the Solicitor's expertise in the Trade(s) they are seeking a Title in. However, under no circumstances will an Invitation for a Title of membership be denied if actual sample work has not been evaluated by a Review Board. If the submission of sample work is deemed to be required, and is requested of the Solicitor, the requested sample work must be postmarked within ten (10) days of the request for sample work for it to be considered by a Review Board, unless the Solicitor receives prior written approval for an extension from the Guild staff. Upon receipt of any requested sample work, the Guild staff will present it to a Review Board for evaluation.

A Review Board will determine if the workmanship of the Solicitor is considered to be highly superior to the current standard of work exhibited by a production rod company. (e.g. Temple Fork Outfitters, Sage, Orvis) If the Review Board deems that the Solicitor has met this high standard by a majority of the Members evaluating the Solicitor's workmanship, then an Invitation for the Title of Master is extended to the Solicitor. If the majority deems the workmanship to be below the established standard, then the Solicitor's request is denied. In the event a Solicitor is seeking a Title in multiple Trades, the Review Board may deem the sample work to have met the standard in one or more of the Trades, and deny the Solicitor's request in the other(s).



# The Rodsmith's Guild™ Bylaws



## Rodsmith:

Any Member that is awarded the Title of Master in all three of the recognized Trades, will be extended a special Invitation for the most prestigious Title the Guild awards, and which represents the pinnacle of membership in the Guild and craftsmanship in the rodsmithing industry: The Title of Master Rodsmith.

## VIII. Disciplinary Action

### Loss of Title:

A Review Board serving as a disciplinary council may revoke a Member's Title at anytime, and for any reason or cause they deem such action to be appropriate. In doing so, the Review Board may elect to extend an Invitation for a lower Title in the recognized Trade, but they are under no obligation to do so.

The withholding of an Invitation for a lower Title by a Review Board serving as a disciplinary council, or the Member's failure to accept an Invitation for a lower Title extended by the Review Board, constitutes a revocation of membership in the Guild.

### Revocation of Membership:

Membership in the Guild is a privilege that may be denied or revoked by a Review Board at anytime, and for any reason or cause they deem such action to be appropriate. This may include, but is not limited to, unethical business practices or substandard workmanship.

The revocation of membership in the Guild will result in the Member losing all Member privileges, benefits, and resources, and any entity that has their membership revoked, forfeits any and all membership dues and fees they have paid, and will receive no refund or other remuneration.

Furthermore, the loss of membership constitutes a disassociation of the Member with the Guild, and no reference to Guild membership or Titles, past or present, may be used to promote, distinguish, represent, or otherwise infer a level of expertise, craftsmanship, artistry, or knowledge.

### Appeal:

In the event that a Review Board revokes a membership, an appeal may be filed with the Guild staff for another Review Board to be organized to evaluate the evidence. The Solicitor must file this appeal within three (3) days of the notice of their membership being revoked.

Upon said filing, a Review Board consisting of a minimum of five (5) Members will be organized to review the evidence and render a decision. In the event that this Review Board agrees with the initial decision to revoke the membership, the membership will be immediately revoked and no further appeal may be made.

If the Review Board finds that there is not sufficient evidence to revoke the membership, then the Solicitor retains their Title, but is placed upon probation for a minimum of one year. At the conclusion of the probationary period, the Review Board will request the Solicitor to



## The Rodsmith's Guild™ Bylaws



provide current client and peer references, and/or sample work for evaluation by the Review Board. Failure to comply with this request will result in the membership being immediately revoked.

Upon review of the new evidence, the Review Board will render a final decision and either removes the probationary status of the Member or revokes the membership. There is no further appeal process, and the decision of the Review Board is final.

### **IX. Liability**

The value of the sample work submitted for the purpose of soliciting advancement or Title in the Guild, or as evidence in a mediation or disciplinary council, constitutes the limit of liability of the Guild, and this liability cannot exceed five-thousand dollars (\$5,000), or the actual insured value declared by the Solicitor when the sample work is placed with the post office or other shipping entity, whichever is less.

In the event that a Solicitor believes a submission's value will exceed the limits of liability defined above, and desires that these limits be extended to cover the value of their submission, the Solicitor must receive prior written authorization and approval from the Guild for the declared value of the submission. Failure to receive this prior approval from the Guild constitutes the acceptance by the Solicitor of the previously described limits of liability, and the Solicitor assumes all risk and responsibility for any loss or damage beyond those defined above.

Damage or loss of sample work that occurs while the sample work is in the possession of the post office or other shipping entity is the sole responsibility of the shipping entity, and the Guild and its Members are absolved of any liability or claim brought by the Solicitor for said damage or loss.

Damage or loss of sample work that occurs while the sample work is in the possession of the Guild or a Review Board will be identified and conveyed to the Solicitor as soon as reasonably possible by the Guild staff. Damage or loss identified by the Solicitor upon the return of their submission, must be declared by the Solicitor by submitting a Damage/Loss claim form within three (3) days of their receipt of the returned submission. Any and all approved claims of damage or loss to be settled upon payment to the Solicitor of an amount mutually agreed upon by the Guild and the Solicitor making said claim, but not to exceed the limit of liability defined above.

### **X. Member Standard, Privileges, and Benefits**

#### **Member Standard:**

Members are expected to meet or exceed a high standard of business ethics and quality workmanship as a condition of membership in the Guild. As such, Members accept the responsibility to provide their clients with the highest quality craftsmanship they are capable of executing, and to be honest and fair in all their business dealings.



## The Rodsmith's Guild™ Bylaws



### Privileges:

Members are licensed and authorized to utilize the trademarked Guild branding, logos, awards, Titles, designations, or other associative verbiage and images in distinguishing themselves as a Member, and for the promotion of their business, Trade, craft, and artistry. Additionally, Members are entitled to utilize all Member benefits provided to them by the Guild, including but not limited to: newsletters, promotional items, discounts, and website resources.

### Library of Work:

The collection of rods donated by, and showcasing the craftsmanship and artistry of Guild Members, and known as The Library of Work, may only be requested for by a Member, and will only be released for display at significant events where a Member is present. To request The Library of Work, a Member must submit their request to the Public Relations department of the Guild a minimum of thirty (30) days prior to the requested delivery date. A request submitted by a Member for the Library of Work will be reviewed by the Guild staff for scheduling conflicts, and for the appropriateness and cost justification of displaying The Library of Work in the requested venue. The request is neither approved nor denied until a written notice of the same is provided to the requesting Member.

### Mediation:

Member/Client mediation is not a legal service, but a benefit that may be requested by submitting a Request for Mediation form to the Guild. Upon receipt of this form, a Review Board will be organized to review the evidence relating to the dispute provided by the Member and the client. Upon review of this evidence, the Review Board will render a recommendation they deem to be fair in settling the dispute.

## XI. Fees and Annual Dues

### Fees:

All fees are subject to change, and are payable in U.S. dollars only.

A non-refundable fee of twenty-five (\$25) is required to be submitted with every Request for Review Form, and all costs associated with the submission, distribution, and return of any requested sample work is the responsibility of the Solicitor. All sample work is shipped to Review Board Members and returned to the Solicitor via USPS Priority Mail (uninsured) unless otherwise directed by the Solicitor.

Upon receipt of requested sample work, and the subsequent organization of a Review Board, a request for submission of the estimated shipping costs will be provided to the Solicitor. Payment for these costs must be received by the Guild prior to the distribution of the sample work to the Review Board and/or return of any sample work to the Solicitor. Failure to pay these fees within ten (10) days of the notification of the estimated shipping costs constitutes a withdrawal of the Request for Review by the Solicitor.

Upon this withdrawal, the Solicitor has sixty (60) days to provide the return shipping cost for the sample work. Failure to do so constitutes the Solicitor's forfeiture of any right or



## The Rodsmith's Guild™ Bylaws



claim of ownership to the sample work, and the Guild may sell or otherwise dispose of the sample work submitted.

Additionally, all costs associated with the delivery, display, and return of The Library of Work are the responsibility of the requesting Member.

### Annual Dues:

Membership dues are based upon the calendar year, and are paid annually. Annual dues are payable in U.S. Dollars only, are subject to change, and are currently ninety-six dollars (\$96).

Membership dues for new Members are prorated on a monthly basis, with any portion of a month being calculated as a full month. The period of time that constitutes this prorated period is delineated by the date of acceptance of the Invitation by the Solicitor, and the thirty-first (31<sup>st</sup>) day of December of the same calendar year.

All renewing memberships are paid in advance of the calendar year for which they are due, and dues must be received by the Guild on or before the thirty-first (31<sup>st</sup>) day of January in the calendar year for which they apply.

Failure to pay the membership dues by the due date will result in the membership being revoked or the Invitation withdrawn, and in the loss of all Member benefits and privileges.

### XII. Amendments / Revisions

These Bylaws may be amended or revised as deemed necessary and by the governing individual(s) of the Guild. Any Solicitor that retains their membership in the Guild upon or after said amendments or revisions are in effect agrees to be bound by all terms and conditions of the amendment or revision, and so indicates their acceptance and agreement of same by their retention of membership in the Guild.

The forgoing Bylaws were reviewed and adopted on the tenth (10<sup>th</sup>) day of February, 2013.