

TITLES AND STYLES OF KNIGHTS AND DAMES

1. POSTNOMINAL LETTERS

Postnominals (abbreviations after a name) may be shown with or without points (full stops); e.g. K.N.Z.M. or KNZM.

Knights

A knight of an Order of Chivalry may use the appropriate postnominal letters after his name; e.g.

Sir John Smith, GNZM
Sir John Smith, KNZM
Sir John Smith, KBE

Knights Bachelor **do not** use any postnominal letters to denote their honour. The appellation “Sir” before their name is considered sufficient. In biographical works of reference the abbreviation “Kt.” or “Kt. Bach.”, followed by the date of knighthood, may be used to clearly identify the type of knighthood and date of the honour.

The letters “K.B.” **should not be used**. These letters refer to a Knight of the Order of the Bath prior to 1815.

Dames

Damehoods are confined to the Orders of Chivalry and a dame may use the appropriate postnominal letters after her name; e.g.

Dame Joan Grant, GNZM
Dame Joan Grant, DNZM
Dame Joan Grant, DBE

2. WIFE OF A KNIGHT (Courtesy titles)

The wife of a knight may use the courtesy title of “Lady” before her surname, provided she uses her husband’s surname. For example, the wife of Sir John Smith is:

Lady Smith

To distinguish between other women with the same name and title, it may be necessary to use a forename; e.g.

Mary, Lady Smith

The style “Lady Mary Smith” indicates that a woman is a holder of a peerage courtesy title. This style is considered incorrect usage by the wife of a knight.

The wife of a knight who, for professional or other purposes uses her maiden name, may use the courtesy title in association with her other names. For example:

Mary Brown, Lady Smith
 or Miss Mary Brown, (Lady Smith)
 or Dr Mary Brown (Lady Smith)
 or Lady Smith (Dr Mary Brown)

The wife of a knight may choose not to use the courtesy title of “Lady” and may simply be known and addressed by her forenames and surname; e.g.

Mary Smith

or when associated with her husband:

Sir John and Mary Smith

In these situations it would be unusual for the style “Mrs” to be used.

In those situations where the wife uses neither the courtesy title nor her husband’s surname, the following styles may be used:

Sir John Smith and Dr Mary Grant
 or Dr Mary Grant and Sir John Smith

3. HUSBAND OF A DAME

The husband of a dame is not accorded a courtesy title. A dame and her husband would jointly be addressed as:

Dame Joan and Mr John Grant
 or Mr John and Dame Joan Grant

In the case of a dame who does not use her husband’s surname, the joint form of address would be:

Dame Joan Grant and Mr John Smith

[The use of a courtesy title by the spouse of a dame has been the subject of lengthy debate and study in the United Kingdom and elsewhere. No satisfactory solution to this anomaly has been found.]

4. LETTERHEADS AND CORRESPONDENCE

The name of a knight or dame may be printed or typed on letterheads, usually from the top left-hand corner. For example:

From Sir John Smith, KNZM

From Dame Joan Grant, DNZM

From Sir John Smith (for a Knight Bachelor)

If other honours and distinctions are held, these may also be included; e.g.

From Sir John Smith, KNZM, QSO, JP, PhD

Alternatively, the correct name and style may be typed below the signature; e.g.

Yours sincerely

OR

Yours sincerely



Sir John Smith, KNZM, QSO

Dame Joan Grant, DNZM

The prefix "Sir" or "Dame" and postnominals should not be included as part of the signature.

The wife of a knight may show her name and courtesy title in the letterhead; e.g.

From Lady Smith
or From Mary, Lady Smith

or under the signature:

Yours sincerely



Lady Smith
or Mary, Lady Smith

If other honours and distinctions are held, these may be included; e.g.

Lady Smith, ONZM, MSc, FRSNZ

The prefix “Lady” and any postnominals should not be included as part of the signature.

5. LEGAL DOCUMENTS

Knights and dames in legal documents, share certificates and the like may be described as:

“...Sir John Richard Smith, Knight...” [*for a Knight Bachelor*]

or “...Sir John Richard Smith, Knight Bachelor...”

“...Sir John Richard Smith, KNZM...”

or “...Sir John Richard Smith, Knight Companion of The New Zealand Order of Merit...”

“...Dame Joan Grant, DNZM...”

“...Dame Joan Grant, Dame Companion of The New Zealand Order of Merit...”

If other honours or distinctions are held, these may be spelt out in full or shown by the appropriate postnominals.

The wife of a knight, who uses the courtesy title “Lady”, should be described as:

“...Mary Frances, Lady Smith...”

6. BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL CARDS

A knight or dame of an Order of Chivalry should include the appropriate postnominal letter after their name on business or professional cards; e.g:

Sir John Smith, KNZM
Dame Joan Grant, DNZM

Knights Bachelor should show their name as:

Sir John Smith

The wife of a knight should show her name and title on a card as:

Lady Smith
or Joan, Lady Smith

Other postnominal letters may be included at the personal discretion of the knight, dame or lady.

7. CONVERSATION

If a person asks for your name, it is not improper to give your name and title, e.g. "Sir John Smith", "Dame Joan Grant", or "Lady Smith". The person will then know to address you by the title and not as "Mr" or "Mrs", thereby avoiding embarrassment.

8. SEPARATION

In the event that a knight and his wife separate, the wife may continue to use the courtesy title of "Lady" so long as she uses her former husband's surname. However, she may choose not to use the courtesy title. In the event that the wife reverts to her maiden name or another surname, it would be incorrect to use the courtesy title.

9. DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE

If a knight divorces and remarries, the current and former wife (or wives) who retain their current and former husband's surname are entitled to use the courtesy title of "Lady". There may be, therefore, several "Lady Smiths".

In those situations where there is more than one former wife living and entitled to use the courtesy title, a forename may be used; e.g.

Mary, Lady Smith

When a man is made a knight a former wife, who has retained his surname, may not adopt the courtesy title of "Lady". She continues to be styled as she was at the time of her divorce and before her husband was knighted; e.g. "Mrs".

10. KNIGHT'S WIDOW

On the death of a knight his widow may continue to use the courtesy title of "Lady" until such time as she remarries and assumes another name. If the widow remarries but retains her late husband's surname, she may continue to use the courtesy title. However, the widow of a knight may at any time choose not to use the courtesy title even though she may have retained her late husband's surname.

11. THE USE OF OTHER TITLES AND STYLES

On being made a knight or dame the use of the style "Doctor" is discontinued. The use of the postnominals denoting the Doctorate may, however, be shown after the name. For example:

Sir John Smith, KNZM, PhD

Dame Joan Grant, DNZM, MRCS, MRCP

Those knights and dames entitled to certain other titles, styles or ranks may continue to use them; e.g:

The Honourable Sir John Smith, KNZM

The Right Honourable Dame Joan Grant, DNZM

Lieutenant General Sir John Smith, KNZM
[in speech may also be addressed as "General Smith"]

Professor Sir John Smith, GNZM
[in speech may also be addressed as "Professor Smith"]

The Very Reverend Sir John Smith, KNZM

A Judge of the Supreme, Appeal and High Courts who is a knight or dame may be addressed as:

The Honourable Justice Smith
or Justice Smith [for The Hon Sir John Smith, KNZM]

Justice Grant [for The Hon Dame Joan Grant, DNZM]

12. CLERICAL KNIGHTS

In New Zealand all clergymen and clergywomen may accept and use titles denoting a knighthood or damehood. Clergymen may also accept the accolade of knighthood.

[In the United Kingdom, clergymen of the established churches in England and Scotland, while eligible to receive knighthoods, do not receive the accolade, may not use the title of "Sir" and their wife may not use the courtesy title of "Lady" as the wife of a knight.]

13. HONORARY KNIGHTS AND DAMES

Honorary knights and dames are not entitled to use the titles of "Sir" or "Dame". The wife of an honorary knight may not use the courtesy title of "Lady". Honorary knights and dames may use the appropriate postnominal letters; e.g.

Dr John Smith, KNZM
Miss Joan Grant, DNZM

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