

On “pro se”

pro se For himself; in his own behalf; in person. Appearing for oneself, as in the case of one who does not retain a lawyer and appears for himself in court.

Black’s Law Dictionary, Fifth edition, 1979, page 1099

pro se For one’s own behalf; in person. Appearing for oneself, as in the case of one who does not retain a lawyer and appears for himself in court.

Black’s Law Dictionary, Sixth edition, 1990, page 1221

pro se *adv. adj.* [Latin] For oneself; on one’s own behalf; without a lawyer <the defendant proceeded pro se> <a pro se defendant>. — Also termed *pro persona*; *in propria persona*

Black’s Law Dictionary, Seventh edition, 1999, page 1236

pro persona *adv. & adj.* [Latin] For one’s own person; on one’s own behalf <a *pro persona* brief>. — Sometimes shortened to *pro per*. See PRO SE.

Black’s Law Dictionary, Seventh edition, page 1232

pro persona (= for his own person, on his own behalf) is a LATINISM used in some jurisdictions as an equivalent of *pro se* and *in propria persona*.

A Dictionary of Modern Legal Usage, 1987

in propria persona [Latin “in one’s own person”] See PRO SE.

Black’s Law Dictionary, Seventh edition, page 796

pro se, n. One who represents oneself in a court proceeding without assistance of a lawyer <the third case on the court’s docket involving a pro se>. — Also termed *pro per*.

Black’s Law Dictionary, Seventh edition, page 1237 (also *Black’s Eight*, 2004)

pro se = on his own behalf. The phrase is two words, and should not be hyphenated. Functionally, the phrase may be either adjectival or adverbial. Here it is the former: “In this *pro se* action, plaintiff contends that...” Just as frequently it is adverbial, as here: “The petitioner appeals *pro se* from...”

A Dictionary of Modern Legal Usage, 1987

Latin phrases are generally italicized. Ed.

USAGE:

“You say that I am *pro se*. If you mean that I am without assistance of a lawyer – I agree. If you mean anything else, please explain it on the record, as I am not an attorney or a lawyer.”

(Words and phrases relating: unrepresented, *sui juris*)