

September 22, 1998

Honorable Gayle Ford
Circuit/Chancery Judge
507 Church Street, Room 203
Mena, Arkansas 72953

RE: Case # 96-311

Dear Judge Ford:

In its September 18, 1998 meeting, the Judicial Discipline & Disability Commission decided to impose on you an informal adjustment in complaint number 96-311. In that complaint it was alleged you violated the Arkansas Code of Judicial Conduct.

The Commission considered the facts and circumstances surrounding the allegation, your statements, documents, and other evidence before the Commission. Applying this material to the Code of Judicial Conduct, the Commission found that there had been conduct that is cause for discipline, but for which an informal adjustment is appropriate.

The Commission found that there was evidence of a violation of Canon 4D(1)(b) of the Code of Judicial Conduct. Specifically, you and your wife own the office property located at 135 Elder Street in Mount Ida, and that you lease office space in that building to attorney Bill McKimm. In April 1996, you presided at a trial in which attorney Bill McKimm represented one (1) of the litigants. The landlord/tenant relationship between yourself and attorney Bill McKimm was not disclosed to the other attorney.

The Judicial Discipline and Disability Commission has accepted your commitment that in the future, if Bill McKimm appears in a case in any capacity, you will notify all lawyers or parties, if a party is not represented by a lawyer, of the landlord/tenant relationship between yourself and Bill McKimm.

If any party or lawyer so notified objects, you will disqualify from the case.

This Commission has instructed me to give you notice that this informal adjustment has been imposed. This Commission action is public information.

Sincerely,

James A. Badami
Executive Director

cc: Mr. & Mrs. Marlin Black
Attorney Bob Hargraves

m:\office\wpwin\data\judges\ford96.311